

# RECOVERY OF CREATIVE HALAL INDUSTRY BUSINESS AFTER COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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## ABSTRACT

This research identifies gaps in understanding halal business adaptation strategies amid the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in the MSME sector, focusing on case studies of Yotta and Browcyl in Makassar. This study aims to explore the development of the two products' halal businesses after the pandemic, the strategies they implemented, and the application of Sharia principles in their operations. The method used is field research with a qualitative descriptive approach through interviews and thematic analysis. The results showed that Yotta and Browcyl survived and thrived through digital transformation and halal certification despite facing significant challenges such as declining production and sales. However, this study has weaknesses in the generalizability of the findings and the lack of investigation of the long-term economic impact of the strategies adopted. For future development, it is recommended that the scope of the study be expanded by including more cases from different segments of the halal creative business industry and analyzing government policies that affect the industry. Future research is expected to provide comprehensive guidance for industry players to formulate effective strategies to face future challenges and capitalize on growth opportunities.

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## INTRODUCTION

The field of entrepreneurship is unique, and it will never be enough if it is only studied formally. In entrepreneurship, theory and practice are often very different, and that is something natural. Entrepreneurship takes its flexibility when working in the real business world (Eko Widiyanto, 2013). Islam places business as the best way to obtain wealth and

regulates the best ways of trading or doing business by leaving all harmful practices, such as fraud, usury, price engineering, hoarding goods, etc. These business rules are business ethics (Teguh Susanto, 2013).

Indonesia is the country with the largest Muslim population in the world. Based on a report by The Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Center (RISSC) or MABDA entitled The Muslim 500 2022 edition, there are 231.06

million Muslims in Indonesia. This number is equivalent to 86.7% of Indonesia's total population. With the largest Muslim population in the world, Indonesia has a vast market potential for the global halal industry. This year's report estimates that Muslims spent US\$2.02 billion in 2019 in the food, pharmaceutical, cosmetics, fashion, travel, and media/recreation sectors, all influenced by the need for ethical consumption inspired by Islamic teachings. (Waharini & Purwantini, 2018). The business potential of halal or Sharia products and services is enormous if the perception of halal products and services can be socialized as universal products with comparative advantages. This perspective will expand other halal food markets that attract non-Muslim markets to increase the market share of halal or Sharia products and services (Sofyan, 2011). However, the basic need for halal food for an Indonesian Muslim cannot be fully met (Fathoni, 2020). In this new era, the opportunity for the halal industry is huge because people tend to want hygienic and halal products (Evita Farcha Kamila, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a global impact on the sustainability of world industries, including the halal industry. The spread of this pandemic is of great concern to the Indonesian people because of the problems it continues to cause. Many of the losses caused by COVID-19 impact the Indonesian economy, which extends to various parts of the world. The impact on the Indonesian economy, in terms of trade, investment, and tourism, was devastated by this outbreak (Yenti Sumarni., 2020). The recovery of the halal industry after the COVID-19 pandemic is critical and requires strategic planning and implementation. Various studies provide insights into important aspects that can contribute to the revival and growth of this industry. One of the critical aspects highlighted

in the literature is the importance of branding and promotion strategies to emphasize the Halal and tayyib aspects of the product (Kasri et al., 2023). In addition, the development of human resources, halal knowledge, skills, and entrepreneurship is essential in accelerating economic recovery in the halal industry (Mulyani et al., 2022). The pandemic has also encouraged a shift to domestic production of Halal products to reduce dependence on imports (Prabakusuma et al., 2023).

Furthermore, a post-COVID-19 Islamic tourism business recovery strategy has been outlined, emphasizing ethical principles and Islamic values as fundamental drivers of sustainable restoration (Sudirman et al., 2023). The potential of halal tourism beyond 2020 was recognized, with a focus on conceptual development, opportunities, and implementation post-pandemic (Ekka, 2024).

