

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SIHALAL APPLICATION IN THE MINISTRY OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS OF BANDUNG CITY AS AN INNOVATION IN RELIGIOUS PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY

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ABSTRACT

The digitalization of halal certification has become increasingly important in strengthening the quality, accessibility, and responsiveness of religious public services in Indonesia. This study aims to analyze the implementation of SIHALAL at the Bandung City Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs as an innovation in religious public service delivery. The study is grounded in perspectives on digital public service innovation, institutional capacity, and service implementation, which emphasize that technological systems generate public value only when supported by effective organizational practices. This research employs a qualitative approach with a case study design and relies on document analysis and relevant secondary data published up to 2023. The findings show that SIHALAL has functioned not merely as an administrative platform but as a service infrastructure integrating registration, verification, assistance, and certification processes. Its innovative value lies in improving access, procedural clarity, and service efficiency, although its effectiveness remains shaped by institutional capacity, coordination, and users' procedural readiness.

Keywords: SIHALAL; Religious Public Service; Halal Certification

INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation has encouraged public organizations to redesign services in ways that are faster, more measurable, and more responsive to user needs (Bertot et al., 2016). Digital public services are also widely regarded as a means of strengthening transparency and accountability, as service processes, information, and outputs can be traced more openly through electronic systems (Bertot et al., 2010). In the Indonesian context, halal certification has become part of the state's obligation to provide legal certainty regarding product halalness through the Halal Product Assurance regime as regulated by Law Number 33 of 2014 and Government Regulation Number 39 of 2021 (Badan Pemeriksa Keuangan, 2021; Badan Pemeriksa Keuangan, 2014). In response, the Halal Product Assurance Organizing Agency (BPJPH) has structured this service process through SIHALAL and issued service manuals for both the regular and self-declare schemes as the operational basis for digitally based halal certification applications (Badan Penyelenggara Jaminan Produk Halal, 2023). This development indicates that the digitalization of halal certification cannot be understood merely as a technical shift, but rather as a transformation in service governance that requires institutional readiness at the implementing level (Santoso & Rachman, 2023).

The push for the implementation of digital halal services intensified in 2023 when the government reopened the quota for one million free halal certifications through the SEHATI program for micro and small enterprises throughout the year (Sekretariat Kabinet Republik Indonesia, 2023). BPJPH further emphasized that the integration of the certification process with SIHALAL enables halal certificates to be issued digitally immediately after the Fatwa Committee

determines the halal status of a product, thereby shortening service time (Badan Penyelenggara Jaminan Produk Halal, 2023). In West Java, the acceleration of halal certification initiated on 7 June 2023 placed the province in first position, with 382,385 halal certificate registrations recorded by December 2023 (Kementrian Agama Provinsi Jawa Barat, 2023). Bandung City also became part of this implementation landscape, as the mandatory halal certification campaign launched on 18 March 2023 included two activity points in Bandung and directly involved the Head of the Bandung City Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and its staff (Kementrian Agama Provinsi Jawa Barat, 2023a). These facts suggest that halal certification in Bandung has moved beyond the national policy level into the domain of local service delivery, making it necessary to focus the discussion on the practical implementation of SIHALAL at the local service office level (Kementrian Agama Provinsi Jawa Barat, 2023a; 2023b).

The Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Bandung City is therefore confronted with the challenge of translating a digital system into services that are genuinely accessible, understandable, and efficient for business actors. The increasing halal certification agenda has added pressure in terms of coordination, document verification, assistance, and service communication, while users' capacity to operate SIHALAL remains uneven. Under these circumstances, the existence of an application does not automatically guarantee smooth service delivery, particularly when the office has not fully succeeded in simplifying procedures, clarifying requirements, and maintaining service responsiveness. The main problem of this study lies in examining the extent to which the implementation of SIHALAL at the Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Bandung City functions as an innovation in religious public service delivery rather than merely as a digital administrative instrument. On this basis, the analysis should focus on service implementation, the benefits generated, and the obstacles that emerge in day-to-day service practices.

