

Editorial Note

Preservation of Life in Tandem with Shariah Compliances Regarding Covid-19 Vaccines

Mohamad Aizat Jamaludin* and Siti Nur Harmizah Ramli

International Institute for Halal Research and Training (INHART), Level 3, KICT Building, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), 53100 Jalan Gombak, Selangor, Malaysia; mohdaizat@iium.edu.my

*Corresponding author: Mohamad Aizat Jamaludin, International Institute for Halal Research and Training (INHART), Level 3, KICT Building, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), 53100 Jalan Gombak, Selangor, Malaysia; mohdaizat@iium.edu.my

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1. Introduction

The novel coronavirus disease (Covid-19) startled the world as it spread expeditiously from continent to continent. Globally, on the 1st of March, 2021, there have been 113,820,168 confirmed cases of Covid-19, including 2,527,891 deaths reported (WHO, 2021). Due to the fact that more people are dying during the pandemic, it urges the scientists to produce vaccines to protect mankind against the deadly coronavirus.

Shariah is the way of life that governs, conserves, and preserves comprehensive values in all aspects of human life. According to Jasser (2007), jurists used the term '*maqasid*' to refer to the purposes, objectives, principles, intents, goals, ends, and as alternative expressions to the interests (*masalih/maslahah*). Maqasid Shariah can best be referred to as the objectives of Shariah to preserve the benefits or interests of the human beings.

News published by The Star on the 2nd of March, 2021, entitled "New vaccine shows promise", informed the readers that recent studies from the United Kingdom suggested a single dose of the Pfizer vaccine can provide a strong protection against Covid-19.

As mentioned by Bernama (2021) in New Straits Times that was published on the 14th of February, 2021, Office of the Mufti of the Federal Territories (PMWP) has agreed to adopt the resolution of the *Muzakarah* (discussion) of the Fatwa Committee of the National Council for Islamic Religious Affairs on 3rd of December, 2020, and the meeting has decided that the usage of Covid-19 vaccine is permissible and compulsory for groups which have been identified by the government. Unquestionably, this resolution is in line with the preservation of life in the objectives of Shariah.

2. Protecting against Disease as the Preservation of Life

Al-Syatibi in his book, *al-Muwafaqat fi Usul al-Shariah*, argued that the main purpose of Shariah is to benefit humanity both in the world and hereafter. For that, Al-Syatibi has done research (*istiqra'*), explored from the al-Quran and Sunnah, which deduced that the objectives of Shariah in the world are five things, namely the preservation of faith, life, intellect, lineage, and wealth (Abdurrakhman, 2019).

Furthermore, Padela (2018) highlighted safeguarding against contagious diseases and establishing excellent medical care services to fight illness, as vital steps for the achievement of such goals. In addition, he focused on the discussions concerning the preservation of human life at four different degrees, including the individual, the family, the Muslim society, and the global community.

“Covid-19 vaccine is permissible for Muslim use, preservation of life is key consideration: MUIS”, headline used by CNA Singapore on the 13th of December, 2020, enlightens the readers about the intents of introducing Covid-19 vaccines and the processes involved in producing vaccines are largely aligned to manifest Islamic essences and values, and therefore as a mean to uphold the principles of the sanctity of human life and the avoidance of harm from the upshots of the virus.

3. Shariah Compliances in Covid-19 Vaccines

Additionally, Mufti of the Federal Territories, Sahibus Samahah Datuk Dr. Luqman Abdullah said from the perspective of consumerism, only vaccines that have been identified as halal and *tayyiban* will be used for the National Covid-19 Immunisation programme (Bernama, 2021).

The Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS) also highlights that the religious perspective of the Covid-19 vaccine must take a more holistic stance in the issue of halalness or permissibility of its ingredients (CNA, 2020).

