



A *MAQASID SYARIAH* PERSPECTIVE ON THE IMPORTANCE OF FOOD SAFETY DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT

Food safety is an essential factor in maintaining health and life, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, and it requires special attention and stricter Standard Operation Procedures (SOP). One of the main principles found in the *Maqasid syariah* is the preservation of life. Safe food is defined as clean and of high quality and impacts the body's health. This study is qualitative and uses content analysis methods with data collection consisting of books, documents, journals, and websites of the agencies involved. Following that, the food safety position will be analyzed from the standpoint of *Maqasid syariah* to safeguard benefits and reject harm to consumers. According to the findings of this study, the aspects of safety, quality, hygiene, and materials used in the food manufacturing process must aligned with the concept of *Maqasid syariah* to ensure consumer health and safety and this study will contribute to the enrichment of knowledge on food safety from the standpoint of *Maqasid syariah* for the benefit of the community.

Keywords: Food Safety, *Maqasid syariah*, Covid-19, Food Entrepreneur, Consumer

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INTRODUCTION

Food safety is food that is free from impurities and does not harm the body and is free from any risk (Ghani, 2019). Food Safety will be able to protect the body from food-borne disease infections that can be fatal in human life (WHO, 2021). The obligation to provide food safety for consumers is the main responsibility of the entrepreneur. Eating halal, clean, safe and quality food is a requirement of *shariah*. Allah SWT has said in the Qur'an: Surah al-Maidah: 88. In this verse, clearly shows the importance of finding halal and tayyib food. Tayyiban is referred to as food that is good for the body and does not harm the intellect and mind (Kathir, 1999).

Food that is halal and tayyib aligned with the concept of *Maqasid syariah* as an objective to make the body healthy and safe. *Maqasid syariah* is a shariah-determined objective to be implemented in order to acquire good from the servant (Al-Raysuni, 1992). The objective





of legal regulation will make people more understanding and sensitive to the commands and prohibitions contained in the commandments of Allah SWT. Shariah law, which has been imposed on humanity as a whole has a purpose, wisdom, and objective which encourages good and prevents evil (Al-Shatibi, 2004). *Maqasid syariah* is the foundation of Islamic law since Allah SWT does not create anything in vain but is full of wisdom and wisdom, as Allah SWT says in Surah al-Imran: 191.

God has created man with full perfection and taking care of the body is a duty. Body care requires safe, nutritious, and non-harmful food sources. The food served must be clean, safe, and of good quality during the manufacturing process that meets halal aspects. Ignoring food safety will cause the existence of disease-spreading agents such as foodborne diseases caused by food poisoning (WHO, 2021). This neglect starts from the selection of raw materials, processing, and sales of products. Practicing the concept of *halalan tayyiban* in the food manufacturing process will make the manufacturing chain safer and more secure (JAKIM, 2022). Among the factors that contribute to foodborne diseases in Malaysia that can be identified is less hygienic handling procedures in food preparation areas (Soon et al., 2020).

Concept of Food Safety

Food Safety can guarantee human health and life and avoid food-borne diseases caused by food contamination. Food can be contaminated through the process of preparation, processing, and storage (Soon et al., 2020). Other factors that can cause pollution are the condition of the premises and the dirty environment, unclean equipment, and neglect of personal hygiene in addition to the factor of preparing food too early before eating because inappropriate temperature and ventilation will make it easier for bacteria to multiply (My Health, 2021). The importance of complying with food manufacturing procedures is highly emphasized because it involves public health and human life (BKMM KKM, 2021). Foodborne diseases are caused by bacteria and pathogenic microorganisms found in dirty, rotten, and disgusting food. The resulting foodborne diseases are such as Salmonella bacteria, Shigella, Campylobacter and E. coli, and Hepatitis A virus (WHO, 2021).