Regarding the Halal industry, the importance of halal blockchain, supply chain implementation, and challenges faced by small and medium enterprises have been discussed (Ardiantono et al., 2024; Kurniawan et al., 2023). In addition, the impact of the pandemic on Brunei SMEs in the halal food processing industry highlights the need for further research to understand and address the practical implications of the pandemic (Haji Shahlehi et al., 2024). Studies also emphasize the role of certification bodies such as BPJPH in improving halal product quality and consumer confidence (Bahrudin et al., 2024). Traceability technology and logistics performance are essential for building Halal brand value (Fernando et al., 2022). In addition, post-COVID-19 adaptation and competitive resilience strategies are essential to optimize revenue potential and drive innovation in halal food SMEs (Grace Haque, 2024). In conclusion, a comprehensive recovery strategy for the halal

industry post-COVID-19 should include branding, human resource development, domestic production, ethical principles, certification, and innovation. By utilizing these insights and implementing strategic measures, the halal industry can overcome the challenges posed by this pandemic and become stronger in the post-pandemic era.

However, there is still a research gap in understanding the adaptation strategies of halal businesses amid the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in the MSME sector. Several studies have addressed branding, business ethics, and certification. However, few have explored the comprehensive integration of these strategies in a specific local context, such as Makassar City. The novelty of this research is the focus on the creative halal industry in Makassar, with case studies on Yotta and Browcyl products, which can survive and thrive amid the pandemic. This study aims to explore: first, the development of the halal business of Yotta and Browcyl products after the COVID-19 pandemic; second, the business strategies implemented by these two businesses after the pandemic; and third, the application of sharia principles in the operations of these two businesses. This study is expected to provide valuable insights for stakeholders and industry players in formulating effective strategies to advance the halal industry in the post-pandemic era.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Impact of the Pandemic on SMEs in the Halal Industry*

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed deep vulnerabilities in the Halal Creative Industries, particularly in the halal food processing sector. Studies show that Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) face significant challenges due to disruptions in global supply

chains and rapid changes in consumer behavior (Haji Shahlehi et al., 2024). Adaptation to unpredictable economic dynamics is crucial, but the need for compliance with halal certification standards also complicates the process (Pg Hj Idris, 2024). The government and certification bodies such as the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) play a central role in ensuring compliance with halal standards, but legal and regulatory challenges remain a barrier to overcome, especially for manufacturers of halal cosmetics (Othman et al., 2023)

The halal tourism sector has also been significantly impacted, with a sharp decline in tourists due to global travel restrictions. Studies show that developing online platforms for halal information is critical in supporting the sector's recovery (Vargas-Sánchez & Moral-Moral, 2019). In Indonesia, efforts to align the concept of halal with health protocols are an essential focus, signaling the need for new strategies to rebuild tourist confidence post-pandemic (Santoso et al., 2022).

In the context of halal creative industry development, the pandemic has made the need for more adaptive and innovative strategies clear. The SWOT analysis for the Center for Technology Development and Industry Collaboration offers a framework that can strengthen the management and competitiveness of SMEs in the Industry 4.0 era (Damayanti et al., 2023). Despite significant economic pressures, SMEs remain instrumental in supporting economic growth, especially in ASEAN, where their contribution is widely recognized (Che Arshad & Irijanto, 2023). The sustainability of these SMEs depends on their ability to adapt and respond to changes in the ever-changing global economic landscape.

In order to face these complex challenges, the halal creative industry needs to continue to innovate and adapt strategically. Focusing on technology integration, improved regulatory compliance, and sustainable business model development will be critical for SMEs to thrive in the uncertain post-pandemic landscape.

### *Post-COVID-19 Business Recovery Strategy*

Post-COVID-19 pandemic, the Halal Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) industry needs to implement robust business recovery strategies to overcome the challenges and uncertainties brought about by the global health crisis. The integration of digital technology is emerging as an essential element in revitalizing the Halal MSME sector post-COVID-19. Adopting digital tools and platforms has become essential for MSMEs to improve competitiveness, adaptability, and resilience in an ever-evolving business landscape (Firstian Aldhi et al., 2024).

The crisis triggered a paradigm shift in the Halal MSME industry, forcing businesses to quickly shift to online platforms to maintain operations amidst the disruptions caused by the pandemic. This shift towards digitalization facilitates business continuity and allows MSMEs to overcome previous hesitations in adopting digital technology, thus opening up new opportunities for growth and development. Digital tools, such as e-commerce platforms and digital marketing strategies, have proven instrumental in enabling MSMEs to reach a broader customer base and increase sales in the post-pandemic era (Firstian Aldhi et al., 2024).

