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## MINORITY JURISPRUDENCE IN THE CONTEXT OF HALAL FOOD EVALUATION IN SINGAPORE

Fathurrahman Haji M Dawood<sup>1\*</sup>, Mohammad Naqib Hamdan<sup>2</sup>, Nurul Aini A Kadir<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Academy of Islamic Civilisation, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia.  
Email: fathurrahman@graduate.utm.my

<sup>2</sup> Academy of Islamic Civilisation, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia.  
Email: mohammadnaqib@utm.my

<sup>3</sup> Academy of Islamic Civilisation, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia.  
Email: kadiraini@gmail.com

\* Corresponding Author

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### Abstract:

The study focuses on minority jurisprudential perspectives regarding the evaluation of Halal food in Singapore. It observes an increasing demand for Halal-certified food within the Muslim community in Singapore, prompting concerns about Halal extremism, defensive eating, and potential contamination between Halal and non-Halal food items. Minority jurisprudence offers a legal framework that is both contextual and adaptable, making it particularly relevant for addressing the challenges encountered by Muslim minorities within non-Muslim societies. To address these issues, a qualitative research approach centered on document analysis was employed. This involved examining Fiqh texts, fatwas, academic studies, and related documents. The findings of the study present the views and opinions of minority jurisprudence regarding potential solutions to the identified challenges. Additionally, the concept of *at-takhayyur* was discussed as a minority jurisprudential approach to addressing the problem of Halal food evaluation in Singapore. Studying Halal food evaluation through the lens of minority jurisprudence offers a more comprehensive understanding of contemporary Halal food-related issues. Consequently, this research has the potential to contribute to the integration of residents from diverse backgrounds within Singapore's complex and multicultural society.

### Keywords:

Halal Food Evaluation, Singapore Muslim Community, Minority Jurisprudence, *at-Takhayyur*

## Introduction

Islam requires its followers to select meals that are both Halal and healthy (*Halal Toyyiban*). In Arabic, "*Halal*" denotes something that is permissible, while "*Haram*" signifies what is forbidden. According to al-Qaradawi (2003), the main principle behind what is permitted and prohibited in Islam is that everything created by Allah SWT and all the good that ensues from it are for the benefit of humans. Adherents to Quranic guidelines are obliged to consume Halal and wholesome food as it is a command from Allah SWT. Actions that permit what is not Halal and are forbidden by Allah SWT are to be avoided by believers.

In Sharia, Halal food is believed to benefit the consumer both spiritually and physically as it preserves life and common sense, which are fundamental purposes of Islamic law. Similarly, Islam prohibits Muslims from harming themselves and others through harmful actions. Individuals who produce hazardous processed materials or intentionally create harmful foods or substances are considered guilty in Islam (Maisyarah Rahmi Hassan, 2019). It is unequivocal in Islam that engaging in activities that can cause harm to oneself or others is forbidden.

The Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS) serves as an Islamic religious advisor in Singapore, ensuring its adherence to Islamic principles (Mustafiyah, 2009). MUIS plays a significant role in the burgeoning Halal food industry in Singapore, particularly concerning Halal certification. Halal certification issued by MUIS in Singapore greatly facilitates the Muslim community's access to Halal food options (Mustafiyah, 2009). In Singapore, Halal certification is obtainable by any food business or product owner. In 2016 alone, MUIS issued over 4000 Halal certifications. The process for obtaining Halal certification involves six stages, and it is not a simple undertaking. Additionally, applicants must renew their Halal certificates upon expiration.

A significant development occurred in 1978 when MUIS began issuing Halal certification as a guarantee in response to various issues, including doubts about the authenticity of Halal labels and their misuse by noodle manufacturers containing pork. Amendments to the Administration of Muslim Law Act (AMLA) in 1999 further empowered MUIS to issue Halal certificates, marking a crucial transformation in Singapore's Halal food industry. The demand for Halal certification remains high due to Singapore's agricultural advancements and global developments in the Halal food sector (Suratty, 2018).

The Muslim community in Singapore seeks broader Halal certification in various sectors, including medicines, cosmetics, and even shared microwave ovens. However, as a Muslim minority country, Singapore grapples with several Halal certification issues. The community has been divided over Subway's application for Halal certification, drawing mixed reactions, especially from non-Muslims who perceive it as restricting their food choices, particularly regarding pork (News Straits Time, 31 August 2018).

Moreover, *The New Paper (TNP)* newspaper (2018) covered the controversy surrounding the issue of halal food served in cinemas with a report titled "*Food sold in cinemas not Halal-certified: Muis. Muslim moviegoers call for Halal-certified food options as cinemas here attract people of different races and religions*", on the first page. It was stated in the report that Muslim customers were unsatisfied with the lack of halal-certified food in Singapore cinemas, resulting in a large social media debate. A similar issue has been raised in neighboring countries, with Indonesia being seen as excessive when it comes to halal. There is a demand

among Muslim consumers for household appliances with Halal certification, such as microwave ovens and refrigerators. In response to consumer demand, Sharp has developed the first microwave oven in Indonesia with Halal certification (Siregar, 2019).

