

The Concept of Sertu According to Madhhab Syafi'i Its Importance in the Industrial Sector and its Implementation Challenges in Brunei Darussalam

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DOI: 10.15642/johs.2024.1.1.40-44

Abstract

The implementation of sertu is becoming increasingly important for small and large industries that want to obtain halal certification. It is not only the industry that chooses sertu as the main element in ensuring the halal and cleanliness of the product, but the private sector is also starting to feel its importance. In other words, the implementation of the practice of sertu, whether for halal application or not, remains the choice of the Islamic community to increase confidence in its cleanliness. In implementing the sertu, various issues are faced and become challenges, especially with various contemporary issues that require immediate answers. Therefore, this paper aims to identify the problems faced in Brunei Darussalam and how to address these challenges. The research methodology used is qualitatively descriptive, using content analysis and interviews with related parties. There are two methods of document analysis, namely primary sources consisting of legal and regulatory books and fiqh books. Furthermore, references are also taken from secondary sources, such as books, journals, magazines, bibliographies, seminar papers, newspapers, and so on, to find out the views of contemporary Islamic scholars on the studies discussed. Sertu is still seen as less popular in Brunei society even though it is closely related to the provision of halal venues and products. Various issues and challenges are faced, including those arising from legislation, guidelines, human resources, and even physical assets.

Keywords: Halal industry, najis mugallazah, Sertu, Shafii madhhab.

Introduction

Islam is a perfect and comprehensive religion; He explained in detail all things, small or large, that are beneficial to humans in this world and the hereafter. Among the things that Islam pays great attention to is the aspect of cleanliness. The Prophet Muhammad (saw) said that cleanliness is part of faith (Muslim, 1955). Islam emphasizes spiritual and physical cleanliness. Spiritual hygiene includes the cleanliness of the heart and soul, such as faith and other aspects that purify the

soul, cleanse the heart, remove bad qualities, and adorn it with noble morals. Meanwhile, physical hygiene includes personal hygiene, place, clothing, equipment, and other physical aspects (Muhammad, 2015).

Therefore, every Muslim is responsible for learning, maintaining, and practicing cleanliness and purity in their daily lives. This is important to ensure that all practices carried out are in accordance with the demands of sharia. Not only individuals but also the food industry, logistics management,



and other sectors should also prioritize cleanliness and purity to ensure the halal and cleanliness of the products used or consumed. This is important to ensure that products are free from feces, especially *najis mughallaẓah*, heavy uncleanness such as dogs, pigs, and their descendants (second or from one of them), which can affect the health and well-being of Muslims.

Sertu Definition

Sertu is one of the methods of purification in Islam that is specifically used to remove *mughallaẓah* uncleanness, and this uncleanse cannot be purified except by washing it seven times, one of which must be mixed with the soil, whether the *mughallaẓah* uncleanness is *‘ayn* (observable) or *hukmi* (not observable), and whether it's on the body, clothing, or place (Al-Khin & Al-Bugha & Ali, 1413). This process of sertu is emphasized in Islam because *mughallaẓah* najis is considered very heavy najis and require a specific cleansing procedure to ensure that purity returns to an acceptable state in the context of sharia (Al-Shirazi, n.d).

In the Dewan Bahasa Malaysia Dictionary, the act of sertu is known as "samak" or "menyamak". (Dewan Pustaka, 2024) The use of the terms "samak" or "menyamak" for sertu is less accurate because there is a difference between the two terms. Sertu, as explained above, is the act of purifying limbs or anything that is exposed to *mughallaẓah* by means of seven washes, one of which is with water mixed with soil. Whereas "samak" means the act of purifying animal leather (other than the leather of dogs and pigs or the offspring of one of them) that becomes unclean due to death (carcass skin) by using any substance that can remove dirt and remove moisture from the leather that can damage it so that if soaked in water, it no longer smells bad and does not deteriorate (al-Hisni, 1994).

Sertu Law

Cleanliness is an important aspect of life, and Islam has established guidelines on how to clean heavy uncleanness (*najis mughallaẓah*).

The term sertu refers to the process of purification of *najis mughallaẓah*. Although each Sunni *madhhab* (school of law) has a different understanding and procedure for cleansing this defilement, all schools agree on the importance of its cleansing (Daud Awang & Nadiha Mohd Zaki, 2022).

