

## JAKIM Halal Certification to the Salted Eggs Industry in Malaysia

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### Abstract

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The Shari'a of Islam has placed a great importance on the law of cleansing off faeces and those related to umum al balwa (which means some things that always happen and are unavoidable). On the same note, the society is not adequately informed about shari'a laws on issues related to faecal matter in the food manufacturing process, especially to those that are always being misjudged like salted eggs. Therefore, this study is performed to offer an insight view on the law about the halal status in the salted eggs industry in Malaysia. This study adopted the methods of library study, laboratory method and field study in the forms of interviews with JAKIM officers, salted eggs entrepreneurs, nutritional science experts, and health experts as well as the public. Observation method is also elected by the researcher to ensure the validity of facts. This study found that the salted eggs manufactured in Malaysia, despite them not being washed prior to preservation, are not absorbed by any excrement to the point of haram as has been claimed.

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**Key words:** Salted eggs, Certification, Halal, Faeces

### 1. Introduction

In the field of Islamic muamalah, which is connected to nutrition, there have been a lot of arguments raised on the status of food products or ingredients mixed into foods and also the manufacturing itself such as the level of cleanliness of a food item or product. In our country, we often come across people or certain parties relating any given food product as haram to be eaten, as they raised the issue of syubhah, without accounting for dalil or evidence, the method and details which already determined by Shara'.

Islam as a religion that prioritises cleanliness in all aspects, starting from the heart to acts of worship, has recommended that the ummah should always seek for Halal and clean things (Syed Mohammad Hilmi: 2008). The actions of some raw food entrepreneurs who care less about the aspect of cleanliness have provoked controversies among the public. The issues are also discussed by the scholars as the answers to the issues that arise among the general public concerning the issue of the salted eggs, meat and fish that are said to be marinated before the foods are washed or the colon is removed first.

These issues have provoked a particular polemic among the Muslims of Malay community in Malaysia, where most of them are from the Syafie sect. Some of the issues sometimes stem from some of the people's attitude- those who blindly impose a law or impose a verdict stating that it is syubhah due to the wild doubts and suspicions without them basing it to any guideline before determining something a syubhah.

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The syubhah that has been raised only is based on their surface observation that certain products are mixed with excrement; these products such as salted or marinated fish, meat and eggs. These issues originate from the misunderstanding about the actual reality regarding the states of excrement or faeces that can leave an impact to food products and with the one which do not leave any. The various reviews also demonstrate the existence of multiple views and understanding on the laws of Shara', when it comes to excrement and ways of cleaning it. There are some shara' evidence which understanding is made limited in the form of textuality without considering factors of Usul al-Fiqh and Maqasid al-Syari'ah. As a result, there emerges a narrow-minded interpretation on the aspect of syubhah which is clearly incompatible with the requirements of shara' and the current reality.

The vagueness about the principles and methods in resolving the issue of syubhah also invites a multitude of opinions on the issue at hand. Imposing that a product is haram due to the similarities they have with haram products or the fact they are mixed with excrement would raise confusion if the products' processing would be syari'e-compliant or otherwise. Throwing an accusation without leaning on facts and not really understand the issue of excrement and the extent to which it affects the foods processed from the grass root are only causing suspicions as people would misjudge, other than there would be the absence of a proper guidance in comprehending the issues of halal, haram and syubhah related to excrement.

Such an offence will not only become a polemic among the general public but also among those called the leaders of the society with the status of an Ustaz or a religious scholar. Thus, a research has been proposed to address the issues that aroused which centrally discuss the status of halal for the salted eggs. This issue has been raised by some parties who find that most of the salted eggs entrepreneurs have not washed the duck eggs which are central to the salted eggs manufacturing.

## **2. Problem Statement**

We have yet to come across any study which specifically looks at the status of cleanliness of salted eggs in the Malaysian industry. However, there are some discussions related to this issue in social media platforms. The library study conducted has not encountered any specific discussion among the fuqaha' on the dirty state of the salted eggs as established in a rather lengthy discussion on salted fish and meat where they claim that they are processed without being washed first.

Looking at a similar concern of the salted eggs, the same issue about the marinated salted fish and meat has taken place, as all these three foods have adopted the same concept in terms of the manufacturing which the process of preserving them done by using salt. Therefore, a close look into the views of the scholars on the issue of the excrement on salted fish and meat needs to be carried out. This study has been conducted as to address the main issue that stands in prominence as the main topic of this study.

