

The Principle of Precaution (*Iḥtiyāt*) in the Consumption of *Ahl al-Kitāb* Slaughter: A Study of the Muslim Community in Kayu Putih Subdistrict, Kupang City

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A B S T R A C T

This study aims to analyze the precautionary attitude (*iḥtiyāt*) of the Muslim community in Kayu Putih Subdistrict, Kupang City, in responding to the legal status of consuming slaughtered animals prepared by *Ahl al-Kitāb* (People of the Book). This research employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive design, utilizing interviews, observations, and documentation involving religious leaders and local community members. The data are analyzed through thematic analysis, drawing upon both classical and contemporary *fiqh* literature. The findings reveal that the majority of Muslims in Kayu Putih tend to avoid consuming slaughtered meat prepared by *Ahl al-Kitāb* due to doubts regarding the conformity of the slaughtering process with Islamic legal requirements, particularly concerning the invocation of the name of Allah and the methods of slaughter employed. This attitude reflects the application of the precautionary principle (*iḥtiyāt*) in daily consumption practices, influenced by their understanding of Qur'anic verses, Prophetic traditions (*ḥadīth*), and local religious authority. Furthermore, the study demonstrates that within a Muslim minority context, both social and religious considerations significantly shape more cautious religious practices, especially in matters of *halal* consumption. This research contributes to the development of contemporary *fiqh* studies, particularly in understanding the relationship between Islamic legal norms and the social practices of Muslim communities in multireligious settings.

1. Introduction

The issue of food permissibility (*ḥalāl*) constitutes a fundamental aspect of Islamic religious practice. In Islamic law, the classification of food as lawful (*ḥalāl*) or unlawful (*ḥarām*) is not solely determined by the type of food itself, but also by the processes of preparation and animal slaughter (Subagiyo & Syaichoni, 2023). One of the most debated issues in Islamic

jurisprudence concerns the permissibility of consuming meat slaughtered by *Ahl al-Kitāb* (People of the Book), as referenced in Qur'ān Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5:5), which states that the food of those who were given the Scripture is lawful for Muslims. Textually, this verse provides a degree of leniency for Muslims to consume such food. However, its interpretation is not uniformly reflected in the lived practices of Muslim communities.

Differences in interpreting the permissibility of *Ahl al-Kitāb* slaughter arise from variations in historical context and contemporary slaughtering practices. Classical *fiqh* literature generally holds that the slaughter performed by *Ahl al-Kitāb* during the time of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) fulfilled Islamic legal requirements, as their practices were still aligned with monotheistic principles. In contrast, in the modern context, slaughtering practices in many settings often involve mechanical methods, may not include the invocation of the name of Allah, and do not always meet the criteria prescribed by Islamic law (Fathima et al., 2024). These conditions have generated doubt among some Muslims regarding the permissibility of consuming such meat in contemporary times.

This debate is not confined to normative discussions within *fiqh* literature but is also reflected in the social practices of Muslim communities across different regions. In the context of Muslim minorities living in multireligious societies, the issue of *halal* food consumption becomes particularly sensitive due to limited access to reliably *halal* food sources. Such circumstances often encourage individuals to adopt a precautionary attitude (*iḥtiyāt*) when making dietary choices, especially regarding food whose legal status is perceived as doubtful (Rofiah et al., 2024).

Kayu Putih Subdistrict in Kupang City represents a socially diverse area where Muslims live alongside adherents of other religions. In such a context, the Muslim community faces distinct challenges in ensuring the *halal* status of their food, including issues related to the consumption of meat slaughtered by *Ahl al-Kitāb*. Therefore, it is important to examine how Muslims in this area understand and respond to this issue in their daily lives.

The study of *halal* food and slaughtering practices in Islam has received considerable scholarly attention, particularly within the field of *halal* food studies. Several studies have examined the evolution of the *halal* concept in the context of globalization and the increasing demand for clear *halal* standards in contemporary Muslim societies (Rahman et al., 2024; Rizqa & Afandi, 2024; Wiyono et al., 2022). For instance, Bergeaud-Blackler et al. (2015) argue that *halal* practices are shaped not only by religious legal frameworks but also by social, economic, and political dynamics that influence how Muslims interpret and implement *halal* principles in everyday life. Other studies have focused on debates surrounding animal slaughter methods in Islam, particularly in relation to the use of modern technology and its implications for the *halal* status of meat products (Lever & Miele, 2012; Mavi et al., 2026; Uula, 2024).