According to Shafi'i *madhhab*, sertu must be carried out if there is a mixture with *najis mughallaẓah* based on the hadith of the Prophet PBUH narrated by Abu Hurairah (Muslim, 1955). It makes no difference whether something becomes unclean because it is exposed to the lick (saliva) of a dog, its urine, its blood, its sweat, its hair, or any other part of its body. Therefore, it must be washed seven times, one of which is with soil. However, Imam Nawawi mentions in the book *al-Raud{ah* that there is a *shadh* (solitary) view in madhhab Shafi'i, which says that it is enough to wash once for uncleanness other than saliva, like washing other uncleanness (al-Hisni, 1994).

If it has been determined that the dog's mouth is *mughallaẓah* according to the hadith and the mouth is the best and cleanest part, then it is even more important than the other parts of the body are cleansed seriously. In another hadith narrated by al-Daraqutni and al-Hakim: "When the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was invited to the house of a tribe, he fulfilled the invitation. Then, he was invited to another house but did not fulfill the invitation. Then he was asked about this, and he replied: Actually, there is a dog in the house of the full. They said to the Prophet: And in the house of the Fulan, there was a cat. Then he said: Indeed, the cat is not unclean." This indicates that the entire body of the dog is feces (al-Zuhaili, 1989)

However, there are other views across Sunni *madhhab* that are *mu'tabar* (authoritative) regarding the impurity of dogs and their relation to the needs of dogs. Here is a summary:

Table 1. Views of different sects on the need for sertu (al-Zuhaili, 1989)

Madhhab	Sertu Requirements
Madhhab Shafi'i and Hambali	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pigs, dogs, and their offspring are classified as <i>mughballazab</i> uncleanness. • This type of poop needs to be washed seven times, one of which is using water mixed with soil.
Hanafi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hanafi scholars consider only saliva/mouth and dog feces as <i>mughballazab</i> uncleanness. • This type of poop needs to be washed seven times, one of which is using water mixed with soil.
Maliki	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the Maliki madhhab, dogs in general, whether or not they are allowed to be kept like guard dogs and farm dogs, are considered sacred. • Only the licking of a dog (not any other part, such as if it puts its paws in a container or licks without moving its tongue or if its saliva falls) is what requires sertu, which is washing seven times as a form of worship and not because it is unclean, according to the popular opinion of this madhhab.

Soil Type and Concentration

Soil is the top layer of the earth that is important for human life. It is formed from rocks that undergo weathering over a long period, aided by microorganisms, temperature changes, and water. The type of soil is different in each area depending on its components. Good soil for plants contains 50% minerals, 5% organic matter, and 25% water. The astronomical and geographical position in Indonesia also influences the formation of various types of soil. There are many different types of soils in the world that vary from one area to another depending on

the environment available in that area (Yulia, 2015).

1. Alluvial Land

This soil is formed from mud deposits carried by river flows, usually found downstream. The soil is brown to gray in color and has a soft texture, making it ideal for agriculture, including rice and crop crops such as corn and tobacco.

2. Andosol Land

This volcanic soil is formed as a result of volcanic processes and is highly fertile and rich in minerals, nutrient elements, and water. The color is grayish-brown and suitable for a wide variety of crops.

3. Entisol Soil

This soil is the result of weathering from volcanic eruption materials such as ash, sand, lava, and lapilli. The soil is fertile but young and is usually found close to volcanoes in the form of thin layers of soil or sand dunes.

4. Grumusol Land

Formed from the weathering of limestone and volcanic tuff, this soil has a low organic content, a dry, easily broken texture, and a neutral to alkaline pH. It is not fertile for agriculture but is suitable for hardy plants such as teak trees.

5. Humus soil

Formed from the weathering of plants, this soil is very fertile with a high content of nutrients and minerals, is quite blackish in color, and is excellent for agriculture.

6. Inceptisol Soil

Formed from sedimentary or metamorphic rocks with a blackish-brown color and a mixture of gray. This soil is suitable for oil palm and rubber plantations.

7. Laterite Soil

The soil is brick red due to its high iron and aluminum content. Including old soil that is infertile and unsuitable for agriculture.

8. Latosol Soils

Formed from the weathering of sedimentary and metamorphic rocks, it is red to yellow in color and has a clay texture. It is not too fertile as it contains iron and aluminum.



9. Lithosol Soil

Newly developed young soils formed from climate change, topography, and volcanoes. The texture varies from soft and stony to sandy.