The research highlights the importance of digital technology adaptation among MSME entrepreneurs in protecting their businesses from the adverse impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Digital technology adoption has

been identified as a critical factor in improving MSMEs' governance, performance, and sustainability, particularly in the context of the Yogyakarta Special Region. By leveraging digital literacy, e-commerce platforms, and digital skills, MSMEs in the Halal industry can optimize their operations, improve efficiency, and take advantage of new market opportunities (Firstian Aldhi et al., 2024).

Moreover, the pandemic has emphasized the importance of digital marketing strategies in strengthening MSMEs, enabling direct interaction with consumers, expanding market reach, and reducing marketing costs. Implementing digital marketing initiatives has played a significant role in empowering MSMEs to overcome the challenges posed by the pandemic and position themselves for sustainable growth in the post-COVID-19 landscape. The integration of digital technologies improves operational efficiency, facilitates access to new markets, and enhances marketing strategies for MSMEs in the Halal industry (Andiana et al., 2021).

In Indonesia, the government has recognized the vital role of digitalization in supporting MSME recovery efforts post-COVID-19, with initiatives aiming to strengthen data and digitize general trade to strengthen economic recovery. The rapid digital transformation of MSMEs in Indonesia enhances entrepreneurial skills and competencies and improves overall business performance in the post-pandemic era (Bawono et al., 2023). By prioritizing innovation, integrating sustainable practices, and embracing digitalization, MSMEs in the Halal industry can improve their resilience and competitiveness in the face of ongoing challenges (Judijanto et al., 2023).

### *Blockchain Implementation and Halal Supply Chain*

Blockchain technology has emerged as a transformational tool in improving supply chain integrity and transparency, especially in the context of the Halal industry. Utilizing distributed and open ledger technology, blockchain can revolutionize how Halal products are tracked and verified throughout the supply chain (Wong et al., 2020). Integrating blockchain technology into the Halal supply chain enables the rapid achievement of transparency, traceability, and quality assurance, thus ensuring the integrity of Halal products. This technology has the potential to improve the performance of the Halal supply chain but also strengthen the competitive advantage of organizations operating within this sector (Ardiantono et al., 2024).

In addition, adopting blockchain technology in the Halal supply chain can significantly improve performance and competitiveness by ensuring the integrity of Halal products from production to distribution (Hendayani & Fernando, 2022). Through blockchain technology, Halal certification and traceability can be effectively implemented, assuring consumers regarding product integrity (Sari & Rahayu, 2024). The combination of distributed ledger technology with smart contracts in the form of Halal blockchain can create a high-performance network in the Halal supply chain, ensuring compliance at every chain link (Rusydia et al., 2023). In the context of the Halal industry, implementing blockchain technology offers a solution to maintain transparency and integrity along the supply chain, especially in difficult times such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Sim & Abdullah, 2022). By integrating blockchain

technology with the Internet of Things (IoT), the Halal supply chain can achieve improved traceability and food safety standards, addressing critical concerns in the industry (Kurniawan et al., 2023). In addition, blockchain-based traceability systems have been identified as necessary in supporting the Halal supply chain ecosystem, providing real-time data access in a secure environment (Alamsyah et al., 2022).

Applying blockchain technology in the Halal supply chain also extends to governance, compliance, and transparency (Ismail et al., 2022). By utilizing blockchain for the traceability process, the Halal industry can guarantee product quality and consumer trust, essential elements in maintaining the integrity of Halal products. In addition, blockchain technology enables the implementation of a Halal supply chain strategy that ensures product quality and increases consumer confidence in the authenticity of Halal products (Sidarto & Hamka, 2021).

In the Halal industry, adopting blockchain technology is essential to prevent food fraud and ensure the authenticity of Halal products (Soesanto et al., 2022). By utilizing blockchain-based systems, the halal of food products can be verified and authenticated, contributing to the overall competitiveness of the food industry. The reconstruction of the supply chain management performance model for the Halal industry emphasizes integrating Islamic values, especially those related to Halal principles, into supply chain practices (Maharani et al., 2023). This integration is essential to ensure compliance with Halal standards and maintain the integrity of Halal products throughout the supply chain.

The implementation of blockchain technology in the Halal supply chain is further strengthened by the concept of value co-

creation, where stakeholders collaborate to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Halal logistics services (Okdinawati et al., 2021). This collaborative approach streamlines the supply chain process and ensures compliance with Halal requirements and regulations.