## **3. Research Objective**

1. To study the views of fiqh sects about the cleanliness issue of salted eggs.
2. To handle lab research upon salted eggs that was wrapped with husk or marinated without clean the faeces on it.
3. To ensure the Halal criteria certificate for salted egg as accounted by JAKIM
4. To give awareness to the society regarding the uncertainty (syubhah) about salted egg.

## **4. Study Methodology**

The methods of study play very essential roles in order to come out with a good and reliable research. This study applied library and field methodologies. The purpose of Kajiankepustakaan is to get the pictures of the society and the field of study, to take a close look of the terms related to their research and to create of form a suitable research question. The preliminary research is a study held by researcher before proceed to the field to collect data. The method used by the researcher to get the data are interview, record the information given by informant an write all the things said by the interviewee in transcription form

The success of a research is well depend to the research methodology used by the researcher and not the content or knowledge about it. Hence, every research that is going to be done must be supported by the good research methodology to gain a satisfied result at the end of the day. Library study plays a great role in a research.

In the progression to finish the research, the kepustakann approach will be employed to gain information that related to the dialectology theory especially the methodology that is used to conduct field study. Reference will be done to get the guidelines, meaning, facts, and understanding for each term that has connection with telurasin.

According to (MohdSheffie Abu Bakar, 1995: 41) Library study is a method use by the researcher to obtained data and proves through their research towards the document and records. There are two types of documents which best known as primer and secunder document. The main reason for kajiankepustakaan is to get the early information regarding the research that is going to be held before the researchers proceed to conduct field study. A good research need a very careful look with the intention to get the preliminary picture about the race and social organization, their research area, the problems that will rise in research objective, as well as the way that will be used to solve in the future.

This study utilized two methods which are qualitative and interview analysis. The field study is divided into two sections and they are the upstream field research and the downstream field research. The study done by the researchers was upstream or this study was done in village or remote areas. The field study or the external study, in a broad definition, would refer to any research that takes place outside the physical, spatial, temporal boundary such as outside the room, outside the office, off campus, abroad, and so on.

This study is a survey study that seeks to identify the issue of the filthy state of the salted eggs that has become a topic of conversation among the public, either virtually or physically. This study adopts the library study method and field study.

Interview: among the targeted parties to be interviewed are as follows:

- JAKIM: This interview serves to identify the halal certification criteria for salted eggs considered by JAKIM.
- Salted Eggs Manufacturers: This interview seeks to identify the salted eggs manufacturing process.
- Researchers' observation.
- Nutrition and health experts: The interview seeks to verify that water gives a negative impact to the durability of eggs.

Interview with the responsible parties:

Several interviews were done towards the responsible agency in this issue which is JAKIM. This interview is to make sure that the procedure applied is reserved for Halal certificates' issuance.

a) Interview with the public:

Interview with the public was carried out to know how far is their awareness and understanding on the Halal or Haram status in foods in general and salted eggs in particular.

b) Interview with suppliers and workers:

Suppliers and workers of salted eggs factories are regarded as the most important parties in the study, where through the interview with them it will facilitate the process of better understanding in relation to reality behind the salted eggs processing from starting up to finishing. This interview was done in several large factories in Kedah, Pahang, Penang, and Perak.

A group of researchers have arranged for a meeting with a senior officer at the Halal department of JAKIM at his office in Putrajaya.

## 5. Findings

In this section, researchers will perform a conclusion based on the findings obtained from the conducted study. The outcome of the findings will be summed up based on the three sections of findings which show that salted eggs can be eaten and they are halal. As the outcome of the interview, researchers were informed that no one has ever proposed this study although it is very important as it touches on the issue of Halal and Haram. According to him, the number of salted eggs manufacturers' who have applied for Halal certification from JAKIM is found to be very low and this is because there is still lack of awareness from both the consumers and the manufacturers' side.

Another factor is that the Halal certification in Malaysia is the manufacturers' own choice, and it is not made compulsory by the Government. He added that manufacturing companies should not feel burdened to apply for the JAKIM's Halal certificate since the rate tax imposed appeared to be very low. The fees charged for Halal certification application on small industries is only around RM200 for of 2 years period while for small medium industries, it will just cost RM 800 for 2 years while RM 1400 also for 2 years will be imposed to international level industries.

