

# Understanding the Consumption of Halal Goods

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Lawful (halal) goods are products that conform to Islamic law, such as food, beauty products, clothing, types of equipment, etc. Consumption in Islam is the method and mechanism of using goods according to Islamic regulations. This practice aims to ensure that consumer goods are excellent and not excessive (ishraf) in delivering the final benefits according to Islamic principles. The consumption of halal goods means the behavioural indications, stances, attitudes and practices of Muslim consumers regarding things that are already halal-certified or verified. Although something is legally certified, from a consumption perspective, it must be used in a way that is not harmful, misleading or excessive. Is the consumption of halal goods Islamic-based? How does one best understand the consumption of halal goods? Two objectives must be achieved to answer these questions. First, one must identify the consumption of halal goods in Islam. Second, one must analyse the purpose of consuming halal goods based on Islamic consumption. This research used a document analysis method for data collection, and then a qualitative content analysis method was used to analyse the collected data. The findings summarise the consumption of halal goods based on Islamic consumption.

**Key words:** *Consumption, halal goods, Islamic consumption, halal goods consumption, Muslim consumers.*

## Introduction

Halal is something a human being can utilise in daily life activities, and it is necessary as long as it is in accordance with Islamic law (Azhar & Ab Wahab, 2017). For example, halal means something is lawful for people to eat, drink, use, dress, sell, serve, etc. Islam requires Muslims to use halal in every use of goods. According to Furqani (2017), the Qur'an and as-

Sunnah have provided humans with guidelines for consumption or use of things, and human beings must be modest and not surpass or diminish that level of moderation, which would lead to wastefulness, excessiveness, frugality, selfishness and ungratefulness.

However, the scope of consumption in Islam emphasises the values of cleanliness, purity, moderation, usefulness, wellbeing, spirituality and morality (Ghani, Harjin, & Ghani, 2005). In the context of halal goods consumption, evaluations are conducted regarding how Muslim consumers use halal-verified products according to Islamic procedures and laws. Extensive studies on halal have shown that there are already guidelines for consumption in Islam, such as the philosophies, principles, ethics and morals of Islam. Consumption guidelines in Islam serve to help Muslims in solving problems related to consumption. However, not many studies have focused on the consumption of halal goods. In addition, some Muslim consumers do not pay attention to halal goods consumption, resulting in wastefulness, harmfulness and end-use that does not benefit the Muslim consumers. Thus, this paper covers three main points: 1) the problem statement, 2) halal goods and 3) the analysis of halal goods consumption.

### **Problem Statement**

Even if goods are halal-certified, Islamic law has established conditions for their possession or consumption. Muslim consumers must prioritise at least three aspects before possessing something: 1) the source of purchase, 2) the intention of purchase and 3) the need or desire to purchase (Dusuki, 2017; Manaf & Ibrahim, 2017). Halal in Islam is not based solely on the marking or validation of the halal logo; it involves various directions, either halal from the source management of the manufacturer or halal to the buyer or consumers themselves. Halal is intended to maintain cleanliness and purity at every stage of the manufacturing and possession of the goods.

There are at least four things that Muslim consumers must pay attention to after possessing halal goods. First, they must receive the benefits of the halal goods and avoid the disadvantages. Second, they must refrain from buying based on desire or filling time (Sapie, Awang, Hussain, & Ishak, 2014). Third, they must use halal products in their rightful place. Fourth, the goods must not be lavish or wasteful. Based on these four points, this paper aims to examine the key elements that can be used as a guide for Muslim consumers in the consumption of halal goods.

Consumption refers to everything related to consuming goods (Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2015; Tajudin & Tajuid, 2016). This discussion is not intended to discuss the legal status of goods; instead, it is expected to see the framework of halal goods consumption itself. The halal goods in question are consumer-owned. The term owned means the product is either

purchased or readily possessed. Possession of halal goods involves considering the customers' social problems, e.g. confusion in determining the motivation for purchasing and wastefulness (Mubi & Alias, 2013; Panatik, Mad Shah, & Rajab, 2004).

