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### **CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN THE HALAL FOOD INDUSTRY: APPLICATION OF SUPPLY CHAIN PERSPECTIVE**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to construct a comprehensive framework for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) within the Halal food industry's supply chain. It acknowledges the increasing public attention towards corporate social responsibility (CSR) and supply chain practices in the food industry. It utilizes current literature and recent developments to provide a comprehensive understanding of CSR in the Halal context. Methodologically, this study conducts a systematic review of relevant articles and materials, forming a robust theoretical underpinning. Our findings reveal key CSR dimensions specific to the Halal food supply chain, including animal welfare, health and safety, environmental concerns, and community involvement. The proposed framework not only enhances understanding of Halal supply chain CSR practices but also sets the stage for strategic and operational improvements. Significantly, this study contributes to the scholarly conversation by integrating Islamic principles with contemporary CSR practices, offering a unique perspective that aligns business operations with ethical and religious standards.

**Keywords:** Halal, Food industry, Supply Chain, Corporate Social Responsibility

## INTRODUCTION

Over the few decades, the relevance of corporate social responsibility (CSR) to firms has expanded at an exponential rate. This is not simply a financial opportunity, but also a reflection of stakeholder expectations that must be considered. This demonstrates that there is a strong link between a successful business, competitiveness, and sustainable practices. CSR has developed from a distinct and unique notion to a generally acknowledged and enforced business practice. CSR is defined by Fernández-Guadao and Sarria-Pedroza (2018) as “the way firms interact with their communities. CSR encompasses the responsibilities that companies bear towards society beyond their economic obligations ((Carroll & Shabana, 2010). In today's business environment, characterized by increasing transparency (Iglesias et al., 2020), stakeholders are exerting greater pressure on companies to fulfill their CSR commitments. Effective communication of a company's social responsibility has emerged as a crucial aspect of corporate reputation, as it can significantly impact the organization's credibility and image (Verboven, 2011). Stakeholders commonly seek information about a company's policies and activities, prompting companies to engage in transparent communication to enhance their reputation (Smith & Huang, 2023).

In light of the growing Halal food industry, there is a critical need to examine how CSR is being applied within this context. Despite its importance, there has been limited research specifically focusing on CSR practices in the supply chains of Halal food. This study aims to fill this gap by exploring and analyzing CSR implementation in Halal food supply chains, identifying potential areas for improvement and proposing actionable strategies. The purpose of this essay is to improve both the awareness and credibility of CSR activities along the supply chains for Halal foods. It aims to address the critical research problem of under-explored CSR practices in the Halal food industry and sets specific objectives to evaluate these practices, propose improvements, and offer practical guidelines for organizations. The study serves as a foundational resource for more informed managerial decision-making and has the potential to guide public sector organizations in formulating business strategies and to allocate resources to promote the expansion of the Halal food industry.

## METHODOLOGY

The article aimed to review the CSR framework in the Halal food industry from a supply chain perspective. Thus, we conducted a review of the articles based on their scope and extracted the articles using databases such as Scopus and Google Scholar. To ensure comprehensive coverage and credibility, articles were selected based on criteria including relevance to CSR in supply chains, publication in peer-reviewed journals, and citation frequency. This approach was grounded in the systematic literature review methodology as outlined by Tranfield et al. (2003), ensuring a thorough and replicable review process. Due to the limitation of the number of full-length research articles on Halal food supply chain management, this review includes literature review papers, proceeding papers, book chapters, and other materials linked to the study. However, a detailed process was used to analyze and collect the most reliable and relevant papers for the study as described in Figure 1. This process involved categorizing articles based on key themes related to CSR in the Halal food supply chain, followed by a critical analysis of each article to identify common findings and divergent views. This is because the key to a successful review is laying the groundwork on which to build new information and theories. Thus, this study has focused on content deliveries and includes material collection on the Halal Supply chain management and evaluation for Halal food supply chain CSR perspectives.

