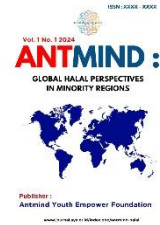


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Freeing Appetite, Keeping Faith: The Struggle of Muslim Go-Jek Drivers in the Middle of Non-Halal Food Challenges

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to dig deeper into the phenomenon that arises from the work of Go-Jek Muslim drivers in Manado City, especially in serving non-halal food orders through the Go-food application. In the application, an auto-bid system is implemented that automatically accepts orders from drivers, so rejecting the order risks suspending the account. The applied research method is a field study with a case study approach, allowing for a deeper understanding of this phenomenon's social, cultural, and legal context. The results showed that the auto-bid system effectively forces drivers to receive and deliver non-halal food orders, even though this contradicts the principle of halal in Islamic teachings. In review of Islamic law, this situation creates a moral dilemma between maintaining the sanctity of religious teachings and meeting life's necessities. However, based on the rules of maqashid sharia, non-halal food delivery can be justified as part of an effort to simplify life and eliminate difficulties or narrowness in daily life.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of the application-based economy has become an integral part of people's lives in many countries, including Manado City (Yu & Dong, 2022). One of the most prominent platforms in this space is Go-Jek, which offers a variety of services, including transportation and food delivery through Go-food (Prananda et al., 2020; Wahyudi, 2023). In the dynamic urban environment of Manado, a significant number of Go-Jek drivers from the Muslim community are actively engaged in delivering food orders, some of which do not adhere to the halal principles in Islam (Weng et al., 2020). This situation raises profound ethical and legal questions about how these drivers should respond to non-halal food orders. The drivers are caught in a dilemma where they must balance their religious convictions with the practical need to earn a livelihood, often without clear guidance on how to navigate these conflicting demands (Tubastuvi & Wiliantoro, 2023). This issue highlights the broader challenges Muslim workers face in app-based economies. It underscores the need for more research and policy development to effectively address these ethical and legal concerns.

A similar phenomenon has become the focus of attention, especially in food delivery applications. A holistic literature review of Islamic principles in purchasing non-halal food, Islamic principles in online ordering systems through courier services, and dynamics involving minority communities highlights the ethical and legal complexities involved in the modern context of an app-based economy. In Islam, buying non-halal food is seen as an act that goes against the principles of chastity and halal (Ismail & Mohd Noor, 2016). According Mukherjee (2014) This principle often collides with modern economic realities that demand efficiency and inclusion. Especially in online ordering systems such as those represented by courier services such as Go-Jek. Research by Suryawan et al. (2022) Explains that Muslim drivers involved in such services face the moral dilemma of having to deliver non-halal food to maintain jobs and meet the demands of the existing system. This is particularly significant in the context of minority societies, Elasrag (2016) says ethical and religious considerations often clash with economic needs and social integration. For example, in metropolitan cities in Muslim-majority countries, such as Istanbul or Jakarta, Muslim courier drivers are usually faced with non-halal food orders from non-Muslim-majority customers (Akbar et al., 2023). In these situations, they must navigate their religious principles with economic demands and social inclusion, reflecting the challenges faced by minority communities globally in integrating their religious values with complex social and economic realities (Temporal, 2011).

We found a significant knowledge gap in terms of how Islamic law responds to the dilemma faced by Go-Jek Muslim drivers in dealing with non-halal food orders. In addition, little research has paid attention to this phenomenon's practical aspects and economic implications from a global perspective. The study aims to fill the gap by analyzing Islamic law's view of the actions of Muslim Go-Jek drivers in serving non-halal food orders. In addition to providing a deeper understanding of these dynamics in the local context, the results of this study are also expected to offer new insights valuable in understanding the challenges faced by Muslim communities in different countries involved in app-based economic ecosystems, as well as their implications globally.

We identified a significant knowledge gap concerning how Islamic law addresses the dilemma faced by Muslim Go-Jek drivers when dealing with non-halal food orders. Existing research has largely overlooked the issue's practical aspects and economic implications from a global

perspective. This study aims to bridge this gap by analyzing Islamic law's perspective on the actions of Muslim Go-Jek drivers who serve non-halal food orders. By doing so, we seek to provide a deeper understanding of these dynamics within the local context and offer new insights valuable in comprehending the challenges Muslim communities worldwide face, particularly those engaged in app-based economic ecosystems. The findings of this study are expected to have broader implications, contributing to the development of policies and guidelines that support the ethical and religious needs of Muslim workers while considering the economic realities they face in the gig economy.

