



The Spirit of Trade in the Muslim Society through Coffee: A Case Study in Al Qassim

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Abstract

This qualitative study investigates the close relationship between the coffee trade and the Muslim population in Al Qassim, specifically in Buraydah and Unaizah. It reveals the unique cultural legacy, economic value, social dynamics, trade networks, and implications for sustainable development through a comprehensive process that includes a literature study, interviews, observation, and focus groups. The findings shed light on the rich history, rituals, and practices of the coffee trade, as well as their impact on local economies, society cohesiveness, and global linkages. This study helps to preserve cultural heritage, promote economic growth, and promote sustainable practices in the coffee trade in Al Qassim.

Kata Kunci:

Masyarakat Muslim
Perdagangan Kopi
Warisan Budaya
Signifikansi Ekonomi
Dinamika Sosial
Pembangunan Berkelanjutan

Abstrak

Penelitian kualitatif ini menyelidiki hubungan erat antara perdagangan kopi dan populasi Muslim di Al Qassim, khususnya di Buraydah dan Unaizah. Penelitian ini mengungkap warisan budaya yang unik, nilai ekonomi, dinamika sosial, jaringan perdagangan, dan implikasi untuk pembangunan berkelanjutan melalui proses komprehensif yang mencakup studi literatur, wawancara, observasi, dan diskusi terarah. Temuan-temuannya menyoroti kekayaan sejarah, ritual, dan praktik perdagangan kopi, serta dampaknya terhadap ekonomi lokal, kohesivitas masyarakat, dan hubungan global. Studi ini membantu melestarikan warisan budaya, mendorong pertumbuhan ekonomi, dan mempromosikan praktik-praktik berkelanjutan dalam perdagangan kopi di Al Qassim.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, trade and business have played an important role in molding societies and encouraging cultural interaction. One such example is the deep bond that exists between trade and the Muslim society, which is intimately woven into the fabric of their traditions and way of life. Coffee has arisen as a trade symbol and a driver for social contacts among the Muslim society in this context.

The study intends to look into the spirit of trade within the Muslim society through the lens of coffee, concentrating notably on the case of Al Qassim. Al Qassim, a region in Saudi Arabia, has a unique position as a hub for coffee production, trading, and consumption. This study aims to shed light on the varied

influence of this age-old custom by investigating the historical, cultural, and economic components of coffee trade in Al Qassim.

The goal of this study is to chronicle and conserve the cultural history linked with the spirit of trade in the Muslim society through coffee. This research contributes to the preservation of intangible cultural assets by understanding the historical foundations, rituals, and practices associated with the coffee trade in Al Qassim. Coffee trade has not only affected cultural customs, but has also played an important part in society economic growth. The purpose of this research is to investigate the economic relevance of coffee trade in Al Qassim, specifically its impact on local businesses, employment possibilities, and general economic growth.

Coffee, on the other hand, has long been recognized as a social lubricant that brings people together and promotes social connections. This study attempts to explore the social dynamics and society cohesion fostered by coffee-related activities in Al Qassim by investigating the spirit of trade through coffee. The research will look into the commercial networks and global connections formed by the coffee trade in Al Qassim. This study sheds light on Al Qassim's connection with the rest of the globe by researching historical trade routes, market dynamics, and international trade linkages.

Furthermore, learning about the spirit of trade in the Muslim society through coffee in Al Qassim can bring useful insights into sustainable development techniques. This study seeks to find opportunities for sustainable practices and responsible consumption by investigating the environmental, social, and economic aspects of coffee production and trading. Through a case study in Al Qassim, this study attempts to uncover the delicate relationship between the spirit of trade, the Muslim society, and coffee. This research seeks to contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage, economic development, society cohesion, global connections, and sustainable practices by investigating the cultural, economic, and social components.