Moreover, discussions on *halal* slaughter are often linked to the broader issue of Muslim life as minorities in multireligious societies. Research in the field of minority *fiqh* indicates that Muslim communities living as minorities frequently encounter challenges in accessing *halal* food, prompting them to develop adaptive strategies in their consumption practices (Fischer, 2011; Luthfi et al., 2024). In this context, the adoption of precautionary measures in food selection becomes a form of religious response to uncertainty regarding *halal*

status in environments not fully governed by Islamic norms (Chairy et al., 2025; Pradana et al., 2024a; Qudsiyah & Tsania, 2024).

Despite the breadth of existing scholarship addressing both normative and social dimensions of *halal* practices and slaughter debates, most studies tend to focus either on the global *halal* industry or on doctrinal discussions within *fiqh* literature. Research that specifically examines how local Muslim communities understand the legal status of *Ahl al-Kitāb* slaughter and how the principle of precaution (*iḥtiyāt*) is manifested in everyday consumption practices remains relatively limited, particularly in the context of Muslim minority communities in Indonesia. This study seeks to fill this gap by analyzing the perspectives of Muslims in Kayu Putih Subdistrict, Kupang City, regarding the permissibility of consuming *Ahl al-Kitāb* slaughter and by examining how precautionary attitudes are formed within their consumption practices in a multireligious social setting.

In Islamic legal tradition, a precautionary approach toward matters of legal uncertainty or scholarly disagreement is known as *iḥtiyāt*. Terminologically, *iḥtiyāt* refers to the practice of adopting a safer course of action in religious observance by avoiding matters that may lead to what is unlawful (*ḥarām*) or doubtful (*shubha*). This concept is closely related to the principle of safeguarding the integrity of religious practice, as reflected in a well-known Prophetic tradition stating that what is lawful and unlawful is clear, while between them lie doubtful matters that should be avoided (Hayati & Putri, 2021). In the literature of *uṣūl al-fiqh*, *iḥtiyāt* is often regarded as an ethical approach to dealing with legal uncertainty, particularly in situations involving divergent scholarly opinions or when social conditions generate doubt about the practical application of legal rulings. Accordingly, in the context of Muslim communities living in multireligious or minority settings, the principle of *iḥtiyāt* frequently becomes a key consideration in determining religious practices, including decisions related to food consumption.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the perspectives of the Muslim community in Kayu Putih Subdistrict, Kupang City, regarding the permissibility of consuming meat slaughtered by *Ahl al-Kitāb* and to examine the tendency toward precautionary attitudes (*iḥtiyāt*) in their consumption practices. Specifically, this research addresses two main questions: (1) how do Muslims in Kayu Putih perceive the legal status of consuming *Ahl al-Kitāb* slaughter, and (2) how is this issue viewed within contemporary Islamic legal discourse?

This study is expected to contribute to the development of contemporary Islamic legal studies, particularly in understanding the relationship between *fiqh* norms and the social practices of Muslim communities in multireligious contexts. Furthermore, it provides insight into how Muslim minority communities negotiate the principles of Islamic law in their everyday lives.

2. Method

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design (Neuman, 2013). The qualitative approach is chosen as the study seeks to gain an in-depth understanding of the perspectives and practices of the Muslim community regarding the legal status of consuming meat slaughtered by *Ahl al-Kitāb* within their social context. Through this approach, the researcher is able to explore the participants' understandings, experiences, and religious considerations that underpin their attitudes toward this issue.

The research was conducted in Kayu Putih Subdistrict, Kupang City, an area characterized by a multireligious society in which Muslims live alongside adherents of other religions. This social setting makes the location particularly relevant for examining *halal* consumption practices within a Muslim minority context.

The research informants consisted of religious leaders, community leaders, and Muslim residents of Kayu Putih Subdistrict. Informants were selected using purposive sampling, based on the consideration that they possess relevant knowledge or experience related to the research topic. This technique is intended to ensure that the data collected provide a comprehensive understanding of community perspectives on the permissibility of consuming *Ahl al-Kitāb* slaughter.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observation, and documentation. Semi-structured interviews were employed to explore in depth the informants' views and experiences regarding the consumption of *Ahl al-Kitāb* slaughter. Observation was conducted to gain direct insight into the social context and everyday practices of the community, while documentation was used to supplement data related to the community's social conditions and relevant religious literature.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis by organizing the data into key themes emerging from interviews and observations. The findings were then interpreted with reference to both classical and contemporary *fiqh* literature concerning the legal status of *Ahl al-Kitāb* slaughter and the concept of precaution (*iḥtiyāt*) in Islamic law. To ensure data validity, this study employs source triangulation and method triangulation by comparing information obtained from different informants and data collection techniques.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. General Overview of the Research Site and Socio-Religious Characteristics

Kayu Putih Subdistrict in Kupang City constitutes a social space characterized by a high degree of religious plurality, where the Muslim community coexists with adherents of other religions, particularly Christians, within relatively open patterns of social interaction. Within this configuration, Muslims occupy a minority position and structurally face limitations in various aspects of religious life, including access to *halal* food consumption.