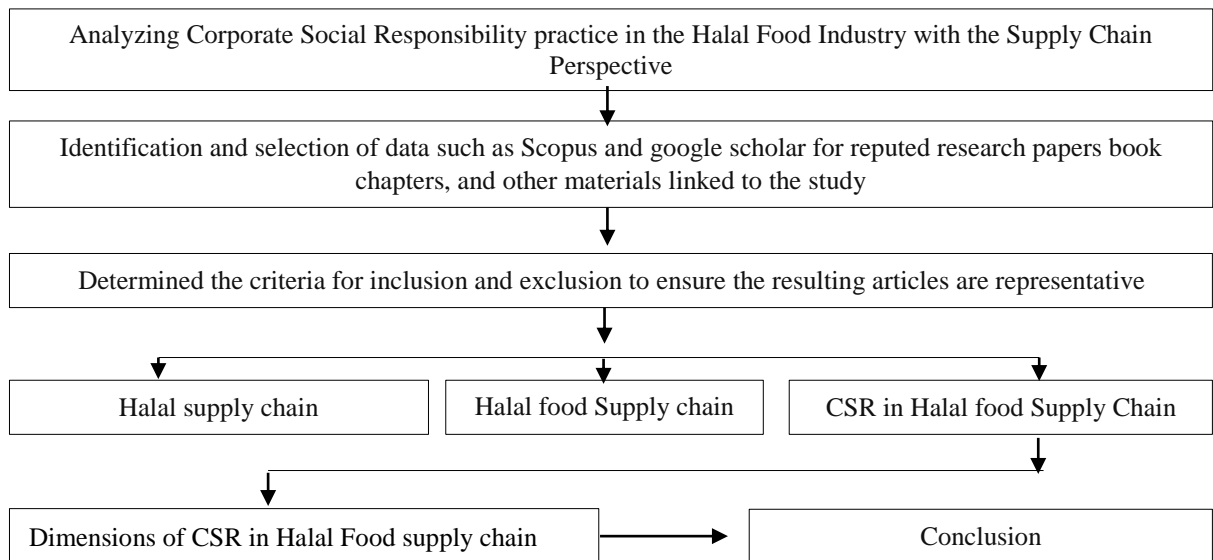


Figure 1. Flowchart describing the research methodology.

### CONVENTIONAL SUPPLY CHAIN

The conventional “supply chain” term refers to the series of organizations and individuals who work together to meet a customer's needs (Chopra and Meindl 2013). Organizations require supply chain management to safeguard that production, storage, warehousing, and shipping are all coordinated to meet customer demands (Hugos, 2006). Managing the flow of raw materials from suppliers to manufacturers, who subsequently make completed goods and arrange delivery to consumers, is the essence of supply chain management (Vonderembse, et al. 2006). Traditional supply chain planning, modeling, designing, and analysis have been primarily motivated by optimizing the acquisition of commodities from the supply chain toward the downstream shipment of goods to end consumers. Figure 1 depicts the fundamental structure of a traditional supply chain, which consists of three stages: receiving, manufacturing, and shipping. During the inbound process, companies focus on acquiring and managing their products. It includes the processes of receiving, storing, and distributing the materials sent to manufacturing facilities and offices. Meanwhile, the inverse is true for outbound logistics, which involves sending identical things out of a factory or firm, including all of those processes before they reach the final consumer. Raw materials and finished goods were all moved from producers upstream to consumers downstream (Rasi et al., 2017).

### HALAL SUPPLY CHAIN

It is only feasible to have belief in products and services labeled as halal if safety measures are taken as early as possible in the supply chain, beginning with the sourcing stage. As described in Figure. 2, there is a constant stream of items and information flow from producers to consumers. This flow can be considered a continuous cycle. The Figure shows how halal checkpoints are included in the whole supply chain to guarantee halal compliance at every stage. Similar to conventional supply chain management, the concept of a halal supply chain emphasizes efficiency and effectiveness. However, it also places special emphasis on endorsing products and services based on their compliance with halal standards. It is only feasible to have belief in products and services labeled as halal if safety measures are taken as early as possible in the supply chain, beginning with the sourcing stage. As described in Figure. 2, there is a constant stream of items and information flow from producers to consumers. This flow can be considered a continuous cycle. The Figure shows how halal checkpoints are included in the whole supply chain to guarantee halal compliance at every stage. Similar to conventional supply chain management, the concept of a halal supply chain