2. METHOD

This qualitative study will use a technique that involves a literature analysis, in-depth interviews, participant observation, and discussions to examine the spirit of trade in the Muslim society through coffee in Al Qassim, specifically in Buraydah and Unaizah. The study's goals are to chronicle and preserve the cultural heritage linked with coffee trade, to investigate its economic significance, to comprehend the social dynamics it promotes, to investigate trade networks and worldwide connections, and to discover implications for sustainable development. This research intends to provide important insights into the numerous aspects of coffee trading in Al Qassim by engaging with key players and society members.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Coffee, a beverage that crosses cultural barriers, has played an important role in creating trade patterns and strengthening communal bonds. This article gives a thorough case study that delves into the complex link between coffee, trade, and the Muslim society in Al Qassim. We hope to provide a deeper knowledge of the underlying beliefs that drive the spirit of commerce in this region by looking into the historical significance, economic impact, and cultural interaction afforded by coffee.

a. Historical Significance and Cultural Capital

Coffee's historical relevance in Al Qassim can be examined through the perspective of cultural capital theory, which investigates how cultural symbols and practices gain value and meaning within a society (Rishardson & Bourdieu, 1986). Coffee has become a cultural symbol and social activity with great significance among the Muslim society in the framework of Al Qassim. Coffee consumption in Al Qassim has a rich history that dates back several centuries. This historical history has helped shape the region's identity and instilled a sense of pride and cultural heritage in its people. Coffee cultivation in Jazan, Saudi Arabia, on the other hand, has not only created economic opportunities but has also been entangled with the region's social fabric and traditions (Cohen & Cohen, 2012).

Cultural symbols and practices, according to cultural capital theory, can function as forms of capital that individuals and groups can use to gain social and economic advantage (Rishardson & Bourdieu, 1986). Coffee's historical significance has given it with cultural capital in the case of Al Qassim. Coffee-related traditions, such as the art of Arabic coffee preparation and the hospitality rituals involved with serving coffee, have become valued cultural assets within the society (Maspul, 2021).

Al Qassim's cultural capital related with coffee has contributed to the region's trading spirit. The society's identity as a coffee trade hub has been established by its history of coffee farming and consumption, developing a feeling of entrepreneurship and business savvy among its citizens. Coffee trading has become a source of pride and a way to highlight the region's cultural heritage. Furthermore, coffee's cultural capital has influenced social connections and communal cohesion. Sharing coffee-related traditions and practices has fostered a sense of kinship and unity among Al Qassim residents. Serving and drinking coffee has evolved into a social practice that promotes social interaction and the exchange of cultural knowledge.

Through the prism of cultural capital theory, the historical significance of coffee in Al Qassim can be explored. Coffee has acquired value and meaning among the Muslim society as a cultural symbol and social

activity. The region's identity has been created by the history of coffee farming and consumption in Al Qassim, producing a sense of pride and cultural legacy that reinforces the society's trading spirit. Coffee's cultural capital has influenced not only economic prospects but also social connections and society cohesion.

b. Social Network Theory and Trade Connections

Social network theory provides useful insights on the dynamics of trade connections within Al Qassim's Muslim society, notably in respect to the coffee industry. Coffee shops and marketplaces function as social hubs where people assemble, socialize, and conduct business. These locations make it easier to build trade networks and exchange knowledge, resources, and opportunities (Granovetter, 2018). Individuals and enterprises, according to social network theory, are entrenched within social systems that impact their behavior and outcomes. Coffee cafes and markets serve as nodes in the social network that connect traders, producers, and consumers in the coffee industry. Individuals can use these spaces to form relationships, build trust, and exchange knowledge (Burt, 2004).

Trade networks created within coffee shops and markets help to business success. Traders can have access to a broader spectrum of potential consumers and suppliers through these networks, thereby expanding their market reach. The network's exchange of knowledge and resources allows businesses to explore new opportunities such as emerging coffee trends or prospective collaborations. Furthermore, trade networks develop trust among participants by building confidence in the dependability and integrity of trading partners through repeated encounters and shared experiences (Uzzi, 2018).