As a minority community, Muslims in this area do not exercise full control over food production and distribution systems. This condition creates a distinct situation compared to Muslim-majority regions, where access to *halal* products is more institutionally assured. In minority contexts, *halal* consumption practices depend not only on product availability but also on individuals' capacity to verify, select, and assess the *halal* status of food. Recent studies indicate that the consumption behavior of Muslim minorities tends to be more complex, shaped by limited access, levels of trust in producers, and broader social considerations embedded in interreligious interactions (Hidayati et al., 2024).

The multireligious social environment also shapes distinctive patterns of religiosity. In heterogeneous settings, religious practices function not only as expressions of individual piety but also as mechanisms for reinforcing collective identity. In this regard, *halal* consumption becomes a significant symbol representing both religious commitment and identity boundaries between Muslims and non-Muslims. Contemporary studies suggest that in plural

societies, *halal* consumption practices are often reinforced as expressions of religious identity and may even contribute to the formation of subtle social boundaries in everyday interactions (Amin et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the dynamics of globalization and modernization influence the consumption patterns of Muslim communities, including those in minority settings. Despite increased exposure to global consumer culture, Islamic identity remains a significant factor in shaping consumption choices. This indicates that engagement with diverse environments does not necessarily weaken adherence to *halal* principles; rather, it may strengthen religious awareness as a response to external challenges (Putra et al., 2025).

In the Indonesian context, awareness of *halal* consumption is a multidimensional phenomenon influenced not only by religious knowledge but also by social, cultural, and environmental factors. Recent literature emphasizes that *halal* consumption practices are shaped by the interaction between individual religiosity, social norms, and local conditions (Deti, 2025). The social conditions in Kayu Putih can thus be understood as a determining factor shaping how the Muslim community interprets and practices *halal* principles.

The socio-religious characteristics of Kayu Putih are not merely a background to this study but constitute a key variable influencing the construction of religious practices. The minority position of Muslims, interreligious interactions, and limited access to *halal* resources collectively foster patterns of religiosity that are more reflective, selective, and adaptive. Therefore, any analysis of *halal* consumption practices in this area must be situated within its broader social context, which constitutes the primary source of its distinctive dynamics.

3.2. Community Understanding of *Ahl al-Kitāb* Slaughter

The Muslim community in Kayu Putih demonstrates a relatively uniform conceptual understanding of *Ahl al-Kitāb*, generally identifying them as adherents of Judaism and Christianity. This understanding is transmitted through religious learning processes, including study circles, sermons, and widely circulated Islamic literature. From a normative perspective, this aligns with classical *fiqh* constructions that recognize *Ahl al-Kitāb* as a theologically acknowledged group within Islamic law, including in matters related to food permissibility.

However, the findings reveal a notable discrepancy between this conceptual understanding and the practical acceptance of *Ahl al-Kitāb* slaughter in contemporary contexts. The community does not automatically internalize the normative permissibility found in religious texts into their everyday consumption practices. Instead, they tend to engage in context-based reinterpretation, taking into account social and technological transformations that influence modern slaughtering practices.

This phenomenon can be explained through the perspective of lived religion, which emphasizes that religious practice is not always a direct reflection of normative doctrine but rather the result of a negotiation between textual authority, lived experience, and social reality. Recent studies indicate that in the context of *halal* consumption, Muslims often develop more complex practical understandings than those suggested by textual formulations, particularly when confronted with uncertainty in food production chains (Pamungkas et al., 2024).

In the case of Kayu Putih, this reinterpretation is evident in how the community perceives contemporary non-Muslim slaughtering practices. While they acknowledge that the

Qur'an provides permissibility regarding *Ahl al-Kitāb* slaughter, they do not automatically consider such permissibility applicable in modern conditions. This is largely due to the perception that contemporary slaughtering practices have undergone significant transformation, both in terms of procedures and underlying values.

Community concerns primarily focus on two key aspects. First, there is no guarantee that the slaughtering process includes the invocation of the name of Allah, which is a fundamental requirement for permissibility in Islamic law. Second, the use of modern technologies, such as mechanical slaughtering systems, is perceived as diminishing the element of intentionality in the act of slaughter. From an Islamic legal perspective, both intention and procedure hold central importance, and changes in these aspects generate legal uncertainty.

Recent research in *halal* studies also indicates that advancements in food technology often introduce ambiguity in determining *halal* status, particularly when such processes lack transparency for consumers (Muin & Tahir, 2023). In such situations, Muslim consumers tend to adopt a precautionary approach by avoiding products whose *halal* status cannot be clearly verified.

