The Perception on Halal Supply Chain Management Systems Implementation of SMEs in Selangor

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Abstract

Objectives: Managing halal supply chain is the main challenge in any halal related industry. Therefore, the study is to identify the perception of implementing Halal Supply Chain Management Systems in SMEs. **Methods/Statistical Analysis:** The understanding toward the need of Halal Supply Chain Management Systems will be quantified in the form of semi-structured questions. The study was conducted through interviews to measure the selected items toward the need for halal SCM. On that purpose, the upper management or owners of the organization were selected as the respondents from 11 halal SMEs companies that run their businesses in Selangor, Malaysia. **Findings:** The result shows the importance of implementing the Halal Supply Chain Management Systems in addressing the problems related to the sustainability of halal related businesses. The complex issues of halal could be overcome, particularly to the relationship between suppliers and buyers in the business systems that need each other to integrate information between them. The respondents' agreed that the implementation of the halal SCM critical to reduce the problems related to procurement and supply chain as a whole. The problems in halal chain based on the factors of integrated information for halal Supply Chain Management is discovered. The related issues state clearly the importance of procurement continuity with business performance. **Application/Improvements**: The study is expected to be the basis for drawing up best practices for ideal halal supply in a more cost-effective and sustainable manner.

Keywords: Halal Supply Chain, Supply Chain Management, Systems Implementation

1. Introduction

In the teachings of Islam, halal practices are mandatory for all Muslims. Halal which is defined as something that is allowed, with no restrictions and act where the legislator that Allah has allowed[1] for Muslims to express their religious beliefs[2]. It is contrary to anything forbidden in any way forbidden by Allah and the wrongdoer responsible for paying the penalty later in

the day.Allah explained with respect to foods that are forbidden for consumption in the following verse:"He has made unlawful to you only that which dies of itself and blood and the flesh of swine and that on which the name of any other than Allah has been invoked. But he who is driven by necessity, being neither disobedient

nor exceeding the limit, it shall be no sin for him. Surely, Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful" (Qur'an 2:174), translated by[3]. Currently halal industry boasted from the Islamic countries that consist of 35% of the world's population[4]. Halal is being part of global ethical lifestyle of the Muslims leading by the syaria teaching. The scope of halal, is not only covers the process of permitted animals slaughtering, but also focus on the aspect of hygienic and cleanliness[5,6]. In addition, the concept is known as the 'halalan toyyiban' that regulating the handling of halal clean and hygienic food by separation of storing and packing of the items between the halal and non-halal foods[7]. The halal commercial participants shall consider the halal syaria-compliant practices to be part of their business core competencies as the consumer trust

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now being the strategic competitive advantage in most studies[8]. Furthermore, the impact of halal practices of a business toward consumer trust is important in ensuring uninterrupted existence in halal industry.

Halal supply chain is concerned with the integration of functional areas of manufacturing operation, procurement and logistics; and value-adding initiatives[9] within the halal framework. The halal chain shall avoid the unknown status of the Muslims food that might risk the business. In embarking halal business, the enterprise should accredit their product through the halal certification body. It is estimated that 300 halal certification bodies around the world and only 30% of them are legal entity[10]. Out of the total numbers, the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) only recognizes 78 of the foreign halal certification bodies from 33 countries[11]. These show the heterogeneous standards of halal accreditation giving pressure to the international business participants to export their halal product.

On the other hand, the businesses competition drives by the technological advancement, global market and information availability. This competition spurs hard through the branches of supply chain network[12]. Supply Chain Management (SCM) term originally started in the field of manufacturing and has its own evolutionary and cumulative innovation that aimed to improve effectiveness[13]. The integration of the key business function proposed by the SCM shall ensure the enterprise operated in more economic and systematic in a trade market. Furthermore, some studies show a proper integration of SCM can significantly benefit both the manufacturers and its customers[14]. Essentially, the halal products business for certain communities shall ascertain halal practices and certification for their core business competencies. These elements of competencies should be aligned to the business competitive advantage in their company's strategic initiatives[15]. The Halal Supply Chain Management Systems (HSCMS) could attain the efficient and effective management of halal related components that comprise the suppliers, operation and logistic plus the certification bodies. The objective of this article is to analyze the perception towards the implementation of HSCMS.

2. Literature Review

There are numerous studies conducted for halal with large spectrum of research area especially in the certification of food products. Many complaints about the compliance process are about procuring halal certification in legitimate business. Among the causes that revolve around the problem are the shortage of labor certification bodies and lack of technology[16]. Lack of enforcement and certificates compliance reduced confidence in the validity of the halal certificates[17]. The consumer is not likely giving full trust to the halal certified product due to unethical imitation of logos by some traders[18]. Likewise, in Malaysia, a series of improvements made, especially by the Islamic Religious Department Malaysia (JAKIM) to accelerate the production of halal certificates[19,20] and these measures appear to be successful by the increasing number of production certificates[21]. However, the halal enforcement is difficult in most of the non-Muslim country due to the completely different setting of law, social philosophy and believe[22]. The world Islamic authority shall establish the standard or logo that could represent and acceptable across boundaries of Islamic community.