emphasizes efficiency and effectiveness. However, it also places special emphasis on endorsing products and services based on their compliance with halal standards (Mohamed et al., 2016). Halal supply chain can be described as the construction and operation of halal corporate policies and operations that improve market positioning and boost profitability. The major objective of every step in the production of the product and distribution processes that make up a halal supply chain is to ensure that all halal products continue to maintain their integrity and high standards throughout the whole process. It is absolutely necessary for businesses to keep halal standards in mind and to factor them into their planning at every level. Halal supply chain comprised of the following four stages: This encompasses (1) Halal sourcing, (2) Halal production, (3) Halal retail, and (4) Halal supply chain management. If companies wish to take part in the halal supply chain, they have to ensure that they are adhering to the minimal requirements that have been established by MS 1500. For example, every stage of the manufacturing process needs to be carried out in a way that is compliant with the halal guidelines.

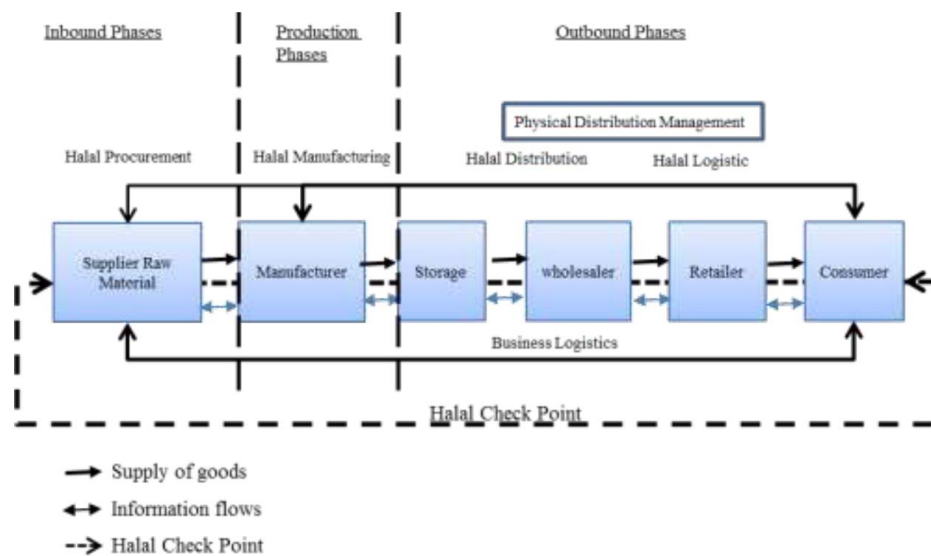


Figure 2. Model of Halal Supply Chain Management (Source Rasi et al., 2017).

## HALAL FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN

The Halal supply-chain management of food products necessitates that each of the chain members functions as a provider to an initial chain member and as a customer for another. Any perceptual disparities will add to inefficiencies within the supply chain's daily operations and the marketplace. These kinds of inefficiencies are most usually manifested in the form of a decline in the halal status, quality, or quantity of the output. In the case of food products like poultry and meat, for instance, the manufacturers of these goods have a responsibility to verify that the animal feed they use is produced using halal components. This component is of the utmost importance since the halal status of these animals will be affected and tainted in any way that involves the use of ingredients that are not halal (Othman and Sungkar, 2009). Ensuring the halal status of food goes beyond just the product itself; it extends to the entire supply chain, including the slaughtering of livestock in accordance with Islamic Shariah standards. Any deviation from these standards can render the entire supply chain non-halal. Furthermore, the post-slaughter stage requires careful attention. Transportation (whether refrigerated or non-refrigerated), warehousing, and storage activities must also adhere to Shariah regulations to prevent issues such as mixed storage and cross-contamination (Zailani et al., 2010). The comprehensive management of the supply chain is crucial in maintaining the integrity of the halal food supply chain. This includes aspects such as the production of halal raw materials, supplier selection, adherence to halal standards in the manufacturing process, transportation, wholesaling, and retailing, as depicted in Figure 3. These efforts are essential to ensure the halal status of food products throughout the entire journey, from farm to fork. It is imperative for all stages of the supply

chain, starting from upstream production, to prioritize and maintain the halal status of the food until it reaches the downstream consumers.