According to the Halal Unit of the Singapore Islamic Religious Council, a survey conducted in 2018 aimed to gauge the level of acceptance among both Muslim and non-Muslim communities in Singapore regarding Halal food selection. The findings revealed a significant reliance on Halal certification among the Singaporean Muslim population when choosing Halal food. However, consumers do not overlook the flexibility permitted by Islam in selecting Halal foods. Various factors may contribute to such lapses, including a lack of understanding of religious knowledge or reliance solely on certain qualified individuals, such as religious teachers or *asatizahs*.

The global Halal food industry faces numerous challenges, including concerns over fraudulent Halal certification and breaches in Halal compliance. Issues such as mislabeling and the presence of non-Halal substances in food products undermine consumer trust and pose significant ethical dilemmas. In Singapore, the situation is compounded by the minority status of Muslims, which sometimes leads to tensions, particularly when Halal certification intersects with the interests of the non-Muslim majority. The 2018 controversy over Subway's application for Halal certification and the debate on Halal food availability in cinemas highlight these challenges (News Straits Time, 2018; TNP, 2018). Additionally, the rapid growth of the Halal market demands stringent regulatory oversight to maintain standards, a task that the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS) continues to navigate amid evolving consumer expectations (Suratty, 2018).

The scope of this study encompasses an in-depth analysis of Halal food evaluation and certification, with a focus on the regulatory framework and consumer perceptions in Singapore. In 2016, MUIS issued over 4000 Halal certifications, reflecting the substantial demand and the complexity of maintaining Halal integrity in a diverse food market (Mustafiyah, 2009). However, breaches in Halal standards remain a concern; for instance, instances of mislabeled products and the inclusion of non-Halal ingredients have been reported. By examining these statistics and case studies, the study aims to elucidate the challenges faced by Halal certification bodies and the Muslim community in Singapore. The objective is to provide insights into improving the Halal certification process and ensuring compliance, thereby enhancing consumer confidence in Halal food products.

### Research Problems

Singapore's Muslim community encounters challenges in ensuring their diet adheres to Halal standards due to their minority status. The overwhelming demand for Halal certifications may potentially disrupt the spiritual fabric of Singaporean society on various levels. Therefore, minority jurisprudence serves as a guiding principle for the Muslim community in Singapore, allowing them to practice authentic Islamic Sharia while maintaining harmony within the society.

Halal food cannot be solely judged by its logo or certification. The Islamic faith recognizes various methods for determining the Halal status of food items (Zulfaqar Mamat, 2019). Fiqh rules provide guidance in discerning whether a food is Halal or not.

Consequently, this study delves into the utilization of minority jurisprudence in the context of Halal food selection in Singapore. With the Muslim community constituting only 15.6 percent of the total population in Singapore (Hirschmann, 2020), it becomes imperative for Singapore's Muslim community to adhere to minority jurisprudence principles.

### Literature Review

The Halal food industry in Singapore has seen significant growth, driven by both local demand and global market trends. In 2016, the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS) issued over 4000 Halal certifications, reflecting the increasing demand for Halal food products among Singapore's Muslim community (Mustafiyah, 2009). A recent study by Ho, Ou, and Vijayan (2023) reveals that 76% of Singaporean Muslims rely on Halal certification when purchasing food, highlighting the critical role of these certifications in ensuring compliance with Islamic dietary laws. Additionally, there has been a notable rise in the acceptance of Halal-certified products among non-Muslims in Singapore, with many appreciating the hygiene and quality associated with Halal standards (Septiarini et al., 2023).

Recent research indicates an evolving landscape in Halal consumption in Singapore. Ho, Ou, and Vijayan (2023) explore Muslim perceptions of cultured meat, a new frontier in Halal food products. Their findings show a cautious optimism among Muslims, with 58% expressing willingness to try cultured meat if it is Halal-certified. Similarly, the study by Septiarini et al. (2023) highlights a growing trend of Halal cosmetics among non-Muslims, driven by factors such as perceived quality and ethical considerations. Wiyono et al. (2022) emphasize the importance of intention in purchasing Halal products, noting that 72% of Muslims in Singapore consider their purchases as part of their religious obligation, underscoring the strong link between faith and consumer behavior. These findings underscore the dynamic nature of the Halal market in Singapore, reflecting both a strong adherence to traditional dietary laws and an openness to new Halal-certified products. The data also suggests a broader acceptance of Halal standards beyond the Muslim community, driven by quality and ethical considerations.

### Concept of Minority Jurisprudence

According to Angelo and Tolino (2017), the term "minority" is translated as "aqalliyya" in Arabic, derived from "qalla," which means "to be little or small." Related terms such as "qilla" and "qalil" stem from the same root. In Arabic, "qilla" translates to "smallness, lack, deficiency," while "qalil" means "small or little" and functions as both an adjective and a pronoun. Generally, a minority denotes a group of individuals sharing common cultural, religious, linguistic, or ethnic traits. Most minority groups possess a desire to distinguish themselves from the majority population where they reside, expressing this desire either implicitly or explicitly (Angelo & Tolino, 2017).