10. Limestone soil

Formed from limestone weathering, this soil is infertile and not suitable for agriculture, which requires much water, but is suitable for crops such as teak trees.

Soils are an important component of the sertu process and have been studied to prove their effectiveness in removing harmful contaminants and cleaning up impurities (Daud Awang & Nadiha Mohd Zaki, 2022). Dog saliva is considered dangerous to humans because it contains bacteria and viruses that can cause various diseases. One of the bacteria found in dog saliva is *Micrococcus sp.*, which can cause meningitis and bacteremia (Abrahamian, Fredrick M & Ellie J.C. Goldstein, 2011).

The use of soil as a cleaning agent for dog saliva aims to fight or kill the bacteria contained in it. Soil, as a natural material, possesses adsorption and absorption capabilities that can be used in various pharmaceutical formulations (Eriatna, 2017). In the field of chemistry, adsorption is defined as the process of absorption or physical-chemical bonding in which the molecules in a solution accumulate on the surface of the absorbing object. In contrast, absorption is the absorption of a liquid by another liquid to form a solution (Madelam, 2020).

According to Aulia Wardahani Eriatna, the results of the compact dilution test in her experiment show that experiments carried out by adding soil can increase the ability to inhibit the growth of bacteria; the higher the soil concentration, the faster the bacterial elimination process occurs (Eriatna, 2017).

According to Shafi'i *madhhab*, in the process of sertu, the use of land is mandatory. The issue that arises is the type of land that can be used. according to Shaykh Bujairimi, all types of land are valid and can be used as long as they are pure and not

mixed with any excrement (al-Bujairami, 1995)

The rate of soil concentration used in the sertu process also plays an important role. Proper use of soil with the right concentration is necessary to ensure that the sertu process is carried out perfectly. However, based on references to the books of Shafi'i *madhhab*, there is no specific standard on soil concentration as long as the soil is enough to pollute the water as asserted by al-Damiri (al-Damiri, 2004) and al-Sharbini (al-Sharbini, n.d).

Sertu's Importance in the Halal Industry

The Arabic word 'halal' means legally justified or legal. In the holy Qur'an, many verses advise Muslims on healthy eating habits and nutritious eating as stipulated by Allah (SWT) in Surah al-An'am, verse 145; al-'Araf, verse 157; al-Maidah verses 1, 4, 5, and 88. The Prophet Muhammad PBUH also instructed his followers to always emphasize matters related to halal eating, as in a hadith narrated by Anas bin Malik, the Prophet (PBUH) said: "Muslims must find halal." These verses relate not only to the preservation of man's physical well-being but also to his spiritual health (Othman et al., 2019).

The term halal is not only limited to food and beverages but covers all aspects of daily life. Halal is one of the five (*al-abkam al-kebamsab*) which includes fard (mandatory), mustahabb (recommended), halal (allowed), *makruh* (disliked), *haram* (forbidden) — which determines the morality of human actions in Islam. Mubah also means "allowed" or "permissible" in the context of Islam. Generally, every object and action in Islam is considered permissible unless there is an explicit prohibition in the holy book of Islam. A detailed explanation of the objects or actions that are permissible in Islam, along with certain exceptions, is given below. The term halal and haram, which distinguishes between lawful and invalid, refers to matters stated under 'Islamic law' known as Shariah (Al-Shariah). This moral system governs every aspect of a Muslim's life. Islam places



great emphasis on hygiene (*tayyib*) — both spiritually and in the context of food and drink. For food and beverages to be recognized as halal, they must comply with the Islamic dietary laws stipulated in the Quran, the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad, his Sunnah (tradition), and fiqh (understanding) of Islamic scholars (Ahmad & Mohd Shariff, 2017).

Halal integrity is a key cornerstone in the halal food industry. Protection and prevention measures from cross-contamination must be taken to ensure that halal food products remain halal, even though they have gone through various production processes and logistics handling in the supply chain, from origin to destination. All parties in the supply chain, including originating suppliers, middlemen, and logistics companies upstream and downstream, must take individual and collective responsibility to protect halal food products from cross-contamination, whether intentional or unintentional, including ensuring the cleanliness and tidiness of all equipment used. No single party can shoulder this huge responsibility alone. As the demand for halal food products is expected to continue to increase, factors in halal ritual cleansing, such as procedures, processes, products, and individuals involved, need to be given serious attention (Ahmad & Shariff, 2016).