Sekarwati & Hidayah (2022) argue that assistance and socialization in the registration of halal certification through the SIHALAL application significantly improve MSMEs' understanding of both the benefits of halal certification and its procedural requirements in Purworejo Regency. Similarly, Rosyanti (2023) finds that the digital implementation of SIHALAL among micro and small enterprises in Cipayung District, East Jakarta, has performed reasonably well in terms of support, capacity, and value. Nonetheless, challenges persist, particularly in relation to limited outreach, user comprehension, human resource constraints, unstable internet connectivity, and system disruptions during maintenance. In another study, Rasyidah (2024) demonstrates that the acceptance of SIHALAL among MSMEs in South Tangerang is strongly influenced by perceived ease of use, while the most significant obstacles arise during data input and document submission stages. Taken together, these findings suggest that the effectiveness of SIHALAL is not solely determined by the existence of the application itself, but also by the quality of assistance, user readiness, and institutional support. This pattern opens an analytical space to examine SIHALAL from the perspective of the service-providing institution.

This article shares common ground with previous studies in positioning SIHALAL as a crucial instrument in the halal certification process. Such alignment is reflected in the emphasis on procedural clarity, system usability, and the role of assistance in ensuring service effectiveness. However, it departs from prior research in terms of context, unit of analysis, and analytical focus. Rather than centering on application users or community-level assistance, this study directs its attention to the Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Bandung City as the service-providing institution. This distinction situates the article within the domain of institutional implementation of SIHALAL in the context of religious public service delivery.

The originality of this study lies in addressing three interrelated research gaps. First, a

contextual gap exists, as SIHALAL has not been specifically examined within the Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Bandung City as a locus of religious public service. Second, a unit-of-analysis gap is evident, given that prior studies predominantly focus on service users, business actors, or facilitators, whereas this study places the implementing institution at the center of analysis. Third, a practical implementation gap emerges, as this study goes beyond examining application usage to explore how SIHALAL is operationalized within service workflows, how services are organizationally managed, and what constraints arise in institutional practice. On this basis, the study offers a novel perspective by interpreting SIHALAL as an innovation in religious public service delivery through an institutional implementation lens.

The urgency of this research is grounded in the large-scale acceleration of halal certification in 2023, which imposed significant demands on service readiness at the regional level. The government reopened the quota for one million free halal certificates in 2023 and delivered these services through a digital mechanism accessible to business actors. West Java ranked first in this acceleration effort, achieving 382,385 registrations by December 2023 following the program's launch on 7 June 2023. Bandung City was directly involved in this agenda, as the mandatory halal certification campaign on 18 March 2023 included two activity points in the city and engaged the Head of the Bandung City Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs along with its administrative apparatus. These conditions underscore the importance of examining the implementation of SIHALAL at the Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Bandung City to assess whether digitalization genuinely functions as an innovation in religious public service delivery. Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the implementation of SIHALAL at the Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Bandung City by examining service delivery processes, service benefits, and the constraints encountered during implementation.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design to examine the implementation of SIHALAL at the Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Bandung City as an innovation in religious public service delivery. This design was selected because the study seeks to develop an in-depth understanding of how SIHALAL is implemented within a particular institutional context, how service processes are shaped in organizational practice, and how the benefits and constraints of implementation emerge in an actual service setting (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Yin, 2018). The research focus is not directed toward testing relationships among variables, but rather toward interpreting the processes, meanings, and dynamics of digitally based service implementation within a religious public institution. The study draws on documents and relevant secondary data, including regulations on halal product assurance, official publications of BPJPH, official publications of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, institutional documents related to halal certification, and other sources consistent with the research focus in Bandung City, with data limited to the year 2023. Data sources were selected purposively based on their alignment with the study focus, the authority of the issuing institution, the completeness of information, the consistency of substance, and their relevance in explaining the implementation of SIHALAL at the organizational service level. The data were then analyzed using a descriptive thematic approach through stages of document review, coding of key information, grouping findings into substantive themes, and interpreting patterns of implementation, service benefits, and institutional constraints, while maintaining the principles of rigor, credibility, and coherence in qualitative analysis (Nowell et al., 2017; Tracy, 2010).



RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of SIHALAL in Service Practices at the Bandung City Ministry of Religious Affairs Office

Document analysis at the research locus reveals that the implementation of halal certification services at the Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Bandung City in 2023 had been embedded within a concrete institutional agenda, particularly through the mandatory halal campaign and the strengthening of cross-institutional collaboration across Bandung City. Official municipal documents indicate that the technical components of service delivery encompassed SIHALAL account creation, the preparation of programmatic support, and reporting mechanisms to BPJPH as part of an integrated service governance framework. In parallel, BPJPH documentation confirms that halal certification applications were processed through official digital channels, namely the Ministry of Religious Affairs' PUSAKA application and the ptsp.halal.go.id portal, thereby standardizing initial access to the service through an electronic system. This system is directly integrated with the halal determination process, enabling certificates to be issued digitally and accessed immediately through users' SIHALAL accounts. Institutional data from West Java further positions Bandung City among the highest-performing regions in halal certification achievement in 2023, while emphasizing the continued acceleration of certification through KUA offices and religious extension officers. Taken together, these findings suggest that service implementation operates through an interplay between structured digital workflows and the active involvement of organizational actors.

These findings indicate that the role of SIHALAL at the Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Bandung City has evolved beyond that of a purely administrative application. SIHALAL functions as an integrated service entry point that connects registration, verification, facilitation, and certificate issuance within a single, continuous process chain. Such an arrangement redefines the role of the service office from a passive policy implementer into an active service manager responsible for ensuring that the digital system can be effectively utilized by business actors in practice. The involvement of KUA offices, religious extension officers, and halal process facilitators further demonstrates that service effectiveness is not determined by the technological platform alone, but by the organization's capacity to translate system design into tangible, user-oriented support. This condition highlights that the implementation of SIHALAL should be understood through the dynamic interaction between system architecture and the capabilities of institutional actors who sustain everyday service delivery.

These findings resonate with prior studies that emphasize the importance of organizational and user support in digital service implementation. Sekarwati & Hidayah (2022) show that SIHALAL becomes more effective when registration processes are accompanied by direct outreach and assistance, as key barriers often stem from limited procedural understanding and perceptions of complexity. Pohan et al. (2024) argue that evaluating SIHALAL solely as a technical platform is insufficient, as the quality of its use is shaped by regulatory clarity, access to consultation, and infrastructural constraints such as network reliability. Kasanah & Andari (2024) further demonstrate that the success of halal services at the KUA level depends on flexible business processes, strengthened roles of halal facilitators, and inter-actor collaboration, suggesting that service innovation emerges from how implementation is organized rather than from technology itself. From a broader theoretical perspective, Bertot, Estevez, and Janowski (2016) conceptualize digital public service innovation as a process that requires adequate infrastructure, accessibility, and contextual alignment to generate meaningful value for both users and implementing institutions. Similarly, Edelmann & Virkar (2023) highlight that e-government innovation evolves incrementally and is strongly contingent upon how public



organizations manage service delivery, administrative processes, and implementation goals within their institutional practices.

In the context of Bandung City, this configuration demonstrates that the implementation of SIHALAL operates through the integration of digital channels, administrative work, and organizational facilitation. Online registration constitutes only the initial stage, while service success depends on the office's ability to transform digital procedures into processes that applicants can understand, follow, and complete. The organization's initial capacity is reflected in its ability to build cross-actor coordination, maintain clarity in workflow, and connect the national system with service needs at the city level. This pattern of implementation positions SIHALAL as a governance instrument that structures the relationship among applicants, service officers, facilitators, and certification authorities within a single service ecosystem. Such a service structure opens further analytical space to assess whether the presence of SIHALAL genuinely generates added value in religious public service delivery for the community and business actors.

The fact that SIHALAL has been integrated into service practice indicates that the central issue no longer concerns whether a digital system exists at the Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Bandung City. The more decisive question lies in the quality of service produced once the system is embedded in organizational workflows. Ease of access, processing speed, procedural clarity, and service responsiveness become more relevant indicators for assessing the innovative value of SIHALAL. These indicators are crucial because digitalization acquires service meaning only when the public experiences tangible improvements in managing halal certification. This framework therefore directs the analysis toward evaluating the benefits of SIHALAL as an innovation in religious public service delivery.

SIHALAL as an Innovation in Religious Public Services

The Ministry of Religious Affairs of West Java Province records that halal certification services in Bandung City have been widely promoted with support from BPJPH programs and that the creation of a SIHALAL account has been positioned as the initial step in the service process. BPJPH (2023) explains that halal certification applications are submitted through the Ministry of Religious Affairs' PUSAKA application or the ptsp.halal.go.id portal as the official digital service channels. BPJPH (2023) further states that halal certificates can be issued and downloaded digitally once the halal determination has been completed within the integrated system. The Ministry of Religious Affairs of West Java Province also shows that the facilitation program in Bandung City has produced approximately 2,000 halal certificates since 2020 with the support of Halal Product Process Facilitators. It further notes that the Mandatory Halal Certification Campaign included two activity points in Bandung City and directly involved the Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Bandung City, indicating that the implementation of SIHALAL formed part of an organized service agenda.

