

Ethical Consumption in Morocco: An Integrative Literature Review and Proposal for a Halal-Tayyib Conceptual Framework

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ABSTRACT

Ethical consumption in Morocco lies at the intersection of environmental, social, health, heritage and religious concerns. This integrative review examines how these concerns interact and proposes a context-sensitive conceptual framework. A structured literature search was conducted across six multidisciplinary platforms. Studies directly addressing Morocco were distinguished from international sources used for conceptual or comparative purposes. Five interdependent dimensions emerge: environmental responsibility, social and territorial justice, heritage embeddedness, Halal-Tayyib integrity and ethics of representation. Trust, authenticity, certification, traceability, perceived quality, social norms and economic accessibility operate as cross-cutting mechanisms. The Halal-Tayyib paradigm provides a promising integrative principle without reducing ethical consumption to religion alone. However, Moroccan scholarship remains fragmented and unevenly developed across sectors. Multisector empirical research is therefore required to test the proposed framework, clarify the relationships among its components and develop culturally appropriate measurement instruments. The review contributes by connecting previously separate research streams and identifying a configurational approach to ethical value in the Moroccan marketplace.

Keywords — ethical consumption; Morocco; Halal-Tayyib; local products; cooperatives; certification; trust; integrative review

INTRODUCTION

From Responsible Consumption to Ethical Consumption

Ethical consumption refers to choices of purchasing, usage, or non-purchasing that integrate—beyond price and functionality—environmental, social, health, cultural, and moral considerations. It overlaps with concepts such as responsible, sustainable, green, engaged, or socially responsible consumption, without being entirely identical to them. In Morocco, this plurality is particularly relevant: a product may be valued because it reduces certain environmental impacts, supports a local producer, preserves traditional know-how, offers quality guarantees, or aligns with a religious framework (Silva et al., 2016; Bouhaddou and El Hiri, 2019; Oubenal and Hlaoua, 2017); (Aderghal and Simenel, 2012; Faysse et al., 2010; Benbihi and Lahfidi, 2021); (Romagny and Boujrouf, 2010; Benbihi, 2021).

However, available studies address these dimensions in a fragmented manner. Green consumption, local products (*produits du terroir*), cooperatives, Halal, natural cosmetics, or communication practices are generally studied within distinct academic fields. This dispersion makes an integrative analysis necessary in order to highlight convergences, tensions, and shared mechanisms.

Specificity of the Moroccan Context

Morocco represents a unique setting where contemporary consumption transformations, the social economy, territorial heritage, and the Islamic reference framework coexist. So-called "Beldi" products, short supply chains, handicrafts, cooperatives, and certain traditional practices can today be reexamined in light of sustainability

challenges. However, this reexamination must remain critical: the age-old nature or local origin of a practice is not enough on its own to prove its sustainable, safe, or fair character.

The Halal framework adds a specific dimension and fits broader research dedicated to the links between spirituality, religion, and consumption (Casidy and Arli, 2018). Beyond prohibiting certain substances, contemporary literature links Halal to composition, processing, storage, traceability, certification, and trust. The concept of Tayyib broadens this framework to include quality, cleanliness, safety, and the prevention of harm (Aslan, 2023). The Halal-Tayyib pair can thus be envisioned as a grid linking permissibility, integrity, health, responsibility, and substantive quality.

Scientific Gap and Objectives

The central question of this review is as follows: how do ecological, social, heritage, and religious logics articulate to structure a specific form of ethical consumption in Morocco? The general objective is to propose an integrative literature synthesis and a conceptual framework adapted to the Moroccan context. More specifically, the study aims to: identify the main documented dimensions; analyze the determinants of responsible behavior; examine the place of Halal-Tayyib; clarify the role of heritage, local products, and cooperatives; analyze the mechanisms of trust, certification, and traceability; and explore the place of commercial representation within this ethical architecture.

METHODOLOGY

Review Design

This study adopts an integrative literature review design with an analytical and conceptual focus. This choice responds to the multidisciplinary nature of the topic, which draws on marketing, sociology of consumption, agriculture, food science, social economy, Islamic studies, and communication. The goal is not to estimate a combined effect size or produce an exhaustive tally of studies following a systematic review procedure, but rather to integrate heterogeneous findings to build a structured understanding of the phenomenon.