Sertu Cleaning is a critical practice in maintaining the halal integrity of products, especially in industries such as food, beverage, pharmaceutical, and other industries (Rahman et al., 2022). It involves ensuring that workstations, vehicles, warehouses, or containers are free of impurities such as dirt and feces that can affect the halal status of the products handled (Ngah et al., 2022). This process is essential for maintaining cleanliness and purity in the handling and transportation of halal goods, as emphasized in the context of halal logistics (Ahmad & Mohd Shariff, 2017).

The importance of Sertu cleanliness in ensuring halal integrity is not only limited to physical hygiene aspects but also involves compliance with the Shariah principles set.

Shariah principles play an important role in ensuring that Halal products are always preserved, with a fully protected Halal guarantee. All activities involving the product production process should refer to Shariah guidelines; this shows how carefully Islam pays attention to related issues, especially with issues in the Halal industry that often arise from time to time. Sharia principles are also flexible when monitoring the entire halal industry. Sharia principles used in solving problems in the Halal industry, especially in logistics, are generally general. Therefore, it is important to expose Shariah principles that can be used as a guide in logistics (Gunardi, 2023).

Implementation and Challenges in Brunei Darussalam

Brunei Darussalam, under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, is fortunate to have a government that is sensitive and responsible in monitoring aspects of food and beverages, including the entry of raw meat into the country. Through His Majesty's initiative, several competent bodies have been established to study, control, and examine issues related to the food and beverages of Muslims, especially from the perspective of halal and haram. Under His Majesty's decree, the Department of the Brunei Islamic Religious Council (JMUIB) is tasked with implementing the Halal Meat Act Term 183, the Halal Meat Regulations 1999, as well as the Halal Certificate and Halal Label Order 2005. The role of JMUIB as the Halal Secretariat also includes oversight of halal recognition as well as the permission to enter raw meat into the country, which is strengthened by the role of the Halal Food Control Section (BKMh) in ensuring the halalness of food in all business sectors including restaurants and food factories. On 26 January 2017, the new amendment made it mandatory for all food business owners in the country to obtain a Halal Certificate and/or Halal Permit in order to ensure that the quality of halal food continues to be preserved.



The late Pehin Datu Seri Maharaja Dato Seri Utama Dr. Awang Haji Ismail bin Omar Abdul Aziz *Rahimabullah* has issued a fatwa related to the importance of maintaining halal food, including:

1. *"The mukallaf must know what halal and haram are from food and drink, clothing, and other things that he will face or take in his lifetime."*
2. *"... I advise Muslims to be careful and careful in buying and eating meat that is not yet known to whom it is slaughtered, whether Muslims or disbelievers, so that they do not eat the unlawful things, unclean and carcasses because eating them is all a great sin, and the flesh of the one who eats the unclean things, unclean and carcasses always leads them to commit immorality and sin, including those who sell them. And the one who serves the ingredients (carcasses), and they are closer and easier to enter the fire of Hell according to the hadiths of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)..."*

Despite the country's well-established halal monitoring system, the implementation of the Sertu practice – which is the process of purifying heavy feces such as dog saliva – still faces several challenges. The lack of clear guidelines and official recognition of the materials used in the Sertu process has created confusion among operators and service providers. This was confirmed through an interview with Mohammad Khairul Hazwan, Co-Founder of "Clean Solution", on 12 March 2024 at the company's headquarters. In addition, the mismatch in the use of Sertu materials and the lack of knowledge about the proper procedures cast doubt on the validity of this process, especially in ensuring that it complies with the standards of the Shafi'i School, the official sect in Brunei. Therefore, to ensure that Sertu's practice is in line with Islamic law, more careful improvement and monitoring must be implemented. This is important to strengthen halal regulations in the country further.

Furthermore, the absence of a formal process for approving companies offering Sertu services officially increases the difficulty in ensuring compliance with the set standards. This was stated in an interview with Haji Muhammad Yusnan bin Lamat, Head of the Halal Enforcement Section, Halal Control Division (BMKH) of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Brunei, on April 22, 2024 at the Headquarters of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Brunei. The issue of soil replacement with other materials in the Sertu process also raises concerns, in addition to ignorance and inconsistency of information about Sertu. Sertu-related courses are still less popular than other courses such as mortuary management. These issues point to the urgent need for improvements in the implementation and regulation of Sertu in Brunei Darussalam.

