

## HALALSPHERE

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### Impact of halalan *toyyiban* principles on consumer trust in sustainable food security in Malaysia: A conceptual study

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Received: 18/9/2025  
Accepted: 30/1/2026  
Published: 31/1/2026

#### Abstract

This conceptual article establishes a theoretical background that illustrates the relationships between the implementation of halalan *toyyiban* principles and their role in shaping consumer trust and enhancing sustainable food security in Malaysia. This study develops a conceptual framework based on Islamic ethical philosophy, trust theory, and sustainability discourse. It contends that halalan *toyyiban* is both a religiously mandated concept and a holistic quality and sustainability framework that influences customer perceptions and systemic resilience. The suggested conceptual model links three dimensions, halalan *toyyiban* compliance and certification, food safety and cleanliness, and ethical farming and production practices to consumer trust, which mediates their total influence on the sustainability of national food security. Consumer trust is argued to be a spiritual and moral link between personal faith-based certainty and larger sustainable benefits. This study seeks to develop a trust-based sustainability context for halal food systems, expand halal research to include ethical considerations alongside legal ones, and inform policy discourse on the governance of Malaysia's food security.

#### Keywords:

Halalan *toyyiban* principles; Consumer trust; Sustainable food security; Conceptual study

#### 1. Introduction

Discourses on food quality, consumer perceptions, and sustainable food security, particularly in Muslim-majority nations such as Malaysia, are centred on the concept of halalan *toyyiban* (Ali *et al.*, 2020). Halal refers to Islamic law, while *toyyiban* refers to food that is safe, pure, wholesome, and produced and consumed responsibly. *Allah* mentioned in the Holy *Qur'an*:

*O humanity, eat from whatever is on earth [that is] lawful (halāl) and good (toyyib), and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy.*

(*Al-Baqarah*-2:168)

The impact of the halal industry in Malaysia is significant for the national economy, and consumer confidence in halal-certified products supports continued market expansion and food security (Asman & Abdullah, 2023). There are significant concerns about rising food imports, climate change, and supply chain upsets worldwide, as well as scandals over safety, which have put consumers' trust at risk (Azmi & Hamid, 2023). Faith or trust in halal integrity is an essential element influencing purchase intention, brand lifetime, and sustainable consumption propensity (Ulfy *et al.*, 2025a). The principles of halalan *toyyiban* establish the ethical and legal framework of Islamic dietary systems, regulating both permissibility and the

wholesomeness and integrity of food production and consumption (Shafie & Othman, 2021). Although Malaysia has developed a robust halal certification system, it often emphasises legality over *toyyiban* principles, which also include quality, purity, and sustainability (Asman & Abdullah, 2023). This disparity has created a substantial gap in the literature, both theoretical and practical. This conceptual study explores the impact of implementing halalan *toyyiban* principles on consumer trust and their role in promoting sustainable food security in Malaysia. This study formulates a conceptual framework that synthesises Islamic ethics, trust theory, and sustainability theory to elucidate how faith-based trust mechanisms can enhance the resilience of food systems. The article argues that including *toyyiban* in halal governance can help bridge the gap between religious approval and sustainability, with trust serving as the link between the two (Abdul Mokti *et al.*, 2024; Ali, 2025).

Malaysia's reliance on food imports, amounting to RM 75.6 billion in 2021, alongside increasing public apprehensions over food authenticity and safety, highlights the necessity for a value-based framework (DOSM, 2022; Economist Impact, 2022). Food security in Malaysia is now under threat from structural dependencies, consumer confidence issues, and food authenticity (Halal Development Corporation, 2021). The implementation of halalan *toyyiban* principles, as proposed in theory, does not appear to be consistently observed throughout the value chain. This discrepancy has reduced consumer

confidence and raised alarms about the country's food security measures.