The non-Muslim population can be categorized into two groups: secular non-Muslims and religious non-Muslims. Secular non-Muslims unequivocally reject any form of organized religion, while religious non-Muslim communities often adhere to prevalent religious ideologies in their geographical region. To address the challenges faced by Muslim minorities in non-Muslim nations, a new branch of Fiqh, known as Minority Fiqh, emerged. "*Fiqh al-aqalliyyah*" combines the words "*Fiqh*" and "*aqalliyyah*," with "*aqalliyyah*" originating from the Arabic verb "*qalla*," meaning "to diminish in number." Therefore, "*aqalliyyah*" signifies a "smaller number" or "minority" (al-Alwani, 2003). This term encompasses individuals within the same community who differ in race or religion from the majority of the population.

Consequently, *Fiqh al-aqalliyyah* exclusively pertains to Islamic minority law (Adegoke, 2021).

*Fiqh al-aqalliyyat*, or minority jurisprudence, represents a branch of Islamic jurisprudence addressing the unique circumstances and legal rulings applicable to Muslim minorities residing in non-Muslim majority countries. It acknowledges that legal principles and practices applicable in majority Muslim societies may not directly apply in minority contexts. Through adaptation and flexibility within the bounds of Islamic principles, Muslims in non-Muslim majority countries can address their specific needs and challenges (Adegoke, 2021).

Furthermore, minority *Fiqh* considers the interaction between Islamic law and national law within society, recognizing the coexistence of various legal systems. It seeks practical solutions and guidelines enabling Muslims to uphold their religious obligations without contravening national laws. Minority jurisprudence guarantees fundamental rights and freedoms for Muslims residing in countries with non-Muslim majorities, encompassing religious freedom, Islamic ritual practices, dietary requirements, dress codes, and personal status.

### ***Importance of Fiqh Minority***

According to Islamic jurists and legal theorists, *Fiqh al-aqalliyyah* holds no relevance for the non-Muslim population. While scholars like Jabir Taha al-Alwānī and Yusuf al-Qaradāwī advocate for the viability and applicability of *Fiqh al-aqalliyyah* in contemporary times, others such as Hamud Ibn Uqla al-Shu'aybī and 'Abd al-'Azīz Ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Shaikh, particularly among Salafis and Wahhabis of the 20th century, do not support it due to their *al-Walā' wa al-Barā'* doctrine (Adegoke, 2020).

Jurists and Islamic legal scholars define minority jurisprudence as a type of legal practice that is contextual, tailored to the circumstances and geography, aiming to address the challenges faced by Muslims in non-Muslim societies. It is formulated by experienced contemporary Muslim jurists and legal theorists to safeguard the rights and affairs of Muslim minorities residing in communities where Islam is not fully recognized or influential in their private and public lives (Qaradawi, 1998).

*Fiqh al-aqalliyyah* or Minority *Fiqh* was developed by Taha Jabir al-Alwani and Yusuf al-Qaradawi, modern legal theorists and classically trained Islamic jurists (Adegoke, 2021). It was devised to cater to the needs of Muslim minorities coexisting with non-Muslim majorities in particular communities (Ali & Sudirman, 2019). Drawing from passages in the Qur'an, As-Sunnah, and accepted Rules of *Fiqh (qawa'id al-Fiqhiyyah)*, both scholars argue for context-based legal judgments, asserting the necessity of considering Muslim minorities in countries where non-Muslim populations are predominant (Howe, 2017).

Numerous works on *Fiqh al-aqalliyyah* were authored by Taha Jabir al-Alwani and Yusuf al-Qaradawi. Al-Qaradawi penned "*Fiqh of Minority*," while al-Alwani contributed "*Towards a Fiqh for Minority: Some Basic Reflections*." These materials are highly significant in today's world where Muslim minorities frequently relocate to non-Muslim cities for better opportunities or educational pursuits in various fields, including science. The evolution of new Islamic jurisprudence (*tajdid al-Fiqh*) has prompted contemporary Islamic jurists (*fuqaha al-mu'assirin*) and legal theorists (*usuliyyun al-mu'assirin*) to derive Islamic legal theory from this



updated jurisprudence (tajdid al-Fiqh). Whyte (2017) illustrates examples of legal provisions tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of contemporary Muslim minorities.

In societies where non-Muslims constitute the majority, minority Fiqh plays a pivotal role in addressing the unique challenges encountered by Muslim minorities. Minority jurisprudence guides Muslims in navigating the legal and ethical dimensions of their religious practice within non-Muslim majority countries. It proposes practical solutions and provisions aligned with the host society's laws, norms, and context. Through minority Fiqh, Muslims strike a balance between fulfilling their religious obligations and integrating into society, contributing positively to societal development and fostering social cohesion. It assists Muslim minorities in maintaining their religious identity while engaging in civic life and confronting challenges and temptations inherent in a Muslim-minority environment through the application of Islamic beliefs, practices, and values (Adegoke, 2021).

### ***Legal Instruments in Minority Jurisprudence***

A minority Fiqh in its practical application is empowered by its methods (*qawa'id al-Fiqhiyyah*), rukhsah, and the modern law theory of *takhayyur* about the necessity (*al-darurrah*). Some Muslim minorities will benefit from these sources of Islamic law when they are in times of hardship and need to alleviate financial, social, and physical hardships. In this regard, it is important to note that Sunnah and textual evidence from the Qur'an support the application of *Fiqh al-aqalliyyah* to Muslim minorities living in non-Muslim societies (Adegoke, 2021).

