

**FACTORS MOTIVATING THE LOCAL COMMUNITY OF BELAWA, WAJO REGENCY, SOUTH SULAWESI PROVINCE TO ENGAGE IN EDIBLE BIRD'S NEST INDUSTRY IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF ISLAMIC BUSINESS ETHICS****Agusdiwana Suarni, Asriati, Sulaiman Masnan, Fitriani**Islamic Economics Department, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar ( [agusdiwana.suarni@unismuh.ac.id](mailto:agusdiwana.suarni@unismuh.ac.id))**Abstract**

This study aims to determine the factors that motivate the local community of Belawa sub-district, Wajo regency, South Sulawesi, to engage in edible bird's nest industry. Edible-nest swiftlet farming becomes a rife among the agricultural community in the area, particularly after the issuance of MUI Fatwa No. 2 of 2012 concerning the lawful consumption of edible bird's nest as well as the lawful swiftlet farming in Islam along with several requirements including the birds should not be tortured during the process. This study is a qualitative research in which qualitative analysis was performed to find out and learn directly about the actual situation and interaction between the community and the presence of swiftlet farming. The findings reveal that the factors motivating people to engage in edible bird's industry are the prospective profits of the business, frequent agricultural crop failures, and the permit to consume bird's nest based on Islamic law as well as the permit to farm the bird based on Islamic business ethics.

**Keywords:** Edible bird's nest, Business ethics, Belawa, Wajo, South Sulawesi**Introduction****Background**

Indonesia is the world biggest producer of edible bird's nest, especially swallow's nests, in which swallow farming becomes a special industry for some people. Edible bird's nest including bird's saliva is believed to be beneficial to health. The nest is usually used as an ingredient of soup while the majority of bird's nests in Indonesia are exported to China, especially Hong Kong. Bird's nests have been consumed since time immemorial. Its health benefits are feasible for all ages. It is claimed that bird's nests improve the body's immune system and rejuvenate organs, without an effect of "hot feeling" to the body as with ginseng (Arif Budiman, 2005: 42).

In line with the rise of the Chinese economy, demand for bird's nests has also elevated. Therefore, the bird's nest industry in Asia and especially in Indonesia is growing vastly. Bird's nest soup is a phenomenal Chinese cuisine with many enthusiasts, especially those from China. Bird's nest trade began to develop in China during the Tang Dynasty in 618-907. In the 20th century, the Chinese communist government banned Chinese people from eating expensive and extraordinary cuisine such as bird's nest soup. Nevertheless, in the late 20th century, the Chinese government became more flexible, allowing the increasing popularity and demand for bird's nests (Arif Budiman, 2005:47).

Indonesia is the world biggest producer of edible bird's nests. Other countries that also produce bird's nests include Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Singapore and India. All of these countries are located in the South and Southeast Asia. In Indonesia, most of the bird's nests are cultivated

within buildings called swallow/swiftlet house (Eka Adiwibawa, 2000: 72).

The development of knowledge about the ease and benefit of bird farming further motivates people to farming at home. It leads to the increasingly widespread feud to provoke and bring such birds to houses. However, without proper attention to the bird's condition and the lack of maintenance, it is highly possible the houses will be abandoned and uninhabited while the birds flee and search for another habitat.

Edible bird's nests have been recognized as a source of delightful cuisine since hundreds of years ago. It was the Chinese people who introduced and popularized the bird's nest throughout the world. During the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), bird's nest soup became a famed delicacy. Nevertheless, bird's nests were so rare thus the Chinese had to cross the ferocious waves of the South China Sea to obtain them. Hundreds of years ago, edible-best swiftlet used to build nests in coral reefs in the coastal area of South China Sea.

Chinese has always been an attractive market among global trading. Chinese traders introduced and sold various goods, including bird's nests, to the European, American and other continents. Bird's nests have been an exclusive commodity then while the Chinese descent throughout the country also participated in popularizing the bird's nest.

The high demand and prices of bird's nest enhance the number of worldwide producers, collectors and traders. This high demand is mainly due to the good taste and distinguished flavor of bird's nests. In addition, they are believed to serve as medicine as well as boost the prestige of the consumers. The highest global demand comes from China and Hong Kong. In addition to these two countries, demand also comes from Japan, Thailand, Malaysia, Taiwan, and Singapore (Nugroho and Budiman, 2008).

Swallow in general is known for several characteristics which distinguished the from other birds. Their characteristics include carrying out almost all of its activities in the air such as eating and reproducing, and best-known in Indonesia as 'burung layang-layang'. In addition, the most distinctive feature of this species is its ability to build high value, marketable nests. Indonesia is among the largest global supplier of edible bird's nests that this commodity in various countries in Asia, Europe, Australia and the United States.

