

Promotion Of Halal Industry In Sulu: The Key To Economic Growth

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Abstract

Sulu economy is not stable as it cannot meet the growing demands of the local people. The mode of production is backward and the means of production are further crippled by *riba*, and lack of infrastructure facilities. The objectives of this study are as follows: 1). To know the present state of the Sulu economy, 2). To assess the halal industry as an approach to stimulate economic growth and 3). To identify the role of the *ulama* and the local governments. Methodology of this study is based on descriptive method. The research instruments used to generate data are focus group discussion, interview, community immersion, and library works.

Halal industry is largely pointed by the FGD participants as the most potential factor to stimulate economic growth in Sulu. The way to realize this is that the local government must invest in infrastructure development such as roads, water facilities, standard slaughterhouse, electricity and internet connection and initiate the establishment of the Islamic bank. Halal certifying board must be established and must be manned by scientists, *ulama*, and management experts. The board will regulate food industry and tourism.

The findings also pointed out the role of the *ulama* is to educate business people about *riba*, the concept of halal and Islamic finance such as *mudaraba*, *musharaka* and *murabaha*. The *ulama*, the leaders and the masses are the pillars of the Sulu economy. The *ulama* hold the key to moral governance. The role of the local government is to improve the physical facilities such as road networks, electricity, internet connection, delivery of basic services and to maintain peace and order and security of the people. It is the masses who will organize industry, exploit the resources and implement development.

Keywords: Halal industry, halal certifying body, Economic Growth, Sulu, Ulama, Riba.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Gracious Indeed, the origin of the halal demand for each individual is the noble hadith of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w)

١٠١٥: إِنْ لَّهِ طَيِّبٌ لَا يَقْبَلُ إِلَّا طَيِّبًا" (رواه مسلم برقم

"Allah is good and only accepts the good." (Muslim, hadith no. 1015)

In Lupa Sug, the search for halal is often limited only to food and drinks because of the lack of Islamic knowledge among the people. Halal in the Islamic worldview is comprehensive in food, beverages, clothing, and even financial and tourism transactions. Unfortunately, there is no halal center in this town that can examine all products exported to us as well as the production of halal products. The subject of halal is one of the greatest purposes of Islam, because it encompasses all the worldly and hereafter matters of man. Promoting the halal industry will practically eliminate the spread of riba in the Tausug society. The halal industry will not only promote good health but also justice. Injustices brought by riba are the main factor that perpetuates poverty elsewhere in society. The way to eliminate riba is through the promotion of the halal industry. Islam prohibits gambling and riba because they are sources of easy gain devoid of hard labor. The good role model to be followed in seeking halal is the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w). It was narrated on the authority of Anas Ibn Malik (r.a) who said that the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) passed by a datefruit on the road and said:

عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ، قَالَ: مَرَّ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بِتَمْرَةٍ فِي الطَّرِيقِ، قَالَ: "لَوْلَا أَنِّي أَخَافُ أَنْ تَكُونَ مِنَ الصَّدَقَةِ لَأَكَلْتُهَا" (رواه البخاري برقم ٢٤٣١)

"Had it not been for fear of being from charity, I would have eaten it." (Al-Bukhari, hadith no. 2431)

Because charity is not permissible for the Prophet and his family, he refrained from eating this date for fear that it would be for charity. This teaches us to be careful, to eat only what is lawful and avoid what is forbidden, and to beware of illegal ways of earning, such as cheating. Undeniably, the main cause of the great wealth in Lupa Sug is halal sales, because halal blessings abound.

The halal industry is very relevant to the economic development of Sulu. Unfortunately, the concept of halal, in the perspective of many Tausug, is only restricted to pork.

The impact of ignorance on halal topics created problems for socio-economic development. Due to the importance of this matter, it is imperative to ask the following questions:

1. What is the present state of the Sulu economy?
2. How can the halal industry be promoted to stimulate economic growth?
3. What is the role of the ulama and the local government in the promotion of halal industry?