Sources and Search Strategy

The literature search utilized six platforms: ScienceDirect, Scopus, Web of Science Core Collection, Cairn.info, SpringerLink, and Wiley Online Library. Searches combined geographical terms (Morocco/Moroccan) with several conceptual blocks: ethical/responsible/sustainable consumption; green consumer behavior; Halal/Tayyib/Halalan Tayyiban; Beldi/terroir/local products/food heritage; agroecology/organic/sustainable agriculture; cooperatives/fair trade/social and solidarity economy; handicraft/craftsmanship; natural/green cosmetics; sustainable/ethical/modest fashion; advertising/marketing/representation/religion/modesty. More targeted queries were used when general terms generated excessive noise.

Source Selection and Organization

Priority was given to publications directly addressing Morocco or containing identifiable Moroccan data and dealing with at least one dimension of ethical consumption. Comparative studies were included when Moroccan results could be interpreted independently. International references without Moroccan data were not used as proof of Moroccan consumer behavior; they were drawn upon to define concepts, illuminate mechanisms, or compare theoretical frameworks. Irrelevant documents, incidental geographical occurrences, and studies where the term "consumption" referred strictly to medical, toxic, or energy uses without a commercial ethical dimension were excluded from the core synthesis.

Analytical Synthesis

Relevant information was organized by author, year, context, sector, study type, behavioral determinants, environmental, social, heritage, and religious dimensions, as well as mechanisms of certification, trust, and traceability. A thematic synthesis was then performed. Five dimensions gradually structured the interpretation: environmental, social and territorial, heritage, Halal-Tayyib, and representational. This approach is explicitly

interpretive: it aims to construct an integrative framework rather than achieve the statistical exhaustiveness of a systematic review.

RESULTS

A Fragmented but Convergent Moroccan Field

The identified literature indicates that ethical consumption in Morocco is rarely designated by that exact phrase. Instead, it appears through sectoral topics: socially responsible consumption, eco-friendly products, food waste, local products (*produits du terroir*), local agrifood systems, cooperatives, argan, Halal, or halal tourism. This lexical dispersion nonetheless masks several convergences. De Silva and Ben Bachir (2020) document the perception of socially responsible consumption among Moroccan students. Godefroit-Winkel and Peñaloza (2023) show, through an ethnographic approach, that the purchasing practices of Moroccan women are structured by social and ethical dimensions. Zoubi et al. (2024) situate food waste reduction within sustainable consumption policies, while Rossi et al. (2026) connect consumer preferences, artisanal production, local sourcing, and women's entrepreneurship. These transformations also fit into the broader evolution of Moroccan dietary habits observed since the COVID-19 pandemic (Bouhoudan et al., 2024).

Environmental Responsibility and Sustainable Behaviors

Research devoted to ecological products, agroecology, food systems, and food waste demonstrates environmental sensitivity (RIAM, 2018; Fatema, 2025; Rasool et al., 2021), but also reveals a potential gap between attitudes and behaviors. International studies on maintaining sustainable behaviors emphasize the role of contextual constraints, social influence, and consumer agency (Gordon-Wilson and Godefroit-Winkel, 2024; Elhoushy and Jang, 2023). In the Moroccan context, environmental issues frequently combine with considerations of price, availability, quality, local origin, and trust. The environmental dimension thus appears less as an autonomous register than as one component of a multi-criteria decision process.

Social Justice, Cooperatives, and Territory

Studies on cooperatives and the argan sector introduce an essential distributive dimension (Benbihi and Lahfidi, 2021; Romagny and Boujrout, 2010; Benbihi, 2021). The ethical value of a product depends not only on its environmental features, but also on production conditions, compensation, participation, and the bargaining power of producers. Degen and Clausen (2026) show that the global promotion of argan oil can contribute to empowering Amazigh women, while low-income or exploitative situations still persist. The mere label of "local," "traditional," or "cooperative" does not inherently guarantee fairness. These distributive issues tie into broader research on responsible sourcing strategies in Moroccan companies, which documents both the drivers of and barriers to the ethical integration of value chains (Cherkaoui and Aliat, 2025).