### *The Role of Certification Bodies in the Halal Industry*

Certification bodies are essential in the Halal industry, ensuring products and processes comply with Halal standards. These bodies conduct audits, inspections, and certifications to verify compliance with Halal requirements (Munawar & Mugiono, 2024). The certification process involves a rigorous assessment to determine whether the product meets the necessary criteria to be considered Halal, reassuring consumers that the product complies with Islamic food law (Hanifasari et al., 2024).

A standardized Halal certification system overseen by accreditation bodies is essential to maintain the integrity of the Halal supply chain. These bodies issue product certifications and oversee the entire certification process, ensuring consistency and reliability in Halal certification. Accredited certification bodies help build consumer confidence by providing a mark of authenticity and compliance with Halal standards (Hanifasari et al., 2024).

The lack of cohesiveness of global Halal standards has created challenges in the certification sector, with approximately 400 certification bodies worldwide lacking globally accepted criteria (Abdallah, 2021). This lack of coherence undermines efforts to ensure the integrity of Halal food products, emphasizing the need for standard criteria to simplify the certification process and enhance the credibility of Halal certification (Ali et al., 2021).

In countries like Malaysia, official agencies such as JAKIM are essential in promoting Halal certification among food manufacturers and facilitating the certification process. These bodies encourage compliance with Halal standards and assist clients to successfully obtain Halal certification, which contributes to the overall integrity of the Halal supply chain (Mohamad Hashim et al., 2023).

Certification bodies are not only issuing certificates to promote transparency and traceability in the Halal supply chain. Blockchain technology is recognized as a valuable tool to enhance traceability and integrity, allowing consumers to verify the Halal status of products through supply chain transactions (Rusydziana et al., 2023). By utilizing blockchain technology, certification bodies can enhance the credibility of Halal certification and provide consumers with real-time access to product information.

In addition, certification bodies are essential in addressing issues such as Halal fraud and ensuring product authenticity. Through rigorous audits and inspections, these bodies prevent fraudulent practices and enforce Halal principles (Mustun, 2022). Continuous monitoring and evaluation by certification bodies help maintain consumer confidence in the Halal certification system and protect the integrity of the Halal supply chain.

In conclusion, certification bodies are crucial in maintaining the integrity and authenticity of the Halal industry. By establishing standardized processes, promoting transparency, and leveraging technologies such as blockchain, these bodies ensure compliance with Halal standards and increase consumer confidence in Halal products. Collaboration between certification bodies, regulatory authorities, and industry stakeholders is critical to strengthening the

Halal certification ecosystem and building trust in Halal products.

### *Halal Marketing and Changing Consumer Preferences*

Halal marketing is increasingly important in response to evolving consumer preferences, especially in the post-COVID-19 era. The halal industry has experienced significant changes in consumer behavior, with a growing emphasis on halal products driven by health awareness, religious beliefs, and ethical considerations. Consumers actively seek products that match their values and meet specific criteria, including halal certification, to ensure compliance with Islamic food laws. Growing consumer awareness regarding product halal status, health, and perceived value has led to a surge in interest in purchasing halal-labeled food products (Izza & Akbar, 2023).

Implementing halal marketing strategies has become essential for businesses operating in the halal industry to meet changing consumer preferences. Halal transparency across the food supply chain is increasingly prominent, with traceability systems increasing consumer confidence in halal products and food safety (Kamarulzaman et al., 2022).

Consumers consider Halal labeling on products essential, demonstrating compliance with Shariah rules and providing assurance of product quality and compliance with halal standards. The focus on halal certification has emerged as a critical driver influencing consumer purchasing decisions and building trust in halal products (Sari & Rahayu, 2024).

Consumer preferences have also shifted in the halal tourism sector, with individuals increasingly opting for Muslim-friendly destinations and experiences. The trend of consumers choosing halal food, shopping for halal products, and vacationing in Muslim-

friendly destinations is increasing, contributing to significant growth in the halal industry (Septiani & Samatan, 2023). This trend reflects a broader movement towards a halal lifestyle, where consumers seek comfort and serenity by consuming halal products (Rachim & Santoso, 2021).

In the cosmetics industry, the demand for halal cosmetics is increasing, especially among Muslim consumers living in multi-religious cultures. Halal cosmetics are gaining popularity due to the quality assurance and compliance with halal standards provided by halal certification. Consumers value the quality assurance offered by halal certification, increasing their acceptance and trust in halal cosmetic products. The perceived value of halal cosmetics, combined with ethical considerations, has contributed to the growth of the halal cosmetics industry (Ismaja & Kijkasiwat, 2023).