These diseases can be avoided when hygiene and safety practices are practiced. Food safety can be improved with training and awareness about practicing hygiene practices during preparation and processing (My Health, 2021). Enforcement of food-related laws will give awareness to entrepreneurs to be more sensitive to food safety issues. Food handlers must be prepared to gain knowledge of safe food preparation by attending courses, seminars, and training organized by the authority (BKMM KKM, 2021). Consumer awareness to get safe, clean, and quality food must be high because it involves body health and life safety. Safe food will protect consumers from harm in terms of health, preparation, sale, and consumption of food (KKM Food Safety and Quality Division, 2021). The worldwide Covid-19 pandemic has increased hygiene behaviors, especially the practice of washing hands thoroughly and wearing a face mask while manufacturing and selling food.

Maqasid syariah: Definition and Concept

Maqasid syariah consists of two words namely *maqasid* and *shariah*. The word *maqasid* is Masdar Mimi derived from the verb *قصد - يقصد - قسدا* which means intention, purpose, and objective (Al-Maany, 2021). While *Shariah* comes from the verb *شرع - يشرع - شرعا* which means to settle and explain something (Mustafa, 1985). In terms of terminology, *shariah* means rules from Allah SWT to humans through Prophet Muhammad SAW (Al-Yubi, 1998). *Shariah* refers to remaining Allah SWT's commandments and always carrying out worship to Him, as well as the path that should be followed in order to fulfill religious duties (Al-Jurjani, 1987).





Therefore, everything commanded by Allah SWT has an objective and purpose to achieve the benefit of mankind. Islamic scholars have given the understanding of *Maqasid syariah* as the object and wisdom of the legal *shariah* imposed on humans to achieve benefits in this world and the hereafter and reject harm (Al-Shatibi, 2004). Allah SWT does not make something in vain without wisdom and purpose for the good of people and benefiting behind the law (Ibnu Ashur, 2001). Ahmad al-Raysuni stated that *Maqasid syariah* contained in it the goals that have been set by *shariah* to realize the welfare of humans (Al-Raysuni, 1992). He also explained that *Maqasid syariah* is a goal that *shariah* wants to achieve for the benefit of mankind. The division of *Maqasid syariah* as stated by Al-Raysuni (1992), namely: *Maqasid Ammah*, *Maqasid Khassah*, and *Maqasid Juz'iyah*. The priority of discussion in *maqasid* is *Maqasid Ammah* which is the objective of *shariah* law which determines all or most of the law.

Finally, *Maqasid syariah* is the endpoint that *shariah* law attempts to accomplish for the welfare of human beings with the aim to obtain good and reject evil.

METHODOLOGY

This study is qualitative and uses content analysis methods with data collection consisting of books, documents, journals, and websites of the agencies involved. The data obtained were analysed using the thematic method through an inductive approach to achieve the objectives of the study. The analysis is done descriptively by explaining the meaning and concept of *Maqasid syariah* as well as related to the importance of security aspects in the current and practical context throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Then, the position of food safety is assessed and determined accordingly to achieve the objective of Shariah which is to protect and preserve human life.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The Importance of Practicing Hygiene Practices Through Certification

Keeping food clean starts with the practices and attitudes of entrepreneurs who always care about product cleanliness. It starts from the selection of raw materials until the sale or serving. The attitude of entrepreneurs who are sensitive to the quality of the raw materials used will have a positive effect on the health of consumers.

Raw materials that are clean and stored perfectly can guarantee product quality. Many cases have been reported due to the careless attitude of operators who do not maintain perfect hygiene practices. Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, the government has mandated compliance with standard operating procedures to curb the virus from spreading and endangering lives (MOH, 2021). This includes always washing your hands and wearing a face mask it is a hygiene practice that has existed for a long time in food safety procedures (MOH Food Safety and Quality Division, 2021), and the practice of keeping clean and practicing food safety procedures is a good step (Soon et al., 2021).