According to the Global Food Security Index (Economist Impact, 2022), Malaysia ranked 41st out of 113 countries, a relatively moderate position given its aspiration to become an international halal hub. The Global Food Security Index (GFSI) indicated that although the country ranks well in food affordability, it fares poorly in sustainability and resilience, particularly regarding environmental challenges and its reliance on imported food. Food imports to Malaysia reached RM 75.6 billion in 2021, up almost 36% from 2015 (DOSM, 2022). This increasing dependence on imports not only raises supply chain risk but also exposes the country to global inflation and volatile exchange fluctuations. For example, findings of non-halal substances in fake halal-certified products have reduced consumers' trust in the authorities. These results further highlight consumers' increasing demand for a more comprehensive assurance system that covers not only halal legality but also *toyyiban* aspects of safety, wholesomeness, and ethics in production. To make things worse, the food security problem includes health and nutrition issues. Malaysia is facing a dual challenge of obesity and undernourishment as forms of malnutrition (Zulkharnain & Mahmood, 2024).

Neglect of *toyyiban* values, which promote optimal nutrition and quality, is one of the factors that lead to such imbalances (Ulfi *et al.*, 2025b). Without building consumer trust in the inclusion of *toyyiban* principles in its halal branding, Malaysia risks being edged out of the global market (Abdul Mokti *et al.*, 2024). Competing nations like Indonesia and the United Arab Emirates have already established more stringent halal and *toyyiban* compliance platforms, thereby intensifying competition for Malaysia's share (Ibrahim & Aziz, 2022). That is why the most significant issue of all is the gap between Malaysia's ambition as a global hub for halal and the reality on the ground: consumer cynicism and structural weaknesses in food security surround it.

Halal certification is well established; the *toyyiban* aspect, including safety, quality, nutrition, and ethics, is often neglected or haphazardly enforced (Ismail & Othman, 2022). This void undermines consumer confidence, not only in domestic consumption but also in the credibility of halal exports internationally. Unless something is done about this, these two equally important goals, which have been the focus of past food policies but remain unsustainable and unmanageable by Malaysian policymakers, may never be met (Ali, 2025).

The study has important theoretical, practical, and policy implications, particularly given Malaysia's efforts to balance religious conformity with sustainable food security. In this context, the adaptation of halalan *toyyiban* principles provides a holistic framework in which consumer confidence intersects with national aspirations in food sovereignty, public health, and international competitiveness. From an academic standpoint, this article contributes to the discussion on religion, sustainability, and consumer behaviour. Current authors have paid attention to halal regarding certification and consumer attitude (Ismail & Othman, 2022). Nonetheless, the role of socio-cultural values, such as *toyyiban* factors, in increasing trust and stability in food is under-researched (Ulfi *et al.*, 2025c). By theorising the connection between *toyyiban* and food security, this research seeks to fill an important gap in scholarship and extend the theoretical discourse on halal

studies. This conceptual study highlights the importance of industry operators (i.e., food producers and retailers) and halal certifying bodies, including *toyyiban* assurances, in their strategic plans.

Consumer confidence is essential, as the halal market extends beyond Muslim consumers in Malaysia, where at least 60% of the population tends to associate halal with safety and hygiene rather than religious obligation (Talib *et al.*, 2021). Enterprises implementing *toyyiban* principles that include transparency in sourcing, eco-friendly (production method or services), and nutrition labelling practices will likely achieve a competitive advantage regionally as well as globally. Furthermore, this conceptual analysis highlights the potential importance of new halal system-based innovations, such as blockchain traceability, real-time certificate verification, and consumer awareness initiatives. That sort of innovation could substantially increase transparency while also suppressing scammers and bolstering consumer confidence. This has the potential to achieve sustainable food security, as enhancing consumer confidence in local halal foods may reduce dependence on imports and encourage growth in the domestic food industry in Malaysia.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 Sustainable food security

The food security issue in Malaysia is complex and encompasses all four dimensions: availability, access, utilization, and stability. (Karim & Latif, 2022). Malaysia, an upper-middle-income nation with a robust agricultural industry, is susceptible to challenges arising from escalating food imports, disrupted global supply chains, and climate change (Latip & Abdullah, 2022). In 2021, food import expenditures exceeded RM55.5 billion, up 13.6% from 2015, with basic commodities such as rice, dairy, and vegetables accounting for the majority of imports. This dependence renders the region vulnerable to external disruptions, such as COVID-19, regional geopolitical conflicts, and rising global food prices (Musa & Salleh, 2021). From a conceptual standpoint, halal certification may contribute to sustainable food security by fostering consumer confidence in locally produced foods, thus supporting resilience within domestic food systems. Extending this logic, the integration of halalan *toyyiban* principles is theorised to enhance consumer trust further and strengthen the ethical and quality dimensions of food governance, which are central to long-term food security outcomes.