There are several species of swallow that can be found in Indonesia, including *Collocalia fuciphaga* or edible-nest swiftlet. This species is able to produce 'white' nests and is most preferred by consumers.

Edible bird's nest production is influenced by several factors, one of which is its environmental condition. The environment of edible-nest swiftlet consists of micro habitat and macro habitat. The microhabitat is an environment in houses that can be conditioned according to needs such as temperature, relative humidity and light intensity. Macrohabitat is the environment outside the houses where the birds live and find foods such as altitude, temperature and humidity, as well as water sources and vegetation as a food resources. Macrohabitat cannot be easily maintained as microhabitat thus swiftlet house must be constructed in an appropriate area. Therefore, in general, the problems in the present study can be formulated, namely: 1. Factors that motivate people to engage in edible bird's nest business, 2. What is the perspective of Islamic business ethics toward the edible bird nest farming as practiced by the community of Belawa Sub-district, Wajo Regency, South Sulawesi?

### Research Objectives

Based on the background of the study, the objectives of this study can be formulated, namely: 1. To investigate the factors that motivate people to engage in edible bird's nest business, 2. To examine the perspective of Islamic business ethics toward the the edible bird nest farming as practiced by the community of Belawa Sub-district, Wajo Regency, South Sulawesi.

### Literature Review

#### Islamic Economics

According to Muhammad Abdul Manan, Islamic economics is a social science which studies the economic problems of people imbued with the Islamic values. Meanwhile, M. Umar Chapra (2014) suggests According to Muhammad Abdul Manan, Islamic economics is a social science which studies the economic problems of people imbued with the Islamic values. Meanwhile, M. Umar Chapra (2014) suggests Islamic economics as a knowledge that attempts to realize human well-being through an allocation and distribution of scarce resources that is in conformity with Islamic teachings without unduly curbing individual

freedom or creating continued macroeconomic and ecological imbalances.

Islamic economics is a social science that studies the economy system based on Islamic values. Islamic economics is different from the system of capitalism, socialism, and the welfare state. The major difference between capitalism and Islamic economics is that the exploitation by capital owners toward poor workers and the accumulation of wealth are prohibited in Islam (Djoko Muljono, 2015).

Several definitions of Islamic economics, it can be relatively explained and comprehensively defined by Hasanuzzaman, Islamic economics is the knowledge and application of injunctions and rules of the Sharia (Islamic Jurisprudence) that prevent injustice in the acquisition and disposal of material resources in order to provide satisfaction to human beings and enable them to perform their obligations to Allah (God) and society.

Islamic economics is a multidimensional or interdisciplinary study that is comprehensive and mutually integrated, including Islamic teachings sourced from the Scriptures, and also rational thinking (the results of human thought and experience), with this knowledge humans can overcome the problems of scarce resources to achieve *falah* Principles of Islamic Economics

Islamic economics is the manifestation of both *rabbani* (divine) and *insani* (human) nature. It has divine nature since it is imbued by divine goals and values. It has human nature since this economic system is realized and intended for human prosperity and well-being

The building of Islamic economics is based on five universals, namely:

- a. *Tawhid* (Oneness of God)
- b. *Adl* (Justice)
- c. *Nubuwwah* (Prophethood)
- d. *Khalifah* (Successor)
- e. *Ma'ad* (Resurrection)

Business opportunity is a number of possible influences on the success or failure of a business that may occur in the future. It can be interpreted as a measure of the prospects of a business. In this context, prospects are a speculation carried out in terms of the number of products and the sales revenue. The notion of business in entrepreneurship is an opportunity that must and can be utilized by a business owner or entrepreneur to gain a certain desired goal. Business opportunity is a risk that

must be taken and faced to manage and address all difficulties related to financial matters (Pranata, 2014).

### Business Development Strategies

There are several business development strategies, namely:

- a. Focus on one product or service, put it on the market, promote, sell, take any action to enhance sales.
- b. Expand product links to complement existing products and services. When the product is demonstrated to have many buyers, do not ignore to grab opportunities for relevant products to diversify product links.
- c. Search for techniques to increase sales to customers who have already tried the product. It will be easier to do it. Even though it may not improve the product, it may accelerate revenues through volume discount.
- d. Begin hiring employees to support a business whether in services, livestock, etc., by adjusting costs to the level of work available.
- e. Create a website to advertise or market a business online for marketing special products. Perform website development with only Rp. 300,000 per month without technical knowledge.
- f. Join with other business owners or entrepreneurs to enhance the business. Partner with other related companies is one of the cheapest and lowest marketing technique.
- g. Start marketing to other markets. If the target customer is a teenager, start pointing to students. If the target is working mothers, conduct strategy of using retail-oriented products and sell them in a wholesale

### Benefits for The Community

In the broader context, business is an activity carried out by a person in order to obtain the expected outcome. In a narrower context, business can be interpreted in various definitions according to its specific context. In the field of business, for instance, business is basically associated with business activities.