Another important component assisted by social networks in the coffee industry is knowledge exchange. Individuals can share insights, techniques, and best practices pertaining to coffee production, processing, and brewing through the network. This knowledge exchange improves the overall quality of coffee production and assists enterprises in staying current with industry advances. Furthermore, social networks foster a supportive environment in which members can seek advice, guidance, and mentorship from more experienced peers (Borgatti & Cross, 2003).

In the coffee industry, social networks foster a sense of society. These networks establish a sense of society and camaraderie among dealers, producers, and consumers by promoting connections and exchanges. The shared love of coffee, as well as the common goal of advancing the industry, contribute to a collaborative and cooperative environment. This entrepreneurial attitude fosters innovation and the ongoing improvement of coffee-related activities (Burt, 2007).

Social network theory sheds light on the dynamics of trade connections within Al Qassim's Muslim society, notably in respect to the coffee business. Coffee shops and markets act as social hubs, facilitating the establishment of trade networks, the interchange of information and resources, and the promotion of the trading spirit. These networks help firms expand by fostering trust, facilitating knowledge sharing, and creating a supportive and collaborative environment within the coffee industry.

c. Islamic Economic Principles and Ethical Trade

Islamic economic concepts and ethical commerce play an important part in developing coffee trade practices in Al Qassim. Adherence to Islamic principles such as fairness, justice, and ethical conduct enables traders to conduct fair transactions, maintain honesty, and promote society well-being, establishing a sustainable and ethical trading environment (Kamali, 1991). Islamic teachings provide precise standards and regulations for economic transactions, ensuring that they are handled within Sharia law and avoid any sort of injustice towards fellow human beings. The concept of "*Halal*" (permissible) trading is essential to Islamic economic concepts and acts as a guideline for coffee traders. Halal trade entails ethical behavior, openness, and justice throughout the trade process (Kamali, 2014; Vogel & Hayes, 1998).

Allah, the Almighty, says,

وَأَحَلَّ اللَّهُ الْبَيْعَ وَحَرَّمَ الرِّبَا

"...while Allah has permitted trade and has forbidden interest..." (Quran 2:275). Al-'Allamah As-Sa'di stated that trade contains benefits and social urgency, and if it were prohibited, it would lead to various harms. Based on this, all transactions (buying and selling) conducted by humans are originally permissible, unless there is evidence prohibiting a specific transaction (Taisir Karimir Rahman 1/116).

The Prophet (peace be upon him) was once asked about the best profession. He replied that the best profession is any work done by one's own hands and lawful trade conducted without violating the limits of Shariah (authentic hadith with multiple narrations, reported by Al-Bazzar 2/83, Al-Hakim 2/10; cited from Taudhihul Ahkam 4/218-219).

He (peace be upon him) also said,

الدَّهَبُ بِالذَّهَبِ وَالْفِضَّةُ بِالْفِضَّةِ وَالْبُرُّ بِالْبُرِّ وَالشَّعِيرُ بِالشَّعِيرِ وَالتَّمْرُ بِالتَّمْرِ وَالْمِلْحُ بِالْمِلْحِ مِثْلًا بِمِثْلٍ سَوَاءٌ بِسَوَاءٍ يَدًا بِيَدٍ فَإِذَا اخْتَلَفَتْ هَذِهِ الْأَصْنَافُ فَبِيعُوا كَيْفَ شِئْتُمْ إِذَا كَانَ يَدًا بِيَدٍ

"Gold for gold, silver for silver, wheat for wheat, dates for dates, salt for salt, equal for equal, and hand to hand. If the types differ, then sell as you wish, as long as it is a direct exchange" (Narrated by Muslim: 2970). Based on these hadiths, buying and selling are activities that are sanctioned by Shariah.