Generally, halal issues deal with a product's halal status. Today, halal is even gaining attention and attraction among non-Muslim consumers. For example, the concept of halal products and foods has been acknowledged and recognised as a guide, as well as a validation, for consumers to use halal goods (Ambali & Bakar, 2013).

In the consumption of halal goods, one of the issues that arises is when Muslim consumers use such halal goods in ways that are contrary to Islamic requirements, leading to negative side effects, such as wastefulness and harm to consumers, i.e. a consumer who injures their intestine from consuming spicy noodles beyond the level of organ acceptance, and the consumer eventually has to pay medical expenses of RM10,000 to diagnose the cause of the pain. Issues may be related to goods other than food, for example, a knife should function to make it easier for humans to slice or cut something; however, some people use knives as a means of killing, threatening and endangering others. Therefore, the use of such halal goods is wrong because it is harmful to others, and any treatment that brings harm is not allowed in Islam (Hanapi, 2017; Hanapi, Mastura, & Doktoralina, 2019).

Muslim researchers have developed guidelines to address the problem of consumption, particularly among Muslim consumers. For instance, Ghani et al. (2005) explained that consumption in Islam has its own philosophy, stressing wellbeing, ownership, devotion and trust. Similarly, Kassim and Zain (2016) classified the philosophy, principles, ethics, level of needs and goals of consumption in Islam. Later, Mubi and Alias (2013) explained that consumption of a product or service is lawful when it achieves the legal standards and verified goals of Sharia (*maqāsid al-sharī'a*) and demonstrates sensitivity in product or service selection. Khan (2014) further discussed the rules, norms, values and level of needs in Islam.

Since consumption also involves consumers' attitudes or stances, Furqani (2017) and Muttaqin (2013) clarified that Israf, or excessiveness and wastefulness, deviates from the Muslim consumer practice, as mentioned by Allah SWT: '...and eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess' (Al-A'raf: 31).

Generally, from the perspective of Muslim consumers, halal focuses on resource management and acquisition. Therefore, it is not surprising there are serious issues of extreme wastefulness or other problems. These issues may be due to the natural human inclination to want to fulfil desires and to dispose of the goods that are not needed or no longer useful. Consumers also have a habit of throwing away and eliminating something unfavourable to

them. An example is the food waste that occurs during the month of Ramadan due to leftovers or unsold food, which can greatly increase the amount of garbage (Bernama, 2019).

Based on the previous research and the scope of the present study, three issues require certainty. First, why is there a need for goods consumption? Second, what is the concept of halal goods consumption based on Islam? Third, what guidelines or principles have been developed that can be applied to the use of verified halal goods? The following questions arise from common issues related to goods consumption. Accordingly, based on the problem, it is necessary to research the consumption of halal goods, which can be enlightening for Muslim consumers. This information is important in achieving the final goal, which is a blessing from Allah SWT; therefore, halal goods will be discussed in the next section.

### **Halal Goods**

Goods refer to the products in a business deal (Tajudin & Tajuid, 2016). Halal means all things related to everyday life, such as food and the goods used by Muslim consumers, including beauty tools, clothing and types of equipment (Ahmad Robin Wahab, 2004).

Consumers usually obtain halal goods through two methods: 1) the conventional method that prioritises material satisfaction and 2) the Islamic method that focuses on material satisfaction, as well as honouring the merit and blessing of Allah SWT. Furthermore, these methods often go hand in hand in influencing consumers' product reviews. The conventional method of investigating consumers often examines their tastes, income and changes in dressing style according to current trends. However, a review of Islamic consumers focuses on whether the spending is based on need and according to Islamic law (Razak & Dali, 2012).

Furthermore, to possess halal goods, Islamic consumers often emphasise certain aspects. The first aspect is the source of exchange that relies on money or goods, such as the barter system, which is intended to acquire or own goods. The second aspect is the source from a slaughtering perspective for food items. The third aspect is the source of the processing and packaging. Manufactured goods typically display a halal logo to indicate their appropriateness for Islamic consumers.