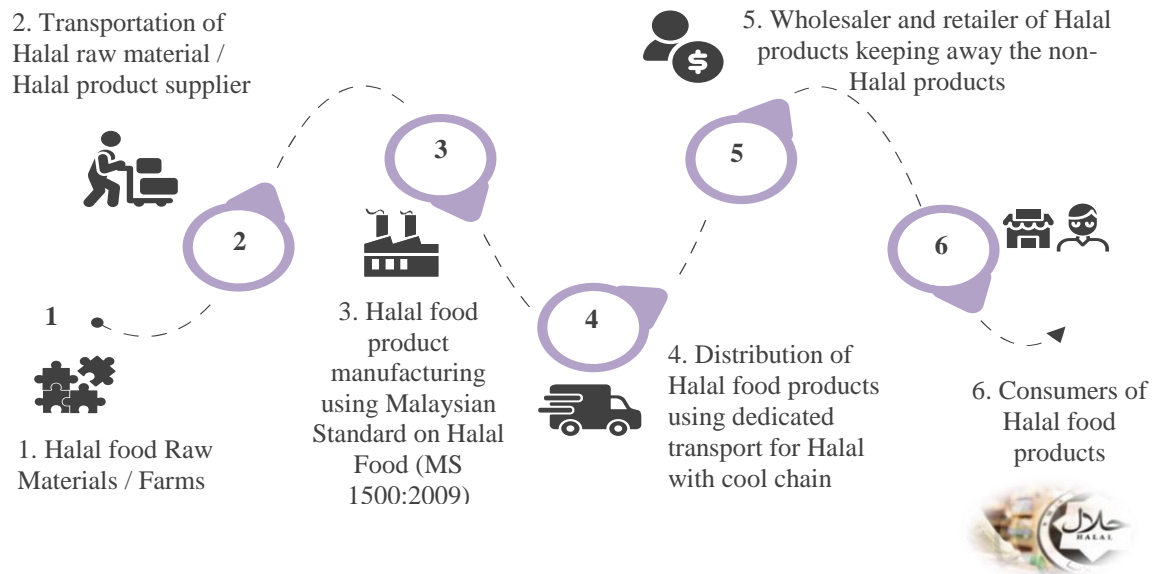


Figure 3. Halal Food Supply chain from Farm to fork

### CSR DIMENSION IN HALAL FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN

The term "halal," which has its roots in the Arabic language and can be understood as lawful according to Islamic Sharia principles, is central to the idea of Islam as applied to the CSR practice of the food supply chain. This concept is not only about compliance with dietary laws but also embodies a broader ethical and social responsibility. The term "halal" is most often used in reference to food that is authorized under Islamic law, but it encompasses all aspects of Muslim life, thus referring to a comprehensive system business in the food industry should adhere to. This system integrates Islamic values with CSR practices, extending beyond mere profitability to include ethical considerations and social justice (Suhana et al., 2014). In contrast to existing models, this study uniquely explores how Islamic principles specifically influence CSR in the Halal food supply chain, thereby offering a new perspective on the integration of religion and business ethics. Both buyers and sellers in a Halal market are regulated by Islamic principles, where the practice of CSR is viewed as an ethical and religious endeavor, founded on the value that a business should employ sound management strategies regardless of the bottom line. The unique aspect of this study is its focus on how Islamic principles guide the balance between profitability and ethical responsibilities in the Halal food industry, which is distinct from conventional CSR models (Parvez, 2000). The next paragraphs along with the figure 4, will elaborate on the dimensions of CSR applied to the Halal food supply chain in light of Islamic principles, demonstrating how this approach differentiates from existing CSR models in the food industry.

#### Animal welfare

Industrial farming has been established in a number of developing nations, mostly in Asia and Latin America, in search of efficiency and scale economies. The bulk of animal products is produced in severe confinement systems with no lighting and minimal or no exercise, depriving animals of the capacity to live in accordance with their species' natural behavior. Additionally, they are stressed beyond their physiological capacities in order to produce countless numbers of eggs, lots of milk, and kilos of flesh. Furthermore, the environs of industrial farms may be filthy and inadequately ventilated, generating concerns about animal health. Despite the fact that industrial farming could assist the local industry in cutting costs, this technique is contrary to Islamic ideals. Animal welfare in the Halal food supply chain should emphasize the gentle treatment of animals, particularly those reared for human consumption. Halal food farmers should be concerned with how animals are bred