### 2.2 Sustainable food security comparison

Food security is an important issue worldwide, including in Malaysia, where food security levels are mid-level (Economist Impact, 2022). Comparing Malaysia to Indonesia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, and the European Union (EU) is also interesting, as they represent different food security strategies. The food security index of Malaysia is relatively high (Rank = 41, Table 1), mainly in terms of accessibility and the development of the halal certification system (Ministry of Agriculture Malaysia, 2021). However, poor rice self-sufficiency and increasing prevalence of obesity and malnutrition are significant vulnerabilities. Indonesia, whose population exceeds 250 million, ranks 63rd, with its production predominantly rice, despite limited infrastructure

Table 1: Sustainable food security comparison

Country	GFSI Rank (2022)	Key Strengths	Key Weaknesses	Halal/ <i>Toyyiban</i> Relevance
Malaysia	41	Affordable food, halal hub, strong certification (JAKIM)	High import dependency (75.6B RM in 2021), obesity & malnutrition, climate risks	Halal certification is credible, but <i>toyyiban</i> is less emphasized
Indonesia	63	High rice self-sufficiency (>90%), large agricultural base	Infrastructure inefficiencies, poverty, and food quality gaps	Mandatory halal certification by 2024
UAE	23	Agri-tech innovation, halal exports, global food trade hub	90% import dependence, desert climate	Halal credibility integrated with food traceability
Saudi Arabia	30	SALIC global food investment, halal credibility	Water scarcity, high import reliance	Aligns halal food with religious legitimacy & food security
EU	Top 5 (varies)	CAP policies, tech-driven agriculture, and strong food safety standards	Environmental sustainability, intensive farming impacts	Food safety & hygiene align with <i>toyyiban</i> principles, but halal is less central

efficiency, post-harvest loss control, and governance weaknesses (Indonesia Halal Product Assurance Agency, 2022). For a country that ranks 23rd in susceptibility to food imports, the UAE has pursued agri-tech investments and positioned itself as the world's largest halal from non-halal exporter (UAE Ministry of Climate Change & Environment, 2022). Saudi Arabia (30) has suffered from severe sustainability issues in agriculture due to water shortages; however, with an added-value focus on halal purity (Saudi Agricultural and Livestock Investment Company, 2021). The EU has strong agricultural policy frameworks, high innovation rates, and strict food safety regulations. However, it is not without its sustainability concerns, most notably in reconciling intensive farming practices with environmental stewardship (European Commission, 2022).

The comparison implies that Malaysia falls between import-dependent countries (the UAE, for instance, and Saudi Arabia) and, at the other end of the spectrum, those that bank on domestic agriculture (Indonesia). While domestic food availability represents a foundational dimension of food security, comparative experiences suggest that it is not sufficient on its own to ensure resilient food systems. In contrast to the EU's mature policy systems, Malaysia's food security remains fragile, with rising import costs and nutrition-related issues. The final possible comparative advantage for Malaysia is its existing halal certification framework, which, combined with *toyyiban* guarantees (safety, wholesomeness, and production ethics), provides an opportunity to leverage consumer confidence as a market risk minimisation strategy.

The UAE and Saudi Arabia are demonstrating how an import-reliant nation can instil consumer confidence by fostering innovation and making strategic investments to expand the sector. Indonesia is learning that focusing on local production is suitable for governance, even if it slows infrastructure progress. It is also the standard that Malaysia can use to effectively develop its own regulations on food safety and government efficiency. However, Malaysia has an opportunity to leverage best practices worldwide and strengthen its halal *toyyiban* framework, as food security is not just about access and affordability, but also about trust, safety, and sustainability. Collectively, these cases highlight that food

security extends beyond access and affordability. It also encompasses trust, safety, institutional credibility, and sustainability, domains in which a strengthened halalan *toyyiban* framework may be particularly relevant to Malaysia.