2. METHODS

This study explores Islamic legal views on non-halal food delivery practices by Muslim Go-Jek drivers in Manado City. Using a qualitative approach through case studies (Gioia, 2021) This research will involve in-depth interviews with Muslim Go-Jek drivers who are actively serving food orders. In addition, direct observations will also be made to understand the context of drivers' daily practices in dealing with non-halal food orders (Weston et al., 2021). The collected data will be analyzed thematically to identify drivers' views, beliefs, and ethical dilemmas, as well as to evaluate the consistency of their actions with relevant principles of Islamic law.

Regarding the description of the research site, Manado City, the capital of North Sulawesi Province in Indonesia, is a center of diverse economic, cultural, and social activities (Langston et al., 2015). In the context of religion, Manado has a population that adheres to Protestant Christianity. Still, there is also a Muslim minority who are active in social and economic life. Manado's culture is rich in local traditions and customs that are reflected in typical cuisine, such as grilled fish dishes and Manado porridge (Wahyudi, 2023). This cultural diversity creates a tolerant and open environment where religious and cultural groups interact harmoniously. Socially, Manado is known as a friendly and multicultural city, where different ethnicities and religions coexist peacefully (Darwis et al., 2022). This is of interest to this research because this open and inclusive environment can influence the views and practices of Go-Jek Muslim drivers in facing moral and legal dilemmas related to non-halal food delivery, and reinforce the importance of finding a balance between religious principles and economic needs in daily life.

The theoretical study will cover three main Islamic law concepts relevant to the context of non-halal food delivery practices by Go-Jek Muslim drivers in Manado City. First, the concept of halal and haram is a fundamental aspect of Islamic law that regulates what is and is not allowed in Islam, including in the context of food and food consumption (Auda, 2022). Second, business ethics in Islam highlights the moral and ethical principles that Muslim business people must adhere to in conducting their business, including in terms of decision-making related to non-halal food orders (Tlaiss, 2015). Third, the theory of *maqashid al-shari'ah* is a conceptual framework that explores the aims or intentions of Islamic law in safeguarding the interests of individuals and society at large (Kamali, 2008). Concerning these works, the study integrates these concepts to deepen understanding of the moral and legal dilemmas Go-Jek Muslim drivers face and their implications in their business practices and daily lives.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Islamic Legal Views on Non-Halal Food Delivery Practices

In the context of working as Go-Jek drivers in Manado City, Muslim drivers are faced with complex moral and legal dilemmas. ET, 26, and his colleagues at Go-Jek, such as FL and HS, face complex moral and legal dilemmas. Although ET is often hesitant to accept non-halal orders, such as food containing pork, due to its incomprehension of Islamic law on the subject, economic pressure and the risk of sanctions on accounts compel it to accept such orders. The same applies to FH and other drivers, who feel caught between adhering to religious principles and meeting their economic needs. Although some chose to reject non-halal orders, complexity in the application system and financial pressures forced many of them to accept such orders.

Based on interviews with Go-Jek Muslim Manado drivers, they face a situation where they have to accept orders in any form, especially non-halal food orders, some of which contain pork or similar non-halal goods. They cannot decline the order due to the threat of sanctions, which generally means temporary account suspension, such as a 30-minute time bracket. Although some drivers consider the sanctions acceptable, their perceptions of receiving non-halal orders vary. Some drivers prioritize economic considerations and face difficulties getting orders if they refuse too many. In addition, using the auto bid feature limits their ability to reject specific orders, especially non-halal orders, thus influencing their decision to accept orders. Therefore, accepting non-halal orders becomes an ethical dilemma for Go-Jek drivers.

The Islamic legal view of non-halal food delivery practices by Go-Jek Muslim drivers presents a complex and profound set of considerations (Wahyudi, 2023). Various aspects include Islamic law principles, practical dilemmas drivers face, and ethical and religious considerations relevant in Manado. First, the basic tenets of *ijarah* (lease agreement) in Islam are the primary basis for this assessment (Alamad, 2019; Mirakhor et al., 2020; Prananda et al., 2020). For example, we observe the importance of consent from both parties and the existence of clear benefits of the leased object because Islam affirms the need for transparency and expediency in every economic transaction, including food delivery.

Second, in the face of non-halal food orders, drivers face pressure from various sides, including compulsion to accept orders already logged into their accounts and work-related consequences, such as the risk of account suspension and uncertainty in income. Third, this analysis critically examines Islamic law's view of Muslim drivers' delivery of non-halal food. Fourth, in-depth analysis also touches on relevant ethical and religious considerations. Although Islam stresses the importance of assisting others regardless of religion or background, there are moral questions about whether delivering non-halal food to non-Muslims can be considered a form of support for activities that are contrary to religious principles.