The understanding of *Ahl al-Kitāb* slaughter among the Kayu Putih community can thus be categorized as selective-contextual. While they do not reject the theological concept of *Ahl al-Kitāb*, they limit its practical application based on empirical considerations. This reflects a shift from a purely textual approach toward a contextual one in interpreting Islamic law, where the validity of a ruling is determined not only by scriptural evidence but also by its relevance to contemporary realities. Their understanding is therefore dynamic and adaptive, demonstrating that the authority of religious texts in social practice is always mediated by experience, perception, and the surrounding socio-environmental context.

3.3. Community Legal Perspectives on *Ahl al-Kitāb* Slaughter

The legal perspectives of the Muslim community in Kayu Putih Subdistrict regarding *Ahl al-Kitāb* slaughter demonstrate a predominantly restrictive tendency, reflected in their general avoidance of consuming such meat in contemporary contexts. Importantly, this stance does not stem from a lack of awareness of classical *fiqh* discourse; rather, it emerges from an informed recognition of the diversity of scholarly opinions, which are subsequently evaluated in light of present-day realities.

In Islamic jurisprudential literature, scholarly opinions on *Ahl al-Kitāb* slaughter can generally be classified into three main tendencies. First, the view that permits it unconditionally (al-Ṭabarī, 1992). This position is based on the general meaning of Qur'an Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5:5), which states that the food (*ṭa'ām*) of the People of the Book is lawful for Muslims. Scholars such as Ibn 'Abbās interpret the term *ṭa'ām* in this verse as referring specifically to their slaughtered animals, thereby establishing its permissibility. This view is further supported by the majority of exegetes, including Ibn Kathīr (1923), who affirms that the slaughter of Jews and Christians is lawful as long as it is not dedicated to other than Allah. Moreover, in well-known narrations, Imām Mālik is reported to have permitted *Ahl al-Kitāb* slaughter without requiring detailed investigation into whether the name of Allah was invoked, provided there is no clear indication that the slaughter was intended for idolatrous purposes. The Prophet Muḥammad's acceptance and consumption of food offered by a Jewish

woman during the event of Khaybar is also frequently cited as empirical evidence supporting this permissibility (al-Qurṭubī, 1980).

Second, the conditional permissibility view. This position, held among others by the Shāfi'ī school, stipulates that the permissibility of *Ahl al-Kitāb* slaughter depends on the fulfillment of specific conditions (al-Nawawī, 2010). These include that the slaughterer genuinely belongs to the People of the Book, that the slaughter is carried out in accordance with Islamic legal requirements (such as proper cutting of the throat), that the animal itself is lawful, and that it is not dedicated to other than Allah. Al-Qurṭubī (1980) emphasizes that if deviations occur – such as invoking a name other than Allah or employing invalid methods – the meat becomes unlawful. Even in cases of uncertainty, he advocates for a precautionary stance. A similar position is articulated by Ibn Qudāmah (2010), who underscores the importance of procedural compliance as a prerequisite for permissibility. Thus, in this view, permissibility is conditional and contingent upon verification of the slaughtering process.

Third, the context-based prohibition view. This perspective is developed by several contemporary scholars, including Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, Muḥammad Mutawallī al-Sha'rāwī, Ibn 'Uthaymīn, and al-Albānī. They argue that in modern contexts, the slaughtering practices of *Ahl al-Kitāb* no longer meet the standards prescribed by Islamic law. Factors such as the absence of invoking the name of Allah, the use of non-*shar'ī* methods (e.g., stunning, blunt force, or automated machinery), and the potential incorporation of non-Islamic ritual elements render such practices problematic. Consequently, although the textual sources indicate permissibility, this ruling is not considered directly applicable in contemporary circumstances due to significant transformations in slaughtering practices (al-Ghazālī, 1996).

Within the context of the Kayu Putih community, these three strands of opinion are implicitly recognized. However, the prevailing tendency aligns more closely with the third view, characterized by a precautionary approach that leads to the rejection of consuming contemporary *Ahl al-Kitāb* slaughter. This position is grounded in the assumption that modern slaughtering practices cannot be reliably verified as compliant with Islamic legal requirements, both in terms of procedure and intention.

This preference illustrates that the community does not adhere to scriptural texts in a purely literal manner but engages in a process of normative selection based on contextual considerations. While the authority of religious texts is acknowledged, their application is mediated through empirical realities. Thus, the restrictive stance observed is not a rejection of Islamic law; rather, it represents a stronger commitment to the principle of ensuring *halal* integrity.