Meanwhile, the Islamic concept of buying and selling (*al-bay'*) emphasizes the exchange of products or services, which results in the transfer of ownership rights. This trade is voluntary and takes place within the framework of Sharia law. The permission to purchase and sell in Islam is based on the concept that it allows people to obtain what they want while respecting the rights and well-being of others (Kamali, 1996).

The Quran, the Sunnah (teachings and practices of the Prophet Muhammad), consensus (*ijma'*), and analogy (*qiyas*) are all sources of evidence that support the practice of buying and selling in Islam. The Quran expressly allows for buying and selling but forbidding interest-based transactions (*riba*). This affirms the validity of commercial transactions while emphasizing the social advantages they provide. The Prophet Muhammad's Sunnah adds to the permissibility of purchasing and selling. The Prophet himself advocated lawful transactions and conducting business with one's own hands, as long as it adhered to Sharia law norms. This endorsement emphasizes the significance of ethical and legal business activities in Islam (Khan & Watson, 2003).

Throughout history, Muslim communal consensus (*ijma'*) has supported the permissibility of buying and selling. The fact that people have been engaging in trade transactions from the time of the Prophet till the present day proves that Muslims are unanimous in their belief that such activities are legitimate. Analogy (*qiyas*) is employed in Islamic law to draw similarities between the requirement of purchasing and selling and other established concepts. Within the context of Islamic law, the inherent human urge to obtain products or services from others, whether through barter or the exchange of money, is recognized and accommodated (Siddiqi, 2006; Vogel & Hayes, 1998).

In summary, Islamic economic principles and ethical commerce guide coffee trade activities in Al Qassim. Adherence to Islamic principles, such as fairness, justice, and ethical behavior, guarantees that commerce transactions are carried out ethically, within the bounds of Sharia law, and without inflicting harm or injustice to others. Within the coffee industry, the concept of *Halal* trading acts as a guiding principle, fostering transparency, fairness, and society well-being.

d. Cultural Exchange and Identity Formation

Meanwhile, cultural interchange and identity development are inextricably linked to the coffee trade inside Al Qassim's Muslim population. The theory of cultural exchange provides a framework for understanding how the coffee trade acts as a platform for people from all walks of life to share their traditions, practices, and tales, ultimately contributing to the construction of a collective identity (Ferguson, 1988).

The strong Islamic culture and beliefs in Al Qassim play an important role in promoting a conducive trading environment. Individuals in Al Qassim are taught the ideas and methods of commerce from an early age, making it easier for them to enter into commercial enterprises, particularly in the coffee industry. The proximity to Al Haramain (the two holy cities of Makkah and Al Madinah) boosts the Islamic influence and serves as a driving factor behind the region's commercial activities. Furthermore, Al Qassim's historical roots, which stem from many areas of the Middle East, have positioned it as an important commerce route in the region, with coffee and dates being key commodities.

Al Qassim cities such as Buraydah and Unaizah are key trading centers for dates and coffee, respectively. Buraydah has been certified as a gastronomic city by UNESCO (2021) due to its rich culinary traditions, particularly the coffee culture inherent in its past, as well as its strong commerce traditions. The Arabic coffee value chain, which encompasses coffee farming, processing, preparation, and consumption, has become an essential part of Al Qassim's cultural fabric (Maspul, 2021). Throughout the long history of coffee in the Middle East, the hospitality associated with coffee, which forms the foundation of Arab hospitality, has strengthened the establishment of the local identity in Al Qassim (Ferabolli, 2014; Maspul, 2023).

The coffee trade brings people from all walks of life together to engage in cultural exchange. When traders and customers engage, they share not only the physical product but also the tales, customs, and traditions associated with coffee (Jolliffe, 2010). This exchange of cultural knowledge promotes mutual understanding, breaks down boundaries, and improves communal relationships. Individuals in Al Qassim build a collective identity through the sharing of traditions and practices, which is formed by their involvement with coffee and the cultural exchange it promotes (Eskine-Loftus *et al.*, 2016).