Enforcement of halal compliance by authorities in the halal industry plays a vital role in protecting consumer rights and ensuring the integrity of halal products. Halal certification instills consumer confidence by ensuring products conform to their religious beliefs and meet halal standards. This regulatory oversight not only protects the interests of consumers but also promotes the growth and sustainability of the halal industry by building trust and credibility in halal products (Türk et al., 2024).

### *The Role of Digital Technology*

The role of digital technology in the post-COVID-19 Halal Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) industry is a factor that cannot be ignored in efforts to improve competitiveness and economic resilience. The pandemic has accelerated digital transformation for MSMEs in Indonesia, with

the adoption of e-commerce and digital technology becoming a vital strategy for survival and growth (Kurniawati et al., 2021). It reflects an adaptation to changing consumer behavior that tends towards online shopping and a response to disruptions in global supply chains. Studies show that MSMEs utilizing digital technology well, such as increased digital literacy, can improve operational efficiency and reach a broader market (Aji et al., 2023). It reflects an adaptation to changing consumer behavior that tends towards online shopping and a response to disruptions in global supply chains. Studies show that MSMEs utilizing digital technology well, such as increased digital literacy, can improve operational efficiency and reach a broader market (Laorden et al., 2022). The importance of digitalization strategies is also reflected in the government's efforts to simplify regulations and facilitate access to technology for MSMEs, which has helped improve their competitiveness in an increasingly competitive market (Kusumaningtyas et al., 2022).

In the context of Halal Creative Industries, MSMEs must adopt innovative strategies to integrate digital technology to ensure sustainability and growth. The integration of e-commerce platforms helps MSMEs maintain their presence in the global market and increases the accessibility of Halal products at large (Pertwi et al., 2022). Amidst the uncertain economic dynamics post-pandemic, innovations in digital technology are crucial to building a solid foundation for Halal MSMEs, enabling them to adapt quickly to market changes and improve their competitiveness on a broader scale.

Overall, the role of digital technology in the post-COVID-19 MSME Halal industry is not only about improving operational efficiency and optimizing market access but also about

building a solid foundation for long-term growth. This digital transformation requires MSMEs to continuously develop digital literacy, improve adaptability to new technologies, and implement innovative marketing strategies. In this way, Halal MSMEs can harness the full potential of digital technology to strengthen their position in an increasingly complex global market.

### *Government Policy and Financial Support*

Government policies and financial support play a crucial role in maintaining stability and promoting economic growth, especially in times of crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The World Travel and Tourism Council emphasizes that government policies to provide financial stimulus to the tourism and hospitality sector are critical in protecting jobs and supporting affected businesses (Allaberganov et al., 2021). This support not only ensures the battered industry's survival but also helps the overall economic recovery. Further research shows that government intervention in the form of financial support can spur technological innovation among small and medium-sized enterprises, which in turn supports business advancement (Pham Thi Ngoc et al., 2022).

Financial support from the government also plays a significant role in building entrepreneurs' confidence in entrepreneurship. A study by Nguyễn (2020) highlighted that access to venture capital and policy support from the government and local financial institutions can significantly boost entrepreneurial initiatives. These measures not only create a conducive environment for the growth of new businesses but also help create jobs and increase their economic contribution to society (Rezaei-Moghaddam & Izadi, 2019).

The impact of government policies on financial inclusion and economic sustainability has also attracted significant attention. Research by Naqvi (2022) shows that while some financial support policies may not consistently achieve the expected results, appropriate and measured interventions remain crucial in maintaining economic resilience amidst turmoil such as the pandemic. This confirms that well-designed policies are necessary to respond to crises and build a solid foundation for sustainable economic growth.

The government's role in supporting Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) through its policies and financial support cannot be overlooked. These initiatives provide immediate relief to hard-hit sectors and create favorable conditions for innovation, entrepreneurship, and long-term economic growth. As such, the government has a vital role in creating a stable and sustainable business climate through effective and timely financial support mechanisms.