This situation can be called a concrete example of the phenomenon of *subhat*. The primary purpose of Islamic law is to avoid the matters referred to in (*subhat*), which are forbidden or haram (Auda, 2022; Hamid, 2017). *Subhat* arises when there is a lack of clarity in an issue relating to an act that falls between what is haram, something that is not permissible, and what is halal, something that is permissible in Islamic law (Yusuf, Sarib, et al., 2023). The concept of *subhat* provides a foundation for understanding moral doubts that may arise when performing their duties. First, doubts may arise when there is concern about whether or not to perform such an act, where the principle of *istishab* is used to establish its legal basis. Second, doubts can arise regarding changes

in a thing's halal or haram status, where substantial evidence or arguments are needed to ascertain its legal status. Third, changes in legal status from haram to halal or vice versa can occur based on strong allegations or non-fulfilment of these allegations. Fourth, the dominant allegation related to the cause that makes something haram or impermissible can affect its legal status (Yusuf, Botutihe, et al., 2023).

Subhat cases refer to acts or activities whose halal or haram status is unclear, or actions that raise doubts about their legal status when committed (Kamali, 2021). Islamic teachings emphasize the importance of avoiding the subject of *Subhat* and focusing more on things that have a clear and definite halal (Hipni, 2020). This is because Islam teaches that staying away from doubts in religious matters is part of keeping the heart clean and practicing religion correctly.

In the maqasid review of Sharia, *subhat* can be excluded in certain situations. Maqasid sharia considers the purposes of religion, which include the maintenance of religion, soul, reason, heredity, and property (Yusuf, Botutihe, et al., 2023). In the context of the *subhat* case, there are situations where urgent interests allow exceptions to vague prohibitions. For example, in emergencies where there are no other options and job availability is available, there may be room to do work that falls within the territory of the *subhat* (Kamali, 2008). This aligns with the principle of benefit on which the *maqasid* of Sharia is based. To preserve religion, soul, reason, heredity, and property, the principles of *maqasid sharia* allow leeway for vague rules or *subhat*. In this case, exceptions to the prohibition of *subhat* are made to achieve the greater goal of preserving human life and welfare, by the principle of benefit, which is a top priority according to Al-Shatibi (Hipni, 2020).

Moral and Legal Dilemmas Facing Drivers

Based on interviews with Muslim Go-Jek drivers, it is evident that they face complex moral and legal dilemmas. Drivers like ET, FL, HS, and W find themselves in a difficult situation where they cannot refuse non-halal food orders, particularly due to the auto bid feature that mandates accepting any incoming orders. This system significantly limits their ability to make choices aligned with their religious beliefs, compounded by the threat of sanctions, such as temporary account suspension, which further restricts their actions. The attitudes and perceptions of these drivers vary; some, like Hasan and Sofyan, prioritize economic considerations and struggle to get orders if they reject non-halal ones, highlighting the economic pressures that influence their decisions. On the other hand, drivers such as ET, FL, HS, and W feel hesitant or indecisive when faced with this dilemma, often due to a lack of understanding of Islamic law concerning the acceptance and delivery of non-halal food. This uncertainty and moral discomfort underscore the need for more straightforward guidelines and support to help drivers navigate these challenges without compromising their religious principles.

Understanding the challenges faced by drivers in receiving and delivering non-halal food involves several interconnected factors. First, there is significant uncertainty and confusion regarding the interpretation and application of Islamic law on this matter. Many drivers express a lack of understanding of the religious guidelines, which can stem from a lack of formal education on Islamic jurisprudence or limited access to authoritative scholarly sources. This knowledge gap can be particularly pronounced among drivers who may not have had the opportunity to study religious texts deeply or may not have access to religious scholars for consultation. Consequently, this uncertainty leads to moral and ethical dilemmas, causing drivers to feel uncomfortable or

hesitant about accepting orders involving non-halal food. These moral doubts can create a significant psychological burden, as drivers may fear their actions could inadvertently contravene their religious principles. Moreover, this discomfort is compounded by the practical necessity of earning a livelihood, which can place drivers in a difficult position to balance their financial needs with their religious beliefs. This situation underscores the need for more transparent and more accessible guidance from religious authorities, as well as better educational resources to help drivers navigate these complex ethical and religious considerations confidently. Addressing these challenges comprehensively would involve a concerted effort from religious institutions, educational bodies, and industry stakeholders to provide the necessary support and information to ensure that drivers can perform their duties without compromising their faith.