Among the things that he rose was the societal awareness on the halal status for the salted eggs. According to him, people's awareness of this issue is very weak. Answering the question on the criteria considered by JAKIM in the application of halal certificates, he stated that there are two aspects that will be stressed, namely the shara' law and the efficacy of the management like cleanliness and others. Addressing the issue of Halal certificate criteria under JAKIM to salted eggs entrepreneurs, he clarified that JAKIM has made it compulsory for raw eggs to be washed first before being wrapped in husks to ensure that the eggs are very clean. He added that the excrement that sticks to the egg shells, that are not washed before the wrapping will give an impact to the eggs.

Asked if JAKIM has ever received any complaint on the issue of the filthy state of the salted eggs, he confirmed that JAKIM has never received any report or complain about the halal status of salted eggs as being made viral on the Internet.

When asked about his suggestion on the ways as to help solidify the value of the study, as a representative of JAKIM he suggested that the study also involved a laboratory study as to ensure that the content in the eggs is really free from filth or excrement. He added that up until today, JAKIM has never revoked any certification from any salted eggs companies, except for those which do not submit a new application before their certificates expired.

Researchers also asked if there are any particular issues that become prominent in the industry which propel JAKIM to take the views of other sects, other than Syafie. He stated that if there were such issues, then a standard guideline will be issued by adopting the approach of not exposing any sect that has become the point of reference; the differences of opinions will not be bared too in the certification but the sect will be the foundation to the guideline, after all views from all sects are accounted for.

According to the view from fuqaha' all eggs from animal that are Halal (which is not forbidden) to be eaten is clean even it will later change to be blood when being incubate by its parent and later will result to the hatches of that egg. However, the egg from venomous animals such as snake is straightly not allowed. (Al-Haitami : 2009). We can eat all kinds of eggs produced by Halal animals even it contains blood as long as it will give no harm like poisonous animals or insect. (Al-Zuhayli: 1988).

Whereas, eggs that comes from alive chicken as according to Imam (Al-Nawawiy : 2012) in kitab al-Majmu', there are two opinions among the ulama' from Hambali sect in this affair. Some of them said that it contains faeces while the rest agreed that it is clean. Upon relying on the first opinion in this issue, hence the egg shell should first be washed. However, if one decided to hold on the second opinion, then it is not compulsory to wash the egg shells. This issue concern about the faeces on the egg shells not only because it comes from the rectum of Halal animal but because of the humidity in the rectum channel of animal is not hygienic.

From Hambali and Syafie sect perspective, boiling eggs which contains excrement will only affect the shell but do not give any impact to the egg white as well as the of the egg yolk. (Al-Jawi : 2012). This research discovered that the ulama' differentiate the way the faeces was absorbed between the food that already cooked from the raw one. The decision obtained solely to decide either the absorbance process has happen or not. Although the issue that have been discussed by ulama' about the absorbance of faeces in the boiled egg, meat, flour and the thing that related to it is slightly different from the main issue in this research but the ta'lil hokum from both parties about the absorbance that possibly happen have a close relation to this study.

## 6. Conclusion

The Laboratory study, through the Microbiological Test finds that the bacteria content of E.coli in salted eggs, either through the process using the husks or water are at level (<3) indicating that there is no duck excrement absorbed although the eggs were not cleaned prior to the preservation process.

It should be noted, however, that Coliforms (3-MPN) contained in the salted eggs process through soaking, are at a serious level (1100) compared to the husk preservation process. It is confirmed, that it is not E.coli Bacteria which is said to be a form of excrement, so the Halal status of the eggs is not affected according to Shara'.

The Halal Certification Criteria considered by JAKIM have adopted the normal food industry qualification prerequisites including the fact that it is made compulsory to clean the eggs before the process to prevent cases of excrement absorption. However, these criteria are contrary to the findings obtained from the library study above. Through the interview, it is found that there is a fraction of the general public who are very much influenced by the syubhah (the filthy state of salted eggs) especially those established by the social media.

Through the survey and interview conducted with the entrepreneurs, it is found that the factories which are in possession of the JAKIM Halal Certificate or not all of them, do not wash the eggs before the preservation process on the pretext that it is a complicated task and that it can affect the quality of the eggs in the long run.

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