In the economic realm, business is defined as an effort made to gain profits while the actors

who carry out business activities are called entrepreneurs or businessmen. Moreover, it provide benefits not only for oneself but also a variety of benefits for people in general. Some of the benefits may be widely recognized but some are not. They include:

- a. Create jobs
- b. Promote people welfare
- c. encouraging people to open a business
- d. promote environmental sustainability
- e. provide a role model for the society
- f. reach broader communities
- g. Promote the economic growth

### Edible Bird's Nest

Edible-nest swiftlet usually live in caves and have similarities to swallows in general, in terms of preying on insects while flying. This species is not meant to be sold for the sound or flesh, but for the nest. The nest contains the bird's saliva. In countries such as Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and China, edible bird's nest has been consumed because it is believed to have many benefits. It is usually use as the ingredient of making soup. Bird's nest soup has been consumed by the Chinese for thousands of years.

Indonesia is the world biggest producer of edible bird's nest. Other countries that also produce edible bird's nest are Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippine, Vietnam, Burma, Singapore, India, and Sri Lanka. All of these countries are situated in South Asia and Southeast Asia. In Indonesia, most of the edible bird's nest are produced by utilizing swiftlet houses (Eka Adiwibawa, 2000: 72).

The benefits of edible bird's nests include:

- a. The benefits of the edible bird's nest
- b. The benefits of consuming swiftlet saliva

The benefits of consuming swiftlet saliva include:

- 1) Rich in amino acids
- 2) Good source of minerals
- 3) High in antioxidants
- 4) Increase endurance during chemotherapy

### Islamic Business Ethics

Islamic business ethics is defined as a set of values about good and bad or right and wrong conducts in the business based on the principles of morality. In other words, business ethics means a set of principles and norms in which business actors must commit to in dealing, behaving and relating

to achieve their business goals appropriately. This is a criterion for commemoration/action (Mustaq Ahmad, 2001: 31)

Basically, learning Islamic business ethics means learning what is right or wrong to equip business actors to make or decide the right thing in accordance with morality-based knowledge, awareness, and situations. Nevertheless, Islamic business ethics can also mean managerial ethics or organizational ethics agreed upon by a company (Faisal Badroen, 2006 :16).

The term of business appears in the Qur'an as *at-tijarah* and in Arabic *tijaraha*, which means to trade or commerce. Essentially, business ethics is the value standards that guide or reference managers and all employees in having and operating ethical business (Budi Untung, 2012: 61).

The noble characteristics of the Prophet Muhammad that made him success in doing business include:

- a. Trustworthy (*Amanah*)
- b. Honest (*Shiddiq*)
- c. Smart and Wise (*Fathonah*)

### Profit and Business in Islamic Perspectives

- a. Concept of Profit and Business in Islam

Every human being needs wealth to meet individual needs. As a consequence, humans always make efforts to obtain that wealth. One of the efforts is by engaging in a business activity.

There are several ethics as the basic principles for business actors in running their businesses, namely:

- 1) Having spiritual consciousness (*taqwa*)  
Muslims are commanded to always remember Allah even in the midst of their hectic activities. They should be fully aware and responsive to the priorities that have been determined by God. This should be a driving force in all actions. For instance, a Muslim has to stop on-going activities when it comes to pray, as well as other obligations.
- 2) Avoiding backbiting (*Gheebah*)  
Backbiting or tale-bearing or *gheebah* is a disease of the heart that must be evaded by Muslims. It should not be done in the business, especially those of backbiting business competitor with an intention to gain profits. Allah forbids these acts, as

He says in the Holy Quran:  
*O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin. And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it. And fear Allah ; indeed, Allah is Accepting of repentance and Merciful (Surah Al-Hujurat [49:12]).*

- 3) Promoting justice (*Al-Adl*)  
 Islam forbids every business relationship that adheres to wrongdoing and requires the fullest justice applied in every trade association of business contracts. The Qur'an recurrently states that Allah loves those who do justice while the curse Allah is upon the wrongdoers (Surah Hud [11]: 18), Allah has commanded to do justice among people including those who have different religious beliefs (Surah Ash-Shura [42]: 15).

