

RESPONSIBLE CONSUMERISM

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INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY
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PREFACE

This textbook provides students with exposure to consumerism with sustainable development. Sustainable development integrates all aspects of consumerism, applicable to both consumers and producers. Students will gain exposure on consumerism topics that include consumption, market players' behaviours, consumer protection and rights, institutions, and systems of consumer protection.

Moreover, this textbook incorporates Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 12, that is to achieve prosperity, peace, and unity in the world through responsible consumption and production. This text is prepared for the course entitled Responsible Consumerism, and becomes part of a project at the Kulliyyah (Faculty) level. The Kulliyyah is related to multiple stakeholders that include International Islamic University Malaysia (the Host of RCE Greater Gombak), the internal Kulliyyah community, and Consumer Association of Penang (CAP). CAP serves as a network partner of IIUM and RCE Greater Gombak in consumerism advocacy and a training provider for consumerism.

The project also incorporates the Falsafah Pendidikan Kebangsaan (PFK) or National Education Philosophy Malaysia, to create and sustain a peaceful, unity and prosperous world, and is known as *Sejahtera*¹ *World*. *Sejahtera* has a strong influence in Malaysia, particularly, consumerism.

The book discusses the responsible consumerism that has been promoted by the United Nation Development Program (UNDP), specifically its 12th SDG Goal: Responsible Consumption and Production. Apart from that, the topic also reinforces the spirit of the National Education Philosophy (Falsafah Pendidikan Negara) that upholds a balanced development between Intellectual, Spiritual, Emotion and Physical (ISEP) aspects of human existence. With a strong support by International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) as a pioneer Islamic university in Malaysia that aims to imbue the Islamic values with the modern practice of knowledge, it welcomes the SDG goals promoted by UNDP.

While adhering to the *Shariah* principles, IIUM has formulated its local genre of Islamic-based concept named **Sejahtera² Academic Framework** (SAF) that portrays the elements of peace (*aman*), prosperity (*makmur*), tranquility (*tenang*), ease (*senang*) and protection from calamity of hardship (*terpelihara daripada bencana kesusahan*). All of these values capture comprehensive goals of SDG that promote prosperity in a sustainable way.

The framework intends to produce a sustainable development of the earth intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, and finally, physically to humans and other beings. With regard to the human, two Rectors of IIUM have elaborated on the concept of *Insan Sejahtera*, i.e.,

^{1 2} According to Kamus Dewab Bahasa (DBP), *Sejahtera* is a Malay word which means *aman* (peace), *makmur* (prosperity), *tenang* (tranquility), *senang* (ease) and *terpelihara daripada bencana kesusahan* (free from any hazardous incidents). It can be translated as a condition or position where it is prospered and free from any hazardous activities or consequences whether right now or in the future.

current Rector, Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Dato' Dzulkifli Abdul Razak and the renowned Islamic scholar, late Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Mohd Kamal Hassan.³

Incorporating the concept of *Sejahtera* in economics marks a significant step towards achieving a holistic and harmonious approach to consumerism. *Sejahtera*, rooted in *Shari'ah* principles and universal values, emphasizes the equitable utilization of resources and the just distribution of incomes among all stakeholders. This integration gives rise to a transformative paradigm known as "Responsible Consumerism."

At its core, Responsible Consumerism encompasses more than just individual buying habits. It represents a collective commitment to fostering sustainable economic practices that not only benefit consumers but also uphold ethical principles and safeguard the well-being of society and the environment. Drawing from the spirit of *Sejahtera*, this approach transcends mere materialistic pursuits and embraces a profound sense of responsibility towards our fellow beings and the planet we inhabit.

Through Responsible Consumerism, consumers are empowered to make conscious choices that consider the social, environmental, and ethical implications of their actions. By adhering to *Shari'ah* and universal values, these choices prioritize fairness, justice, and compassion in the acquisition and consumption of goods and services. This mindful consumer behaviour, in turn, fosters a positive impact on the entire supply chain, encouraging businesses to adopt sustainable and responsible practices.

In the context of *Sejahtera*, the equitable distribution of incomes assumes paramount importance. Responsible Consumerism strives to bridge economic disparities by advocating for fair wages, decent working conditions, and inclusive opportunities for all stakeholders, including employees, suppliers, and local communities. By embracing this ethos, businesses can create a nurturing and inclusive environment where economic growth coexists harmoniously with social progress.

Responsible Consumerism also places a strong emphasis on resource conservation and environmental stewardship. Guided by the principles of *Sejahtera*, consumers and businesses alike actively seek environmentally friendly and sustainable products. This approach mitigates the adverse impact of consumerism on the planet, promoting a balanced and symbiotic relationship between economic growth and ecological well-being.

