



Implementation of Halal Practices in Providing Supplementary Food in Kindergartens, Indonesia

Fitria Budi Utami^{1*}, Maya Lestari¹, Yogi Gumilar¹, Jalaloden Bansil Marohom²,
Nerissa G. Dela Viña²

¹Department of Majoring in Early Childhood Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah A.R. Fachruddin, Indonesia

² University of Southern Mindanao, Philippines

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Abstract

The provision of supplementary food is outlined in the guidelines for the development of the health of students in kindergarten, as stated in the Minister of Health Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia No. 66 of 2014. In this context, the provision of supplementary food constitutes nutritional education in the form of communal meals. Kindergarten teachers also utilize this activity to implement halal practices among early childhood learners. Therefore, the aim of this research is twofold: 1) to describe the implementation of halal and healthy supplementary food activities in kindergartens; 2) to delineate the roles of class teachers and school principals in planning and executing the provision of halal and healthy supplementary food in kindergartens. This study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach. The data analysis model employed in this research is the Miles and Huberman model. Data was collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis. The study's findings reveal that halal practices in supplementary food provision in three schools are relatively successful. Both teachers and school principals meticulously plan the sourcing, production, and use of halal-certified food items. Additionally, teachers explain to the students the nature of the food they are about to consume, emphasizing its halal and healthy attributes. However, it is important to note the limited involvement of parents in these activities. Their support is crucial not only for ensuring the nutritional quality but also the halal status of the supplementary food provided.

Keywords *Halal, Food, Implementation of Halal, Provision of Supplementary Food, Early Childhood Education, Indonesia*

INTRODUCTION

At the current global level, halal food is considered an alternative in ensuring food safety, cleanliness, and quality. This concern is not limited to Muslim consumers alone; even non-Muslim consumers have come to accept the requirements of halal (Handayani, 2003). While there may be differences in perspectives between Muslim and non-Muslim consumers regarding what constitutes halal food, for a Muslim consumer, it signifies adherence to Islamic Sharia standards. Non-Muslim consumers, on the other hand, view halal food, beverages, and products as symbols of cleanliness, quality, and safety due to their production under a comprehensive Halal Quality Management System (Adinugraha & Sartika, 2019).

In Indonesia, the Halal Quality Management System, particularly concerning halal food, is guaranteed by the state through Constitution Law No. 33 of 2014 (Simanjuntak & Nasiha, 2019). This reflects Indonesia's status as one of the countries with the largest Muslim population globally. Furthermore, discussions on halal and haram are also embedded in the Ministry of Religious Affairs

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Nerissa G. Dela Viña. (2023)

Corresponding author's email: fitriabudiutami.2005@gmail.com

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regulations on the Madrasah Curriculum of 2013 ([Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2013](#)). According to research by [Wahyudin et al. \(2018\)](#), the habits of Muslims in adhering to halal and haram practices are introduced and discussed as part of curriculum development in schools.

Various methods are employed for introducing halal food to early childhood learners, as demonstrated by [Widada et al. \(2021\)](#), who used a "Pop-Up Book" in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Additionally, research by [Heppy and Hasbi \(2022\)](#) introduced the concept of halal in the holistic, integrative development of early childhood in Balikpapan city. In contrast to previous research, which introduced the concept of halal and haram in early childhood using holistic, integrative learning and development media for early childhood education, this research looks at how halal and haram are implemented at an early age through providing additional food at school. Some of the research above is related to the provision of early childhood education services.

Several studies mentioned above are related to providing early childhood education services. The provision of early childhood education services needs to consider every aspect of growth and development. Educators in early childhood education institutions should address stimulation for physical-motor skills, language, cognitive abilities, social-emotional development, religious and moral values, arts, and all aspects related to the character of early childhood. Furthermore, these institutions must also pay attention to and provide health services to create healthy, intelligent, and cheerful Indonesian early childhood. According to the Republic of Indonesia Law Number 23 of 1992, Article 45 on Health ([Wati, 2020](#)) states that School Health is organized to improve the healthy living abilities of students in a healthy environment, allowing them to learn, grow, and develop harmoniously and optimally to become high-quality human resources.

One implementation of health services is the provision of supplementary food programs for students. This is in accordance with the Regulation of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia Number 66 of 2014 as a form of nutrition counselling to fulfil the necessity of students' energy during school hours. During mealtime activities, teachers can exemplify attitudes of gratitude, patience, and honesty, for instance, by finishing the provided food as an expression of gratitude and responsibility. Additionally, teachers can demonstrate patience while queuing for handwashing and food retrieval and a willingness to share blessings, ensuring that the food is halal, as indicated by introducing the correct halal logo ([Mutiawati et al., 2019](#)).