### *Implementation of Sharia Principles in Business Operation*

Applying Shariah principles in halal business operations is essential to ensure that all economic activities comply with Islamic law. These principles include fairness, honesty, and responsibility, which are applied in halal tourism, food and beverage, and finance sectors. In practice, halal businesses must undergo a rigorous certification process to ensure compliance with Shariah standards, covering all operations, from raw materials to production and distribution methods. For example, the halal tourism sector provides halal accommodation and food and includes services that facilitate worship and maintain privacy following Islamic values (Solehudin et al., 2024). In the financial sector, Islamic financial

institutions play an essential role in providing products and services accessible from usury, gharar, and maysir, all of which are prohibited in Islam (Cipta & Hatamar, 2023).

However, the implementation of Sharia principles in halal business faces various challenges. One is the lack of awareness and understanding of Shariah principles among entrepreneurs and consumers. Many businesses that still operate conventionally have difficulty adapting to Shariah standards, especially as these changes require investment in training and infrastructure. In addition, there are challenges in harmonizing halal standards across different countries, which can make international trade in halal products difficult. For example, some countries have different halal certification standards, so companies wishing to export halal products must fulfill various and sometimes conflicting requirements (Wijoyo et al., 2023). In the halal tourism sector, service providers often have to significantly change how they operate to meet the needs of Muslim travelers, which requires additional costs and careful strategic planning (Ismanto et al., 2022).

In addition to operational and regulatory challenges, there are challenges in promoting and maintaining consumer confidence in halal products and services. Businesses must ensure that they not only adhere to Shariah principles formally but also apply them consistently in their daily practices. Consumer trust is critical in the halal industry, and any breach of Shariah principles can significantly damage a business's reputation. Additionally, halal businesses need to adapt to technology in the digital age to remain competitive and relevant. It includes implementing digital marketing and e-commerce that adheres to Sharia principles (Fauziyah et al., 2023). Therefore, halal businesses must continue innovating and

raising awareness about the importance of Sharia principles to ensure future growth and sustainability.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used in this study is field research, where primary data is obtained directly from sources in the field. This research will be conducted on the halal business of Yotta and Browcyl products in Makassar City, focusing on the recovery of the halal creative industry after the COVID-19 pandemic. This qualitative research describes the business recovery strategies implemented by Yotta and Browcyl halal products. The sociological approach aims to explain the existing reality without being influenced by the researcher's perception (Muhammad Idrus, 2009).

In implementing this research, the subjects are individuals or administrators directly involved in managing business recovery strategies in halal products Yotta and Browcyl in Makassar City. These subjects include business owners and divisions developing strategies after the COVID-19 pandemic. The object of the research is the business recovery strategy implemented by Yotta and Browcyl products after the pandemic. Primary data was obtained through interviews with directly related parties, while secondary data was obtained from books, journals, and other sources relevant to the research theme.

Data analysis in this study used qualitative descriptive techniques with a thematic analysis approach. The steps of thematic analysis include data collection, initial coding, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing reports. Initial coding was done by reading the data in depth and marking sections relevant to the business recovery strategy. Next, key themes emerging from the data were identified and examined to ensure consistency and relevance. This analysis aims to find significant patterns and relationships in the business recovery strategies of halal creative industries in Makassar City after the pandemic, providing deep insights into the challenges and successes in the recovery process.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### *Analysis Results with Thematic Analysis Approach*

In this study, a thematic analysis was conducted to understand the business strategies implemented by Browcyl and Yotta in dealing with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and their halal industry development strategies. This analysis identified several key themes that emerged from the interviews with the owners and managers of both businesses, which are described in the following table:

**Table 1.** Trend analysis and business response

Analysis Theme	Description
Decrease in Sales Volume	The COVID-19 pandemic caused a significant drop in sales volume for both Browcyl and Yotta.
Production Process Adjustment	Both businesses experienced adjustments in their production processes, including implementing strict health protocols.

Analysis Theme	Description
Digital Transformation Strategy	Digital transformation is a crucial strategy to increase market access and retain customers.
Mass Online Promotion	The increase in online promotions is in response to the changing behavior of consumers who tend to shop online.
Employment Management Strategy	Adjustment of workforce management strategies to meet health protocols and maximize productivity.
Halal Certification	Implementation of halal certification to increase Muslim and non-Muslim consumers' confidence in their products.
Halal Consumer Awareness	Increased consumer awareness of halal products as a healthier choice and by religious values.