In summary, the coffee trade in Al Qassim serves as a catalyst for cultural interaction and identity building within the Muslim society. The theory of cultural exchange explains how the coffee trade allows individuals to share their traditions, rituals, and stories, ultimately contributing to the construction of a common identity. The strong Islamic culture, historical roots, and value chain of Arabic coffee all play important roles in defining the cultural exchange and identity development linked with the coffee trade in Al Qassim.

e. Entrepreneurship and Innovation

The role of entrepreneurship and innovation in the coffee trade in Al Qassim can be investigated using economic development and innovation theories. Entrepreneurship is defined as the process of discovering and capitalizing on chances to start new businesses or expand existing ones (Schumpeter, 1934; Hobsbawm

& Ranger, 2012). Drucker (1985) defines innovation as the introduction of new ideas, products, or procedures that result in positive change. Entrepreneurs in Al Qassim use their talents, experience, and resources to build innovative coffee-related businesses, contributing to economic growth, job creation, and diversification of the local economy.

Monshaat, a Sharia Islamic financing organization, plays an important role in fostering entrepreneurship in Al Qassim, particularly in the coffee sector. Monshaat's activities and financial programs have aided the expansion of the region's small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), including coffee shops (Monshaat, n.d.; Suhel *et al.*, 2018). These efforts have provided access to money, coaching, and business support to ambitious entrepreneurs, allowing them to develop and build their coffee-related companies.

Over 150 coffee shops in Al Qassim, mainly in Buraydah and Unaizah, demonstrate the society's entrepreneurial spirit and ingenuity (Monshaat, n.d.). The proximity of coffee shops in Buraydah supports a strong coffee culture and good rivalry. This concentration of coffee shops boosts Al Qassim's total coffee value chain by encouraging entrepreneurial collaboration, knowledge sharing, and constant improvement.

Furthermore, technological improvements have had an impact on coffee entrepreneurship. Smart technologies and advanced coffee machines have transformed the coffee industry in Al Qassim (Monshaat, n.d.). Entrepreneurs have embraced these advances in order to improve the quality of their coffee offerings, increase production efficiency, and create unique consumer experiences. Technology adoption has not only boosted the competitiveness of coffee shops, but it has also attracted a larger client base, including tech-savvy customers.

Entrepreneurship and innovation in the coffee industry contribute to economic growth and employment creation in Al Qassim. Coffee-related enterprises create jobs, both directly in coffee shops and indirectly in the supply chain (Monshaat, n.d.). The success of these ventures also draws investment and encourages regional economic activity. Additionally, diversifying the local economy through the coffee trade decreases reliance on conventional sectors and enhances resilience in the event of economic problems.

Moreover, entrepreneurship and innovation are critical in the coffee trade in Al Qassim. Entrepreneurs in the society build innovative coffee-related enterprises using their talents, experience, and resources, contributing to economic growth, job creation, and the diversification of the local economy. Initiatives by groups such as Monshaat, as well as technology improvements, have aided in the growth of entrepreneurship in the coffee sector. The success of these entrepreneurial ventures boosts the broader coffee value chain in Al Qassim and nurtures a strong coffee culture within the society.

4. CONCLUSION

The Al Qassim case study exemplifies the complex relationship between coffee, trade, and the Muslim society, as supported by different related ideas. Cultural capital theory emphasizes the historical and cultural relevance of coffee, whereas social network theory elucidates the function of trade networks in encouraging economic growth. Ethical trading practices are guided by Islamic economic principles, but theories of cultural exchange and identity formation emphasize the value of cultural contacts. Finally, notions of entrepreneurship and innovation give light on the dynamic nature of the Al Qassim coffee trade. grasp these theories allows us to acquire a better grasp of the complex character of the spirit of trade within the Muslim society in Al Qassim.

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