and fed, as well as how they are handled during transit and slaughter. Animal cruelty is considered a sin. Islamic teaching condemns cruelty to animals, including confinement to intensive rearing, because this compromises animal welfare and deprives them of fundamental needs like as exercise and fresh air (Rahman and (Suhana et al., 2014). Halal food suppliers are prohibited from selling animals that have been strangled or brutally blown to death, fallen or gored to death, or devoured in part by a wild animal. The Halal slaughtering of animals should be a speedy, humane, and relatively painless death for the animal. The animal should be slaughtered following Halal slaughtering guidelines such as Malaysian protocol for Halal meat production described by Malaysian Standard MS 1500:2009 Halal Food – Production, Preparation, Handling, and Storage – General Guidelines (Second Revision).

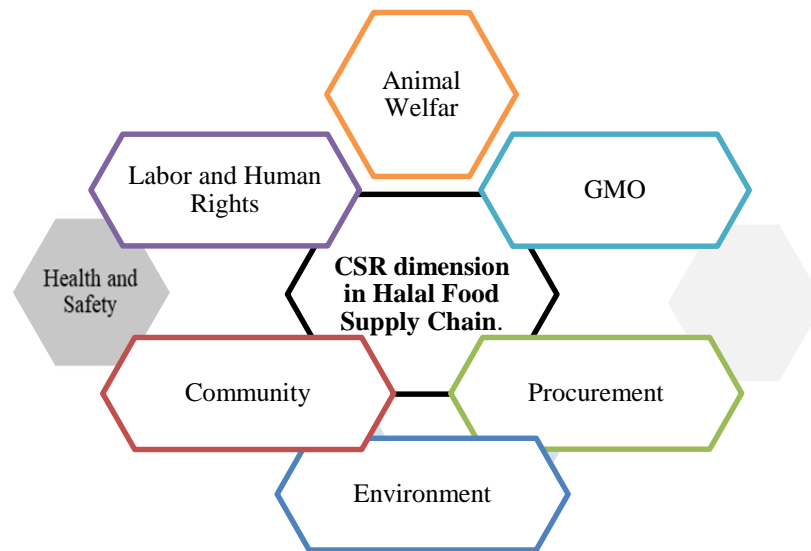


Figure 4. Dimensions of CSR in Halal Food Supply Chain.

### Genetically modified organism

Genetically modified organisms (GMO) are plants, vegetables, or animals that have had their DNA changed using biotechnology. This is done by taking a gene from one species and putting it into another species that is not related to it by evolution. So, biotechnologically modified foods may be good because they increase the amount of food that can be grown, add nutrients, and help the environment. However, the process of changing genes, on the other hand, is controversial. Some Muslim scholars suggest that changing physical traits is not allowed because God is the Supreme Power and Creator and no one can or would try to mess with His power. However, for human use, there are two ways to look at it: either changing something is done just for the sake of changing it (no reason other than to make it look better, like in cosmetics or face surgery), or changing something is done for a good reason (to help people), but it doesn't hurt nature or other animals. Some think that genetic modifications are okay, even though they are not clearly mentioned in Holy Quran or by Prophet Muhammad (Hadith). This is because genetic engineering is a fairly new idea. By the Qiyas and Ijma, the GMO production that may inline Halal Food supply chain process, may be allowed, with some restrictions, if it improves the nutritional value of plants/ animals for the good of people while the alteration of the gene within Halal animals and plants.

### Health and Food Safety

The supply chain for halal food must adhere to rigorous standards of cleanliness and sanitation because only clean and risk-free goods are permitted to be consumed in accordance with Islamic law. The potential risks to human health are the driving force behind the bans on some types of animal products being consumed by people. For instance, Muslims are not permitted to consume carrion or the meat of deceased animals because doing so can result in the production of toxins that

are detrimental for human body. The blood extracted from animals contains harmful microorganisms and toxins, which can negatively impact human health (Ambali and Bakar, 2013). Similarly, milk is considered a ideal food due to its rich content of protein, calcium, and vitamins A and B. However, this beneficial quality can only be obtained from lawful animals that are alive and in good health. The Islamic method of slaughter, which ensures complete bleeding out of the animal, provides customers with a perception of reduced bacterial infection risk, leading to healthier meat (Bonne & Verbeke, 2006).

