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Analysis of Consumption from the Perspective of the Qur'an

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Abstract

This article aims to analyze the Qur'anic verses related to the concept of consumption. Consumption is a human activity that involves utilizing goods or services with the purpose of fulfilling life's necessities, either gradually or instantaneously. This study employs a qualitative method, using primary data from the Qur'an and its interpretations by various exegetes. The qualitative data were collected through interpretive analysis and literature reviews involving classical and contemporary tafsir books such as those by Ibn Kathir and Al-Misbah. The data were then analyzed using a descriptive approach. The findings identified three main verses that address consumption: Surah Al-Baqarah (2:168) emphasizes food as a basic necessity; Al-Baqarah (2:172) highlights the importance of consuming *halal* food; and Al-A'raf (7:31) discusses the etiquette of dressing and the prohibition of extravagance in consumption. These verses demonstrate that Islamic consumption must be guided by principles of moderation, ethics, and compliance with religious teachings.

Keywords: Al-A'raf; Al-Baqarah; consumption; Qur'anic economics; moderation

INTRODUCTION

This study originates from the limited understanding of Qur'anic verses that address the economic dimensions of consumption. This limitation highlights the need for a more in-depth analysis of consumption from an Islamic perspective. Although the Qur'an provides clear guidance regarding consumption and its mechanisms, these teachings are often not comprehensively understood or applied. Hence, this research aims to explore and analyze the Qur'anic verses that specifically discuss consumption, with the goal of achieving a deeper and more holistic comprehension.

Previous studies on economic-related verses concerning consumption have been conducted from various perspectives. First, Kasdi explains that the term *consumption* is

derived from the Dutch word *consumptie*, referring to the act of using or diminishing the utility of goods or services, whether as labor or product, to address needs and solve problems directly.

Second, Fauroni asserts that consumption involves the use or rental of goods, labor, or products with the intention of resolving needs. Buyers, in this sense, are defined as individuals or groups who act as clients of labor and products. When a purchase is made with the intent to resell, the individual becomes a trader.

Third, Sodikin interprets consumption as the act of utilizing or benefitting from goods and services produced by others. From an Islamic viewpoint, consumption is an integral component of economic activity aimed at attaining well-being in both worldly and spiritual dimensions.

Fourth, Lutfi emphasizes that while the definition of consumption in Islamic economics is similar to that in conventional economics, it is distinguished by its spiritual and ethical dimensions. In Islam, consumption must align with *shariah* principles, with a strong emphasis on moral intent and permissible means.

Fifth, Sodokin (in a separate work) reaffirms that in Islam, consumption is not merely the satisfaction of needs, but also a spiritual act that can earn divine reward if conducted within the parameters of halal and ethical consumption. The Qur'an repeatedly reminds believers to maintain balance, avoid excess, and consume only what is good and beneficial for both body and soul. Allah, in His infinite mercy, has granted humans various blessings to enjoy, including food, clothing, and animals, as long as these are used in moderation and with gratitude.

Although the topic has been widely studied, existing literature predominantly emphasizes definitions, theoretical frameworks, and comparisons between conventional and Islamic economic perspectives. However, few studies provide a thorough analysis of the exegetical interpretation (*tafsir*) of economic verses in the Qur'an relating to consumption. Thus, this research seeks to fill that gap through a comprehensive examination of key Qur'anic verses and their interpretations, focusing specifically on consumption-related content.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative research approach, appropriate for the exploration of conceptual and textual data that cannot be quantified numerically. The research specifically focuses on the analysis of Qur'anic verses that pertain to the concept of consumption, using interpretative methodologies.

The primary data sources comprise verses from the Qur'an and their interpretations by both classical and contemporary Muslim scholars (*mufassir*), along with supporting insights from Islamic jurists (*fuqahā'*). These sources are categorized as secondary data, given that they are derived through literature rather than direct empirical observation.

According to Hasna Latifatunnisa, qualitative data refers to information that cannot be expressed numerically. In this context, the study relies heavily on interpretive reading and thematic analysis of selected verses and their exegeses, particularly those found in notable *tafsir* works such as *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* and *Tafsir Al-Misbah*.