Second, significant economic pressures influence drivers' decisions to accept non-halal orders. Many drivers rely heavily on the income from their jobs as Go-Jek drivers to meet their daily economic needs, making the financial aspect a critical factor in their decision-making process. The threat of sanctions, such as account suspension or performance degradation, is a powerful motivator for drivers to accept non-halal orders despite their discomfort or moral reservations. These sanctions can have immediate and severe impacts on their livelihoods, forcing drivers to prioritize economic survival over religious adherence. This dynamic suggests that, in many cases, economic imperatives can override moral considerations, compelling drivers to make choices that align more with financial necessity than with their ethical or religious values. The pressure to maintain a steady income in a competitive and often precarious gig economy environment highlights the complex interplay between economic needs and personal beliefs. It underscores the importance of creating supportive systems that can help mitigate these conflicts for drivers.

Third, the auto bid system used in the Go-Jek application significantly restricts drivers' freedom to refuse specific orders. This feature automatically assigns orders to drivers who first accept an offer, without considering the type or characteristics of that order. Consequently, drivers often feel compelled to accept non-halal orders they may not wish to receive, as the system does not allow them to filter or reject specific orders based on their religious beliefs. This lack of flexibility forces drivers to choose between adhering to their personal and religious convictions and maintaining their income. This situation highlights the need for a more nuanced approach within the app's functionality, allowing drivers to exercise greater control over the orders they accept, thereby respecting their religious and ethical boundaries while ensuring they can continue to earn a living without compromising their principles.

Go-Jek Muslim drivers face complex moral and legal dilemmas due to the interplay between religious considerations, economic pressures, and technical limitations in the application system. They feel caught between complying with religious rules regarding halal food and enduring economic pressures that force them to accept non-halal orders. Technical limitations, such as auto bid systems, limit their ability to reject specific orders. Based on findings Prananda et al., (2020) and Wahyudi (2023), drivers often feel trapped in choosing between religious principles and economic necessity.

Practical Implications in Social and Economic Contexts

The wages received by Muslim Go-jek drivers for non-halal food deliveries can be viewed through the lens of the concepts of dharurriyat, hajjiyat, and tahsiniyyat, each of which reflects the

essential aspects of life maintenance, avoidance of life difficulties, and improvement of human dignity by the principle of religious benefit (Murat & Mas'ad, 2023).

First, at the Dharurriyat level, which deals with the maintenance of essential human needs, such as religious and worldly life, if these benefits are threatened, then there is damage and suffering (Deuraseh, 2022). However, the delivery of non-halal food by Go-jek drivers can be considered to follow the needs of dharurriyat because it is an essential source of income for the family. Such acts can also be considered as participating in the process of selling goods that are forbidden in Islam. Second, in the Hajjiyat level, which is related to avoiding life's difficulties (Hipni, 2020; Yusuf, Sarib, et al., 2023), wages earned from working as a Go-jek driver can meet the family's daily needs, eliminate the burden of life, and ensure welfare. At this level, the work can be considered as fulfilling the obligation to provide for the family. Third, at the level of Tahsiniyyat, which is related to the enhancement of human dignity before God (Ismail & Mohd Noor, 2016; Wahyudi, 2023), a job as a Go-jek driver provides an opportunity to be responsible for the family and put oneself in a position that obeys religion. However, in the context of non-halal food delivery, contrary to religious principles, this creates contradictions in achieving religious values.

The practical implications of non-halal food delivery by Muslim Go-jek drivers have complex repercussions in various social and economic aspects. Socially, this practice can result in tensions between groups of people with different religious backgrounds (Suryawan et al., 2022; Yu & Dong, 2022). In a multicultural society like Indonesia, inter-religious harmony is one of the important pillars in ensuring social peace and stability (Prananda et al., 2020). However, when actions such as the delivery of non-halal food by Muslim drivers become controversial, there can be divisions as well as increased polarization between religious groups. This can disrupt social harmony, reinforce negative stereotypes, and even trigger interreligious conflicts.

In the economic context, the impact is also significant. Companies like Go-jek operate in highly competitive markets, where consumer trust is one of the most important assets. Non-halal food delivery practices can disrupt a company's image in the eyes of consumers, especially those who consider religious values in their consumption decision-making (Kamali, 2008; Mukherjee, 2014). This can result in decreased consumer loyalty, revenue, and potential long-term financial losses for the company. In addition, the impact can also be felt by Go-jek drivers themselves. Although non-halal food delivery may be a significant income source, they should also consider the psychological and moral impact of such actions, especially if it goes against their religious beliefs and principles.