Allah said in the Quran:

يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُخَفِّفَ عَنْكُمْ ۖ وَخُلِقَ الْإِنْسَانُ ضَعِيفًا

Meaning: Allah (always) wants to lighten (the burden of the law) from you, because human was meant to be weak.

Surah al-Nisā', 4: 28

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنْزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ ۚ فَمَن

شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ ۖ وَمَن كَانَ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ

يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ وَلِتُكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَاكُمْ

وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ۝ ١٨٥

Meaning: Fasting is required in the month of Ramadan when the Quran was revealed to mankind as guidance and evidence that explains the guidance and the difference between right and wrong. In this way, whoever witnesses the new moon of Ramadan (or knows about it) should fast that month; and whoever is sick or on a journey should fast as much as he did the day before

he left. As a result of such a decree, God wishes for you to have ease, not hardship. So you can complete the number of fasts (for a month of Ramadan), and you can express gratitude to Allah for guiding you.

Surah al-Baqarah, 2: 185

In addition, Prophet Muhammad S.A.W said:

وَعَنْ أَبِي صِرْمَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَنْ ضَارَّ

مُسْلِمًا ضَارَّهُ اللَّهُ وَمَنْ شَاقَّ مُسْلِمًا شَقَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ، أَخْرَجَهُ أَبُو دَاوُدَ وَالتِّرْمِذِيُّ

وَحَسَنُهُ.

Meaning: From Abi Shirmah radhiallahu'anhu he said, Rasulullah SAW said, "Whoever harms a Muslim, then Allah will harm him, whoever troubles (troubles) a Muslim then Allah will trouble him."

Hadith Narrated by Abu Dawud no. 3635, Tirmizi no. 1940.

It is forbidden for Muslims to engage in basic and traditional religious practices that do not conflict with the laws of non-Muslim societies that are either secular or religiously inclined. It is also forbidden for them to participate actively in legal activities within Islam (Yilmaz, 2016). As the Hindu community regards cows as sacred and spiritual, jurists and legal theorists use one of the sources mentioned above to justify slaughtering cows as food.

Below is a discussion of the sources of this law.

### ***Maslahah between Fiqh al-Aqaliyyah and Minority Muslims***

*Maslahah*, an Arabic term meaning "benefit," technically denotes a public interest that remains unrestricted and unencumbered by Allah SWT as no definitive court decision has been made regarding its validity. Factors such as religion, life, wealth, lineage, intelligence, and dignity contribute to the well-being of the Muslim minority and are aligned with the goals of Sharia (*Maqasid al-Syariah*) (Alnemari, 2017). Therefore, Muslim jurisprudence should abstain from activities that contravene Sharia (*Maqasid al-Syariah*) or lead to hardship (*darar*) or corruption (*mafsadah*) in the lives of Muslim minorities as well as secular non-Muslims (Kamali, 1991).

Through various secondary legal sources of Islamic law, such as *istihsan*, *istislah*, and *masalih al-mursalah*, which will be briefly highlighted, this *maslahah* can be established in minority Fiqh:

i. *Istislah*: Derived from the Arabic verb "*istaslaha*," meaning seeking correction or amendment, *istislah* technically refers to a strategy aimed at obtaining comfort and convenience for the Muslim minority within secular non-Muslim communities through judicial orders (Adegoke, 2021).

ii. *Istihsan*: Originating from the Arabic verb "*istahsana*," signifying the search for the best option, *istihsan* implies judicial preference or general welfare. Technically, it provides a means for expressing individual opinions to avoid rigidity and injustice for the Muslim minority within secular non-Muslim communities that could result from the literal application of existing laws in public (Adegoke, 2021).

iii. *Maslaah Mursalah*: *Maslaah Mursalah* refers to rules applicable to the Muslim minority in non-Muslim, secular societies lacking clear foundations in established law (Al-Quran and Sunnah), whether favoring or opposing Muslims (Adegoke, 2021).

### ***Qawa'id al-Fiqhiyyah between Minority Muslims and Minority Fiqh***

The Arabic term *qawa'id al-Fiqhiyyah* means "The Rules of Fiqh". It is a set of laws based on a careful examination of Islamic law (Kamali, 1991). This study describes the rule as a comprehensive one that is based on clear and comprehensive information about legal facts to minimize the social challenges and hardships faced by Muslim minorities. Various sources were used to gather this information, including the Qur'an, As-Sunnah, and Athar of the Prophet's companions (*sahabah*) and their students (*tabi'un*). A goal of *Qawa'id al-Fiqhiyyah* is to show that Islamic law applies to all situations, scenarios, and conditions regardless of place, time, situation, or circumstance (Ahmad, t.t.; & Adegoke, 2021). As a legal process, *Qawa'id al-Fiqhiyyah* will allow Islamic scholars and jurists to address any issues relating to recent and new developments.