### 2.3 Halalan *toyyiban* principles

Halalan *toyyiban* is a fundamental principle in Islamic food regulations that encompasses purity, safety, and ethical responsibilities. Halalan *toyyiban* encompasses not just acceptability but also quality, hygiene, safety, and sustainability grounded in Islamic practices; it embodies a humane and responsible ethos in every aspect (Shafie & Othman, 2021). In Malaysia, where halal certification is well established, integrating *toyyiban* principles is deemed to enhance product legitimacy and consumer confidence, making it pertinent to the debate on sustainable food security. Given the *Qur'an's* emphasis on sustainability and ethical consumption, halal is explicitly associated with *toyyiban*. The concepts of *toyyiban* advocate transparency and rigorous safety verification, encompassing most contemporary food safety standards, as *toyyiban* is derived from the Islamic *taiyyab*, meaning 'pure' (Awan *et al.*, 2015).

Studies indicate that the halal emblem is associated with superior hygiene, thereby reinforcing general trust in food security. It pertains not only to the quantity of food offered but also to its quality. Malaysia faces issues of malnutrition and overnutrition, whereas the *toyyiban* principle emphasises nutritional quality alongside ethical agricultural practices and animal care (Fathi *et al.*, 2016). The incorporation of *toyyiban* concepts in national initiatives would enhance environmental stewardship and elevate consumer perceptions of food safety. The worldwide halal food market is expanding, and Malaysia, skilfully circumventing this challenge, recognises the advantages of establishing itself as a halal hub. However, recurrent scandals have diminished customer trust (Musa *et al.*, 2025). The principles of *toyyiban* can be employed to rectify and strengthen legal, ethical, and quality assurances. Should *toyyiban* be adopted, it might restore trust and enhance Malaysia's standing in the international halal trade (Wan Hassan & Salleh, 2021). Figure 1 conceptually illustrates the

halalan *toyyiban* principles as a holistic and integrated ethical framework guiding halal food systems.



Figure 1: Halal *toyyiban* principles.

### 2.3.1 Halal compliance and certification

Halal standards and certification are vital to Malaysia's food system, enhancing consumer trust and global competitiveness. The Department of Islamic Development of Malaysia (JAKIM) administers halal certification, and its emblem is globally acknowledged (Mohd *et al.*, 2021). The halal sector significantly contributes to Malaysia's GDP and commerce, with projections indicating an 8.1% contribution to the nation's GDP by 2030 (Ministry of Health Malaysia, 2020). Halal certification is a crucial component of JAKIM's comprehensive policy regarding food and beverages, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, and logistics providers (Roslan & Salleh, 2024). However, consumer confidence in halal certification has been undermined by prominent scandals, notably the 2020 "Meat Cartel" incident. Malaysia should integrate *toyyiban* principles into its certification framework to enhance customer confidence and achieve global sustainability objectives. The incorporation of *toyyiban* principles into certification may facilitate operationalising this integration, enabling transparency and real-time verification of halal integrity (Mohamed *et al.*, 2024). Ambitious regulatory enforcement, strategic collaborations, digital technologies, and consumer outreach can effectively address difficulties related to scale, compliance, and education.

### 2.3.2 Food safety and hygiene

The need for safe, hygienic food is crucial for sustainable food security and customer confidence (Shafie & Othman, 2019). Animal and dairy products have emerged as a significant concern in Malaysia due to scandals, rising food imports, and ineffective supply chain management policies (Zakaria & Abdul Talib, 2020). The halalan *toyyiban* concept mitigates such concerns by emphasising cleanliness, wholesomeness, and purity in line with contemporary norms to ensure adherence to religious requirements (Zulkifli & Mahmood, 2020). Foodborne illnesses persist as an issue in Malaysia, with the meal safety framework governed by the Food Act 1983 and its associated regulations. Consumers have been astonished by the 2020 controversy referred to as the "Meat Cartel", alongside

accusations of contaminated cooking oil and pesticide residues in food (Asman & Abdullah, 2023). The *toyyiban* aspect of halal certification emphasises hygiene, sanitation, and safety, as reflected in contemporary safety practices such as HACCP and ISO 22000. Technological developments, such as blockchain technology and QR-code-based traceability systems, ought to be implemented to improve food safety surveillance. Numerous obstacles persist, including inadequate enforcement capacity, insufficient food safety knowledge among smallholder farmers, and climate-related concerns. These gaps necessitate collaboration among multiple stakeholders (Hassan & Latif, 2024).