Furthermore, this tendency reflects an orientation toward the principle of *iḥtiyāt* (precaution), whereby the community adopts what is perceived as the safest religious position in situations marked by uncertainty. From the perspective of contemporary Islamic legal thought, this attitude can be understood as a form of religious rationality aimed at safeguarding the integrity of religious practice amid the complexities of modern food systems.

In sum, the community's legal perspective on *Ahl al-Kitāb* slaughter is not simplistic but is shaped by the interaction between *fiqh* knowledge, religious authority, and critical engagement with contemporary realities.

3.4. Factors Influencing Community Attitudes

The attitudes of the Muslim community in Kayu Putih Subdistrict toward *Ahl al-Kitāb* slaughter cannot be understood as a singular or simplistic response; rather, they emerge from a complex interplay of multiple interrelated factors. These factors do not operate independently but interact and reinforce one another, forming a collective framework that shapes how individuals make decisions in their everyday consumption practices.

3.4.1 The theological factor.

Religious understanding derived from the Qur'an and *ḥadīth* constitutes the primary foundation for shaping community attitudes. In particular, scriptural emphasis on the invocation of the name of Allah during the act of slaughter exerts a strong influence on perceptions of *halal* legitimacy. Verses that prohibit the consumption of animals over which the name of Allah has not been mentioned are interpreted normatively and often literally, thereby becoming a criterion for assessing the permissibility of animal-based products.

In this context, religious texts are not only perceived as legal sources but also as moral guidelines that must be upheld in everyday life. Recent studies indicate that in *halal*-related issues, theological considerations often serve as the dominant factor shaping consumption behavior, even when individuals are confronted with complex social realities (Amin & Semmawi, 2022; Qudsiyah & Tsania, 2024). Thus, the strength of the theological factor lies in its capacity to establish a relatively stable normative consciousness within both individuals and the broader community.

3.4.2 The socio-structural factor.

As a Muslim minority within a multireligious environment, the Kayu Putih community faces structural limitations in accessing and controlling *halal* food sources. The absence of a fully *halal*-based production and distribution system places the community in a vulnerable position with regard to consuming products whose *halal* status is uncertain.

This condition encourages the emergence of a heightened level of selectivity as a form of adaptation to the surrounding social environment. In plural societies, consumption choices are not merely a matter of individual preference but are also shaped by the dynamics of interreligious interaction. Contemporary studies show that Muslim minorities tend to develop stronger precautionary strategies in food consumption as a means of safeguarding their religious identity (Fischer, 2021; Lever & Miele, 2022).

Accordingly, the socio-structural factor functions as the contextual framework that defines the boundaries of available choices. Within these constraints, the adoption of a precautionary attitude represents a rational response that enables the community to maintain its commitment to religious principles.

3.4.3 The epistemic-practical factor.

Another significant factor influencing community attitudes is the limited access to reliable information regarding modern slaughtering processes. In contemporary food production systems, slaughtering often occurs within large-scale industrial settings that lack transparency for consumers. This situation generates a substantial degree of uncertainty.

Such uncertainty often develops into doubt, particularly when individuals lack the means or mechanisms to verify whether a product complies with *halal* standards. In response, the community tends to adopt a defensive position by avoiding products with unclear status.

Recent research in *halal* studies highlights that the lack of transparency within food supply chains is a major factor contributing to avoidance behavior among Muslim consumers (Iskandar et al., 2023).

Thus, the epistemic-practical factor is closely related to limitations in knowledge and access to information, which ultimately shape how individuals construct confidence in the *halal* status of a given product.

3.4.4 The role of local religious authority.

Religious leaders play a crucial role in shaping the horizon of understanding and religious practice within the Kayu Putih community. They function not only as transmitters of normative teachings but also as social actors who interpret and contextualize these teachings in everyday life.

This authority is performative in nature, meaning that the views and guidance provided by religious leaders have a direct impact on social practices. Through sermons, religious gatherings, and informal legal opinions, they tend to encourage the community to adopt more cautious attitudes, particularly in matters involving elements of doubt (*shubha*).

From the perspective of the sociology of religion, this phenomenon illustrates how religious authority contributes to the formation of a community's moral economy – a system of values that defines what is considered right and wrong in daily practice (Fischer, 2021). The community's trust in religious leaders further reinforces the legitimacy of these perspectives, transforming precautionary attitudes from individual choices into collectively internalized norms.

Overall, these four factors demonstrate that community attitudes toward *Ahl al-Kitāb* slaughter are the result of a multidimensional process. The theological factor provides the normative foundation, the socio-structural factor shapes the contextual constraints, the epistemic-practical factor generates conditions of uncertainty, and religious authority directs collective responses. The interaction of these factors ultimately produces a dominant orientation toward precaution (*iḥtiyāt*) in the consumption practices of the Muslim community in Kayu Putih.