Some of the *qawa'id al-Fiqhiyyah* being studied to establish *Fiqh al-aqaliyyah* to protect the welfare of the general public and the interests of the Muslim minority living in non-Muslim societies are as follows (Mishkat, 2013):

- i. *Al-Mashaqqah Tajlib al-Taysir*, which means difficulty produces ease.
- ii. *Idha Dha al-'Amr ittasha'a Dhaq ittasha'a* or when something becomes tight, it expands and vice versa.
- iii. *Al-Darurat Tubi'h al-Mahzurat* or the necessity of legalizing unlawful things.
- iv. *Al-Darurrah Biqadarih* or needs have limits.
- v. *Ma Ubiha li Darurah Yuqaddar bi Qadariha* which means that needs have limits that cannot be exceeded.
- vi. *Ma JaZa li 'Udhri Batala bi Zawalih* or whatever is Halal with a good reason will become haram when the good reason expires.
- vii. *Al-Hajah Tanzil Manzilah al-Darurah 'Ammah Aw Khassah* or general or specific requirements may be requirements.
  - a. *Idha Ta'adhar al-'Asl Yusar ila al-Badaal* or when something important is not available, we choose another alternative.

According to minority jurisprudence, Muslims are allowed to participate in behavior that would be unlawful in that requires consideration in legal matters as a legal basis (Elesin, 2021). Many verses of the Quran and the Prophet's Hadith support the *Qawa'id al-Fiqhiyyah* in this regard. For example:



Allah SWT said:

مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِيمَانِهِ إِلَّا مَنْ أُكْرِهَ وَقَلْبُهُ مُطْمَئِنٌّ بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَكِنْ مَنْ شَرَحَ بِالْكُفْرِ صَدْرًا  
فَعَلَيْهِمْ غَضَبٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

Meaning: The person who disbelieves in God after believing will face wrath and punishment from God, except for those forced to disbelief during a period of calm and peace with faith; however, those who open their hearts to accept kufr will be subjected to God's wrath, and a severe punishment will await them.

Surah al-Nahl, 16: 106

إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَالدَّمَ وَلَحْمَ الْخِنْزِيرِ وَمَا أُهِلَّ بِهِ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ ۖ فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ١٧٣

Meaning: The only things Allah forbids you from eating are carrion, blood, pork, and animals that haven't been slaughtered for Allah, so if someone is forced (to eat it in an emergency), he is not a sinner if he does not desire it and doesn't exceed the limit (when it comes to the amount he eats). Indeed, Allah is Forgiving, Most Merciful.

Surah al-Baqarah, 2: 173

### Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach, utilizing document analysis to explore the dependency of the Muslim community in Singapore on Halal certification. As a minority group, the Muslim community in Singapore is governed by the principles of minority jurisprudence, necessitating a thorough examination of relevant documents to understand their unique challenges and potential solutions. This systematic analysis covers the concept of minority jurisprudence, its legal framework, significance, and practical solutions to address the reliance on Halal certification. The study was conducted over a period of six months, from January to June 2024. Data sources included academic journals, books, governmental and institutional reports, and credible online resources related to minority jurisprudence and Halal certification. Key sources which provided contemporary insights into the Halal industry and Muslim consumer behavior in Singapore. The data collection process involved identifying and retrieving relevant documents, followed by a detailed review and coding of information pertinent to the research objectives.

## Research Findings

### *Issues related to Halal Food and its Impact on the Muslim Community in Singapore*

#### *Defensive Eating*

According to Kamaludeen & Perreira (2008), defensive eating among Muslims refers to their vigilance and care in ensuring their food adheres to Halal standards. This proactive approach stems from the Islamic principle of upholding Halal dietary laws and preserving the integrity of one's faith. Defensive eating reflects Muslims' commitment to ensuring their food choices align with their religious beliefs and practices, aiming to maintain their Halal integrity and avoid any potential violation of their dietary obligations.

Practicing defensive eating enables Muslims in Singapore to ensure their food aligns with their religious beliefs, allowing them to indulge in a variety of culinary delights while remaining Halal-compliant. Collaboration between the Muslim community, MUIS, and the Halal certification body contributes to fostering a robust Halal dining environment in Singapore. As observed by Kamaludin and Pereira (2008), Muslims who identify as "obedient" and "practicing" are highly attentive to Halal issues, demonstrating significant concern regarding the Halal labeling of various products. It is crucial for the Muslim community that food preparation and dining environments are Halal-certified, with study results indicating that nearly all respondents utilize defensive eating methods to fulfill their religious obligations. However, despite this emphasis on dietary practices, the Muslim community in Singapore seamlessly integrates into the country's multicultural and cosmopolitan daily life when food is not a concern.

The practice of defensive eating is prevalent among Muslims in Singapore to ensure their food conforms to Halal requirements. Singapore boasts a diverse food culture with an array of cuisines and dining options. However, given its multicultural nature, Muslims must exercise caution and vigilance in their dietary choices. Marranci (2012) suggests that some Muslim Malays employ various tactics in food court settings, such as ordering food from a Halal stall for takeaway if the food court is not exclusively Halal, sitting separately from non-Muslim groups when dining, and persuading non-Muslim companions to opt for Halal food. While defensive eating methods are widely adopted in Singapore's Muslim community, acceptance of these practices may vary among individuals.

Among the defensive eating practices observed by Muslims in Singapore is the pursuit of Halal certification (Kamaludeen & Perreira, 2008). Muslims actively seek out Halal-certified restaurants and food establishments, relying on the MUIS Halal certified label as a dependable indication of Halal status (Mustafiyah, 2009). This label ensures that products meet required Halal criteria and have undergone proper certification processes.