- 4) Avoiding negative assumption (*Suuzh-zhaan*)  
 Islam strictly prohibits business actors from negative assumption or prejudice against other business actors, which is driven by business competition. Allah forbids these acts, as He says in the Holy Quran:

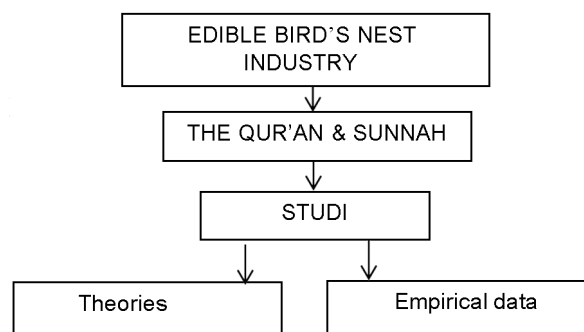
*O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin. And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it. And fear Allah ; indeed, Allah is Accepting of repentance and Merciful (Surah Al-Hujurat [49:12]).*

(Hermawan Kartajaya & Muhammad Syakir Sula, 2006: 67-93)

### Research Gap

There are studies which has been done which are Sumardi Danny, Pordamantra, & Sunariyo (2018); Harapuspa Annisa & Fitriani Dyah (2018); Yunirna Roswita , Zakariah Leo M. Nur & Uca (2019); Nuroini Fitri & Wijayanti Nastiti (2017) and Sudiyanto Totok (2018). Most of the studies are focusing on the financial aspect. Furthermore, Sudiyanto Totok (2018) has been studies on swallow's nests (*Collocalia fuciphaga* Thunberg)

can be eaten and most of Indonesian society make an edible bird's nest industry in their home (Yunirna Roswita , Zakariah Leo M. Nur & Uca (2019). Indeed, this study is focus on the Factors that motivate people to engage in edible bird's nest business and perspective of Islamic business ethics toward the edible bird nest farming as practiced by the community of Belawa Sub-district, Wajo Regency in South Sulawesi.



Source: Author (2019).

### Research Method

#### Type of Research

The present study is a qualitative research. Based on a series of theories about qualitative research, this study used descriptive research methods since it focused on data descriptions in the form of in-depth interviews that involved informants and the behaviors that had relevance to the application of pawn shop scheme according to the principles of Islamic economics.

#### Research Focus

The present study suggests several issues that become a reference and the focus of the researcher in conducting study and research on what factors affecting the community of Belawa Sub-district to engage in the edible bird's nest industry, and the perspective of Islamic business ethics toward the practice of edible-nest swiftlet farming and the consumption of swiftlet saliva. The focus of this study was the community of Wajo City.

#### Sources of Data

The present study is a quantitative research that aims to reveal a problem based on the current, actual situation. The data used in this study consisted of:

1. Primary data: The data retrieved directly from the research site or field data. The data were obtained from edible-nest swiftlet farming site.

2. Secondary data: The data were the results of literature review of scholarly articles, books and other sources relevant to the topic.

### Research Instrument

Qualitative instruments, which became the research instrument or tool, are employed through observation and in-depth interviews. The research was conducted in accordance to the focus under the study. Therefore, to perform in-depth interview, data from relevant material or sources were collected with the assistance of instrument and equipment such as cameras, mobile phones for recorders, and stationery. The camera was utilized during observation to record an event both in the form of images and videos while recorded was used to record information during in-depth interview and observation. Meanwhile, stationery was required to make notes and describe data obtained from the sources.

### Data Analysis Method

The data obtained from data collection stage consisted of primary data and secondary data. Subsequently, the data were presented in a description in accordance with the results of the study and arranged regularly. The data were initially presented in the form of images, then analyzed and finalized with drawing conclusions. In data analysis, the data obtained from the results of research both from the literature review, in-depth interviews, and observations were arranged systematically and then analyzed using the methods as follows:

1. Qualitative Analysis  
Qualitative analysis included identifying secondary data by initially performing inventory of norms and principles related to the problem, which were the factors affecting the community to engage in the edible bird's nest industry.
2. Descriptive Analysis  
Descriptive analysis is the identification of primary data comprehensively by linking to secondary data in order to obtain a clear and detailed picture of the phenomena as the subject of discussion but without involving statistical calculations. This descriptive analysis included several steps, namely frequency counts, measures of central tendency, and measures of variability.