These findings indicate that SIHALAL does not merely function as a data input medium, but also as an instrument that restructures service processes to become more concise, orderly, and easier to follow. The integration of digital channels with the support of service actors has shifted halal certification from a fragmented administrative pattern toward a more coordinated service model. The innovative value of SIHALAL emerges when the system is able to shorten the distance between applicants, facilitators, and the service-providing institution. The Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Bandung City holds a crucial position, as the benefits of the system can only be realized when digital procedures are translated into services that are accessible and understandable. This condition suggests that innovation in religious public service delivery lies in the quality of service transformation produced, and this argument needs to be reinforced

through comparison with findings from previous studies.

Bertot et al. (2016) argue that innovation in digital public services becomes meaningful when technology is able to transform the way services are delivered and create value that is relevant to both users and implementing institutions. Santoso & Rachman (2023) show that the digitalization of halal certification is needed to address the slow and inefficient manual processes that have characterized halal service governance in Indonesia. Sekarwati & Hidayah (2022) explain that the use of SIHALAL becomes more effective when business actors receive adequate outreach and assistance in understanding service procedures. Kasanah & Andari (2024) find that innovation in halal services at the KUA level develops through flexible business processes, the strengthening of facilitators' roles, and collaboration among service implementers. Edelmann & Virkar (2023) further demonstrate that sustainable digital public services require institutional capacity and organizational capability to connect system design with user experience.

The pattern observed in Bandung City suggests that the innovative value of SIHALAL emerges from a hybrid service model that combines system automation with organizational intervention. This model highlights an important finding: service success is determined less by the sophistication of the application itself than by the institution's ability to bridge digital procedures with the diverse capacities of users. In this context, SIHALAL functions as a service architecture that integrates initial access, verification, facilitation, and service output into a more structured workflow. These findings indicate that innovation in religious public service delivery at the level of the city office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs arises when a national platform is translated into a local service experience that is easier, more predictable, and more manageable for users. Accordingly, service success cannot be assessed merely by the existence of the application, but rather by the extent to which the system and the organization jointly produce tangible benefits.

This innovative value, however, does not operate automatically across all stages of service delivery. The effectiveness of digital services consistently depends on system stability, implementers' readiness, document completeness, and users' ability to navigate the available procedures. The gap between a standardized digital service design and actual service practices involving direct interaction with the public may still generate variations in users' service experiences. Such variation shapes whether SIHALAL is perceived as a facilitative instrument or, conversely, as an additional administrative burden for applicants. Under these conditions, implementation barriers become a decisive element in assessing the innovative capacity of the service in a more comprehensive manner.

Implementation Constraints and Implications of Service Strengthening

The Ministry of Religious Affairs of West Java Province indicates that the implementation burden of halal certification in 2023 was exceptionally high, as annual targets were allocated across regencies and cities within a tightly structured acceleration framework. It further notes that the certification process had to be driven through KUA offices and religious extension officers, while being directly supervised by the heads of local offices to ensure target achievement. The Ministry of Religious Affairs of Bandung City likewise shows that program implementation at the city level still required a series of technically demanding steps, ranging from SIHALAL account creation and reporting to BPJPH to the arrangement of financial support for facilitation. The same source also indicates that the achievement of approximately 2,000 halal certificates since 2020 continued to depend on the assistance of Halal Product Process Facilitators (P3H) and the support of other institutions in order to meet the target of 880 MSMEs. BPJPH confirms that initial access to halal certification is available only through official digital channels, namely the

Ministry of Religious Affairs' PUSAKA application and the ptsp.halal.go.id portal, meaning that obstacles related to account creation, document submission, and system navigation directly affect service continuity.

These findings suggest that the implementation barriers of SIHALAL in Bandung City do not appear as isolated technical disruptions, but rather constitute a layered workload within the service organization. Account creation, document completeness, and administrative reporting create vulnerable points at the initial stage that determine whether an application can proceed to subsequent phases. Dependence on P3H, KUA offices, and other institutional support mechanisms indicates that the digital system has not yet been able to operate fully on its own without operational translation by implementing actors. Target pressure further increases the risk that service orientation may shift from solving users' problems to merely fulfilling administrative outputs when organizational capacity does not expand at the same pace. Under these conditions, the barriers to SIHALAL implementation should be understood primarily as issues of institutional capacity rather than as mere problems of application usage.