Furthermore, Muslim communities in Singapore endeavor to eliminate any doubt or uncertainty surrounding Halal food items. In instances where consumers are unsure about the ingredients or preparation methods of a particular item, they may choose to abstain from consuming it. Typically, the Muslim community in Singapore refers to the Halal guide, a comprehensive list of Halal-certified restaurants, food stalls, and products published by MUIS. This guide is frequently consulted both online and in printed format, providing details such as specific foods, addresses, and contact information of certified establishments. As noted by Marranci (2012), the Muslim community in Singapore practices defensive eating by inquiring about the Halal status of ingredients and preparation methods before dining out or purchasing

food. Halal options are often indicated by signs or menus in restaurants or conveyed by restaurant staff. In cases where uncertainty persists regarding ingredients or preparation methods, individuals may exercise caution and opt to refrain from consuming the item.

Despite the prevalence of defensive eating practices among Muslims in Singapore, certain challenges may arise. Limited food options emerge as a primary issue stemming from defensive eating practices, particularly in uncertified or non-Halal environments (Kamaludeen & Perreira, 2008). This limitation can curtail dining experiences, especially in cuisines or establishments that do not strictly adhere to Halal requirements. Consequently, while the Muslim community in Singapore may employ defensive eating strategies when necessary, their preference lies in dining within a Halal environment whenever possible. Although some Muslims may mix their eating habits based on individual needs, such as opting for non-Halal food from time to time, it is evident that defensive eating is not practiced exclusively in Singaporean Muslim communities.

Furthermore, individuals who practice defensive eating may encounter difficulties in social settings. Defensive eating practices can occasionally pose challenges during social gatherings, particularly when individuals with differing dietary restrictions convene. Finding common dining options that accommodate everyone's needs may require additional planning and coordination. Additionally, trust and reliability emerge as significant challenges for the Muslim community in Singapore. Instances of food processing companies or organizations inaccurately using Halal labels or signs can lead to non-compliance issues or the display of false labels (Asa, 2019). Such occurrences undermine the trust and credibility of Muslim communities, resulting in heightened scrutiny and doubt when selecting restaurants or food products.

### ***Halal Extremists***

A Halal extremist is an individual who interprets and applies Halal principles in an extreme or radical manner, often leading to intolerance, exclusion, or the imposition of strict religious practices on others. It's important to note that such extremism does not represent the mainstream Muslim community or the approach taken by the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS) to promote Halal practices in the country. While Singapore has few specific examples of Halal extremism, any extreme interpretation or practice has the potential to cause harm. Ramakrishna (2018) highlights intolerance of non-Halal practices as an example of religious extremism intersecting with Halal practices. Individuals or communities who do not adhere to Halal practices may face intolerance or lack of understanding from those with extreme views, potentially leading to social disunity or discriminatory behaviour (Ramakrishna, 2018).

For instance, the application for Halal certification by the Subway Food Chain sparked various reactions from the Singaporean community (News Straits Time, 31 August 2018). Non-Muslims often perceive such actions negatively as they feel it restricts their food choices to Halal options for the minority Muslim community in Singapore. Halal food has also stirred controversy in cinema premises, where Muslim customers express disappointment over the absence of Halal-certified food options (TNP, 2018). According to Lim (2018), certain non-Muslim community groups utilize social media platforms like Facebook to promote the Halal boycott movement in Singapore, viewing the demands of the Muslim community as extremist and intolerant towards non-Muslims. In essence, while Halal extremism may not be widespread

in Singapore, it's crucial to address any instances of extreme interpretations or practices to ensure social cohesion and mutual understanding among diverse communities.

### ***Food Contamination***

Contamination of Halal food refers to the presence of non-Halal ingredients in Halal food, rendering them unfit for consumption according to Islamic dietary laws. This contamination can occur at various stages of the food supply chain, whether accidentally or intentionally. One of the issues associated with food contamination is cross-contamination (Hassan al-Banna et al., 2021), wherein Halal and non-Halal ingredients can inadvertently mix during storage, processing, or preparation. Joint production facilities, shipping processes, or improper handling can facilitate the unintended introduction of non-Halal elements into Halal foods. The use of shared equipment or facilities for processing both types of ingredients can lead to cross-contamination, as residual traces or particles from non-Halal ingredients may inadvertently come into contact with Halal food.

Improper cleaning practices can also contribute to cross-contamination, as insufficient cleaning or separation between Halal and non-Halal production lines may result in contamination (Afiq, 2018). To mitigate this risk, food manufacturers must adhere to strict cleaning protocols and implement proper handling and storage practices. Using separate storage areas, utensils, and tools for Halal and non-Halal ingredients can minimize the likelihood of cross-contamination. Additionally, businesses should verify the Halal status of their suppliers and ensure compliance with Halal practices through reliable certification sources. Education and training programs for food handlers and staff are essential to raising awareness of Halal integrity and minimizing the risk of contamination.