The importance of maintaining hygiene and food safety practices is found in several certifications and recognitions practiced in Malaysia such as *Bersih*, *Selamat* dan *Sihat* or BeSS recognition. It is a recognition given to food premises operators to encourage premises operators to provide safe and clean food to customers. Other certifications such as MeSTI, GMP, and HACCP are certifications that are very necessary for the food manufacturing sector (KKM Food Safety and Quality Division, 2021). JAKIM's halal certification is one of the certifications that has met specific food safety characteristics through the halal certification procedure manual found in the certification (JAKIM, 2022). There are also other documents that have a direct relationship with food safety such as the Malaysian Standard MS 1514:2009





certificate for GMP and MS 1480: 2019 for HACCP under the Malaysian Standards Department (Malaysian Standards Department, 2021). At the global level, the World Health Organization (WHO) has made guidelines for hand washing and health care aimed at providing the right guidance to be practiced by the world's population (WHO, 2021).

Food Safety as a Factor to Preserve Health and Life

Presently, the news is often presented with cases involving dirty factories, food manufacturing operations that do not follow the rules, and also misuse of the halal logo. The case reported in Sinar Harian by Othman (2021), has given a clear picture of violations of the Food Act 1983, Food Regulations 1985, Food Hygiene Regulations 2019, and violated regulations stipulated under the jurisdiction of JAKIM as a government agency that is responsible for the halal logo in Malaysia (MoH Food Safety and Quality Division, 2021; JAKIM, 2022).

Acts and regulations created aim to provide protection to consumers through food hygiene practices, including the cleanliness of locations or areas that have been reserved for the purpose of manufacturing or processing. Mixing dirty things (*khabith*) is a serious offense that can lead to contamination and damage to food (JAKIM, 2022). A case involving dirty food manufacturing premises was reported in Sinar Harian on 22 June 2021 by Mohamed (2021), in a raid carried out by the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs (KPDNHEP) and the Ministry of Health Malaysia (KKM) in an integrated operation of crime prevention and Covid-19 monitoring. Dirt that exists as a result of premises that are not maintained, equipment that is not washed cleanly, and does not follow the correct washing method will cause diseases to spread easily. This role must be played by food handlers (Lee et al., 2017).

The Importance of *Maqasid syariah* as the Objective of Preserving Life

Hifz Nafs or protecting life is one of the principles contained in *Daruriyat al-Khams* (Al-Shatibi, 2004). According to Ibnu Ashur (2001), *Hifz Nafs* is to preserve human life from falling into destruction. Allah SWT has determined that every law that is imposed on humans has wisdom and an objective that is implied for the good of humans and does not make everything useless without an objective behind it, as the words of Allah in Surah *Al-Zariyat*: 56. The objective behind enjoying food that is halal and good as the words of Allah SWT in the Qur'an *Surah al-Baqarah*: 168, that is so that people do not follow the footsteps of the devil. According to Ibn Kathir, the devil is a nuisance that leads people astray by seducing them to engage in many different vices and avoid worshipping Allah SWT. Halal and good food will provide spiritual and physical blessings and make people strong and healthy to worship God. As a result, people will be able to distance themselves from the tricks and temptations of the devil (Kathir, 1999).

Halal and quality food can sustain human life starting from health care through safe and clean food. Hospitalization rates due to food contamination will be controlled and reduced as a result of monitoring and enforcement by the authorities to protect consumers. Consumers are protected by the Consumer Protection Act (APP) 1999 (Act 599) which came into force on 15 November 1999 (KPDNHEP, 2021). This consumer act plays a broad role in safeguarding the rights and welfare of consumers in Malaysia. The duty to take care of the welfare of consumers is included in the care and preservation of life seen holistically. It is included in the matter of *Daruriyat* which is the most important basis for getting the benefits of this world and the hereafter (Mohd Jalil et al., 2019). In the context of *Maqasid syariah*, it is included in *Daruriyat* that must be given special attention because it involves human life (Al-Shatibi, 2004). The objective of *hifz al-nafs* through the care of food safety can be realized when the food





manufacturing chain is carefully maintained through practices and practices implemented by entrepreneurs and consumers.