The data collection technique utilized is literature review, involving in-depth textual study of interpretive commentaries related to consumption. This method is often employed in Islamic studies to extract theological and ethical meanings from

scriptural sources. The research emphasizes unstructured or open-ended inquiry to allow for nuanced interpretation of religious texts.

Data analysis in this study is conducted through content analysis, a method suitable for examining religious texts. This involves the systematic identification, classification, and interpretation of Qur'anic verses related to consumption, with attention to linguistic, theological, and ethical dimensions.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Definition of Consumption

In economic terms, consumption refers to the activity of utilizing the utility value of goods and services to satisfy personal or communal needs. A person who engages in consumption is referred to as a consumer. Consumption is a deliberate human action aimed at reducing or exhausting the utility of labor and products, either gradually or immediately, for the fulfillment of life's necessities and human survival.

In the broader framework of economic activity, consumption serves as a central component. It represents the endpoint of economic production and distribution, thereby playing a pivotal role in sustaining the economic cycle. Goods and services consumed typically originate from the labor and production of others, who act as producers or service providers.

In the context of the Indonesian language and culture, consumption encompasses the use of creative products, food ingredients, and services. Examples include dining at a restaurant, receiving a haircut at a salon, or consulting a medical specialist. While such activities are commonly associated with daily life, Islam frames them within a broader spiritual and ethical context.

According to Islamic teachings, the purpose of consumption extends beyond mere material satisfaction. It serves both worldly and spiritual objectives. The former includes meeting needs such as food, clothing, shelter, education, healthcare, and recreation. The latter, however, involves ensuring that the means and items consumed are *halal* (permissible) and beneficial, thereby contributing to the individual's spiritual well-being and ultimate salvation. For example, purchasing a vehicle with halal income and using it for permissible purposes contributes to both physical mobility and spiritual merit. Conversely, if the same vehicle is acquired through illicit means, it undermines both dimensions of well-being.

Consumption also holds strategic importance within the financial system. It stimulates production and distribution, thereby driving economic growth. As such, consumption is not only a personal act but also a factor that influences macroeconomic stability and development.

The Purpose of Consumption in Islam

In Islam, consumption is viewed as a human activity that involves the reduction or utilization of goods and services in a manner that gradually or immediately fulfills individual needs. However, the concept extends beyond material satisfaction to include spiritual significance.

From an Islamic perspective, there are three core objectives of consumption:

- 1. Reducing or eliminating the utility value of perishable goods:** Certain goods, such as food and beverages, must be consumed within a specific timeframe. If not used promptly, they will decay, become

obsolete, or lose their functional value. Consumption of these items ensures that they serve their intended purpose before they spoil, thus avoiding waste.

2. **Gradual utilization of durable goods:** Other goods, such as clothing, furniture, and vehicles, have a longer usage life. Their utility value diminishes over time through repeated use. Consumption in this category involves the sustained utilization of these items for practical purposes over an extended period, making them long-term investments in fulfilling daily needs.
3. **Fulfillment of physical and spiritual needs:** The ultimate aim of consumption in Islam is to satisfy both bodily and spiritual necessities. Physical needs include eating, drinking, exercise, and healthcare, while spiritual needs encompass religious practices, seeking knowledge, and recreational activities that do not contravene Islamic ethics. For instance, engaging in worship or reading beneficial books satisfies the soul, while eating nourishing food maintains physical strength to perform acts of devotion.

Islam integrates consumption with moral consciousness. Every act of consumption should align with *shariah* principles, be free from extravagance, and contribute to the individual's well-being in both this life and the hereafter. This dual purpose emphasizes that consumption is not merely an economic act, but a form of worship when conducted responsibly and ethically.

Factors Affecting Consumption

Consumption patterns are shaped by individual preferences and influenced by several interrelated factors. These factors determine the type, quantity, and frequency of goods and services consumed over a given period. In the Islamic economic framework, these influences are acknowledged but must be managed within ethical and religious boundaries.