The Present State of Sulu's Economy

The major industries in Sulu can be categorized into four parts: agriculture, fisheries, services, and trading. Tausug rely on agriculture and fishing for their livelihood. But the problem with these two sources is the transformation issue; they are not modernized. It is vital to examine the mode of production and the means of production. No high-tech equipment was found in the area of production. On the other hand, local elites own and control the means of production like industries, banks, factories, capital, and labor, which result in exploitation.

According to Ustadz Abdurajak Alhari, one FGD participant, the current economic state in Sulu is much weaker compared to other provinces and cities, although every way to strengthen this economy is available and exists both on land and at sea. In fact, some cities are in dire need of the Sulu Sea for fishing and our terrestrial products, such as different kinds of fruits that can hardly be found except in us, the Sulu, and its people's pride. It was also mentioned during FGD that local government units should encourage the people to engage in agriculture, which aims to increase rice, cassava, and vegetable production. The tourism officer, Mr. Arastam, supports this idea by stressing that small industries are available in Sulu, like native coffee (Kahawa Sug) production and delicacies (Bang-Bang Sug). He further added, that almost all municipalities in Sulu have coffee, although, it is not a plantation, so how much more if this product is updated in terms of farm and plantation. Among the examples sighted to be given priority as far as production is concerned are the coconut and lobster. For him, it is timely and significant to use selected marine products as contributors to economic development. Dr. Bara stressed that the government should give priority to promoting the halal industry through the establishment of One Town, One Product (OTOP). Meaning, every municipality would create one product that symbolizes their own culture and may invite investors both locally and internationally.

Restraining Factors Affecting the Sulu Economy

The following factors are gathered through the discussion of every participant in the FGD:

Program to provide assistance from the local government units, Tourism officer Mr. Arastam admitted that the local government units and line agencies still have lapses in support mechanisms. He further argued that the promotional programming is also weak regarding the Sulu economy. On the other hand, Lack of quality control is also among the factors. According to Prof. Kulani, knowledge of certain business industries should leave no one behind. Simultaneous training in business must be observed both in barangays, municipalities, and the province as a whole. The Ministry of Trade, Investment, and Tourism (MTIT) and the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) are the line agencies to provide control, he added.

The behavioral aspect also affected the economics of Sulu. Tausug are the sole solution to their economic problem. They should identify the cause and effect of this dilemma. According to Ustadz Alhari, the effect was rooted in these causes: peace and order, family feuds, little trust of the Tausug in the security sectors, laziness, and too much dependency on the government. In relation to all of those mentioned, a lack of investment, according to Mr. Arastam, is among the restraining factors.

Lack of access to technology is also among the factors affecting the Sulu economy. There is not enough technology to help them take quick action. In addition, she also contributed to those factors. As it is visible throughout the community. Rather, there are institutions that organize and operate riba, like pawnshops. Although Allah (s. w.t) forbids riba in all its forms because it involves deceit and consuming people's money unjustly, And there is no such barakah in riba, as Allah (s.w.t) told us:

"يَمْحَقُ اللَّهُ الرِّبَا وَيُزِيلُ الصَّدَقَاتِ"

"Allah will deprive Riba of all blessings, but will give increase for deeds of charity." (Qur'an 2: 276)

In 2019, the economic performance of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) expanded at a lower rate of 5.9 % as compared with a 7.7 % increment previously. By looking further into the drivers of the economic growth that contributed to BARMM as a whole, one can conclude that all of it falls under the category of halal industry. Therefore, the search for the development of halal social transactions is one of the most important requirements in achieving the greatest goal, which is the growth of the economy.

Halal Industry

In introducing halal, it should be guided and start with seeking knowledge about it because it is very clear that consuming halal in any form and avoiding haram in any form is an obligation to every Muslim. In addition, the preparation process should not be contrary to Shari'ah. The Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) commanded all Muslims to avoid and keep away from the shubhat; this is to guard oneself from committing haram.