This interpretation is consistent with broader studies on digital transformation and halal service implementation. Syed et al. (2023) show that barriers to public sector digital transformation in developing countries generally arise from a combination of limited organizational capacity, resistance to change, and misalignment in institutional processes. Goh & Arenas (2020) argue that technology produces public value only when organizations possess the capability to manage service trade-offs, align institutional goals, and build the capacities required to sustain digital processes. Yuanitasari et al. (2023) find that halal certification implementation remains constrained by low income, limited information technology literacy, insufficient legal documentation, and inadequate production facilities among micro and small enterprises. Sekarwati & Hidayah (2022) further show that the use of SIHALAL becomes more problematic when business actors do not yet understand the importance of halal certification and the procedures for registration, making facilitation and outreach inseparable from the service itself. Kasanah & Andari (2024) likewise demonstrate that halal services at the KUA level function effectively only when organizations build process flexibility, strengthen the role of facilitators, and activate collaboration across implementing actors.

The configuration observed in Bandung City reveals that the implementation barriers of SIHALAL generate three interrelated layers of operational friction. The first layer emerges at the service entry point, where applicants are required to prepare accounts, basic documentation, and procedural understanding before the verification process can proceed. The second layer arises during service translation, when officers and facilitators must convert formal digital requirements into practical guidance that can be understood by business actors. The third layer appears at the governance level, where quota targets, reporting obligations, and the need for cross-institutional coordination operate simultaneously within the constraints of limited organizational capacity. This three-layered pattern explains why SIHALAL may appear efficient at the level of system design, yet still produce variation in service experiences at the organizational level.

Overall, the findings indicate that the implementation of SIHALAL at the Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Bandung City operates as a hybrid service model that integrates digital channels, facilitation, and institutional coordination within a single service chain. The innovative value of SIHALAL is reflected in the simplification of initial access, the integration of processes, and the acceleration of service outputs. However, these benefits remain contingent upon the organization's ability to maintain process stability at critical points of implementation. Service performance in this study is primarily determined by the institution's capacity to manage

the translation of digital procedures, sustain facilitation support, and align administrative targets with users' needs in practice. This position suggests that service success should not be measured by the mere existence of an application, but by the consistency of front-office and back-office arrangements that sustain the entire halal certification process. SIHALAL in Bandung City is therefore more appropriately understood as a service infrastructure whose effectiveness depends on institutional capacity to reduce operational friction at each stage of service delivery.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the implementation of SIHALAL at the Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Bandung City functions as an innovation in religious public service delivery, as it is not merely utilized as an administrative application but has been operationalized as a service infrastructure that connects initial access, verification, facilitation, and halal certification output within a more integrated workflow. The findings indicate that the innovative value of SIHALAL lies in its capacity to simplify processes, clarify procedures, and accelerate service delivery; however, its effectiveness remains strongly contingent upon the organization's ability to translate the digital system into service practices that are responsive, coordinated, and accessible to users. The research objective to analyze service implementation, service benefits, and implementation constraints has been achieved by demonstrating that the benefits of SIHALAL emerge from a hybrid service model combining digital systems with the support of implementing actors, while its primary constraints are rooted in operational frictions related to account creation, document preparation, facilitation, and institutional coordination. The main contribution of this study lies in its analytical perspective, which positions the Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Bandung City as the service-providing institution, thereby interpreting SIHALAL from an institutional implementation standpoint rather than solely from the perspective of application users or program outcomes. Based on these findings, the Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Bandung City should strengthen the standardization of service workflows, enhance the integration between front-office and back-office functions, expand facilitation capacity, and improve technical assistance mechanisms at the initial application stage in order to systematically reduce operational friction. Future research should incorporate in-depth interviews, field observations, or mixed-methods designs to capture user experiences and organizational performance more comprehensively, while the limitation of this study its reliance on secondary data should be addressed through the inclusion of primary data and comparative analysis across regions. The policy implication underscores the need to strengthen the operational framework of SIHALAL through procedural simplification, improved support for implementing personnel, and the development of digital service designs that are more adaptive to users' capacities at the local level.

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