

ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES ON PROPERTY OWNERSHIP AND CONSUMERISM IN GENERATION Z

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Abstract: *This study looks at contemporary economic property ideas from an Islamic philosophical standpoint and evaluates how they affect Generation Z's consumerism. Property is viewed by most modern economic systems as an unalienable individual right that permits unrestrained accumulation and spending. Islamic philosophy, on the other hand, views ownership as conditional, non-absolute, and ethically responsible under the amanah (trust) principle. This study uses a qualitative philosophical analytical approach, combining modern literature on consumerism and generational behavior with Islamic intellectual writings. The results show that, especially in digital and consumer oriented situations, absolute ownership frameworks support identity driven and excessive purchase practices among Generation Z. By redefining property as responsibility rather than entitlement and placing an emphasis on moderation, social obligation, and moral accountability, Islamic ownership ethics provide a normative alternative. The study comes to the conclusion that Islamic philosophical ideas offer a pertinent moral framework for dealing with contemporary consumerism and encouraging younger generations to engage in more ethical and sustainable economic conduct.*

Keywords: *Islamic Philosophy; Economic Property; Consumerism; Generation Z; Moral Economy*

Introduction

A major topic in contemporary economic discourse is property ownership. Ownership is typically defined in dominant capitalist systems as an unalienable individual right that permits unfettered resource management, accumulation, and trade. This idea has influenced market systems, legal institutions, and cultural narratives that link ownership to success, freedom, and identity development. As a result, consumption increasingly serves as a symbolic activity that people use to create their own meaning and social standing in addition to being a way to satisfy basic necessities.

One generation that is fully engrossed in this consumer focused culture is Generation Z. This generation, who was raised in a time of social media, influencer economies, and algorithm-driven advertising, views consuming as a constant and accepted part of daily life. Generation Z's economic conduct is heavily impacted by visibility, rapid gratification, and symbolic significance it is frequently unrelated to long term responsibility or ethical consideration. The moral underpinnings of contemporary consumer culture are called into question by this predicament.

An whole new perspective on ownership is provided by Islamic philosophy. Islam views property ownership as conditional and morally limited, as opposed to an absolute right. God is the ultimate owner, while humans serve as trustees in charge of justly and morally administering resources. This philosophical framework presents a different ethical perspective on ownership and consumption while challenging the moral neutrality of contemporary economic theory.

Literature Review

This literature review is structured to establish a clear conceptual foundation for examining modern economic property concepts through an Islamic philosophical perspective and their implications for consumerism among Generation Z. Five interconnected themes are discussed to provide a systematic understanding of the issue.

1) Modern Economic Concept of Property

In modern economic discourse, property is predominantly understood as an absolute individual right. Classical and liberal economic theories emphasize private ownership as a cornerstone of economic freedom, efficiency, and market participation. Ownership grants individuals exclusive authority over resources, legitimizing accumulation, transfer, and consumption with minimal moral restriction. Within contemporary capitalist systems, this conception of property is reinforced through legal institutions and market mechanisms that prioritize individual autonomy and profit maximization.

According to critical scholarship, excessive consumption and the normalization of material acquisition have been facilitated by the moral neutrality that modern economics attributes to property. Property becomes an aim in and of itself rather than a tool for achieving societal well-being when ownership is separated from moral obligation. This paradigm serves as the intellectual foundation for contemporary consumer culture, which promotes consumption as a valid way to show individual autonomy and achievement.

Philosophical Underpinnings of Ownership in Islamic Thought: Islamic philosophy presents an essentially distinct perspective on ownership. In Islam, property is morally limited and conditional rather than absolute. God is the ultimate owner, yet humans are given the responsibility of managing resources in line with divine instructions as stewards (khalifah). This perspective places economic activity in the context of a larger moral and spiritual framework. The ethical basis of ownership in Islamic thought is formed by fundamental ideas such as amanah (trust), adl (justice), and hisab (accountability). Due to the rights and responsibilities that come with ownership, people must think about the ethical and social ramifications of their financial decisions. Islamic philosophy rejects the division between moral principles and economic action by including ethical duty directly into the concept of property, in contrast to contemporary economic frameworks.