### 2.3.3 Ethical farming practices and animal

Halalan *toyyiban* relates to ethical agriculture, optimal animal welfare, and a commitment to kindness, attention, and care, alongside accountability in food production (Zulkharnain & Abdullah, 2020). A multitude of reports exist on conservation and biodiversity in the context of agriculture and food security (Fathi *et al.*, 2016), as well as studies focused on staple rice; nonetheless, ethical considerations for sustainability in rice production must be prioritised. The circumstances in Malaysia are similarly concerning, with 7.4% of GDP and 1.6 million jobs reliant on the agricultural industry, and issues such as overcrowding, waste management, and irresponsible antibiotic use. If customers are educated about ethical food sourcing and advocate for sound agricultural practices, it will foster trust among Malaysians, thereby enhancing the value of halal products in the global market (Ibrahim & Rahman, 2024). Malaysia has initiated measures to advance sustainable and ethical agricultural practices through its policies, notably the National Agro-Food Policy, which prioritises innovative farming technology, climate adaptation, and animal welfare (Rezai *et al.*, 2015a). If Malaysia integrates Islamic ideals with contemporary sustainability, it can spearhead the production of safe halal food that benefits both individuals and the environment (Rezai *et al.*, 2015b).

### 2.4 Consumer trust

Consumer trust will be central to shaping purchasing decisions, brand loyalty, and the ability of food systems to withstand long-term challenges (Omar & Jaafar, 2021). Halal certification in Malaysia serves both as a source of religious legitimation and as a form of quality control, shaping consumer perceptions of food products and institutions. Customer trust encompasses food safety, ethical sourcing, and transparency in sustainability, and is thus aligned with halalan *toyyiban* (Rahim & Ahmad, 2021). However, 68% of Malaysian shoppers were concerned about the authenticity of halal products and identified food fraud and mislabelling as key drivers of their distrust (Asman & Abdullah, 2023). The lack of consistent enforcement through the food chain, especially with imports, continues to erode consumer confidence. Trust in food systems is an important factor worldwide that significantly affects consumers' purchase behaviour, with strong predictions of purchase intention towards halal among Muslim consumers in Pakistan, Indonesia, and the Middle East (Roslan & Abdullah, 2021). In Malaysia, consumer confidence is also influenced by religiosity, with more religious consumers seeking greater assurance of halal and *toyyiban* standards (Asman & Hamid, 2024). Indeed, transparency regarding the sourcing and certification of food has become a significant trust driver, with digital technologies such as blockchain-enabled traceability systems helping to improve consumer confidence by enabling