Key factors affecting consumption include:

1. **Income**
Income level significantly impacts consumption behavior. As income increases, individuals tend to consume more goods and services, particularly those beyond basic necessities. Conversely, lower income constrains consumption to essential needs.
2. **Education**
Education influences consumer awareness and decision-making. Individuals with higher educational attainment generally have greater awareness of quality, health, and ethical aspects of consumption. They are more likely to make informed choices that align with Islamic ethical values.
3. **Prices of Goods and Services**
The price of goods and services directly affects consumption levels. As prices rise, demand typically decreases, particularly for non-essential items. This principle also applies in Islamic economics, which encourages moderation and discourages wasteful spending.
4. **Family Size**

The number of family members affects the quantity of goods consumed. Larger families require more resources to meet collective needs, whereas smaller families may consume less overall.

5. Gender

Consumption patterns often vary between genders due to different preferences, roles, and responsibilities. These differences can influence spending behavior in specific categories such as clothing, personal care, and household goods.

6. Desires and Lifestyle Preferences

Personal tastes, fashion trends, and lifestyle aspirations significantly influence consumption. Islam acknowledges individual preferences but cautions against excessive consumption driven solely by vanity or materialism.

7. Cultural Norms and Habits

Customs and traditions within a community or region shape consumption patterns. These cultural factors may influence the types of food, clothing, and entertainment consumed, and must be balanced with Islamic values to avoid harmful or prohibited practices.

8. Financing and Debt

In conventional economics, consumption is often linked to borrowing. Traditional economists argue that higher borrowing costs may discourage consumption and encourage saving. In Islam, while borrowing is permitted under certain conditions, consumption fueled by unsustainable debt is discouraged. Ethical financing and the avoidance of *riba* (usury) are critical considerations in Islamic consumption behavior.

In summary, while various socio-economic factors influence consumption, Islam provides ethical guidelines to regulate these influences. Consumption must be driven by necessity and purpose, not by extravagance or imitation, ensuring that every act of consumption aligns with faith, responsibility, and moderation.

Verses of the Qur'an About Consumption

In Islamic teachings, consumption—particularly of food and drink—is considered essential to physical and spiritual well-being. The Qur'an addresses the ethics, conditions, and boundaries of consumption, emphasizing moderation, permissibility (*halal*), and gratitude. Among the numerous verses that discuss consumption, three are particularly relevant to this study: Surah al-Baqarah verses 168 and 172, and Surah al-A'raf verse 31.

Surah al-Baqarah (2:168)

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا ۝ وَلَا تَتَبَرَّوْا حُطُومَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ ۝ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَذُوبٌ مُّبِينٌ

Transliteration: *Yā ayyuhā al-nāsu kūlū mimmā fī al-ardī ḥalālan ṭayyibān wa lā tattabi‘ū khuṭūwātī al-shayṭān, innāhu lakum ‘aduwwun mubīn.*

Translation: O mankind, eat of what is lawful and good on earth and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy. (*Qur'an, Surah al-Baqarah, 2:168*)

This verse is a general directive addressed to all humanity, emphasizing that what is consumed must meet two conditions: it must be *halāl* (permissible) and *tayyib* (pure and beneficial). It warns against following Satanic temptations that lead to excessiveness or the prohibition of what Allah has allowed.

Surah al-Baqarah (2:172)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُلُوا مِنْ طَيَّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِلَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ إِيمَانَكُمْ تَعْبُدُونَ

Transliteration: *Yā ayyuhā alladhīna āmanū kulū min ṭayyibāti mā razaqnākum wa-ishkurū lillāh in kuntum iyyāhu ta 'budūn.*

Translation: O you who believe, eat of the good things We have provided for you and be grateful to Allah if it is Him you worship. (Qur'an, Surah al-Baqarah, 2:172)

Addressing the believers specifically, this verse builds on the previous one by adding the spiritual dimension of gratitude. It connects lawful consumption with sincere worship, suggesting that true servitude to Allah is expressed in how one consumes sustenance and acknowledges its Source.