Furthermore, Responsible Consumerism encourages transparency and accountability throughout the supply chain. Businesses are urged to uphold ethical practices, shun exploitative behaviours, and prioritize the welfare of their stakeholders. By embracing these principles, they cultivate trust among consumers and build long-lasting relationships based on integrity and responsibility.

Ultimately, Responsible Consumerism exemplifies the seamless integration of *Sejahtera's* values into the fabric of economics. It represents a transformative shift towards a more conscious, compassionate, and sustainable mode of consumer behaviour and business practices. By adopting Responsible Consumerism, we pave the way for a future where

³ Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Dr. Muhammad Kamal Hassan has produced a book entitled "The Malay Concept of *Sejahtera* from An Islamic Perspective" by IIUM Press, 2021. The book elaborates comprehensively the concept of *sejahtera* that aligns both the Islamic perspective and SDG direction by UNDP.

prosperity is not only measured by material wealth but also by the harmony, justice, and well-being it bestows upon all members of society and the planet.

For practitioners, independent learners, learners in formal classroom the book should best be read chapter by chapter so that the readers are able to follow the presentation in a pre-arranged sequence. Despite this, anyone may be able to benefit from the contents of single chapters that may be read at convenience.

The 14 chapters applied the same format. After the chapter title, one finds the learning objectives. Each chapter is presented with A SCENARIO that provides a light narrative of a student or a group of students relate themselves to the theme of the chapter. Any instructor or trainer may use the scenario to get the audience share their perceptions toward one of the issues contained therein.

Each chapter ends with individual sections Chapter Summary, Key Terms, Discussion Questions, and References.

The authors decided to publish their preliminary work rather than wait until the draft be revised for further improvement so that they make available a basic text readily available to their students on campus. In fact, the text may be used by anyone who shares their interest on responsible consumerism. Whis this confession, the authors accept responsibility for the inadequacies of their work. Comments and suggestions are welcome with gratitude.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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Chapter 1

Consumption, Consumer Values, and *Sejahtera* Framework

Learning Objectives

At the end of this chapter, learners should be able to

- 1.1 Describe the existing consumption framework
- 1.2 Explain the existing consumer values
- 1.3 Identify 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- 1.4 Evaluate SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and Production Framework
- 1.5 Explain *Sejahtera* Framework
- 1.6 Summary of Chapter 1
- 1.7 Key terms
- 1.8 Discussion questions
- 1.9 References

A SCENARIO

Zakiah had always been conscious of her environmental impact, but it wasn't until she moved to a new city and started living on her own that she truly began to understand the importance of responsible consumption.

One day, while browsing through the aisles of a local supermarket, Zakiah noticed that many of the products she typically bought were packaged in single-use plastic. She was frustrated by the lack of sustainable options and the amount of waste being generated by her shopping choices.

Zakiah began to research ways to reduce her environmental impact and discovered the concept of “conscious consumerism.” She learned about the importance of considering the entire lifecycle of a product, from its production to its disposal, and the impact that consumer choices have on the environment.

As she began to make changes to her own consumption habits, Zakiah also noticed a shift in her own values. She became more aware of the social and ethical implications of her purchase and began to prioritize products that were produced sustainably and with fair labour practices.

Zakiah’s journey towards responsible consumption wasn't always easy. She had to make difficult choices, such as choosing to buy more expensive but environmentally friendly products and reducing her overall consumption. But over time, she began to

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WHY THIS BOOK?

In an era dominated by consumption, where every purchase has ripple effects on society and the environment, understanding responsible consumerism is more crucial than ever. "Responsible Consumerism" is the essential companion for pre-university, college, and university students embarking on a journey to explore the depths of consumer behaviour. With clarity and insight, this book equips students taking consumerism courses with the knowledge and tools they need to become informed and conscious consumers. From understanding the impact of social factors, advertising, and peer pressure on individual choices to delving into the ethical and environmental dimensions of consumption, this guide navigates the complex world of responsible consumerism.

As students progress through this book, they uncover the challenges at different levels – from local districts to the global stage – that hinder responsible consumerism. They learn how inconsistent policies, resource constraints, lack of enforcement, and the power of industry lobbying influence consumer behavior and choices. Moreover, they explore cross-cutting challenges like greenwashing, affordability, accessibility, and the need for behavioral change.

With practical insights, case studies, and actionable steps, "Responsible Consumerism" empowers students to be advocates of responsible consumption. They discover how to align personal values with purchasing decisions and foster a positive impact on society and the environment. The book encourages students to critically examine their consumer identities and question the relationship between material possessions and individual values.

As future leaders and change-makers, these students hold the potential to reshape the consumer landscape. Armed with knowledge from this book, they become champions of responsible consumerism, driving meaningful transformations in their communities and beyond. "Responsible Consumerism" is a must-have resource that enlightens, engages, and motivates students to become catalysts of change in the pursuit of a sustainable and responsible world.

Responsible Consumerism

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Sejahtera Consumerism

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