Islamic consumers will focus more on halal status when it involves the selection of goods or products (Hamidon, 2017). Examples are goods or products that are newly released into the market. The halal logo should be a benchmark for ensuring the lawful use of goods. However, consumers often ignore the logo due to their confidence in the manufacturers (Suradi, Alias, Ali, & Abidin, 2015). For example, consumers may trust the goods or products produced by small Muslim traders.

Food items are among the goods that are often the subject of legal discussions. Reviews concerning the legal issues of food are regularly discussed in terms of resource selection, materials, manufacturing, production, storage, transfer, distribution and marketing (Azhar & Wahab, 2017). Furthermore, matters relating to the slaughter of animals, the use of slaughtering equipment and the conditions of sacrifice are often discussed. Therefore, various guidelines have been developed to ensure that Muslim consumers can use halal or clean goods and foods. The Qur'an provides some guidance. First, goods/foods must not contain intoxicating substances. Second, the items must not contain animal blood. Third, the item cannot be a natural human source. Fourth, the item must avoid any association with pigs. Fifth, the item must not be slaughtered under conditions that make it invalid for use (Jamaludin & Ramli, 2014). For goods other than food, Lisut (2017) reported on the use of pork derivatives on overseas' products that are not halal guaranteed, such as toothbrushes, paintbrushes and colour brushes.

From an economic perspective, manufacturers and suppliers have been motivated to produce halal goods or products due to the growing consumer acceptance and demand. These manufacturers and suppliers compete for halal certification (Muhammad, Salleh, & Mahmood, 2008). Facing the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution, Hasan Azhari Idris encouraged local companies to continue competing internationally, and the developed Islamic financial industry agreed to stimulate and promote the development of the halal industry in Malaysia to a worldwide market (Bernama, 2018).

However, this study examines the consumption of halal goods as practised by Muslim consumers. Consumption of halal goods refers to the goods linked to everything that is possessed or available to Muslim consumers, as well as how Muslim consumers handle the consumption of such halal products to ensure the consumption is acceptable to Allah SWT. These goods include food, beverages, clothing, houses, vehicles, mobile phones, etc. The consumption level of these halal products is based on the existing goods available and the goods possessed by consumers. Hence, this study also considers how halal goods should be used. As more halal goods are being produced in today's economy, it is possible there will be an inability to determine between needs and desires. The potential impact of halal goods consumption is undeniable, given the growth of the halal industry. Therefore, the consumption of these halal goods will be discussed in the next section.

### **Consumption of Halal Goods**

Consumption is everything about the consumer (Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2015; Tajudin & Tajuid, 2016). Consumption also means the social or economic rules or behaviours that encourage the purchase of goods or services (Mahajan, 2015). The products' ownership factors and uses are believed to influence consumption behaviour significantly. According to

Generasi Pengguna (2012), among the most visible cultures or influences are luxury, loyalty, wasting, advertising, greed and beauty. Perceptions, experiences, knowledge and attitudes may also influence consumption. Some consumers who use halal goods typically do not focus on the final stage because they have too broad of an understanding of how to obtain a halal item compared to an understanding of the consumption of the halal thing.

Some parties are trying to raise awareness for consumers who are likely to engage in the sale of halal goods. The rapid online sales method often attracts consumers if the products are beautifully presented; however, consumers should also consider that the halal goods purchased can cause loss, waste and potential harm. For example, a culture of ‘challenge’ has now spread among consumers. This ‘take on the challenge’ culture requires users to act and behave unexpectedly. A ‘challenge’ culture can be detrimental to consumers because of the side effects that come with such practices. This can be seen in the selection and processing stages of goods consumption in Islam, i.e., halal goods consumption does not mean the same as consuming according to Islamic law, as the adverse side effects of the use of halal goods are not claimed and prohibited in Islamic law (Muhammad & Hanapi, 2019). Therefore, the consumption of halal goods should be focused on aligning with Islamic law (Rahim & Bahari, 2018). The goal is to ensure the consumption process conforms to Islamic law and always receives the blessing of Allah SWT at every level of use.