Surah al-A'raf (7:31)

يَا بَنِي آدَمْ خُذُوا مِنْ تَنَكِّثُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مسْجِدٍ وَكُلُوا وَاشْرُبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا ۚ إِنَّمَا لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ

Transliteration: *Yā banī 'Ādam khudhū zinatakum 'inda kulli masjidin wa-kulū wa-ishrabū wa-lā tusrifū, innahu lā yuhibbu al-musrifīn.*

Translation: O children of Adam, wear your adornment at every place of worship, and eat and drink, but do not be excessive. Indeed, He does not like those who are excessive. (Qur'an, Surah al-A'raf, 7:31)

This verse emphasizes the ethics of modesty and moderation. It encourages believers to dress appropriately for worship and to consume food and drink without excess. The concluding statement highlights that extravagance is disliked by Allah, reinforcing the principle of balance in consumption.

Interpretation of Qur'anic Verses on Consumption

The interpretation (*tafsir*) of the Qur'anic verses related to consumption reveals significant ethical and spiritual insights about human behavior and the proper use of worldly resources. The analysis here focuses on the three previously cited verses: al-Baqarah (2:168, 2:172) and al-A'raf (7:31), drawing from the exegesis of classical scholars such as Ibn Kathīr, Nawawī al-Bantanī, and contemporary interpreters like M. Quraish Shihab.

Tafsir of Surah al-Baqarah (2:168)

"O mankind, eat of what is lawful and good on earth and do not follow the footsteps of Satan..."

M. Quraish Shihab, in *Tafsir al-Misbah*, explains that this verse was revealed to correct the practices of certain pre-Islamic Arab tribes—such as Banu Mudlij and Banu Thaqif—who had arbitrarily forbidden certain animals like *sā'ibah* and *baḥīrah*. The verse invites all people to benefit from what Allah has made lawful (*halāl*) and good (*tayyib*), indicating both legal and physical or moral purity. It further warns against emulating Satan's ways, which include distorting religious laws and encouraging extremism.

Shaykh Nawawī al-Bantanī elaborates that the word *tayyib* denotes food that is beneficial and non-harmful, and *halāl* indicates what is religiously permitted. Satan's influence, in this context, manifests through misleading people into believing that certain permissible things are forbidden. Abu Bakr al-Jazā'irī adds that *tayyib* refers to what is naturally pure and agreeable to human nature, and that Satan's "footsteps" refer to progressive steps of disobedience that begin with small innovations or extremities.

Tafsir of Surah al-Baqarah (2:172)

"O you who believe, eat of the good things We have provided for you and be grateful to Allah..."

This verse targets believers, emphasizing gratitude in conjunction with lawful consumption. Nawawī al-Bantanī interprets *tayyibāt* as wholesome provisions such as crops and livestock, and underlines that expressing gratitude for them is an integral part of worship. Ibn Kathīr remarks that lawful and wholesome consumption facilitates the acceptance of prayer, while unlawful consumption hinders it.

According to Dr. Muhammad Sulaiman al-Ashqar in *Zubdat al-Tafsīr*, the phrase *eat from the good things We have provided* implies that there should be no self-imposed prohibitions unless expressly forbidden by Allah. The conditional clause *if you worship Him alone* further connects gratitude and righteous consumption to true monotheism.

Quraish Shihab observes that this verse aligns spiritual integrity with dietary discipline, suggesting that the way one consumes is a reflection of their obedience to divine guidance. He further highlights how the Qur'an anticipates modern health standards, for example, in prohibiting carrion, blood, and swine flesh due to their harmful content.

Tafsir of Surah al-A'rāf (7:31)

"O children of Adam, wear your adornment at every mosque, and eat and drink, but do not be excessive..."

This verse addresses both physical presentation and consumption ethics. Historically, as narrated by Ibn 'Abbās and others, the verse corrects the practice of circumambulating the Ka'bah while naked, urging believers to cover their *'awrah* and dress appropriately, especially in worship settings.