3.5 The Practice of *iḥtiyāt* in Everyday Consumption

The principal finding of this study indicates that the principle of *iḥtiyāt* (precaution) has become a dominant paradigm in the consumption practices of the Muslim community in Kayu Putih Subdistrict. This principle is no longer merely understood as a normative concept within *fiqh* literature; rather, it has undergone a process of deep internalization, transforming into a social ethos that guides collective behavior in everyday life. In other words, *iḥtiyāt* operates not only as a legal option but also as a form of religious habitus that shapes how the community thinks and acts in responding to issues of *halal* and haram.

The internalization of *iḥtiyāt* is evident in the consumption preferences observed within the community. In daily practice, there is a strong tendency to select food products – particularly meat – that are slaughtered by fellow Muslims or sourced from providers with clear and trustworthy *halal* guarantees. Trust in the religious identity of the slaughterer serves as a primary indicator in determining the permissibility of a product. Conversely, products with uncertain *halal* status – whether due to unknown slaughtering processes or involvement

of non-Muslim actors—are generally avoided, even though religious texts may theoretically allow some degree of permissibility.

This phenomenon demonstrates that, in practice, the community does not rely solely on legal possibility but prioritizes legal certainty. In this context, *iḥtiyāt* functions as a strategy to minimize the risk of violating religious norms. Contemporary research in *halal* consumption studies shows that in situations of uncertainty, Muslim consumers tend to develop what is described as risk-averse behavior, preferring options that are perceived as religiously safest (Bonne & Verbeke, 2020; Fischer, 2021).

From a *fiqh* perspective, the practice of *iḥtiyāt* among the Kayu Putih community is firmly grounded in established principles of *uṣūl al-fiqh*. One relevant maxim is *al-khurūj min al-khilāf mustahabb* (it is recommended to avoid areas of scholarly disagreement), which suggests that in cases of differing juristic opinions, adopting a more cautious position is preferable. Additionally, the principle of avoiding doubtful matters (*al-shubuhāt*) in order to safeguard oneself from the unlawful provides a strong normative basis for this practice.

However, the practice of *iḥtiyāt* in this context cannot be understood solely as a textual implementation of *fiqh* maxims. It also represents a response to the complexities of modern realities, particularly within increasingly industrialized and opaque food production systems. In situations where consumers lack direct access to production processes, trust becomes a key determinant in consumption choices. Recent studies indicate that within global *halal* supply chains, limited transparency and increasing technological complexity often lead consumers to adopt precautionary strategies as a form of self-protection (Lever & Miele, 2022).

Moreover, the practice of *iḥtiyāt* carries significant ethical and spiritual dimensions. For the community, avoiding doubtful food is not merely a matter of legal compliance but also part of a broader effort to maintain personal purity and the quality of religious devotion. Within this framework, *halal* consumption is understood as an integral component of religious life, with implications for one's relationship with God. Consequently, precautionary attitudes are driven not only by rational considerations but also by deep moral and spiritual awareness.

From the perspective of the sociology of religion, this phenomenon can be interpreted as a form of embodied religiosity, in which religious values are not only cognitively affirmed but also enacted through concrete daily practices. *Halal* consumption becomes a primary medium through which religious identity is expressed and maintained. In the context of a minority community such as Kayu Putih, this practice also functions as a mechanism for preserving identity boundaries within a plural social environment.

Iḥtiyāt in the consumption practices of the Muslim community in Kayu Putih can be understood as a multidimensional protective mechanism. It functions not only as a legal strategy to avoid the unlawful, but also as a social strategy to maintain identity, and as a spiritual strategy to preserve the integrity of faith. In navigating the complexities of modern realities marked by uncertainty, *iḥtiyāt* emerges as both a rational and ethical choice that enables the community to remain consistent with their religious values.

3.6 The Relationship between *Fiqh* Norms and Social Practice

The findings of this study demonstrate that the relationship between *fiqh* norms and social practice within the Muslim community of Kayu Putih is dialogical, dynamic, and contextual. *Fiqh* norms do not function as rigid or static entities; rather, they operate as a

system of values that continuously undergo negotiation with changing social realities. In practice, the community does not merely reproduce religious texts in a literal manner but engages in reinterpretation by taking into account social context, technological developments, and empirical experiences encountered in everyday life.

This phenomenon underscores that Islamic law in social practice is never entirely autonomous from reality; instead, it exists in a dialectical relationship with the conditions that surround it. In the Kayu Putih context, classical *fiqh* texts concerning the permissibility of *Ahl al-Kitāb* slaughter are not normatively rejected but are reinterpreted through the lens of contemporary experience, particularly in relation to transformations in modern slaughtering systems. As such, the meaning attributed to legal norms is not fixed but remains open to continuous reinterpretation.