As explained in the problem statement section, the use of halal products referred to in this article is the behavioural indications, stances, attitudes and practices of Muslim consumers towards available or possessed halal goods. The assessment of halal goods consumption does not involve the process of selecting a product before owning or processing a product whose status is still unknown to consumers; in fact, it involves the process of the halal goods they own.

Based on the features or methods of implementation in Islam that have been developed by previous researchers, it is clear that consumption level in Islam is based on three main categories: 1) the *maqāṣid al-sharī‘a*, 2) moderation and 3) value and quality.

First, the consumption level is based on the *maqāṣid al-sharī‘a*, which is critical when implementing consumption. However, in terms of halal goods consumption, the application may be from a different perspective because the three levels of consumption—*ḍarūriyyāt* (need to have), *hājiyyāt* (good to have) and *tāḥṣīniyyāt* (nice to have)—are only used to help Muslim consumers assess goods before possessing them. In the use of halal goods, the level of consumption considers the extent that it can either be beneficial or harmful, avoiding lavishness and waste in one's consumption. Examples of the harmful use of halal products from a nutritional point of view is the excessive consumption of refined foods that will cause

gout and excess fat (Kusumayanti, Wiardani, & Sugiani, 2014). In this case, consumers with gout often fail to control their diet according to their ability.

Second, consumption level is based on moderation. Consumption in Islam emphasises the simple aspect of buying or selling something. This simple feature is noteworthy as it is intended to prevent consumers from making a mistake when choosing and purchasing. Moderation also avoids the issue of wastefulness at the consumer level (Mastura & Hanapi, 2018). In the case of the consumption of halal goods, moderation ensures the use of halal goods is not excessive and moderation can have a physical and spiritual effect on Muslim consumers, such as avoiding the excess consumption of sugar that can cause diabetes, kidney damage and other health concerns.

Third, consumption level is based on value and quality. The value to the consumer and the quality of the goods are necessary for consumption in Islam due to the philosophy, truth, cleanliness, purity, usefulness and wellbeing that shapes Islamic law-abiding consumption. The philosophical setting explains that consumption in Islam differs from conventional consumption. The philosophy also has a strong foundation in ensuring that every Muslim consumer's behaviour is accompanied by monotheistic values (Mastura & Hanapi, 2018; Marangoz, 2018), thus promoting praiseworthy qualities in Islamic consumption. Both value and quality promote the truthfulness necessary in distinguishing the decree and prohibition of Allah SWT in certain consumption. In addition, cleanliness is valued in determining how hygienic or unhygienic the goods are, while purity is assessed from the legal status of the goods. Quality also considers the cleanliness of the tools used on each of these items. Furthermore, Islam is also concerned with the possible side effects of consumption. Most studies explain this value in the principle of consumption, only considering the useful things and strongly rejecting the ones that cause harm in the process of applying consumption.

Therefore, to ensure that consumers' use of halal goods is also included as a practice of worship, consumers must ensure that their activities and behaviours are always in line with Islamic law and regulation. Muslim consumers should not be too ascetic or frugal to interfere with their wellbeing and may not even use the traditional economic theory that views consumer satisfaction as the core for the consumption of halal goods (Rahim & Bahari, 2018). The Islamic economy rejects the prevailing economic ideology in the exercise of consumption. Furthermore, moderation in consumption can also serve as a link between rich and poor consumer relationships, as they complement each other's security and equality.

## **Conclusion**

The use of halal goods is the behavioural indications, stances, attitudes and practices of Muslim consumers towards available or possessed halal goods. Items must be certified and verified as halal (stated in the logo). The research on the use of halal goods is intended to help Muslim consumers avoid confusion regarding the various beliefs and norms that may affect their consumption level. However, consumption should not be so ascetic/frugal that it interferes with wellbeing, nor should Muslims use the conventional consumer theory that considers achieving consumer satisfaction as the end goal of consumption. The purpose of consumption is to ensure that Muslim consumers are not extreme in use and to guarantee that the blessings of Allah SWT can be fulfilled and achieved according to Sharia (Hanapi, 2017). Therefore, based on the analysis, Muslim consumers can apply moderation, value and quality towards the consumption of halal goods to meet the requirements and decree of Islamic law.

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