The sertu industry has become a hot topic of discussion due to the sudden increase in demand. The development of the halal industry at the domestic and global levels has driven the growth in demand for sertu services. The high demand for sertu processes in the halal industry has led to various new problems. As a result, the implementation of the sertu process is not always perfect. Among the problems identified include first, the non-compliance of sertu operators with the established guidelines and fatwas, where they make their own interpretations of the percentage of soil mixture in sertu products. Second, the level of understanding and knowledge about the need to implement sertu is still moderate among industry and society. Third, the operator's use of modern equipment may not reach the level of equipment set by the shariah. Fourth, the addition of materials other than soil in the sertu process. Fifth, the existing sertu guidelines are general and not specific to each halal scheme. Sixth, the industry's trust in the efficiency of sertu operators in managing sertu processes indirectly weakens companies that offer sertu services (Yusof & Subri, 2022).

The importance of the implementation of more specific guidelines for Islamic



cleansing methods (sertu) by all parties in the halal industry. Issues that may arise during the implementation of the sertu process should be given special attention so that they do not go against the requirements of Islamic law (Yusof & Subri, 2022).

The lack of support and cooperation from the halal authorities has made it difficult for Sertu operators to obtain verification and support to complete this process. Problems in documentation and record keeping also contribute to the difficulty in proving compliance with halal standards. All these issues underscore the urgent need to develop more detailed and specific Sertu guidelines that all industry players can use. With clear guidelines and strong standards, the implementation of Sertu can be enhanced to ensure halal products are fully Shariah compliant and meet the expectations of Muslim consumers (Rahman et al., 2022).

In addition, awareness and knowledge of the importance of Sertu is still low among industry players, which leads to the improper implementation of Sertu. Lack of qualified manpower to carry out sertu (Rahman et al., 2022).

Solution Strategies and Proposals

Several important strategies can be used to face Sertu's challenges. One of the key strategies is to ensure strict adherence to Sertu procedures, including thorough cleaning of vehicles, containers, and equipment used (Ahmad & Shariff, 2016). In addition, employee training and awareness are essential, as suggested by Shariffudin et al. (2023) Where the business model that empowers the B40 community through Sertu's services not only raises awareness but also provides economic opportunities. Collaboration between industry and the government also plays an important role in improving the Sertu process and ensuring better compliance with Halal standards (Pavan et al., 2022).

Innovations in sertu cleaning materials, as well as the development of sertu standard procedures that suit the needs of the halal industry, will give a huge boost to the halal

business market. This innovation will speed up the process of cleaning *mughballazah* feces in the supply chain system and also be more cost-effective. By ensuring halal compliance in the supply chain from raw materials to customers, product integrity can be maintained, which in turn will increase customer confidence in halal products (Daud Awang & Nadiha Mohd Zaki, 2022).

Conclusions

This study finds that the implementation of Sertu in Brunei Darussalam faces various contemporary challenges that require urgent attention. Key issues include the absence of specific guidelines and formal recognition of Sertu materials, mismatch in the use of materials, and lack of knowledge among service providers. Furthermore, the issue of replacing soil with other materials, the use of modern technology such as spray bottles, and the lack of support and cooperation from the authorities also add to the difficulties in ensuring compliance with halal standards. An urgent need to develop clearer and more detailed guidelines to ensure the effective implementation of Sertu and compliance with Shariah principles has also been identified.

To overcome the challenges identified, several improvement proposals need to be implemented. First, it is important to develop more specific and uniform guidelines on Sertu procedures that are suitable for the needs of modern industries. Secondly, employee training and awareness need to be increased to ensure a deeper understanding of the importance and proper implementation of Sertu. Third, cooperation between industry, authorities, and communities needs to be strengthened to ensure better alignment and compliance with halal standards. In addition, innovation in the use of Sertu materials and technology should continue to be encouraged to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of this process.

Future research should focus on developing and testing more specific and detailed Sertu guidelines that can be applied in a variety of industry contexts, including



pharmaceuticals and food. Studies can also examine the effectiveness of using modern technology in implementing Sertu and its impact on halal integrity. In addition, more in-depth research is needed to understand the views of the community and industry on Sertu procedures and how knowledge and awareness about Sertu can be increased through education and training programs.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We thank Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali (UNISSA) and Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM) for funding this research under the matching grant fund scheme (Registration: USIM/MG/UMA-UNISSA/IFFAH/SEPADAN-A/74923

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