Uninterrupted of various certification standards are not giving a good impact to the halal industry[23,24]. The problem arises when the supply chain from multiple sources and locations of production that require a certificate from different certification body due to disparate region. Therefore, the integration between the international certification bodies by existence collective certification standard could reduce the complexity and expedite halal certification process for local product.

Network with halal certification makes a product into a more complete package to attract Muslims customers compared to other products. In addition, it seeks to continually build a strong relationship between suppliers and buyers[24]. Islamic product business organizations fully leverage the halal certification to market their product sales. The network is not limited to Muslim consumers, but it is across the people and nation as a standard option since dietary product is not only known for its adherence to Islamic law, but it is also covered in terms of cleanliness and manufacturing procedures. Such interest is an essential element in any non-Muslim particularly manufacturers of consumer products. Many consumers are attracted to the halal label because firmness in the enforcement of hygiene products. The rigorous action shown by halal certification body to withdraw or disqualified the non-compliance halal certificate holder[25].

More organizations are using the technology to analyze customer demand and integrate information with the external entities. This process has been integrated via

Supply Chain Management (SCM)[26]. There are a number of studies to determine the characteristics of halal chain management related to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). Most of the studies are focused on the aspects of SMEs expertise in maintaining a competitive advantage to align between supply chain objectives with business strategy[27]. SCM provides the ideal framework prospect, integration and management of synergies related to the overall business process excellence in establishing contacts with other participants of the supply chain[28]. There are significant gaps and needs to review the SCM framework for SMEs[29]. In Malaysia, the implementation of operational supply chain in SMEs inhibit by number of barriers that in common cause by human capital aspect and implementation cost[30]. However, the implementations of Supply Chain Management systems have relational factors towards improving the SMEs business performance[31]. This shows a clear relationship in respect of the implementation of SCM could prepared the Malaysian SMEs business of halal products to be more competitive.

Halal supply chain is concerned with the integration of the enterprise several functional areas such as manufacturing operation, procurement and logistics and value-adding initiatives within the halal framework. It is a circular relationship that stems from the supplier to the manufacturers subsequently customers of halal products. Chain control aspect is important because the mixing between the clean and unclean is not allowed by Islam to avoid contamination. Halal chain can ensure the integrity and security of food products during handling of the product either during the flow of materials, production, packaging, storage, transportation and warehousing[32,33]. As for halal supply shortage is a major problem in some countries[34], the halal chain has to go through good communication to consumers through halal label or the like to give more confidence and trust to halal products[35]. It does also create a good image in respect of a business to increase the market share.

SCM systems required integration of key business processes in determining the attainment of enterprise's supply chain network. The incorporation of the business members, related process link to the component and the level of integration are the key degree of success for SCM Implementation[36]. The global move on halal demand is motivated by the fact that Islam now is being the fastest growing religion, rising awareness on safety plus hygienic foods and the increase of consumable power of

Muslims community[37]. Port of Rotterdam in Netherland initiates the move on setting up the halal facilities and warehouses. Kootenai Malaysia has recently added-value to their operations by becoming the leading halal logistics operations for their customers supply chain activities[38]. In embarking the halal solution, it is important to measure in the perspectives of supply chain. Therefore, either local or global halal SCM players obligated to the supply chain integrity of halal products.

In ensuring the authenticity of halal food, halal products must go through the process and procedures from the slaughtering process until entering single or multiple supply chain checkpoints which emphasize the halal food separation concept and hygienic compliance. Among the gaps that need to be refined in this study is the actual implementation of halal essential practices presumed by all halal participants.

3. Methodology

The interviews were conducted to identify issues related to the needs of the implementation framework for halal supply chain. The respondents were representing 11 halal SMEs companies that were operated in Selangor, Malaysia. The respondents were either from upper management or owners of the organization. Most of the respondents have the authority in decision making of their companies. The upper job position also responsible determining the cost effectiveness in their organization. From the profile, they have the ability to inference the business strategically.

The selection of respondents' company is based on the following criteria:

- The companies must be located in Selangor.
- The companies must satisfy the SMEs criteria.
- All of the companies had already obtained the halal certification.

Only one instrument was used in this study which is known as Halal SCM Initial Perception. The standardized open-ended interview was adapted where the phrased questions were asked in pre-determined sequence. The instrument is divided into two parts; the demographics and questions. An interview transcript was constructed to quantify the perception toward the need of halal SCM. The transcript was formulated in the form of semi-structured questions. Prior to interview sessions, the transcript was evaluated and improvised through pilot-

study and reviewed by the three experts. The experts were selected based on qualification and experience in halal industry and enterprise systems. They have more than 10 years' experience in related fields. The question is of some guidance topics outlined by the researchers based on the research question.