Heritage, Beldi, and Authenticity

Local products and traditional know-how hold a major place in the Moroccan context (Aderghal and Simenel, 2012). The label "Beldi" can serve as a signal of authenticity, proximity, and cultural continuity. However, literature encourages distinguishing between perceived authenticity and objective quality. The study by Amrati et al. (2021) on traditional medicinal knowledge in the Fez-Meknes region illustrates this tension: cultural heritage and perceived naturalness coexist alongside questions regarding safety and scientific validation. From an ethical perspective, heritage valuation must therefore be linked to information, quality, and harm prevention.

Halal-Tayyib: From Compliance to Integrity

Comparative literature provides a solid conceptual foundation to distinguish a compliance-focused Halal from a broader Halal-Tayyib framework (Benkheira, 2000; Bergeaud-Blackler, 2017; Wilson, 2014). Aslan (2023) highlights the influence of Halal awareness, certification, subjective norms, attitudes, and trust on purchase intention. Md Dahlal et al. (2026) emphasize integrity, transparency, and accountability in halal supply chains, while Mohammed et al. (2026) show how technological traceability can simultaneously support integrity, safety,

and performance. These compliance and traceability requirements are also observed in more specialized halal production sectors (Farouk et al., 2021).

The Moroccan grounding is reinforced by Dassouli et al. (2025), who examine the intention to visit halal hotels among 183 respondents in Morocco. Subjective norms, information seeking, and religious commitment help explain attitudes and intentions.

While these findings cannot be generalized across all sectors, they confirm the relevance of variables such as trust, social norms, information, and religious commitment in Moroccan analyses. This observation aligns with a broader body of international literature on halal tourism documenting the influence of trust, loyalty, and local Islamic norms on visitor intentions, notably in Indonesia (Nugroho et al., 2022; Primadona et al., 2025; Timur et al., 2025); (Alam et al., 2025) or within a wider comparative perspective (Islam et al., 2023; Rizki et al., 2016).

Trust, Certification, and Attribute Consistency

Trust serves as a cross-cutting mechanism. Certification does not act merely as formal proof; its effectiveness depends on the credibility of the certifying body, control transparency, and traceability. Rossi et al. (2026) provide a particularly instructive insight: in a Moroccan women-led agrifood system, certain attributes—specifically artisanal and local—are directly valued, whereas other social or health dimensions acquire higher value when combined. This finding supports the concept of an "ethical value configuration" rather than a mechanical addition of isolated attributes.

Ethics of Representation: An Emerging Axis

Advertising, packaging, and product presentation represent a dimension that remains sparsely documented empirically in Morocco. Islamic marketing nonetheless provides a framework to analyze how cultural and religious values can influence commercial representation (Sandikci and Rice, 2011; Nestorovic, 2009). Issues of modesty, decency, product visibility, or body representation should be treated as an emerging axis of the model rather than as already established empirical conclusions for Morocco.

Proposed Integrative Model

The synthesis leads to the proposal of five interdependent components: (1) environmental responsibility; (2) social and territorial justice; (3) authenticity and heritage continuity; (4) Halal-Tayyib integrity; and (5) ethics of representation.

These components are connected to mediating or moderating mechanisms such as trust, certification, traceability, authenticity, perceived quality, information, social norms, religiosity, and price. Expected behavioral outcomes include purchase intention, willingness to pay, loyalty, preference for short supply chains, and the rejection of products perceived as incompatible with consumer values. (Table 1)

Tableau 1. Dimensions de la consommation éthique au Maroc et niveau de documentation

Dimension	Manifestations	Mécanismes/indicateurs	Niveau de documentation
Environnementale	Produits écologiques, agroécologie, réduction du gaspillage	Impact, ressources, emballage, pratiques	Modéré
Sociale et territoriale	Coopératives, commerce équitable, producteurs locaux	Rémunération, inclusion, participation, résilience	Modéré à bon
Patrimoniale	Beldi, terroir, artisanat, savoir-faire	Authenticité, proximité, transmission	Bon dans certains secteurs

Halal-Tayyib	Licéité, qualité, sécurité, intégrité	Certification, confiance, traçabilité, prévention du préjudice	Émergent au Maroc
Représentationnelle	Publicité, packaging, pudeur, visibilité	Normes, contenus, régulation, cohérence symbolique	Faible / à approfondir

DISCUSSION

A Hybrid and Contextualized Ethical Consumption

The results support a multidimensional conception of ethical consumption in Morocco. It would be reductive to contrast a supposedly purely environmental Western ethics against an exclusively religious Moroccan ethics. Observed practices are shaped by multiple logics: environment, health, social justice, religion, identity, price, availability, social norms, and innovation. The Moroccan specificity lies more in the combination and weighting of these dimensions than in their exclusive nature. Conceptual works viewing responsible consumption as a mode of market contestation or transformation offer a complementary perspective on this hybridization (Amine and Benhallam, 2021).