Considering the concerns, the researchers aim to explore how kindergarten teachers implement halal practices by providing supplementary food activities in kindergarten schools in Tangerang, Indonesia. This research aims to describe the implementation of halal and healthy supplementary food activities in kindergarten and outline the roles of class teachers and school principals in the planning and execution of halal and healthy supplementary food provision in kindergarten.

In addition, this research emphasizes the important role of teachers and school principals in ensuring the successful planning and implementation of halal and healthy supplementary feeding activities in kindergartens. This investigation not only aims to explain the practical aspects of implementing halal practices but also to contribute valuable insights for educators and policymakers seeking to create an inclusive and culturally sensitive educational environment in Tangerang, Indonesia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Halal Implementation

Parents/caregivers/teachers need to understand the concept of consuming halal and thoyyib (good, clean, nutritious, and safe) food. In the Quran, Surah Al-Baqarah: 168, Surah Al-Maidah: 88, and others emphasize that Allah commands His people to consume food that is halal and thoyyib,

servicing as evidence of human piety towards Allah SWT. Therefore, knowledge about halal, healthy, and nutritious food needs to be instilled in children from an early age through the role of parents/teachers (Puspa et al., 2022).

Furthermore, Halal encompasses everything permissible for consumption (such as food and beverages) or possession and use (such as usable objects). This includes the halal nature of substances in food, the halal processing of food (such as the method of slaughter and cooking process), and the halal way of obtaining it (Subekhi & Oktavia, 2021).

A comprehensive understanding of the halal concept in food and beverages reflects goodness (thoyyib) in every aspect, such as health, cleanliness, hygiene, and moral correctness. This awareness can lead individuals to be environmentally conscious and caring towards Allah's creations. The implication is that halal awareness can motivate individuals to have a sense of morality in everything they do (Adinugraha & Sartika, 2019).

Moreover, the conventional concept of halal is often limited to food or anything related. However, in Islam, Halal extends to broader aspects of life, such as business and the banking industry. Muslims and non-Muslims worldwide are becoming more receptive to halal issues. For Muslims, Halal is a prerequisite for everything, the methods and processes applied and consumed in daily life. In Muslim-majority countries, the concept of Halal should not only be limited to Muslims but should be extended to become a legal requirement of the state (Zakaria et al., 2018).

Based on the above opinions, it can be concluded that halal is a concept regulated in Islam through the Quran, and its meaning goes beyond just permissible and impermissible food and beverages in Islamic consumption.

Implementation is the application or operationalization of an activity to achieve a specific goal or target (Tarbiyah & Tadris, 2021). Therefore, the implementation of halal involves the application of activities to introduce and familiarize, particularly in this research, young children with consuming everything, especially food and beverages permitted in the teachings of Islam, to lead a healthy life. Halal food and beverages are good, clean, nutritious, and safe, processed with hygiene.

Provision of Supplementary Food in Kindergarten.

In the provision of supplementary food, it is crucial to align with the needs of children and adhere to the guidelines stipulated in the (Regulation of The Directorate General of Early Childhood Education and Community Education of The Ministry of Education and Culture, 2019). The provision of nutritious food serves as an intervention for cultivating a healthy lifestyle, thus promoting the implementation of holistic integrative Early Childhood Education (ECE) services within ECE units or non-formal education units offering ECE programs.

According to Zulaiha (2020), providing supplementary food for early childhood in ECE institutions enhances the quality of students' growth and development in ECE units or non-formal education units offering ECE programs. It aims to maintain students in a balanced nutritional condition, instil healthy food habits, behave according to rules and norms during meals, and increase parental and community involvement in preparing healthy food for early childhood.

The criteria for food in the provision of supplementary food for kindergarten children, as outlined by Utami (2020), including ensuring that food portions are not excessively large, the food is not overly dry (sufficiently moist with broth for easy swallowing), food pieces are small enough to fit into the child's mouth and easy to chew, devoid of thorns or small bones, and mildly seasoned, not excessively spicy, sour, or strongly flavoured. The food should be clean, orderly, visually appealing in colour and shape, diverse in ingredients and types of dishes to prevent monotony, utilizing utensils appropriate for kindergarten children that are safe, easily cleaned, and stored efficiently.