The COVID-19 pandemic has drastically changed the business landscape of Browcyl and Yotta by presenting major challenges in the form of a significant drop in sales volume. Browcyl experienced an 80% drop in production, mainly due to social restrictions affecting labor access, while Yotta reported a 40% drop in direct sales due to reduced consumer visits to their outlets. Responses to these changes included adjustments in production processes by adhering to strict health protocols, such as rescheduling work and implementing stricter hygiene procedures to minimize the risk of virus spread at production sites.

However, Browcyl and Yotta not only adapted but also seized the opportunity to strengthen their position in the market. By adopting a digital transformation strategy, both increased their online presence through e-commerce platforms and social media. Online promotions were also enhanced in response to consumer behavior shifting towards shopping online. In addition, their efforts in obtaining halal certification from MUI boosted consumer confidence, especially in the larger Muslim

market, and cemented the image of their products as a healthy choice and in line with religious values. By educating consumers on the benefits of halal products through solid marketing campaigns, Browcyl and Yotta continue to drive awareness of the importance of halal products in society.

### *Discussion*

The discussion of the results of the thematic analysis of Browcyl and Yotta in dealing with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and their halal industry development strategies can be critically deepened by linking it to relevant literature. Allaberganov et al. (2022) highlighted the importance of government support in maintaining the sustainability of the tourism and hospitality sectors during the pandemic. However, in the context of the halal industry, as observed by Browcyl and Yotta, there is a question of whether similar types of support are also provided to the halal food and beverage industry as a whole in Indonesia,

especially in terms of halal licensing arrangements and specific business incentives.

Browcyl and Yotta's adaptation of their health protocols and digital transformation strategies are in line with the findings of Ngoc et al. (2022), which emphasize that government support policies encourage technological innovation in small and medium-sized enterprises. However, critical discussions include consideration of whether the digital transformation undertaken by the two companies is optimal or whether there is still room for further improvement in utilizing technologies such as big data or artificial intelligence to improve operational efficiency and competitive advantage.

The significant drop in sales volume experienced by Browcyl and Yotta became a central point in the discussion, given that the pandemic affected market access and put tremendous economic pressure on the food and beverage industry. A critical discussion could examine whether their strategies to maintain market share are compelling enough, given that the pandemic has dramatically changed consumer behavior, including increased preference for online purchases and brand resilience in the face of intensifying competition.

The implementation of halal certification by Browcyl and Yotta to increase consumer confidence in their products is a strategic step in accordance with Hanifasari's research (2024), which highlights the importance of standardized halal certification standards. However, critical discussions include the question of whether halal certification itself is sufficient to address challenges such as controversy-prone consumer confidence and the need for greater transparency in the halal supply chain.

Finally, the increase in consumer awareness of halal products as a healthier option and in line with religious values should be seen in broader transformations in global consumer behavior. A critical discussion on this will include thoughts on whether this increased awareness will be sustainable and how companies like Browcyl and Yotta can capitalize on this trend to survive and grow in the long run.

Overall, a more critical discussion allowed for a deeper look into the challenges and opportunities faced by Browcyl and Yotta in managing the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, as well as the strategic steps they can take to strengthen their position in the post-pandemic halal food and beverage industry.

## CONCLUSION

This study provides valuable insights into how Browcyl and Yotta overcame the challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic through their adaptive strategies. Despite experiencing a significant drop in sales volume due to changes in consumer behavior and social restrictions, both companies were able to adjust by implementing strict health protocols and increasing their digital presence. The implementation of halal certification also proved crucial in boosting consumer confidence, while their efforts in raising consumer awareness of halal products helped strengthen their position in the market.

However, some aspects need more profound consideration. First, the focus on two single case studies (Browcyl and Yotta) may limit the generalizability of the findings to the halal creative business industry as a whole. It hints at the need for broader research to better understand the variety of strategies and their impact on the overall economic performance of the industry. Secondly, this study did not

investigate the long-term economic impact of investments required for digital transformation or halal certification. It could be an essential area for further research to gauge the sustainability and efficiency of the strategies adopted.

For future research development, it is recommended that the scope be expanded by including more case studies from various segments of the halal creative business industry. In addition, future studies can focus more on analyzing external factors, such as government policies related to halal business incentives, which can affect overall industry strategy and growth. By deepening the understanding of these dynamics, future research is expected to provide more comprehensive and applicable guidance for industry players to formulate effective strategies to face future challenges and capitalize on existing growth opportunities.

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