الْحَلَالُ بَيِّنٌ، وَالْحَرَامُ بَيِّنٌ، وَبَيْنَهُمَا مُشَبَّهَاتٌ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا كَثِيرٌ مِّنَ النَّاسِ، فَمَنْ اتَّقَى الْمُسَبَّهَاتِ اسْتَبْرَأَ لِدِينِهِ وَعَرْضِهِ، وَمَنْ وَقَعَ فِي الشُّبُهَاتِ كَرَعَ بَزَعَى حَوْلَ الْحِمَى يُوشِكُ أَنْ يُوَاقِعَهُ، أَلَا وَإِنَّ لِكُلِّ مَلِكٍ حِمَى، أَلَا إِنَّ حِمَى اللَّهِ فِي أَرْضِهِ الْحِمَى (رواه البخاري برقم ٥٢: مَخَارِمُهُ ")

“Halal is clear and haram is clear. Midway between them are things which many people do not know whether they are halal or haram. He who keeps away from them will protect his religion and will be saved. He who approaches them will be near to haram, like a herdsman wandering near the place set by the king to be used by his cattle only, who could soon fall into this protected area. Surely, for every king there is such a protected area, and Allah’s is what He declared haram (forbidden).” (Al-Bukhari, hadith no. 52)

Halal Food

To introduce the halal industry in Sulu, it should begin with the foremost needs of the people: foods and beverages. The food industry in Sulu covers restaurants, food catering, coffee shops, street foods, and the sale of delicacies. There must be a halal certifying body, and the establishments shall comply with all the requirements set by halal certifiers. In addition, a halal slaughterhouse should also be built in our area to ensure the legality of slaughtered animals.

According to Badrudin (2011), halal certification in the food industry context refers to the examination of food processes, including transportation and distribution. Furthermore, he explained that halal certification can only be obtained when the food has been verified as nutritious and prepared from permissible ingredients in a clean and hygienic manner. On the other hand, a halal logo must be observed on a packaging, but it should be a verified logo; in other words, trusting a logo alone is insufficient.

Simply having the halal emblem on a product's package or hanging it on a wall is insufficient. Labeling contributes to giving consumers the knowledge they need to make informed decisions. The evidence for this claim is found in some products labelled with the halal logo, yet there are “e-ingredient” fall under the haram category or under musbuh,

which should also be avoided due to their shubhat.

Below are the lists of e- ingredients that contain pork or pork-like products: e-numbers represent specific food additives, universally adopted by the food industry. They are the reference numbers used by the European Union. (Adopted from the halal awareness seminar attended by the researcher.)

E 100, E 110, E 120, E 140, E 1, E 153, E 210, E 213, E 214, E 216, E 234, E 252, E 270, E 280, E 325, E 326, E 327, E 334, E 335, E 336, E 337, E 442, E 430, E 431, E 432, E 433, E 434, E 435, E 436, E 440, E 470, E 471, E 472, E 473, E 474, E 475, E 476, E 477, E 478, E 481, E 482, E 483, E 491, E 492, E 493, E 494, E 495, E 542, E 570, E 572, E 631, E 635, E 904.

Halal Clothes

Textiles are one aspect of the halal business. Islam comes to the conclusion that the origin of clothes is allowed as a result of the general ruling made by the ulama based on teachings from the Prophet. The well-known Imam Sadiq said:

الأصل في مياهنا الطهارة والأرض والثياب والحجارة

Water was originally ruled to be clean (i.e., not haram), just like land, clothing, and rocks.

In accordance with Islamic law, both men and women may wear clothing, with the exception of items that are in violation of the law. For men, it is haram to wear "harir" (silk) of any kind. The Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) said:

"إِنَّ هَذَيْنِ حَرَامٌ عَلَى ذُكُورِ أُمَّتِي"

"These two (gold and silk) are haram to men in the Muslim ummah." (Abu Dawud, hadith no. 4057)

In addition, it is forbidden for both men and women to expose their "awrat" (the area between the navel and the knees in the case of the former, and the entire body in the case of the latter), with the exception of the areas that are permitted.