Based on the statements above, the provision of supplementary food for kindergarten children

essentially aims to educate early childhood about various aspects. This includes ensuring their nutritional needs are met by providing healthy foods that align with the benefits associated with the concept of halal food in Islam (Edison & Lestari, 2020), as well as teaching etiquette and norms during meals in accordance with Islamic teachings.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a qualitative descriptive research approach, aiming to comprehensively, extensively, and in-depth explore and depict the social situation under investigation. The researchers gather the data aligned with the research problem formulation, which includes 1) describing the implementation of providing supplementary food in kindergartens that is halal and healthy and 2) describing the roles of the classroom teachers in the planning and execution of halal and healthy supplementary food provision in kindergartens and the and school principals in the planning and evaluation. The primary sources for this research were three kindergarten schools in Tangerang, Indonesia (Bina Tsabita Kindergarten, Al Khairiyah Kindergarten, and Teratai Kindergarten) utilizing secondary data sources obtained from a critical theory perspective for analysis.

Drawing on the critical theory perspective, particularly from Mac Naughton's viewpoint, as articulated in Lestari and Utami (2023), we can depict social constructivism concerning differences and identity as the foundation of knowledge to comprehend subjectivity and other elements within the environment. Data collection in this research involved in-depth interviews, direct observation, and document analysis. In-depth interviews were conducted with three class teachers in group b from three schools, and direct observations were carried out to see the process of this activity. After gathering the data, the researcher analyzed it in a narrative form, utilizing the Miles and Huberman Data Analysis Model. Analyzing data in a narrative form holds richer meaning than mere statistical figures (Peking et al., 2020).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the findings, the implementation of halal practices in providing supplementary food in three kindergarten schools in Tangerang Regency has been carried out. According to the interviews conducted by Teacher TZ from Bina Tsabita Kindergarten, the introduction of halal and haram concepts occurs during communal eating activities, where information about halal food and beverages is shared,

"Providing information about halal food and beverages during communal eating activities in the classroom." - Teacher TZ

Similarly, Teacher DY from Teratai Kindergarten follows a similar approach,

"The concept of halal can be introduced directly through storytelling/literacy approaches during communal eating habits." - Teacher DY

Teacher DY employs a direct approach during communal eating habits and through storytelling. The same practice is observed in Teacher ANZ's school, Al Khairiyah Kindergarten, where communication during communal meals is used to introduce and familiarize children with halal food.

Implementing halal practices in providing supplementary food in kindergartens begins with planning by teachers and school principals. This planning incorporates discussions about halal into the school curriculum. The interview results indicate that, in Teratai Kindergarten, Teacher DY

explains,

"Incorporating themes about wholesome and halal food into the institution's curriculum." – Teacher DY

By integrating it into the curriculum, it becomes easier to educate kindergarten children. Additionally, teachers and school principals create a menu list for this supplementary food, aligning with the halal food standards in Islam. However, during this planning phase, parents and nutrition experts are not involved. The concept of halal food and beverages encompasses: being halal in substance, halal in processing, and halal in acquisition (Tsani et al., 2021).

Being halal in substance is ensured by teachers and school principals when creating menus and purchasing food items permitted by religious standards. For instance, when buying chicken and beef, they ensure it is labelled halal in the store. According to interview results, when cooking, they ensure everything is clean, hands are washed before processing, and the ingredients are obtained through halal means. Teachers and school principals use funds allocated by the school for this purpose. This is related to the varied implementation of supplementary food provision in each school.

In providing supplementary food, each kindergarten varies in its approach. In Al Khairiyah Kindergarten, the provision of nutritious meals occurs once a week, while in Bina Tsabita and Teratai Kindergartens, it is done once a month in the first week. This difference is related to the different capabilities of each school in its implementation. The implementation of school meals falls into different categories, including non-commercial (parents fund or subsidize, and the school seeks no profit), semi-commercial (minimal profit to cover specific needs), and social, which does not charge fees to parents (Ningsih, 2020).

Furthermore, the implementation of providing supplementary food starts with nutritional education. Nutritional education for students about various halal and haram foods is linked to the ongoing learning theme. According to an interview with Teacher ARN from Al Khairiyah Kindergarten, "Usually, the concept of halal is incorporated into themes like my favourite foods and my needs." Similar statements were made by Teacher TZ from Bina Tsabita Kindergarten,

"Usually combined with a suitable theme, such as my favourite foods, healthy and unhealthy foods." – Teacher TZ

Learning themes serve as tools for introducing a concept holistically to young children. This aligns with the perspective of (Maryatun, 2017). Themes are used in early childhood education to build children's knowledge and develop all aspects of their development. In this case, teachers correctly integrate the introduction of the halal concept into the learning themes in the classroom.