Within this framework, *fiqh* norms function as a referential structure that provides foundational principles and normative boundaries, while social practice serves as the space for their concrete actualization. This process is influenced by various contextual variables, including minority status, limited access to information, and interreligious interactions. In other words, the application of norms does not occur in a vacuum but is mediated through rational, social, and even emotional considerations.

This process reflects what contemporary Islamic legal scholarship refers to as contextualized *fiqh*, an approach that emphasizes the importance of considering temporal and spatial contexts in understanding and applying Islamic law. Within this paradigm, textual sources are not disregarded but are interpreted contextually to ensure their continued relevance to evolving realities. Recent studies indicate that such contextual approaches are increasingly prominent in contemporary Muslim religious practice, particularly in issues shaped by technological advancement and globalization (Fischer, 2021).

In the Kayu Putih community, this contextual approach is evident in the tendency not to generalize normative permissibility into modern practice without prior evaluation. The community assesses whether the conditions underlying scriptural rulings remain applicable to present circumstances. When significant discrepancies are identified—such as in slaughtering procedures or the intention of the slaughterer—the norms are not applied directly but are adjusted in accordance with current realities.

At this juncture, the principle of *iḥtiyāt* plays a crucial role as an epistemological bridge between text and reality. This principle enables the community to remain committed to Islamic legal norms while simultaneously accommodating the uncertainties that arise in practice. By prioritizing caution, the community avoids the need to choose between rigid textualism and complete adaptation to reality. Instead, they adopt a middle position that maintains a balance between the two.

From the perspective of *uṣūl al-fiqh*, *iḥtiyāt* can be understood as a strategy for managing the tension between *al-yaqīn* (certainty) and *al-shakk* (doubt). When legal certainty cannot be attained due to limited information or the complexity of circumstances, precaution becomes a rational choice to prevent potential violations of religious norms. Contemporary research in *halal* studies also indicates that under conditions of uncertainty, Muslim consumers tend to adopt precaution-based strategies as a form of adaptation to increasingly complex modern food systems (Lever & Miele, 2022).

Furthermore, the relationship between *fiqh* norms and social practice in this context suggests that legal authority is derived not only from textual sources but also from the collective experience of the community. Repeated and widely accepted social practices can generate a form of practical authority that reinforces or even shapes interpretations of the text. In this sense, the community is not merely an object of legal application but also an active subject in the construction of legal meaning.

In conclusion, the relationship between *fiqh* norms and social practice in Kayu Putih Subdistrict is interactive and constructive. Norms provide direction, while practice gives them concrete form. Both continuously influence one another, resulting in patterns of religiosity that are adaptive yet firmly rooted in Islamic principles. In this context, *iḥtiyāt* functions not only as a legal principle but also as an epistemological mechanism that enables the integration of text and reality in the lived experiences of Muslim communities.

3.7 From *Taysīr* to *Iḥtiyāt*: The Dynamics of *Halal* Practice in a Muslim Minority Context

The findings of this study hold strong relevance to recent developments in *halal* food studies, which emphasize that *halal* consumption cannot be reductively understood as mere compliance with religious texts. Rather, it constitutes a multidimensional phenomenon shaped by the complex interaction of religious, social, economic, and even political factors. In recent decades, *halal* studies have shifted from a predominantly normative approach toward an interdisciplinary perspective that situates *halal* consumption within dynamic and contextual social practices (Fischer, 2021; Lever & Miele, 2022).

Within this framework, the consumption practices of the Muslim community in Kayu Putih Subdistrict reflect patterns consistent with global scholarship, particularly concerning Muslim consumers in minority contexts. Contemporary studies indicate that, in such settings, *halal* consumption is not solely about adherence to religious norms but also serves as a crucial means of constructing and maintaining religious identity within plural environments (Bonne & Verbeke, 2020). Consequently, the choice of *halal* food is not merely personal but carries symbolic and collective significance.

In the context of Kayu Putih, the adoption of precautionary practices (*iḥtiyāt*) in food consumption can be understood as an adaptive response to structural constraints. Limited access to *halal* products, lack of transparency in production processes, and the dominance of non-*halal* food systems create conditions that encourage the community to develop protective strategies. In this regard, *iḥtiyāt* functions as an adaptive mechanism that enables the community to maintain its commitment to religious values despite operating within an environment that does not fully support them.