The Correlation between the Covid-19 Pandemic and Food Safety

Since the pandemic was declared by the World Security Organization (WHO) starting in the first quarter of 2020, consumers are very careful with their personal hygiene practices, including matters involving food. The preparation of clean, safe, and quality food has been an important agenda of the Malaysian Ministry of Health since before the pandemic through several standards that must be practiced by entrepreneurs (Food Safety and Quality Division (MOH), 2021). There is no conclusive evidence that the Covid-19 virus is transmitted by food (WHO, 2021), but the practice of keeping food clean and safe is very necessary so that life safety can be maintained through the practice of keeping clean starting with personal care, places, and equipment to prepare food.

The established food safety acts, standards, and regulations, gives a clear picture of the importance of protecting and preserving the lives of consumers through clean, safe, and quality food preparation practices. The Islamic Development Department of Malaysia (JAKIM), through the Halal Management Division, which is fully responsible for halal-related matters in Malaysia, has outlined guidelines for halal certificate holders to comply with the standards set. This was proven when the Internal Halal Control System (IHCS) and Halal Assurance System (HAS) were created to solve the problem of non-compliance in the halal industry in Malaysia (JAKIM, 2022). The monitoring carried out by the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs (KPDNHEP) against entrepreneurs who do not comply with manufacturing, manufacturing, and sales practices has given consumers confidence that food safety guarantees are taken seriously by the authorities (Majlis Keselamatan Negara (MKN), 2022).

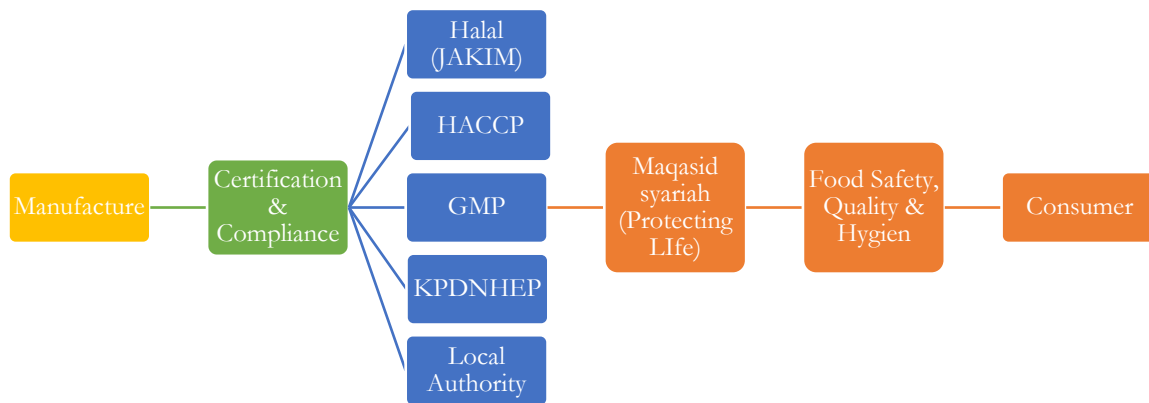


Figure 1: The Relationship of Food Safety with the Shariah Purpose of Preserving Life

CONCLUSION

From the discussion above, it can be concluded that *Maqasid syariah* is a concept that is very inclusive in promoting goods and preventing evil. Practicing hygiene practices and maintaining the food processing chain in the right way will ensure that the food is safe to eat. The position of *Maqasid syariah* as an objective of Shariah law is very important to preserve human life from the aspect of safe nutrition. It is one of the important elements that have a direct impact on the physical, mental, and spiritual. Therefore, the safety, quality, and hygiene of food must take serious emphasis to protect human life. Ignoring aspects of food safety will threaten human health and life. Various standards and certifications have been created by the government that covers aspects of food safety in a holistic manner that coincides with the concept of *Maqasid*





syariah. It must be obeyed by entrepreneurs so that the objectives of the legislation will be able to benefit people and avoid harm.

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