Moreover, teachers use tangible media in their introduction. As done by Teacher ARN when introducing healthy and unhealthy foods, bringing tangible media into the classroom. Concrete media in early childhood education is crucial, consistent with the views of Irawan (2021), stating that learning media enhances the effectiveness of message delivery and lesson content. Teacher DY also introduces the halal concept directly using storybooks. Through storybooks, children are given the opportunity to engage in real-life situations in a non-threatening way, as suggested by Utami et al. (2022).

The storytelling method for introducing halal food was also implemented by Puspa et al. (2022), using a Sticker Storybook for Early Childhood Education on Halal, Thoyyib, and Nutritious Consumption according to the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. The results showed that the majority of students answered correctly (77%) regarding understanding halal and thoyyib foods through the sticker application activity. Meanwhile, according to the Prophet Muhammad's

recommendations, the evaluation of understanding related to proper eating etiquette showed that half of the students (50%) correctly filled in the game by placing checkmarks and crosses.

This nutritional education is also part of the teacher's role in implementing halal practices in providing supplementary food at school. Early childhood educators play a crucial role as the main activity for the child's personality development, ensuring that children can achieve success (Ulfah & Yani, 2017). For young children, the teacher's role is essential as a role model in actions because a teacher's role comprises a set of good behaviours aimed at optimizing children's skills, talents, interests, and potential to become individuals with good character and achievements (Wardani et al., 2021).

In addition to providing nutritional education, teachers and school principals also conduct awareness campaigns for parents. During these campaigns, parents receive a menu schedule and form a committee for providing supplementary food at school. This occurs at the beginning of the academic year and serves as a platform for health education for children and the importance of providing halal, healthy, and balanced nutrition to young children. As mentioned in the guidelines for the development of the health of kindergarten students (Regulation of The Minister of Health of The Republic of Indonesia, 2014), which states that schools should collaborate in providing health education and nutrition to children and parents in kindergarten. According to an interview with Teacher ARN from Al Khairiyah Kindergarten, parents are invited to these awareness campaigns, and nutrition experts are also brought in,

"Yes, we use external experts, competent nutritionists, to explain about halal and haram foods and their negative impacts." – Teacher ARN

This demonstrates the teacher's role in implementing halal practices.

In practice, the activities begin with children washing their hands and praying before meals. Educators ask children to take their packed lunches brought from home by their parents. Educators assist in opening the children's lunch boxes in the classroom. When educators find a child bringing unhealthy or non-nutritious snacks, they explain to the child not to eat them and to bring a healthier lunch the next time, explaining the unhealthy contents listed on the packaging. Educators also distribute only a small portion to students and ask others to share their food with their peers. They then remind the parents when they pick up their child or through communication books. When educators find a child bringing and finishing a lunch with rice, vegetables, and fruit, they reward the child with praise or a sticker and ask them to place the sticker in a designated spot in the classroom.

Cooked food can be distributed to children by portioning it into plates, either prepared in the kitchen and brought to the classroom or brought to the classroom in the serving container and portioned there. Children may also take their food from containers in the classroom. The 5-6-year-old age group is ideal for instilling and reinforcing the idea of responsibility for oneself, as stated in Government Regulation No. 137 of 2014 concerning the standard level of achievement of the social-emotional development of 5-6-year-old children, which emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself and the ability to follow class rules, self-regulate, and be accountable for one's behaviour for one's well-being.

Through communal eating activities, educators can not only encourage and educate children about healthy eating but also teach them to take the food they need responsibly and manage themselves in terms of their dietary needs.

Before educators distribute the prepared food in the classroom, they explain the menu for the day, the nutrition it contains, and why our bodies need it. Educators sometimes demonstrate how to eat it, especially when the menu involves vegetables. This aligns with the Health and Nutrition

Book ([Regulation of The Minister of Health of The Republic of Indonesia, 2014](#)), which recommends training children to eat fruits and vegetables. Teachers eat with the children and provide examples to show that healthy food is enjoyable.

This activity is supervised directly by the school principal. The school principal also does not forget to carry out assessments as a form of evaluation in the implementation of this activity, such as the menu itself, financing, food preferences, and so on. Assessments are written and discussed by the principal and teachers.