The Muslimah is a priceless jewel that needs to be shielded from the eyes of evildoers who are driven by heart sickness. Muslimah should cover their heads with a hijab and wear the required attire to protect themselves from non-Mahrams. Except for areas of the body that have been exempted by Allah (s.w.t.), clothing should cover the entire body. It shouldn't serve as its own form of decoration. Allah (swt) declared:

(٣١: وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ) (النور)

"And not to show off their adornment." (Qur'an 24:31)

In addition, the clothes should not be thin or show the size of the limbs or the shape of the body. The Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) said:

صِنْفَانِ مِنَ أَهْلِ النَّارِ لَمْ أَرَهُمَا ؛ قَوْمٌ مَعَهُمْ سِيَاطٌ كَأَذْنَابِ الْبَقَرِ يَصْرُفُونَ بِهَا النَّاسَ، وَنِسَاءٌ كَاسِيَاتٍ عَارِيَاتٍ، مُمِيلَاتٌ مَائِلَاتٌ، رُءُوسُهُنَّ كَأَسْنِمَةِ الْبُخْتِ الْمَائِلَةِ، لَا يَدْخُلْنَ الْجَنَّةَ، وَلَا يَجِدْنَ رِيحَهَا، وَإِنَّ رِيحَهَا لِيُوجَدُ مِنْ مَسِيرَةِ كَذَا وَكَذَا".

“There are two types of the people of hell whom I have not seen: People with whips like the tails of cattle with which they beat the people, and women who are clothed yet naked, going astray and leading others astray, with their heads looking like the humps of camels leaning to one side. They will not enter paradise nor even smell its fragrance, although its fragrance may be detected from such and such a distance.” (Muslim, hadith no. 2128)

Among the conditions of Muslim women’s dress is that it should not resemble the clothing of men. Free from crosses, and of course, halal and pure. Those are among the adjectives of Muslim dress that must be categorized as halal.

Halal Tourism

Today, halal tourism, or Islamic tourism, is a well-established concept in the field of tourism. The aim is to provide travel and tourism services in accordance with Islamic teachings and practices. In Muslim countries, religious commitment should always manifest in tourism, specifically with regard to facilities that do not allow the sale or serving of the alcoholic drink “khamar”, as well as those that allocate swimming pools for families and other things. It spreads in a number of Arab countries, but tourists can find a part of it in Western countries as well.

Akyol and Kilinc (2014) enumerated the major components of halal Islamic tourism, to wit:

1. Halal Hotels: some of the main indicators of an Islamic hotel include: no alcohol, no gambling; halal food only; Qur’an, prayer mats, and arrows indicating the direction of “qiblah” in every room; beds and toilets positioned so as not to face the direction of “qiblah”; prayer rooms; conservative staff dress; Islamic funding; separate recreational facilities for men and women.
2. Halal Transport: major indicators include cleanliness, non-alcoholic drinks, and publication, which are coherent with Islam.
3. Halal Food Premises: Foods that are served in a restaurant have to be halal. All animals must be

slaughtered according to Islamic principles. No alcoholic drinks should be served on the premises.

4. Halal Tour Packages: The content of the tour packages must be based on an Islamic theme. The Islamic tour packages include visits to mosques and Islamic monuments and promote an event during Ramadan.
 5. Halal Finance: the financial resources of the hotel, restaurant, travel agency, and airlines have to be compatible with Islamic principles. In general, Islamic finance requires participation in sharing the profit and loss among all parties involved in this financial enterprise. Islamic finance also prohibits interest.
- According to Mr. Arastam, provincial tourism officer in Sulu, the local government units are now preparing the tourism code applicable here in our area. The codes are guided by Islamic regulations such as dress codes for both men and women, cultural sensitivity, and the application of Islamic ethics in general. Halal industry can stimulate economic growth by raising economic policy in Sulu, which can recognize the course of action based on Islamic economic principles and intended to resolve a specific economic problem. This policy should normally be applied to problems as they arise.