Halal products may also face cross-contamination during transportation or storage, particularly when they come into contact with non-Halal items (Afiq Razak and Anuar Ramli, 2018). Shared transport vehicles, warehouses, and handling and loading processes can all contribute to contamination. Furthermore, the lack of robust traceability systems in the industry poses challenges in identifying and resolving contamination incidents, making it difficult to ensure the Halal compliance and integrity of food products. In some instances, Halal products may be mislabelled or falsely claimed, leading to confusion and inadvertent consumption of non-Halal ingredients (Aisyah Faizah, 2018). This issue is particularly serious when Halal food products are intentionally contaminated or adulterated for economic gain. Irresponsible individuals or businesses may introduce non-Halal ingredients to reduce costs or deceive consumers, thereby undermining trust in the Halal food industry and compromising its integrity.

### ***The Concept Of Halal Food That Is Suitable For Use In The Context Of Islamic Society Singapore Based On Minority Jurisprudence***

Al-Qaradawi argues in the book "*Fiqh al-Aqaliyyat*" (year not specified) that it is crucial for the Fiqh of Muslim minorities residing in non-Muslim countries, as well as for modern Fiqh in general, that scholars and muftis do not confine themselves. Therefore, a modern mufti and Fiqh expert should consider the four main madhhabs (Islamic legal schools) as well as the opinions of jurists and companions. According to the Quran and Hadith, judges, jurisprudence authorities, mujtahids (Islamic legal scholars), and all Muslims are encouraged to choose easier solutions when available and to avoid what is difficult. *Takhayyur*, *Talfiq*, *Tarjih*, and *Tatlabbu al-Rukhas* can be employed to fulfill human needs and achieve *maslahah* (public interest) through these techniques. However, these should not be used as tools for deviation or straying

from fundamental principles. As a result, the management of Halal kitchen utensils needs to be meticulous as contamination can occur when Halal and Haram (forbidden) foods are stored together, leading to contamination under Islamic rulings. Such an approach is necessary for the international management of Halal goods to support and enhance the influence of Islamic services.

The term "*takhayyur*," which means choice, refers to the freedom to choose among the four sects. It also allows for flexibility within the same sect by holding minority views on a particular subject. In most cases, it is chosen because progress has resulted in a change in the problem (Hashim Kamali, 2021). Utilizing *takhayyur* implies that all four principal sects recognize each other as legitimate representatives of Islam. While there may be differences in specific details and interpretations of some hadiths and Qur'anic passages, the main schools of thought generally agree on important legal and religious concepts. In this regard, the ruler provides flexibility and discretion in deciding which options to choose. According to al-Qaradawi, considering strict and lenient laws allows for careful considerations and establishing priorities (*al-muwazana wa'l-tarjih*).

*Takhayyur* essentially means contemporary legal choice (Adegoke, 2021). It entails a collection of legal principles that enable individuals to select the best legal alternative from a variety of options. While individuals have the freedom to choose within their contexts, Muslim minorities living in non-Muslim majority communities require specific legal considerations. Jurists and legal theorists within Islam have made this choice of law. In the process of implementing *Fiqh al-aqalliyyah*, *takhayyur*, or the choice of law, can be applied within a madhhab or between madhhabs. During times of need and new circumstances, this jurisprudence can be utilized by Muslim minorities living in secular or religious societies to obtain appropriate legal decisions. Muslims residing in non-Muslim societies that are entirely secular or religiously inclined have the right to choose a sect or rule of law that allows them to resolve minor legal disputes expeditiously. Additionally, the Hadith of the Prophet and many Quranic verses support the validity of the *takhayyur* alternative.

Allah SWT said:

وَالَّذِينَ يُظَاهِرُونَ مِنْ نِسَائِهِمْ ثُمَّ يَعُودُونَ لِمَا قَالُوا فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مِّن قَبْلِ أَن يَتَمَاسَا  
ذَٰلِكُمْ تُوَعِّظُونَ بِهِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ۝ ٣ فَمَنْ لَّمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ شَهْرَيْنِ مُتَتَابِعَيْنِ  
مِّن قَبْلِ أَن يَتَمَاسَا ۖ فَمَنْ لَّمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فِإِطْعَامُ سِتِّينَ مِسْكِينًا ۚ ذَٰلِكَ لِتُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ  
وَرَسُولِهِ ۚ وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ ۖ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ۚ

Meaning: In other words, it is those who "disappear" their wives from among you (who are the guilty ones) because their wives are not their mothers. Mothers are none other than those who gave birth to them. The truth is that they (by doing so) are talking about something evil and false. Moreover, Allah is Oft-Forgiving and Most Forgiving. When they "expose" their spouse and then turn around from



what they said (that their wife is forbidden to them), then they let (the husband) free a slave before mixing with the wife. By following such a law, you learn a lesson (so that you don't do the same thing again). And (remember), Allah is All-Knowing of what you do.  
Surah Mujadilah, 58: 3-4

Abu Said al-Khudri RA narrated that the Prophet SAW said:

من رأى منكم منكراً فليغيره بيده، فإن لم يستطع فبلسانه، فإن لم يستطع فبقلبه، وذلك أضعف الإيمان

Meaning: "Whoever among you sees something evil, then let him change it with his hands, if he is not willing, let him with his tongue, and if he is not willing, let him with his heart. That disobeying with the heart is as weak as faith."

Riwayat Muslim, 49 dan Ahmad, 11514.