## Results And Discussion

### Results

#### 1. Factors motivating people to engage in edible bird's nest industry

Factors that motivate the community to engage in edible bird's nest industry include the promising profit and the simple requirement in maintaining the edible-nest swiftlet since unlike other species, edible-nest swiftlet does not need manual feeding. It is a semi-wild bird who lives in caves, finds food, and then returns to the house to resting or producing saliva.

Based on the interview on factors that motivate the community to farm swiftlets, an informant, Saripuddin, explained that he was very excited to practice swiftlet farming due to its promising profit and the benefit or efficacy contained in bird's saliva for health. From the statement, it can be identified that the factors that encourage the community to farm swiftlets are not only because the business is profitable, but also because its beneficial to health.

The capital to start a business is indeed significant because the cost of house construction is approximately tens of millions and even hundreds of millions depending on the size of the house. However, the revenue of this edible bird's nest business can reach hundreds of millions when the harvests are successful. In starting this farming, people must learn the situation and the condition of the house site. It is claimed that the majority of swiftlets farmers undergo failure in this business since they have not harvested for years after the house construction. In fact, it relates to the swiftlet house that is built without analyzing the microhabitat, macrohabitat, and the feasibility of the house.

According to Saripuddin, a strategic site to build a swiftlet house is close to mountains, beaches, or paddy fields due to the absence of food or water source in the house. Swiftlets find food and water sources by themselves hence the house site near mountains or paddy fields is strategic because swiftlets eat small insects like dragonflies, earthworms, rice caterpillars, crickets, grasshoppers, and other small animals. After eating, they will fly around searching for water source and return to swiftlet house. Saripuddin owns a house in Welle 2 village, Belawa, Wajo, and it can be considered successful in which within a year of the house construction, he has harvested twice. On

the first harvest, the yield was less than only 1kg or 8 ounces to be precise, with approximately a revenue of 9 million rupiah. On the second harvest, *Alhamdulillah*, it increased to 1kg 7 ounces with a revenue of 17 million rupiah. It is estimated that within 2 or 4 years, *In sha Allah*, the yield to be harvested will continuously augment in amount. Meanwhile, Muh Singke described about the profit obtained from farming edible-nest swiftlet. He harvested the bird's nest within the first 7 months of the house construction, and the revenue was 7-10 million. Currently, he owns several houses and *Alhamdulillah* all of them are profitable and can be harvested regularly. Muh Singke informed that he was once a rice and corn farmer and due to several factors, the crops failed thus he decided to sell the rice fields and began to engage in edible bird's nest business. He also explicated the benefits in farming edible-nest swiftlet that in addition to the relatively high profit, it is relatively easy to farm swiftlet. It only needs house or building constructed according to the procedures and then just waits for results. As an additional task, the farmers are required to clean dirt within the house once a month to make it a comfortable place for the swiftlets to live in. They are also recommended to carry out pest control. There is no other exact requirement for swiftlet farming.

Furthermore, Muh Singke explained his motivation to prefer swiftlet farming instead of agricultural farming. The differences between the two are obvious and yet problematic. As the agricultural farming has been set up twice harvest in a season, the harvest of edible bird's nest is not particularly precise since the swiftlet should enter the house and produce saliva. It may require a very long time ranging from 10 months to 5 years. However, if the house is constructed in a strategic site, the farmer can gain millions or even tens of millions. This high and promising profit is the main reason for farming swiftlets in the study site.

Regarding the benefits of swiftlet farming compared to farming livestock, Syukardi explained the distinctive difference among them. He stated that it was relatively easy to practice swiftlet farming because the farmers are not required to provide it with food and water, while other livestock animals must be provided with food and water on a regular basis.

Syukardi also informed that in addition to the edible-nest swiftlet, he also owned livestock such as ducks and roosters. Meanwhile, as the benefits of

edible bird's nests had been recognized worldwide in which the profit in one harvest is relatively huge compared to the daily revenue derived from cattle or other livestock, it encourages many people to shift into the business. In fact, the farmers of edible-nest swiftlets have to be persevering for several months to years to gain yield from the harvest. Nevertheless, the farmers can be relaxed since edible bird's nest is a casual business, they are only required to build swiftlet house and install sound systems to attract the bird entering the house. The maintenance that should be carried out is merely to perform pest control once a month and spray special perfume in the house.

The maintenance is recommended to make swiftlets comfortable in the house otherwise they will move to other habitats. In addition, swiftlet houses located in strategic sites, for example around paddy fields or beaches, will also provide added value in which it only approximately within the first year, the farmers are able to harvest twice with a relatively high revenue.