Mr. Julkiram Arastam said if Tausug proves that they have a halal industry in Sulu, they can open the door to economic growth without having to have additional activities. Because they can export their products domestically and internationally.

Prof. Kulani added that in halal there is always barakah, one of the reasons for achieving higher economy. In addition, he stressed the importance of patronage. Consumers always look for halal because it is in demand, not just among Muslims but also to non-Muslim consumers.

Role of Sulu Ulama

The ulama, the leaders (umara), and the masses, are the pillars of the Sulu economy. The ulama provide guidance, and the umara implement programs and projects for the welfare of the masses. The masses will in turn work hard to contribute to the growth of the economy. With the support of the Umara, the masses will organize industries and carry forward development.

The important role of the ulama in stimulating economic growth is to explain and clarify the issue of riba. They must ensure that riba has no place in business or industrial development. It is known to every Muslim that Islam came to urge them to participate in work related to what

strengthens the economy. Among the roles of ulama in developing the economy is to have a place in the government for empowerment. In order for them to promote a riba-free economic system. Based on this argument raised by two ustadzs during the FGD, the ulama must have active participation in government because Islam is the only key to development and no one knows Islamic teaching better than the ulama.

Methods

A descriptive narrative method was used in this research. It is a fact-finding study with an adequate and accurate interpretation of the findings. It describes with emphasis what actually exists, such as current conditions, practices, situations, or phenomena. The principal research instruments in this study are FGD, or focus group discussion, interviews with the key informants, and guide questions. Library work was also undertaken. This study was conducted in Sulu. The respondents to this study were selected ulama, professionals, businessmen, and political leaders. The steps being followed in data gathering are: Preparation of focus questions; identification of the participants in the focus group discussion; identification of key informants; preparation of a letter of invitation; delivery of the letters; the conduct of the FGD; the conduct of interview with key informants; and the writing of the report.

Result and Discussion

This study is very relevant to addressing the many economic and social problems in Sulu. The promotion of the halal industry shall enable the Tausug to conduct business in accordance with the laws of Islam. Observance of the Islamic rites in slaughtering halal animals, proper hygiene, and the elimination of riba will make the people closer to Allah (s.w.t.). Halal is not only about hygiene; it encompasses the process, storage, packaging, and delivery, which must follow the strict Islamic rules.

Prof. Kulani highlighted the importance of organizing academe and ulama to provide mass orientation on halal and every establishments should create halal lane. Ustadz Alhari, agreed on this, as it is the duty and responsibility of every single Muslim to know what is halal. Ustadz Yahya Abdullah, quoted and explained the ayah (verse) from the Qur'an in Surah Al-Baqarah:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ
عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ

“Oh you people! Eat on what is on land, lawful and good;

and do not follow the footsteps of the evil one, for he is to you an avowed enemy.”

He demystifies that Allah, the Almighty, commanded the people to eat not just the halal food (lawful) but also the “tayyib” food that gives nourishments and vitamins and does not destroy human health. He further argued, that Allah (s.w.t) after commanded the men to do so He the Almighty warned them not to follow the footsteps step of Shaytan. Might the one who read this ayah wonder the relation between this warning and the command to consume halal? According to Ustadz Yahya, indeed there is a relation between these two. He cited an example: if a person eats halal and beneficial to his health but he consumes it without limitation then in this situation he followed the footsteps of Shaytan. So, in consuming halal and tayyib food it should be guided by the correct measures of eating and drinking in order for it to be pronounced as halal in general Islamic view.

One FGD participant argued to put up institution on halal, establishing halal certifying board which consists of ulama and chemists and should be accredited by Malaysia Halal Certifying Board in order to be recognized by Muslim countries. Also building halal slaughter house and halal food processing.