Aside from that, news by CNA Singapore on the 13th of December, 2020, stated that MUIS considered the role of vaccine as a critical necessity to rescue lives, it must have no known adverse effects as not expected to cause harm to those who take the vaccine, and considered the permissibility of ingredients used in vaccines. MUIS added that there were situations that allow the use of impure substances for treatment as evident in some Prophetic traditions. In addition to this, the processes would have undergone multiple layers of chemical processes, such as filtration that would render them undetectable in the final product. In Muslim jurisprudence, these processes are similar to *istihalah* (transformation), and in such situations, the final product is deemed lawful for Muslim use and no longer becomes prohibited.

A research by Juan (2021) shows that Covid-19 vaccine, such as the Pfizer-BioNTech, is made up of safe, efficacious, and free from any impermissible ingredients in preventing symptomatic Covid-19 disease, including the messenger ribonucleic acid (mRNA) molecules, lipids, salts, and sugar, and thus can minimize the vaccination refusal among the Muslim societies that argue about the halal status of Covid-19 vaccines.

4. Quality of Life Variable

An example of a variable in preventive medicine that underlines quality of life and whereby, preserves the life (*hifz al-nafs*) is as follows (Ramzi *et al.*, 2020):

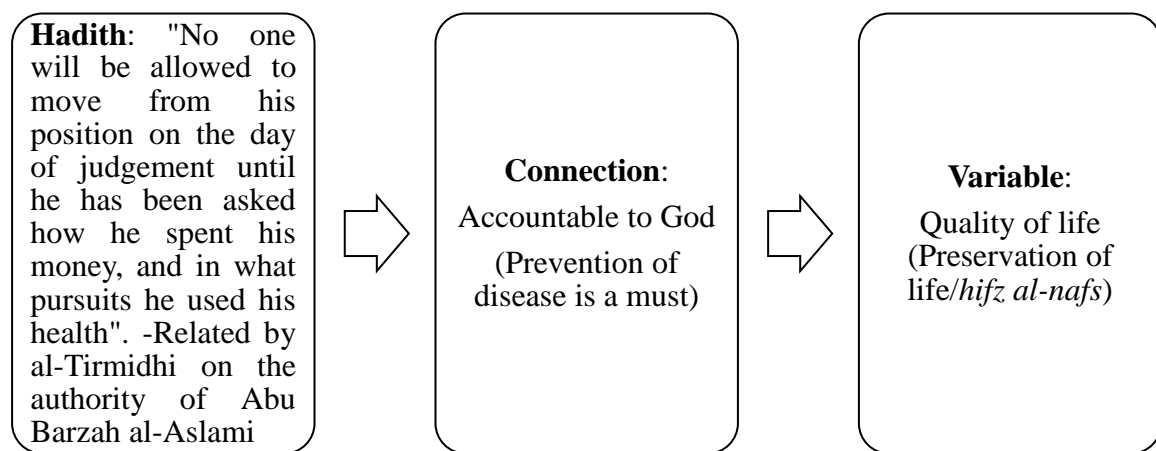


Figure 1. Quality of life variable.

5. Conclusion

After all is said and done, the preservation of life (*hifz al-nafs*) is, from the Islamic standpoint, the second most important after the preservation of faith (*hifz al-din*). Islam will not compromise any act that violates the objectives of Shariah. Health presents mankind a great responsibility, for which human beings are accountable to God on the day of judgement. Thus, vaccination is necessary as it upholds the principles of the sanctity of human life and the avoidance of harm (*mafsadah*), such as death from the effects of the virulent coronavirus. On the other hand, seeking halal is obligatory and the term ‘Shariah compliance’, not only means that the thing should be lawful (halal), but also wholesome (*tayyiban*). Therefore, scientists struggle to produce not only halal vaccines for Covid-19, but the treatment is also ensured to be made up of safe, efficacious, and adverse effect free. The Almighty says in the Qur’an: “*And whoever saves one, it is as if he had saved mankind entirely.*” (*Al-Maidah*, 5:32).

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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