Moreover, in relation with the presence of a sound system used to call swiftlets into the house, Ahmad Arivai explained that it might be quite disturbing in the beginning, particularly during nap time. The sound of birds disrupted the tranquility of the area while the farmers returned home from the fields. However, they were gradually accustomed to the sound and it became a normal situation. The farmers as the owners of swiftlet houses had legal permits for building and farming edible-nest swiftlet. In addition, the timing of the sound system could be set automatically. The residents of the area had been familiar with the sound of birds chirping around, giving no objection about it. Moreover, the presence of swiftlet houses in the area is beneficial for farmers since swiftlets only eat small insects such as rice worms and grasshoppers that damage rice plants.

Concerning with the existence of tax imposed for edible bird's nest farmers, Muh Azhar explained there is a tax from the government with specific conditions, including tax is imposed when the business has succeeded in terms of having capital returned and profits. Meanwhile, since he began the business, Muh Azhar confirmed that he had not paid the tax to the government since the business could not be considered to have succeeded as indicated by a few times harvesting with relatively low amount of revenue and delayed returned capital.

Once a month, the authorized tax collector visits the swiftlet house and inquiry the profit gained within a month. Muh Azhar explained that he had not gained any profits as his swiftlet house had been operated for a year and a half. The total revenue earned was one to two million per month, but the amount was inconsistent. He expected that within four to five years after the house construction, the targeted capital will return.

Concerning with the rife of edible bird's nests in Belawa, Wajo Regency, especially Wele'e village, Nurdin as the Head of Wele'e village claimed that he appreciated the enthusiasm and passion of the community in establishing edible bird's nest business since it potentially gains high profit to enhance the family economic status and supported swiftlet houses as long as the procedure should be equipped with a Construction Permit (IMB).

Currently, 20 residents own swiftlet houses in Wele village, Belawa sub-district, Wajo regency. Some have succeeded while others have not demonstrated high profit yet. Those who succeed usually have the houses for at least 2 years, which are located in strategic area in adjacent to rice fields. Moreover, the number of swiftlet house is increasing every year due to the promising profits. It is estimated that with a capital of tens of millions, the profit of a harvest can reach tens of millions or even hundreds of millions in a year. Nurdin also explained that it is common that the owner's family house is smaller than the swiftlet house. It indicates the accomplishment of people in Wele village in managing the business. In addition to assist family wealth, the business allows them to afford higher education levels for their children.

Based on the data obtained from the informants, it can be summarized that factors that motivate people to engage in edible bird's nests include:

- a. Relatively high profit. Local people build swiftlet houses larger than their family houses with an expectation they will gain revenue to meet the needs of their families. The edible bird's nests also have a very high demand and its benefits are a source of income for rural communities in Indonesia. Moreover, in addition to meeting domestic demand, export opportunities are also quite high.
- b. Wele'e Village, Belawa sub-district, Wajo Regency, is a feasible area to

build a swiftlet house as the location is adjacent to rice fields, while edible-nest swiftlets are more predominantly wildlife living in caves and eating small insects.

- c. Edible bird's nests provide an alternative source of income for local people whose main income derived from agriculture and plantations. Nevertheless, the crops are not reliable income due to the possibility of crop failure while the price of the crops are volatile. The farmers often suffer devastating crop failure. Meanwhile, edible bird's nests have a relatively stable and high price, the farming method is not complicated compared to other livestock which require regular feeding. The bird's nest business only requires a comfortable house or building for the birds to live and produce nests or saliva as indicated from field observations in Wele'e Village, Belawa sub-district, Wajo regency.

## 2. Edible Bird's Nest Industry based on Islamic Business Ethical Perspective

### a. Islamic law and edible bird's nest

The Fatwa of MUI No. 2 of 2012 stipulates that farming swiftlets is allowed as long as it does not torture animals or imprison them, and the farmers must allow the birds to roam and forage freely for food. Edible-nest swiftlets farming is allowed in Islam, a number of propositions which state that it is lawful, one of which is the Prophet Muhammad once allowed a young child to play and keep birds or other animals in cages. But there is a provision in which the animals should be provided with food, water, and other necessities as Al-'Iraqi said in Tharhu Tasrib based on the hadith about a woman who was tortured because of cat, "She neither fed it nor watered it" (al-Muru'ah Masyhur bin Hasan 185).