The promotion of the halal industry is the most relevant strategy to stimulate economic growth in Sulu. The halal market in the world economy today has already reached 7 trillion dollars. By promoting halal products, we can make the Sulu economy a part of the global halal economy. There are two potential industries in Sulu that can be transformed into halal industries. These are the food industry and the tourism industry. The first step is to set up a halal slaughterhouse and a halal certifying board. The second step is to restore the eleven historical landmarks in Sulu that can attract local and international tourists. The third step is to improve the landscape of the existing resort beaches by putting up wider roads, masjid, restaurants, and hotels. Putting this plan into reality will eventually stimulate economic growth in Sulu. And the problem of unemployment will be solved if the halal industry is maximized, thereby promoting the attainment of peace and development in Sulu.

The perpetuation of riba, the outdated mode of production, and the dominant control of the means of production by the local elites, are factors affecting the Sulu economy and are the main causes of poverty in Sulu, according to the study's findings, which also show that the current state of the Sulu

economy is not well developed as it has less capacity to meet the growing demands of the local people.

The majority of FGD participants cited the halal sector as having the greatest potential to boost Sulu's economy. To do this, the local government must invest in the construction of infrastructure, including roads, water facilities, a conventional slaughterhouse, electricity, and internet access, as well as start the process of establishing Islamic banks. It is necessary to create and staff a halal certification board with ulama, scientists, and management professionals. The tourist and food industries will be governed by the halal certification board.

To attain the desired development and reduce poverty, men must work vigorously. Working for a good cause is a form of worship. Men should bear in mind that it is their obligation to develop their society by all means they can. Construction and not destruction, progress and development, not backwardness, happiness and not misery –these are the entire core of the desired progress of Islamic society, particularly in the Sulu province. To achieve the stability of the homeland, the ulama assert the perfecting work, demanding the workers to work hard and diligently so society progresses, the production increases, prosperity prevails, and the country overcomes its ordeal and its stifling economic crises.

Islam encourages people to work on halal earnings, and the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) indicates that this was the habit of all the Prophets. The problem facing the Filipinos in general and the Tausug in particular is the lack of a national goal that gathers the members of society as a whole in one crucible. When every individual knows his duties, the value of home and citizenship is elevated. The goals of progress occupy the highest values for all, from the top to the bottom.

Today, Tausug is facing a serious problem: the dominance of the values of selfishness and individualism over the values of altruism and collectivism. What they want is to get back to work through the collective system that brings together all members of society as a whole. But envy and jealousy always prevail among the people. These two destroy the value of teamwork toward progress.

The target of economic development in our area is to increase the standard of living of the people as well as the Tausug's well-being. That is the process of economic development, a comprehensive societal process that includes several axes: economic, political, and cultural. As for economic growth in our area, it is a steady process that

aims to increase the productive capacity of the economy. Thus, it only includes increasing the area's economic assets and maximizing its wealth.

It is never possible for the economy to rise and to outperform development without finding its causes, including the preoccupation with sharing what Allah has permitted of businesses, halal tourism, and every permissible act that leads to a luminous Sulu. In addition, FGD participants discussed collective action as an opportunity for improving the Sulu economy. Tausug people should work together to achieve their objectives. This action was recognized before by our ancestors (Kamaasan) for the common good, like "magsama-sama ha pag-uma." Collective action involves organizing the farmers and fishers into cooperatives or business entities to become viable blocks or units of production, enjoying higher efficiencies in certain operations and improving profits.

In fact, this idea is recognized by the Holy Qur'an. Allah (s.w.t.) commanded the believers to do so. He the Almighty said:

"وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ سَوَاءً ثَمَّ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَدِيدٌ الْعِقَابِ" (المائدة: ٣)

"Help you one another in Al-Birr and At-Taqwa (virtue, righteousness, and piety); but do not help one another in sin and transgression. And fear Allah; verily Allah is severe in punishment." (Qur'an 5:3)

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