The phrase *eat and drink, but do not be excessive* is, according to Imam al-Bukhārī's report from Ibn 'Abbās, a comprehensive command to enjoy worldly provisions within limits. Excessiveness (*isrāf*) is condemned as it leads to waste, ingratitude, and health issues. Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah, as cited by Ibn al-Qayyim, emphasized that moderation in consumption is a matter of religious etiquette (*adab*), not just physical health.

Quraish Shihab explains that this verse integrates aesthetic and ethical considerations: Islam encourages believers to maintain dignity and cleanliness, especially in worship, and warns that immoderate behavior—even in lawful matters—can corrupt both body and soul.

Correlation of Qur'anic Verses al-Baqarah 2:168, 2:172, and al-A'rāf 7:31

The verses examined in this study—Surah al-Baqarah (2:168, 2:172) and Surah al-A'rāf (7:31)—form a cohesive Qur'anic framework for understanding the concept of

consumption in Islam. Each verse contributes a unique dimension while reinforcing overarching principles that define consumption as both an ethical and spiritual practice.

Surah al-Baqarah (2:168)

"O mankind! Eat of what is lawful and wholesome on earth and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is your sworn enemy."

This verse establishes the foundational criteria for consumption: *halāl* (lawful) and *tayyib* (pure and beneficial). It reflects Islam's concern not only with legal permissibility but also with physical well-being and moral integrity. The explicit warning against following Satanic paths connects improper consumption—such as indulging in excess or self-imposed prohibitions—with broader spiritual dangers.

Surah al-Baqarah (2:172)

"O you who believe! Eat of the good things We have provided for you and be grateful to Allah, if it is Him that you worship."

Targeting believers, this verse emphasizes gratitude as a moral obligation tied to consumption. It introduces the spiritual function of eating and drinking as acts of devotion, conditional upon obedience and awareness of divine provision. Consumption, therefore, becomes a reflection of one's relationship with Allah, not merely a biological necessity.

Surah al-A'raf (7:31)

"O children of Adam! Wear your adornment at every place of worship, and eat and drink, but do not be excessive. Verily, He does not love the extravagant."

This verse situates consumption within the broader context of *adab* (etiquette) and balance. It calls for physical presentation and moderation, discouraging extravagance while promoting self-respect and discipline. The emphasis on *wasatiyyah* (moderation) aligns with the Islamic principle of balance in all aspects of life, particularly in economic behavior.

Together, these verses articulate a comprehensive Islamic ethic of consumption that integrates legality (*halāl*), quality (*tayyib*), gratitude (*shukr*), and moderation (*i'tidāl*). Consumption, as viewed through the Qur'anic lens, is not a purely economic or material activity—it is a holistic practice that encompasses spiritual consciousness, health, and social responsibility.

Conclusion

Based on the analytical findings presented, this study concludes that the Islamic concept of consumption is deeply rooted in principles of balance, ethics, and adherence to religious commandments. Consumption in Islam is not merely the fulfillment of physical needs, but also a spiritual act that reflects a believer's relationship with Allah.

The analysis of Qur'anic verses—namely al-Baqarah (2:168 and 2:172) and al-A'raf (7:31)—reveals a comprehensive ethical framework. Surah al-Baqarah verse 168 highlights the necessity of ensuring that consumption is both lawful (*halāl*) and wholesome (*tayyib*), warning against behaviors influenced by Satanic impulses. Surah al-Baqarah verse 172 reinforces this by linking lawful consumption with gratitude and

sincere worship, thus elevating it to a form of devotional practice. Meanwhile, Surah al-A'raf verse 31 introduces the principle of moderation, warning against excess and emphasizing that Allah does not love those who are extravagant.

These verses collectively demonstrate that Islamic teachings on consumption extend far beyond material concerns. They call for mindful, ethical behavior that maintains bodily health, respects divine provisions, and upholds the moral and spiritual integrity of the individual. In this sense, the act of consumption becomes a means to attain not only worldly welfare but also eternal reward.

This study contributes to the field of Islamic economics by highlighting the exegetical depth of consumption-related verses in the Qur'an and offers a foundation for further research into the practical applications of these principles in contemporary economic behavior and policy.

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