The respondents were questioned the following concerns:

- What is the purpose of obtaining a halal certificate?
- What are the problems encountered in obtaining halal ingredients of your products?
- Are certain items supplied to your organization acquired the halal certification separately?
- What would the organization do if the product is approaching expiry halal certificate?
- Should the integration of information on halal status of materials used by your industry?
- Have your organization recognized the presence of halal SCM?

The interview was done at the respondents preferred location. Overall, each interview took between 30 and 48 minutes. During the interviews, notes were taken and they were recorded by researchers to get a better analysis[39]. The interview was conducted flexibly to drive a few things to the point of interest and smoothness session between the interviewers and interviewees[40]. Through the initial interview, the researcher will look into the answers pattern and is used to improve the subsequent interviews.

4. Result

Based on the interviews that were conducted with selected respondents, important facts were documented and analyzed to derive the view opinion among them. The respondents' statement was recorded to capture the perceptions of halal food manufacturers towards the implementation of halal SCM. The important parts of the documented interviews are stated below:

4.1 What is the Purpose of obtaining a Halal Certificate?

According to the respondents, among the many reasons given for a certificate of halal certification was to ensure that halal certified products was characterized to meet Islamic dietary laws, cleanliness and of high quality. Halal products are considered cleaner and safer for use

by various levels of consumers. There are also non-halal certificate proposed by the respondents as to authorize Malaysia as an Islamic state. Some of the respondents thought the purpose of obtaining halal certification is for the purpose of marketing their products; whether it is local or overseas trade, the halal products should gain greater confidence among Muslims consumers.

In addition, dietary recommendations agreed upon as a force consensus to reflect the perception of the goods or services. Some of the respondents assume responsibility for the halal industry as required worship in Islam. In general, it is a religious responsibility and commercial strategies to offer consumers confidence to halal certified products.

4.2 What are the Problems Encountered in obtaining Halal Ingredients of your Products?

The respondents have given multiple answers to the problems related to procurement a dietary ingredient for their products. Among the top challenges were related to the quality and specification of materials derived from non-Muslim organizations and foreign non-Muslim countries with various levels of halal standards. Strict enforcement of the Malaysian halal organization had also resulted in the need to integrate the local with any foreign halal certification body. Besides that, there were also requirements to obtain a certificate of analysis of the product if it does not have the halal certificate. A number of respondents also agreed that problems related to bureaucracy regarding the products information also possess implication for the smooth running of the entire procurement of halal ingredients needed by an organization.

4.3 Are certain items supplied to your Organization acquired the Halal Certification separately?

Almost all of the respondents acquire halal certificate of their ingredients from others separately. In contrary, one of the respondents combines all the ingredients to get the halal certified as a single certification. These shows there are fewer tendencies of halal producer organizations to be independent in ensuring certification process at their level. The respondents also agreed that guarantee continuous supply chain and halal certificate in the prescribed time

was an important element to ensure the marketing strategy and consumer confidence were gained.

4.4 What would the Organization do if the Product is approaching expiry Halal Certificate?

Specifically, the respondents who used the services of a local halal body would seek renewal of halal certification for six months before it expired. Most of the respondents would also avoid raw material less than three months before the expiry of their production as a precautionary measure. In the event that this material was below average and less than the quality of the required criteria, they would be returned to the original producer.

Clearance sale will be considered for goods that are approaching expiry date and disposing of expired items. This gives significant implications in terms of trading of halal products should comply with halal criteria.

4.5 Should the Integration of Information on Halal Status of Materials used by your Industry?

All respondents agreed with the need for network information about halal ingredients needed by the organization to be held. The importance of information critical for facilitating the integration of procurement and provides an alternative to the halal procurement particularly on the development of new products. The need to obtain appropriate materials with halal expiry date and the expected storage time is also taken into account to ensure the continuous production.

There is also some information that could be obtained from a number of halal certification bodies, but it does not help in terms of information on the supply and procurement processes which are the essential elements in SCM. In addition, the need to have information on alternative products and suppliers is also critical for the smooth supply chain when there are quality and shortage problems encountered.

4.6 Have your Organization recognized the Presence of Halal SCM?

This question was rather hard question to be answered by the respondents. Most of the respondents never heard the halal SCM term previously. Some respondents agreed that related SCM terms were known through experience and

from the halal promoting agencies. However, almost all of the respondents did not apply methods for integrating SCM in their organizations. Part of the questions are enough to infer the significant of the SCM in halal industry by confirming the requirements of integrated and centralized data that being among the main characteristic of SCM systems.