From Islamic perspective, the concept of the "Halal food supply chain" encompasses more than just the food itself. It emphasizes the compliance of food operators with various hygiene practices, including personal hygiene, proper clothing, equipment, and hygienic premises for food processing and production. Consequently, food products manufactured in accordance with the principles of Halal are guaranteed to be safe and have no adverse effects on consumers. Therefore, manufacturers must adhere to the guidelines of Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) and Good Hygiene Practice (GHP), supported by the Halal Certification Body, to ensure the handling of health and safety concerns.

Product credibility is of highest reputation to consumers in the Halal food industry, as they rely on operators to ensure the Halal status of the product. Certain characteristics cannot be assessed by consumers, even after consumption of the product, which can lead to uncertainty regarding product quality during the pre-purchase phase (Andersen, 1994; Suhana et al., 2014).

### **Environment**

The food industry is interconnected with a range of environmental challenges, such as the proper handling of manure, prevention of water and soil contamination, mitigation of deforestation, and the responsible use of chemicals like pesticides and fertilizers. It is also important to consider environmental factors such as food miles, which refer to the distance food travels from farm to consumer, contributing to fuel consumption and contributing to global warming. The increasing awareness and concern among consumers about the environmental impact of the food industry have prompted the adoption of sustainable farming practices and the reduction of chemical usage throughout the farming process (Maloni & Brown, 2006).

In a world plagued by pollution, deforestation, climate change, and desertification, environmental concerns are often put in the back burner in favour of economic gains. However, according to Islam, human interaction with nature should not only be for personal gain but also to support the continuous progress of all beings towards perfection. This perspective suggests that resources should be utilized in the best possible manner to ensure their transformation into improved forms. Islam considers environmental destruction and contamination as hindrances to human ascension towards higher realms and hinderance from transcending the inanimate level of nature to the deeper realms of the phenomenal world. Environmental protection in Islam includes avoiding excessive consumption that leads to waste and utilizing resources in a responsible manner (Aminzadeh, 2013). To maintain the balance of Allah SWT's created nature, manufacturers involved in the Halal food supply chain must prioritize environmental development and sustainability by implementing effective plans during the production of their products.

### **Labor and Human Rights**

The core principles of labor and human rights revolve around the fair treatment of individuals in the workplace, encompassing aspects such as working conditions, compensation, and equality. In the food production industry, a significant number of farmers and agricultural workers are exposed to hazardous farm chemicals, which raises concerns regarding their safety. Moreover, these individuals often face the plight of low wages, which prevent them from breaking free from the cycle of poverty. These practices prevalent in the industry are contrary to Islamic principles that emphasize fair treatment and justice. The practices like slavery should be outlawed throughout the whole Halal food supply chain, from the workforce in production to that in the sale, and work should be viewed as a contract with a required benefit. Such contracts can only be entered into by those who have attained

puberty, which makes child labor inconsistent with Islamic principles (Zinkins and Williams 2006). To eliminate any ambiguity, the contract should clearly specify how employees would be treated, their perks, and the nature of their jobs. Hiring individuals for unclear labor is regarded as possibly discriminatory in the halal food supply chain. Muslims believe that it is their religious obligation to protect the rights of all people, as any form of oppression is seen as a hindrance to God's will and creational design. A Muslim also holds that regardless of one's nationality, family, income, or gender, no one may claim superiority in this regard because God created all people to be equal as human beings. Islam fosters a culture of love and brotherhood, and it is the employer's duty to look out for the welfare and advancement of his staff. The workers in halal production and supply should receive fair pay, appropriate working conditions, and a suitable workplace. Discrimination against any individual or group based on their inherent rights as human beings contradicts the principles of Islamic faith. Islamic practice rejects any notion of superiority based on origin or power, recognizing the importance of equality among all individuals. Upholding human rights and promoting equality are integral aspects of this belief system.