The novelty of this research lies in using supplementary feeding activities to implement halal practices in Early Childhood Education. This differs from previous studies focusing on promoting healthy eating habits in kindergartens. For instance, [Efendi et al. \(2022\)](#) study concentrated on preventing stunting by providing traditional foods as supplementary feeding. Supported by the research conducted by [Hidajat \(2019\)](#) at Tunas Mulya Early Childhood Education, this study aims to prevent stunting among children. Furthermore, if teachers introduced halal using media only in previous studies, in this study, researchers looked at the efforts made by teachers in introducing halal directly to the habit of providing additional food in kindergarten schools. Researchers observe and document how teachers actively weave Halal practices into the daily routines of providing additional food. This includes the selection of Halal snacks, mealtime discussions, and the incorporation of cultural sensitivity in the overall food-related activities within the kindergarten setting.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of this research, it can be concluded that teachers and school principals, starting from the planning stage, genuinely pay attention to obtaining food sources in a halal manner. This includes production methods adhering to halal practices, and even the use of eating utensils is carefully considered to ensure they are clean and washed properly, preserving their halal status. Additionally, before providing supplementary food, teachers explain to the children in the classroom (nutritional education) what they will be eating, emphasizing that it is halal and healthy. This is done through communal eating habits and storytelling methods. The variety of media used ranges from concrete materials to storybooks.

The principal engages in hands-on assessment initiatives, directly evaluating the execution of activities and facilitating discussions on encountered challenges during the implementation process. However, a limitation of this study is the minimal involvement of parents in the provision of supplementary food activities, which not only prioritize health but also halal practices in their planning. While nutrition experts are engaged in nutritional education, they are not involved in preparing menus for the provision of healthy and halal food in the three kindergartens selected as research sites. Nevertheless, in broad strokes, the implementation of halal practices can be achieved through supplementary food activities in kindergartens.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

The implementation of Halal practices in providing supplementary food in kindergartens in Tangerang, Indonesia, may face various limitations. Additionally, there are potential areas for further research to enhance understanding and improve the effectiveness of such implementations. Here are some limitations and suggestions for further research:

Limitations

Implementing Halal practices in providing supplementary food for kindergartens in Tangerang, Indonesia, faces multifaceted challenges. Diverse cultural backgrounds characterize the city's population, and a standardized, one-size-fits-all approach may fall short in addressing the

unique needs of each cultural group. The supply chain introduces complexities, particularly in achieving comprehensive Halal certification and maintaining traceability, potentially leading to gaps in ensuring the purity of ingredients and production processes. Affordability emerges as a concern, with Halal-certified products often being more expensive, posing a potential barrier to the accessibility of supplementary food, especially for kindergartens with limited financial resources. Moreover, a lack of awareness among parents, caregivers, and staff about the significance of Halal practices in supplementary food calls for the implementation of educational programs. Given the dynamic nature of these evolving regulations, navigating stringent local and international regulatory standards adds another layer of difficulty. To address these challenges, a nuanced and culturally sensitive approach is crucial, incorporating educational initiatives and strategic solutions to enhance regulatory compliance and affordability, ultimately ensuring the successful integration of Halal practices in kindergarten supplementary food provision in Tangerang, Indonesia.

Further Research

In advancing the implementation of Halal practices in providing supplementary food for kindergartens in Tangerang, Indonesia, comprehensive research and strategic initiatives are imperative. Exploring consumer behaviour is crucial, delving into the preferences of parents and caregivers concerning Halal supplementary food, encompassing factors such as taste preferences, brand loyalty, and perceptions of Halal certification. A thorough economic impact assessment through a cost-benefit analysis is essential to understand the financial implications of incorporating Halal practices in kindergarten food provision. Additionally, enhancing supply chain management by improving traceability ensures the genuineness of Halal ingredients throughout the production and distribution process. Community engagement, involving partnerships with local Halal certification bodies, religious leaders, and community organizations, plays a pivotal role in promoting and sustaining Halal practices. Evaluating existing policies and proposing improvements to support implementation is vital, as is assessing the effectiveness of educational programs to raise awareness among parents, caregivers, and kindergarten staff. Exploring culturally inclusive Halal practices that accommodate Tangerang's diverse cultural backgrounds is essential, as is conducting research on the long-term sustainability of implementing Halal practices, addressing potential challenges and developing strategies for overcoming them. By addressing these facets through thorough research and strategic planning, the successful integration of Halal practices in kindergarten supplementary food provision can be significantly enhanced.

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