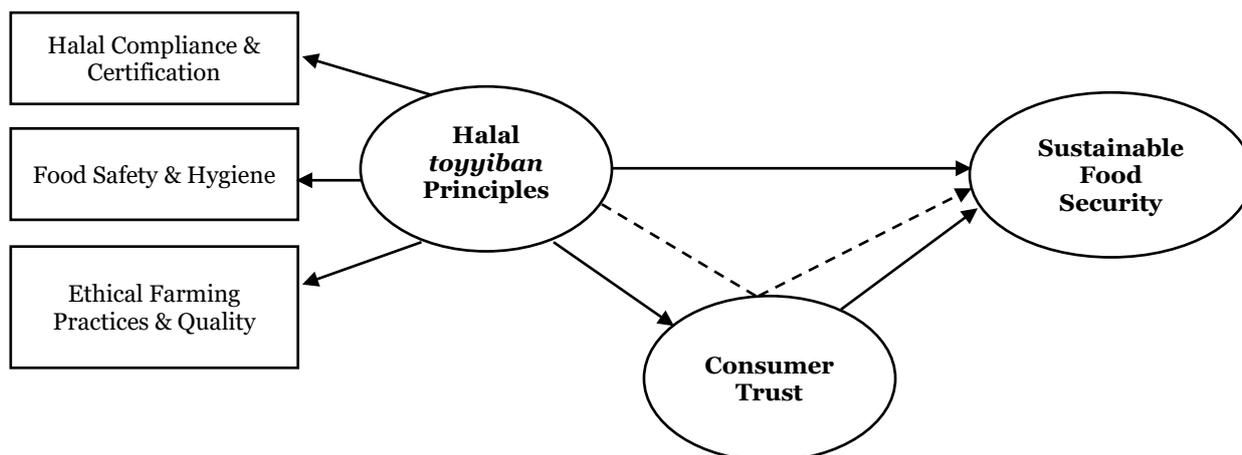


Figure 2: Research Framework.

real-time verification of halal compliance and safety (Bachtiar *et al.*, 2024). Consumer confidence is simultaneously a hurdle and an asset in Malaysia's journey towards sustainable food security. Rebuilding trust requires more vigorous enforcement, tools for digital transparency, and the application of *toyyiban* principles in certification schemes (Ambali & Bakar, 2014).

## 2.5 Research framework

This research design predominantly employs the implementation of halal *toyyiban* Principles, with three combined observed variables: Halal Compliance & Certification, Food Safety & Hygiene, and Ethical Farming Practices & Quality (Karim & Musa, 2024). Conceptually, consumer trust is positioned as a mediating mechanism linking the implementation of halalan *toyyiban* principles to sustainable food security (Figure 2). Halal compliance and certification, food safety and hygiene, and ethical farming practices and quality are theorised as key dimensions through which the implementation of halalan *toyyiban* principles may influence consumer trust within the broader sustainability discourse (Latip & Abdullah, 2024).

## 2.6 Conceptual propositions

Research on halalan *toyyiban* indicates that consumer trust and sustainability are pivotal for achieving comprehensive food security. Halalan *toyyiban* integrates spiritual adherence with ethical consumption, harmonising Islamic principles with modern sustainability frameworks (Ibrahim & Aziz, 2022). Nevertheless, scant emphasis has been devoted to theorising the interaction between these values and consumer trust in fostering national food resilience.

The current conceptual framework is based on three theoretical foundations: sustainability theory, Islamic ethics, and trust theory. Sustainability theory underscores equilibrium among economic, social, and environmental dimensions; however, Islamic ethics broaden this to encompass moral obligation and spiritual accountability (Karim & Latif, 2022; Ibrahim & Rahman, 2024). Trust theory elucidates the behavioural process linking perceived ethical integrity to consumer confidence (Omar & Jaafar, 2021). This work synthesises these ideas to conceptualise halalan turn affects sustainable food security.

Theoretical linkages among constructs are:

- a. Halalan *toyyiban* principles, comprising halal compliance, food safety, and ethical farming practices, positively influence consumer trust.
- b. Consumer trust mediates the relationship between halalan *toyyiban* principles implementation and sustainable food security.
- c. Integrating *toyyiban* principles within halal certification and governance enhances systemic sustainability and ethical assurance.

This framework incorporates a theory-building methodology rooted in previous conceptual research, including Showole *et al.* (2025), which prioritises construct development through theoretical synthesis rather than empirical validation. Future research may utilise structural equation modelling or multiple case studies to substantiate these conceptual paths empirically.

## 3. Methodological approaches

This study adopts a conceptual methodology, emphasizing theory development rather than empirical analysis. Literature sources were systematically selected from peer-reviewed journals, government reports, and policy documents between 2015 and 2025, with emphasis on halal assurance, *toyyiban* ethics, food security, and consumer trust (Asman & Abdullah, 2023; Ibrahim & Rahman, 2024). The theoretical logic follows a constructivist approach to conceptualization, integrating insights from sustainability theory, Islamic consumption ethics, and trust theory.