## **Community**

Islamic doctrine places a strong emphasis on community and encompasses a wide range of activities aimed at assisting others. One such practice is the payment of zakat, which involves allocating a portion of one's wealth to support the poor and needy. This obligation highlights the responsibility of Muslims to provide a basic social safety net for their fellow believers (Muwazir, 2006). Zakat serves as a tool to promote economic balance within a country, allowing the impoverished and disadvantaged to improve their quality of life and break free from the cycle of poverty. Unlike traditional taxes, zakat is viewed by Muslims as a means of purification rather than a mere financial obligation. It encourages the sharing of wealth and the elimination of greed. Muslims believe that the more they give selflessly to others, the more they will receive in return. Therefore, within the Halal food supply chain, the theory suggests that food manufacturers or producers should engage in economic activities not solely for personal wealth accumulation, but also to support and assist those who are less fortunate.

## **Fair Trade**

The lowering of trade restrictions has resulted in significant economic gains and increased wealth for a great many people. Despite this, small-scale farmers in the halal supply chain are having a difficult time competing in a market that is dominated by giant multinational corporations. This is especially true for farmers whose livelihood is dependent on a single-crop plantation. Because of this circumstance, many of them have limited possibilities for generating income, and as a result, many of them live in poverty, frequently being unable to meet even their most fundamental requirements. The religion of Islam does not remain silent on topics related to commercial justice and fair commerce. In point of fact, Islamic teachings have established very high moral standards, ethics, values, and norms of behavior to control the activities of buying and selling. These guidelines can be broken down into four categories: Prices are required to be determined honestly in Islam, and the practice of regulating prices is discouraged (Zinkin and Williams 2006). This is due to the fact that increases and decreases in prices can be attributed to a variety of variables apart from the avarice of traders, and that setting prices can put both public and private interests in jeopardy. Despite this, monopolistic business practices are prohibited in the Halal food supply chain since they result in exploitation, disrupt the normal operations of free markets, and encourage price manipulation. Trading on the basis of uncertainty is also prohibited because doing so will put one party in a position of disadvantage (Zinkin, 2007). For instance, it is forbidden to exchange freshly picked fruits for dry fruits that have already been harvested and for which the quantity and weight are already known. It would appear that the tenets of fair trade, which are centered on fairness, equity, and justice, and the teachings of Islam are completely harmonious with one another. Fairtrade is an approach that is centered on fairness, equity, and justice. When seen from an Islamic point of view, there are, in fact, numerous compelling and unmistakable reasons to back efforts that promote fair trade. Muslims might ensure that producers, specific farmers, receive a fair price by fostering fair trade in the Halal food supply chain. This would provide a living wage for the farmers and assist in poverty elevation.



## **Procurement**

In any company involved in the Halal food supply chain, the procurement process has the potential to become a conduit for bribery and other forms of corruption. Because of the veil of secrecy that surrounds it, this method of conducting business continues to be a complete enigma to the general public. Instead of being exclusively directed by considerations like price, quality, and delivery time, purchasing employees have been known to be influenced by bribery, gifts, and other forms of entertainment as a means of favoring particular suppliers. This practice is still prevalent today (Suhana et. al., 2014). Within the Halal food supply chain, corruption is regarded as completely undesirable due to the fact that it indicates uneven treatment. If we give or take bribes, we are acting in an unjust manner toward the individual and the community that is hurt by the actions that are being bribed. A supplier of halal food products encourages businesses to practice transparency in their purchasing procedures. For instance, transactions involving businesses need to be governed by contracts that are explicit and written down.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study builds upon existing research by emphasizing the integration of Islamic teachings and practices within the framework of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Halal food supply chains. The novelty of this research lies in its focused examination of how Islamic principles uniquely shape CSR in the Halal food industry, an aspect that has not been extensively explored in previous studies. The concept of CSR within the Halal food supply chain is rooted in references from the Quran and Hadith, illustrating that social responsibility is a fundamental aspect of Islamic values and teachings. This study distinctly shows how Islamic principles guide businesses in balancing profitability with ethical responsibilities, setting it apart from conventional CSR models. Moreover, the development of CSR within the Halal food supply chain has the potential to alleviate poverty while fostering economic growth. Our research contributes a new perspective to the existing literature by providing a detailed analysis of CSR practices in the Halal food industry, enriched with Islamic ethical principles. The present article underlines the significance of doing more research, particularly empirical data, to enhance this conceptual inquiry. In conclusion, this study offers a unique contribution by presenting a novel integration of religion and business ethics in the context of CSR, specifically within the Halal food supply chain.

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