Halal-Haram Frameworks and Global Practices

The concept of halal and haram in Islam serves as the fundamental moral and legal basis for Muslims in regulating various aspects of life, including business and economics (Shahabuddin et al., 2020). Halal, which means permissible, encompasses everything that is allowed by Islamic law, while haram, meaning forbidden, refers to all that is prohibited (Al-Teinaz, 2020). This distinction is crucial in guiding Muslim behavior and ensuring their actions align with religious teachings. In the realm of business, the principles of halal and haram play a significant role in governing transactions, products, and services to ensure they adhere to Islamic principles (Tlaiss, 2015).

For Muslim businesses, adhering to these principles means that all activities, from production to sales, must comply with Islamic law (Makka et al., 2024). This includes ensuring the halal status of products, which involves the ingredients and the process of preparation, handling, and delivery

(Haris & Makka, 2023). For instance, in the food industry, businesses must certify that their products are halal, meaning they do not contain any forbidden substances like pork or alcohol and are prepared in a clean environment that prevents contamination with haram substances (Al-Teinaz, 2020). The supply chain must be scrutinized to ensure compliance, reflecting a commitment to religious obligations and consumer trust.

The concept of halal and haram is implemented in various ways across different countries, reflecting the diverse cultural and legal landscapes within which these principles operate. In Malaysia, the government has established a comprehensive system for regulating halal products and services through the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) (Ahmad et al., 2018). This certification process involves rigorous checks to ensure compliance with Islamic law, covering ingredients, processing methods, and hygiene standards, making Malaysia a global leader in the halal industry. As the birthplace of Islam, Saudi Arabia strictly adheres to these principles in all aspects of daily life. The Saudi Food and Drug Authority (SFDA) regulates halal food products, while the Saudi Arabian Monetary Authority (SAMA) ensures that financial transactions comply with Islamic banking practices, prohibiting interest-based transactions and promoting profit-sharing models (Faour-Klingbeil et al., 2022).

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has established itself as a significant hub for halal products and services, regulated by the Emirates Authority for Standardization and Metrology (ESMA), and hosts the annual Global Halal Industry Platform to discuss industry trends (Alzarooni, 2022). Turkey's Halal Accreditation Agency (HAK) oversees the certification of halal products, combining modern regulatory practices with traditional Islamic principles to enhance its global market competitiveness (Suci et al., 2021). These examples illustrate how different countries integrate halal and haram principles into their regulatory frameworks, supporting their Muslim populations' ethical and religious needs while promoting economic growth and international trade.

In the context of food delivery, Muslim Go-Jek drivers are faced with a moral responsibility to ensure that these principles are followed in the orders they receive and deliver (Lusiana et al., 2022). They must ensure that the products they deliver are halal and clean, and consider their social responsibility towards consumers and society. Tlaiss (2015) this is related to business ethics, which in Islam is a moral guide for Muslim business people in running their businesses. These principles include honesty, fairness, social responsibility, avoiding usury, and business practices that harm or exploit others.

The objectives of Islamic sharia contained in the theory of maqashid al-shari'ah aim to protect the interests of individuals and society at large and promote welfare and justice in society. In the context of non-halal food delivery, Go-Jek Muslim drivers are faced with a dilemma between meeting their economic needs as workers by complying with Islamic religious rules and protecting the interests of consumers (Syahid, 2018). The integration of these concepts helps Go-Jek Muslim drivers to understand and navigate the moral and legal dilemmas facing them in a broader context, as well as find balanced solutions between religious principles and economic needs (Harris et al., 2021).

4. CONCLUSION

This research reveals that Go-Jek Muslim drivers in Manado City face a complicated moral dilemma regarding delivering non-halal food through the Go-food application. Although they realize that delivering non-halal food is against the principle of halal in Islam, they often feel

trapped in situations where refusing the order can hurt their financial stability, such as having their account suspended. The discussion in this study refers to concepts in Islamic law regarding halal and haram, Islamic business ethics, and the theory of maqashid al-shari'ah. Although the delivery of non-halal food is theoretically contrary to the halal principle, the maqashid al-shari'ah theory suggests that in certain situations, this action can be justified as an effort to make life easier and eliminate difficulties or narrowness. This research contributes to broadening the understanding of the complex relationship between Islamic legal principles and economic practice in modern societies, emphasizing the importance of finding a balance between religious principles and fundamental necessities of life in the context of increasingly globally connected economic dynamics.

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