Allah says in the Holy Quran "O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth [that is] lawful and good and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy." Keeping a caged animal is forbidden if the animal is abandoned, causing the death of the animal, even the culprit is threatened



with hell, as one of the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad:

*“A woman entered the (Hell) Fire because of a cat which she had tied, neither giving it food nor setting it free to eat from the vermin of the earth” (Sahih Al-Bukhari, No.3318)”*

Rearing edible-nest swiftlet is different from having a cat or other pets, in which the owners are required to build houses and the birds can fly in and out of houses. This species is usually live in areas close to the sea while they use sea water foam to make nests. Edible-nest swiftlets are aerial insectivores that forage for insects around their habitats. The yield of swiftlet farming is nests from bird's saliva.

When exposed to the air, bird's saliva is dried out and solidified into cream that has many benefits. Even today, a number of people seriously explore edible-nest swiftlet as a business opportunity that they are willing to build special, costly buildings to farm edible-nest swiftlets. However, farming this species is not like confining a bird in a cage but to build swiftlet house serving as a habitat for the birds to produce saliva. Moreover, the house should be constructed as comfortable as possible thus the birds are willing to enter the house for resting or producing saliva.

The requirements of swiftlet farming include providing a comfortable place to live for swiftlets otherwise they will move to other habitats, performing dirt cleaning, spraying special perfume, and performing pest control once a month. The farmers also build various facilities such as ponds serving as water sources hence the birds do not go out of the house to find water, particularly for houses far from the coast. It can trigger birds to remain at houses instead of leaving the houses or moving to other habitats.

Nevertheless, farmers who build swiftlet houses near rice fields or the seas are do not necessarily build a pond in the building. Edible-nest swiftlets are independent but prospective animal in which they fly looking for food and water and then return to the house, producing nests or saliva (Muh Singke, August 2018).

b. Islamic law and edible bird's nest consumption

Fatwa (MUI) No. 02 of 2012 concerning edible bird's nests was issued after considering the presence of edible-nest swiftlet farming practiced by the community in order to obtain the nests to be used for various purposes, including for food and medicine.

According to the MUI fatwa No. 2 of 2012 concerning the law of consuming edible bird's nests, swiftlet is one of the edible animals in which the meat is permitted to eat (by initially slaughtering it based on Islamic law) and the bird's saliva is considered pure thus eating edible birds' nests is permitted; likewise farming the birds. In this context, questions arise about the law of consuming bird's nests as well as farming edible-nest swiftlets. The fatwa issued a law concerning the consumption of bird's nests with the Qur'an as the source, concerning the commandment of consuming *halal* and *thayyib* food, among others:

*“O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth [that is] lawful and good and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy (Surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 168).*

Ulama agree that the leftover of drinking water of animals (which meats are *halal*) is considered clean, in which Muslims are allowed to drink the leftover as well as use it to perform ablution, including fluids produced by animals such as sweat, saliva, snot, and ladders is clean unless it is classified as stools.

In the book of Lami 'al-darari', the notion that confirms the assumption both by Muslims and people in general, that animals are considered unclean (in general), not because either *illat* (cause) or unfamiliarity, but because it is only usually perceived unclean (disgusting) by a part of the community but not others, hence the perception of the mainstream is the most accounted. For instance, land reptiles and other land-dwelling animals are considered dirty and disgusting hence they are included in the general unclean animals.

Dr. Rustama Saepudin, an expert in edible-nest swiftlet, explicated during the

Fatwa Commission meeting on December 15, 2011, that the bird's nest is derived from fluids produced in and secreted from salivary glands, while the process is similar to the honey produced by bees. Essentially, swiftlet is one of the edible animals in which the meat is permitted to eat (by initially slaughtering it based on Islamic law), while bird's saliva is also lawful and so does farming it (Sri Yono Fatwa MUI No. 02 of 2012)

The explanations confirm that edible bird's nest is a halal food and it is allowed for Muslims to practice edible-nest swiftlet farming. Nevertheless, it must be carried out based on Islamic teachings such as washing and cleaning swiftlet house from dirt and other unclean as well as treating the birds properly and appropriately. Otherwise, unclean houses and poor maintenance lead to *haram* edible bird's nests which are prohibited to eat.