There are two elements related to *Takhayyur*, namely *tatabbu' al-rukhas* (pursuing concessions) and *tarjih* (priority). *Tatabbu' al-rukhas* is often associated with abandoning sectarian boundaries to gain concessions, while *tarjih* facilitates decisions based on preference, often for convenience and convenience, and to some extent to adapt to the changing conditions of the times. In *tarjih*, the jurist chooses one of two or more opinions through an evaluation of the evidence available (Hashim Kamali, 2021).

Quran and Hadith were the only sources of historical information during the time of Muhammad, and in any case, the Quran and Hadith were the basis of *ijtihad*. According to what was mentioned above, the term *talfiq* did not exist during the life of the prophet SAW. It was only used after the establishment of the School of law in the fifth or sixth century. In contrast, al-Safarini, Sheikh Bakhit, and Abdul Aziz al-Dukhayyil have criticized the use of *talfiq* and *takhayyur*. According to this jurist, *talfiq* makes fulfilling Muslim religious obligations too easy (Hafiz, 2016). In Aznan's 2003 research, he documented that some jurists consider the practice of conveying issues between sects as *takhayyur* rather than *talfiq*. Jurists such as Al-Ghazali, Ibn 'Abd al-Bar, Ibn Hazm, Hanbali, and Maliki allow *talfiq* so long as it does not lead to *tatabu' al-rukhas* (using the simplest view for each school).

Although examples of the use of *takhayyur* in the Halal industry are not common, *takhayyur* has been used in many of the changes and legacies of Islamic family law in the 20th century. Examples of *takhayyur* in marriage law include the fact that many countries in the Middle East and Asia have adopted the rules of the Hanafi School, which allows an adult woman to have her marriage even if she is without a guardian, in contrast to the majority view, which requires the consent of the guardian.

Another example of the use of *Takhayyur* is the permission to drink alcohol as long as it is not intoxicating from Imam Abu Hanifah, although this is a bit unpleasant. Two famous jurists, Uthman b 'Amr al-Hajib (d. 646/1240) and Shams al-Din al-Isfahani (d. 740/1340), respectively from the Maliki and Shafi'i schools, have acknowledged this and recorded that

view. that those who drink date wine do not become sinners. Abu Hanifah's view in this regard is based on the analysis that the text of the Quran mentions khamr, which is a variety of alcohol obtained from grapes.

A study by Hanifah et al. (2020) employs *Takhayyur*, a contemporary Islamic instrument, to rectify Halal logic's problems and guarantee its unification. Halal logistics must address the problem of contagious contamination, which can include odour, taste, and discoloration. In addition to supporting the opinion of leading Islamic scholars on *takhayyur*, this study also examines the importance of Halal logistics globally. It is believed that superstition can provide appropriate solutions to problems when used as a standard. This study seeks to investigate the role of *talfiq* and *takhayyur* in Halal logistics operations from an ethical and legal standpoint based on a debatable scenario. This study also suggests that *talfiq* and *takhayyur* techniques can be an important consideration in ensuring that relevant experts properly monitor proposed solutions to global Halal issues in Halal logistics operations.

### Conclusion

The objective of this study was to examine the dependence of the Muslim community in Singapore on Halal certification and explore solutions through the lens of minority jurisprudence. This objective was achieved by conducting a comprehensive document analysis, which highlighted the prevalence of defensive eating practices, the challenges of food contamination, and the implications of Halal extremism. The study found that defensive eating is a common practice among Muslims in Singapore, ensuring their dietary compliance amidst a multicultural environment. Additionally, the concept of minority jurisprudence provided a nuanced understanding of Halal food practices, offering potential solutions to reduce dependence on Halal certification.

Minority Jurisprudence pertains to the interpretation of Islamic law by minority groups within Muslim societies, particularly in the context of assessing Halal food in Singapore. While the majority of Muslims in Singapore adhere to the Shafi'i school of jurisprudence, which includes guidelines for evaluating Halal food, there is also a Muslim minority in Singapore who follows other schools of thought, such as Hanafi and Maliki. Disagreements among these sects regarding certain interpretations of Halal food may arise, particularly concerning the use of specific ingredients or production processes. These interpretations of Minority Jurisprudence can have implications for Halal certifications and standards within the Singaporean food industry.

Studying Minority Jurisprudence provides insights into food practices that may be contentious or unclear from the perspective of minority communities. This understanding can contribute to the development of more detailed and comprehensive Halal standards. Furthermore, examining Minority Jurisprudence helps to offer a broader perspective on contemporary issues related to Halal food. In some cases, there may be situations where the majority sect does not permit the use of certain materials or new production methods, highlighting the importance of considering diverse interpretations within the Muslim community.

This study contributes significantly to the understanding of Halal food practices among minority Muslim communities in multicultural settings. By highlighting the importance of defensive eating and the role of minority jurisprudence, it offers a framework for addressing Halal certification dependency. The research underscores the need for flexible and inclusive

Halal standards that accommodate diverse interpretations within the Muslim community. Furthermore, it advocates for robust education and training programs to prevent food contamination and promote trust in Halal certification processes. These insights are crucial for policymakers, Halal certification bodies, and the Muslim community in ensuring the integrity and accessibility of Halal food in Singapore and similar multicultural societies.

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