The process of theory building involved four key steps: (1) identifying gaps in the integration of *toyyiban* principles into halal food security; (2) synthesizing constructs related to ethical assurance, consumer trust, and sustainability; (3) developing theoretical linkages between these constructs; and (4) proposing conceptual propositions and a mediating framework. This approach aligns with the conceptual paper standards recommended by Showole *et al.* (2025).

Future empirical pathways may include validating the proposed model using survey-based methods, case studies, or interviews with halal certification bodies, policymakers, and consumers. These approaches could assess how the Taliban's principal implementation influences consumer behaviour and

policy effectiveness, thereby transforming the conceptual propositions into measurable relationships.

#### 4. Implications

This conceptual article contributes to multiple theoretical developments. First, it extends halal scholarship by articulating a trust-based sustainability framework that positions *halalan toyyiban* as both a normative ethical construct and a functional dimension of food system governance. Conceptualising consumer trust as a mediating mechanism advances the existing halal literature, which typically treats trust as an outcome rather than a mediating mechanism. Second, integrating *toyyiban* principles with sustainability theory highlights the potential alignment between Islamic ethical values and environmental, social, and governance (ESG) discourses, thereby broadening halal studies beyond regulatory legality and certification-centric perspectives.

From a conceptual standpoint, this framework offers a normative reference for industry stakeholders to reflect upon the operationalisation of *toyyiban* principles within halal food systems. Theoretically, practices such as supply chain transparency, ethical sourcing, and food safety assurance can be interpreted as mechanisms for fostering consumer trust. Contemporary tools, including blockchain-based traceability and digital authentication systems, exemplify how trust-enabling infrastructures align with these ethical principles (Bachtiar *et al.*, 2024). At the governance level, the framework conceptually supports differentiated halal assurance models that acknowledge nutrition, safety, and environmental stewardship as integral components of *toyyiban* compliance.

At the policy level, this conceptual analysis highlights the relevance of integrating *toyyiban* considerations into national halal and food security discourse, including long-term strategic plans such as Malaysia's Halal Industry Master Plan 2030 (Halal Development Corporation, 2021). Conceptually, enhanced interagency coordination and incentive structures can be viewed as institutional expressions of ethical assurance rather than prescriptive measures. Aligning halal governance with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) further situates *halalan toyyiban* as a value-based sustainability paradigm rooted in Islamic ethical philosophy.

#### 5. Conclusion

This conceptual analysis reaffirms the transformative capacity of *halalan toyyiban* principles to foster consumer trust and ensure sustainable food security in Malaysia. The study expands the theoretical bounds of halal research by establishing a framework that links faith-based legitimacy, ethical assurance, and sustainability. The article suggests that consumer trust, which stems from how genuine *halalan toyyiban* practices appear, plays a key role in strengthening the system and making it more resilient. The study emphasises the need to redefine halal not only as a legal obligation but also as an ethical framework encompassing cleanliness, safety, fairness, and environmental stewardship. This reinterpretation positions Malaysia's halal ecosystem within global environmental discourses, enhancing its legitimacy and competitiveness. A future study could include empirical testing of the proposed model via structural equation modelling or comparative case analysis across various areas of Malaysia's halal supply chain. This validation would facilitate the

implementation of conceptual connections and convert them into quantifiable policy measures. This article also advocates a shift from regulatory compliance to ethical assurance, with *halalan toyyiban* principles serving as the moral foundation for Malaysia's sustainable food security governance.

#### 6. Acknowledgement

No funding was received for this research.

#### 7. Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest related to this study.

#### 8. AI declaration

Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, including ChatGPT (OpenAI, San Francisco, CA), were used to assist with language editing, improve sentence structure, and clarify grammar during manuscript preparation. The authors reviewed, verified, and take full responsibility for the accuracy and integrity of the content. No AI tools were used for data analysis, result interpretation, or scientific conclusions.

#### 9. Open access

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#### 10. Author contribution

Author 1: Project administration, conceptualization, methodology. Author 3: writing, reviewing, and editing. Author 4: writing, reviewing, and editing.

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