Edible bird's nest has many benefits for human health since it contains a lot of nutrients and is classified as *halal* food. It is labeled *halal* by considering the proposition of *dalil* (evidence) and *hujjah* (proof) in which the bird does not have fangs and sharp nails. As mentioned in a hadith, "The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon Him) prohibits eating all the wild animals with fangs and every bird with strong claws (narrated by all scholars of Hadith except Imam Al-Bukhari and At-Tirmidhi). Animal saliva is considered clean in which based on the hadith of Jabir bin Abdullah in which the Messenger of Allah was asked about making ablution with drinking water left by donkeys. The Prophet, upon whom be peace, answered, "Yes, and from the drinking water left by any of the beasts of prey" (al-Baihaqi and ad-Daraqutni)

Murti Arintawati, the deputy of LPPOM, explicated that swiftlet saliva is a *halal* food as it is produced by the stomach of a bird and it does not cause any problem. However, there is a notion that the edible bird's nests are *haram* since the nests might be accidentally exposed to bird droppings hence it must be purified in advance. Moreover, the process of washing the nest itself must be carried out thoroughly to prevent even a bit of dirt attached to the nest. Once edible bird's nest contaminated with droppings, it becomes a non-permitted one. Deep cleaning

of bird's nest from any dirt and droppings is an obligatory so as the nest becomes a halal food (Khanza Safitra, April 4, 2018).

As mentioned in the Qur'an, amongst other:

1. Allah commands mankind to consume foods that are lawful and permitted to be eaten as well as good and clean food, among others:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا ۖ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ

"O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth [that is] lawful and good and do not follow the footsteps of Satan" (Surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 168).

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُلُوا مِن طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِلَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ

"O you who have believed, eat from the good things which We have provided for you and be grateful to Allah if it is [indeed] Him that you worship" (Surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 172)

وَكُلُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي أَنْتُمْ بِهِ مُؤْمِنُونَ

"And eat of what Allah has provided for you [which is] lawful and good. And fear Allah, in whom you are believers" (Surah Al-Ma'idah [5]: 88).

2. It is explained in the holy Qur'an that there are *halal* and *haram* foods to distinguish what is good and what is bad as mentioned in Surah Al-A'raf [7]: 157 as follows:

الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيَّ الْأُمِّيَّ الَّذِي يَجِدُونَهُ مَكْنُوبًا عِنْدَهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ يَأْمُرُهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَاهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُحِلُّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبَائِثَ وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ وَالْأَغْلَالَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ

فَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِهِ وَعَزَّرُوهُ وَنَصَرُوهُ  
وَاتَّبَعُوا النُّورَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ مَعَهُ أُولَئِكَ  
هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

“and he (Prophet) enjoins upon them what is right and forbids them what is wrong” (Surah Al-A`raf [7]: 157).

As mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, it can be summarized that the saliva of edible-nest swiftlet may or can be consumed since this the meat of this bird is classified halal and this bird does not have sharp nails and fangs. Moreover, it is reaffirmed by health experts that bird's nest is produced from solidified saliva secreted from salivary glands.

One of well-known stories about the history of the Prophet Muhammad told that once the Prophet wore a turban and a camel licked it, and when it was time for praying, the Prophet kept on wearing his turban instead of removing it from his head. It shows that saliva of animals (which meats are halal) is also considered clean and lawful. As for the reason for unclean nest is when it is contaminated with dirt thus a thorough cleaning process based on Islamic teachings must be done prior to its consumption.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

### Conclusion

The findings of study on factors that motivate the local people of Belawa sub-district, Wajo Regency, to engage in edible bird's nest industry (from the perspective of Islamic business ethics) reveal that:

1. High and promising profit of edible bird's nest is one of prospective business alternatives. It motivates people of Belawa sub-district,

2. Wajo regency, particularly Wele'e village, to invest in the business by constructing swiftlet houses based on the procedure.
2. It is lawful to keep the birds in the cage for fondness and amusement hence farming edible-nest swiftlet is also lawful or permitted in Islam. Even though the bird is not intended for amusement, it is allowed for having it as long as the owner treats it properly, such as building a comfortable house while birds can fly in and out of the house.
3. In Islam, it is permitted to consume edible bird's nest or solidified saliva since it is derived from fluid produced and secreted by bird's salivary glands and the the meat of edible-nest swiftlet is *halal* for consumption. The bird is not included in animals with sharp nails and fangs.

### Research Limitation and Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are formulated as follows:

1. The owners of the swallow's nest building should pay more attention to the security and comfort of the people around the swiftlet houses, particularly in relation with the sound system that potentially disturbs the community in general.
2. The government should pay more attention to the presence of edible-nest swiftlet farmers in order to improve or maintain sustainable environment around the swiftlet houses while preventing them for disrupting public safety and security.
3. The realization of Islamic business ethics in terms of the process of swiftlet farming and edible bird's nest marketing by applying the principles of trading as exemplified by the Prophet, namely: *Amanah* or trustworthy, *Shiddiq* or being honest, and *Fathonah* or being smart and witty.

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