This phenomenon aligns, to some extent, with the framework of *fiqh al-aqalliyyāt* (jurisprudence of Muslim minorities), which emphasizes the importance of contextual considerations in the application of Islamic law. This approach generally advocates flexibility and facilitation (*taysīr*) in order to alleviate the difficulties faced by Muslim minorities. In many cases, *fiqh al-aqalliyyāt* allows for adaptive reinterpretations of legal rulings in response to local conditions, including issues related to food consumption (Ashfahany et al., 2025).

However, the findings of this study reveal an intriguing dynamic that diverges from this general tendency. Rather than adopting a more lenient approach, the Kayu Putih community demonstrates a clear inclination toward *iḥtiyāt*, or stricter precaution. This

suggests that responses to minority conditions are not always synonymous with legal relaxation; instead, they may involve a reinforcement of commitment to religious norms through more selective and cautious practices.

This divergence can be explained through a sociological perspective that highlights how religious practices are shaped not only by legal structures but also by risk perception and levels of trust. In contexts characterized by high uncertainty and low trust in production systems, individuals are more likely to adopt conservative strategies to avoid potential violations of religious norms. In *halal* consumption, perceived risk plays a significant role in shaping consumer decisions, often exerting a stronger influence than normative knowledge alone (Pradana et al., 2024).

Moreover, the tendency toward *iḥtiyāt* can be understood as a form of moral intensification, wherein moral commitment is strengthened in response to external pressures. In multireligious environments—where religious identity may be subject to negotiation or even erosion—communities often reinforce symbolic practices considered essential, such as *halal* consumption. In this sense, precaution in consumption functions not only as a legal mechanism but also as a cultural strategy for preserving identity.

Furthermore, these findings contribute to broader discussions on the relationship between globalization and religious practice. While globalization facilitates access to diverse products and technologies, it simultaneously increases the complexity of determining the *halal* status of goods, particularly due to extended and opaque supply chains. In such conditions, *iḥtiyāt* emerges as a localized response to global challenges, illustrating how Muslim communities adapt religious principles to navigate new realities (Lever & Miele, 2022).

From a broader perspective, this study underscores that religious practices are the result of complex negotiations between text, authority, and social reality. Texts provide normative foundations, religious authorities offer interpretation and guidance, and social realities present practical challenges that require contextual responses. Within this interaction, communities are not passive recipients but active agents in shaping patterns of religiosity that align with their lived conditions.

In situations of uncertainty generated by social and technological change, *iḥtiyāt* emerges as a dominant strategy with dual functions. On the one hand, it operates as a legal option that enables individuals to avoid potential violations of religious norms. On the other hand, it represents an expression of religious ethics that reflects moral and spiritual consciousness in everyday life. This study not only provides empirical contributions to the study of *halal* consumption among Muslim minority communities but also offers broader theoretical reflections on how Islamic law is practiced in contemporary contexts. The findings highlight that flexibility in Islamic law is not always manifested through leniency (*taysīr*), but may also take the form of precautionary strategies that allow believers to maintain religious integrity amid the complexities of the modern world.

4. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the attitudes of the Muslim community in Kayu Putih Subdistrict, Kupang City, toward the consumption of *Ahl al-Kitāb* slaughter cannot be understood merely as a normative response to religious texts. Rather, these attitudes emerge

from a complex process of negotiation between *fiqh* norms, social realities, and empirical experiences. Although the Qur'an textually permits the consumption of *Ahl al-Kitāb* slaughter, the majority of the community adopts a more restrictive stance by avoiding such consumption in contemporary contexts.

This tendency is primarily driven by doubts regarding the conformity of modern slaughtering practices with Islamic legal requirements, particularly concerning the invocation of the name of Allah and the procedures employed. In the face of such uncertainty, the community prioritizes the principle of precaution (*iḥtiyāt*) as the main strategy in determining consumption choices. This principle is not only understood as a normative concept within *fiqh* but has also been internalized as a social ethos that shapes collective behavior.

The findings further indicate that this precautionary attitude is influenced by multiple interrelated factors, including theological considerations, the socio-structural condition of being a minority community, limited access to information regarding food production processes, and the significant role of local religious authority. The interaction of these factors results in patterns of religiosity that are selective and protective in navigating the complexities of modern food systems.

From a contemporary analytical perspective, this study confirms that *halal* consumption practices constitute a multidimensional phenomenon shaped not only by textual sources but also by social contexts and global dynamics. In contrast to the general tendency within *fiqh al-aqalliyyāt*, which emphasizes flexibility, the Kayu Putih community demonstrates a clear orientation toward *iḥtiyāt* as a form of religious adaptation.

In conclusion, this study highlights that within Muslim minority contexts, the principle of precaution can function as a dominant strategy in religious practice, serving as a bridge between *fiqh* norms and evolving social realities.

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