Halal-Tayyib as a Possible Integrative Principle

Halal-Tayyib can serve as one of the integrative principles of the model. Halal refers primarily to permissibility, whereas Tayyib expands the analysis to quality, safety, cleanliness, and the prevention of harm. This extension connects religious concerns with health, environmental, and social dimensions without conflating them. However, available Moroccan data remain insufficient to consider this framework a validated model; it must be understood as a theoretical proposal based on the convergence of national and comparative results. Beyond consumption, literature on Islamic finance documents comparable compliance and ethics dynamics—such as around Socially Responsible Sukuk—suggesting the cross-cutting relevance of the Halal-Tayyib framework beyond the act of purchase alone (Delle Foglie and Keshminder, 2022).

From Certification to Trust

Certification generates ethical value only if it creates trust. The risks of misleading logos, insufficient enforcement, or opportunistic uses of green or halal claims justify paying close attention to transparency and traceability (Aslan, 2023). Concepts such as greenwashing and, by analytical analogy, "halal-washing" can be useful for studying gaps between communication and actual integrity, though the latter still requires empirical and conceptual validation in the Moroccan context.

Heritage, Naturalness, and Safety

Promoting "Beldi" and local products can support local economies and the transmission of know-how, but it carries ambiguities. Authenticity is equal to neither sustainability nor safety. The proposed framework therefore pairs heritage with Tayyib: local or traditional origin represents a dimension of value, but it must be accompanied by demands for quality, safety, information, and harm prevention.

Value Configuration Rather Than Isolated Attributes

One of the major contributions of this synthesis is the hypothesis of an ethical value configuration. Consumers may value not an isolated signal, but a coherent combination of local origin, artisanal processing, quality, safety, social impact, religious compliance, transparency, and acceptable price. This perspective helps explain why certain ethical labels or claims have limited effects when disconnected from the overall product experience.

Economic Accessibility and Democratization

Ethical consumption based on labels, organic products, or specialized channels risks remaining socially selective. In the Moroccan context, the key challenge is reconciling quality, responsibility, and economic accessibility. This question links consumer behavior, agricultural policies, social economy, and distributive justice, and warrants integration into future research on willingness to pay and trade-offs between price and ethical attributes.

Implications for Research and Public Policy

The proposed model suggests several avenues: developing measurement tools tailored to the Moroccan context using existing socially responsible consumption scales (Perez-Barea et al., 2015); comparing food, cosmetics, tourism, and handicraft sectors; testing the mediating role of trust and authenticity; evaluating the credibility of certifications; analyzing the effects of price, income, generational variables, and influencer impact (Johnstone and Lindh, 2018); and documenting norms of commercial representation. For public and industry stakeholders, the goal is to enhance transparency, traceability, consumer information, and alignment between ethical promises and production practices.

Limitations

This review presents several limitations. Literature explicitly devoted to ethical consumption in Morocco remains scattered and uses heterogeneous sectoral vocabularies. The integrative approach prioritizes conceptual relevance and synthesis over bibliometric exhaustiveness. International references were used to clarify mechanisms without being treated as direct evidence for Morocco. Finally, dimensions such as fashion and the ethics of representation remain less documented than food, heritage, cooperative, or halal axes. These limitations suggest treating the model as a proposal to be tested empirically.

CONCLUSION

Ethical consumption in Morocco can be understood as a hybrid system combining environmental responsibility, social and territorial justice, heritage, health and safety, Halal-Tayyib integrity, and representational norms. Available literature suggests that perceived ethical value depends less on an isolated attribute than on a coherent configuration of quality, trust, proximity, authenticity, responsibility, and accessibility.

The main contribution of this integrative review is connecting literatures usually treated separately and proposing Halal-Tayyib as a potential integrative principle, without reducing consumption ethics solely to its religious dimension. The proposed framework distinguishes values and motivations, trust and authenticity mechanisms, and their behavioral outcomes. Its validation will now require multisectoral empirical studies in Morocco and culturally adapted measurement tools.

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