5. Discussion

Based on the previous study, there is a clear momentum in respect of consumer perceptions, showing interest in the continued support by consuming halal certified products[41]. The halal certification perception among Muslim by overall was overwhelming[42]. This indicates how important halal certification is to the Muslim community as consumers. It is consistent with our findings in which some respondents obtain halal certificates to boost sales of their products. The opinion on products with halal certification in sustaining the business should apply to Muslims majority area. It is a great deed for the Muslims to take responsibility on making halal product due to their understanding on Islamic dietary. The media should provide the systematic information about the halal process. It will educate the consumer to the some level of awareness[43] on the best halal practices that follows Islamic regulation. In some cases, the media negative coverage of halal non-compliance act will damage reputation of the respective companies. The consumer trust and believe in choosing the products could be more important than the certified logos its represent.

The condition that crucial to global halal business is to make standardization bodies to use same level of accreditation standards. The inferior case for this heterogeneous situation is the companies had to seek certification from regional certification body in preparation to penetrate new market. The alternatives medium of to convey the information of the product needed even prior to the companies certified their products. However, the industry could remain isolate with the halal certification process by effectively communicating their 'halalan toyyiban' standard to their consumers. On that score, the integrated SCM systems with halal complaint could be the preeminent alternative in communicating and convince the customer on consuming the products. The aforementioned could be the best media to interconnect with the customers on their halal systematic practices in

continuous relationship. The accreditation process also increased the overhead cost and possible contribute to the products unit price. This is the biggest challenge especially for business startup and the SMEs. The SMEs with small capital would hold up the certification process in allowing the companies to reduce cost. These companies might have impression non-certified halal product that give negative business impact in certain community.

Difficulties to acquire halal ingredient in sustaining the production is also highlighted. One of the problems that may be proposed is too much information to be passed across geographical boundaries. These issues could be solved by having the networks of more integrated halal body. The possible medium is through the HSCMS. Moreover, the integration of social media and big data analytics might continue to stimulate this area towards more competitive business.

In general, the respondents agreed to adapt the requirements of halal SCM is very critical to reduce the problems related to procurement and supply chain as a whole. The issues related state clearly the importance of procurement continuity with business performance. The integration aspect is very important for any enterprise software including those with SCM modules[44]. The aspect of sharing centralized data for distinct functional areas helps the companies to reduce operating cost and rapid task processing. Furthermore, the area of current SCM is covering both internal operation and external activities[45]. The problems toward integrated information are described in Table 1. It could be reduced by the implementation of halal SCM systems.

Table 1. Problems related to integrated information and halal supply chain

Factors	Problems
Integrated Information	Limited information regarding the specification and p
	Less data is shared for use between suppliers and manufacturers
	Lack of information on the supplier for a replacement product
Halal Supply Chain	Lack of awareness of automation and supply chain management

The halal certification bodies are playing the major roles to increase trust of the consumers towards using the certified products where the product only be certified halal after strict accreditation process[46]. The formulation of the halal oriented SCM systems framework should consider the component of halal certification bodies is relevant to be part of the business members. The framework shall provide noncompulsory to certification bodies due to cost limitation of SMEs in procuring halal certificationThere are some reasons to the range of recognition to SCM halal systems. The argument nearly three decade stems from subtle differences between practitioner and academia causes SCM framework remain at the cwonceptual stage[47]. Furthermore, the system is not certainly understood because there is a difference in determining the scope of the SCM framework[48].

Generally, organization aimed business competitiveness by reducing cost and improves performance. Consumer confidence in the use of the halal logo provides a reliable weapon for halal participants to win the competition in the global world. The effective and economic way to benefit the Muslims supply chain is through the proper implementation of HSCMS.

6. Conclusions

The question of halal and haram are basic things that are important to the Muslims in their daily lives. Nowadays, the need to meet the dietary needs should be done in a more systematic and cost-effective way through the implementation of supply chain management. In designing the continuous halal supply chain, the implementation of a more complete framework and sustainable is indispensable. This framework will ensure issues relating to system costs, maintenance and other resources can be optimized. In addition, the implementation of best practices could be an important parameter of systems success.

The study shows the reliance of halal-related business over the implementation of halal SCM systems is narrowly studied. In addition, the undesirable issues relating to halal business operational could be resolve by integrating information between the suppliers and buyers in the business systems. The integrated buyer – supplier relationship and network could boost up the halal industry to be more competitive in the future. The emerging new technology should contribute and expedite the deployment of HSCMS in a cost effective manner. The availability of application service framework that reduces the complexity of application development could be one of the examples. Furthermore, the application

adapt to multiplatform through various devices will help the users to use the systems throughout the supply chain environment.

Further research is needed in relation to the initial analysis are related to the critical success factors for the implementation of the halal supply chain. The study is expected to be the basis for drawing up best practices for solving the problem in a more cost-effective and sustainable manner.

7. Acknowledgements

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