2) Islamic Ethical Critique of Absolute Ownership

The idea of absolute ownership, which is prevalent in contemporary economies, is consistently ethically criticized in Islamic economic literature. This criticism contends that unchecked property rights result in social injustice, exploitation, and environmental deterioration when they are separated from moral restraints. Instead of using property to fulfill common responsibilities, the absolutization of ownership turns it into a tool of dominance.

Islam rejects the idea that ownership may exist without ethical constraints, yet it does not deny the legitimacy of private property. Property rights are acknowledged, but they are governed by the public benefit, moderation, and justice principles. This viewpoint emphasizes societal responsibility over personal entitlement and views ownership as relational and accountable.

3) Consumerism and Identity Formation in Generation Z

A increasingly digitalized, globalized, and consumption-focused sociocultural environment has given rise to Generation Z. Studies already conducted show that this generation's consumption goes beyond meeting basic requirements and increasingly serves as a tool for social identification, identity development, and emotional expression. The symbolic value of

consumption is increased by digital platforms, social media, and influencer culture, which connect ownership to exposure, popularity, and perceived authenticity.

Generation Z's consumerism is frequently socially mediated and emotionally motivated. Possession of tangible and digital items is a sign of one's lifestyle, social standing, and self image. According to academics, these consuming habits reduce critical thought about the moral ramifications of economic activity while normalizing excess and speeding up consumption cycles. The constant promotion, aestheticization, and celebration of consumption in digital arenas reinforces materialistic attitudes and shapes daily ambitions.

In this situation, identity performance and property ownership become intricately linked. Consumption is now communicative as well as economic, acting as a tool for social membership and self representation. Generation Z is especially susceptible to identity driven and symbolic consumption because of this dynamic.

4) **Relevance of Islamic Ownership Ethics for Generation Z Consumerism**

The applicability of Islamic ethical principles in addressing contemporary consumer concerns is highlighted by contemporary Islamic economic study. A different normative framework that can balance excessive consumerism is provided by ideas like moral accountability, social duty, and moderation (*wasatiyyah*). Islamic ethics reorient consuming as a deliberate and responsible action by understanding ownership as trust rather than entitlement.

This ethical framework offers Generation Z a counter-narrative based on values to the prevailing consumer culture. Islamic ownership ethics provide a philosophical basis for more sustainable and morally sound economic activity by promoting ethical contemplation, social awareness, and mindful consumerism.

5) **Literature Review Summary**

The reviewed literature reveals a fundamental tension between the concept of absolute The literature survey highlights a basic conflict between Islamic philosophy's morally conditioned understanding of ownership and modern economic theory's idea of absolute ownership. Islamic philosophy integrates ownership into a framework of ethical obligation and accountability, whereas modern economic systems generally view property as ethically neutral and consumption as an expression of individual freedom. According to current research, Islamic ethical precepts provide a crucial foundation for reevaluating consumerism, especially in light of Generation Z. However, only a small amount of research has directly combined modern analyses of generational consumer behavior with Islamic philosophical criticisms of property. By combining issues of consumerism and identity formation among Generation Z with Islamic ownership ethics, this study fills this gap and advances larger conversations on moral economy and ethical consumption.

Method

In order to critically explore contemporary economic property notions from an Islamic philosophical viewpoint and assess their consequences for Generation Z consumption, this study uses a qualitative philosophical analytical research design. Because the research places more emphasis on conceptual interpretation, ethical assessment, and normative critique than on actual measurement or statistical generalization, a qualitative approach is deemed appropriate. Property ownership is viewed as a normative and philosophical term influenced by cultural, metaphysical, and moral presumptions rather than just an economic or legal construct. As a result, the study takes an interpretive and critical stance in order to identify the moral underpinnings of

contemporary economic theories of property and evaluate their applicability in influencing modern purchasing habits.

The study's primary data come from a systematic evaluation and interpretive interpretation of literary sources. Classical and modern Islamic philosophical writings that discuss ownership, stewardship, moral responsibility, and economic fairness are examples of primary sources. Fundamental Islamic ethical ideas like amanah (trust), khalifah (stewardship), hisab (accountability), 'adl (justice), and wasatiyyah (moderation) are extracted from these scriptures through analysis. These concepts are considered as normative philosophical concepts rather than merely theological beliefs. Peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, and reputable scholarly publications about modern economic theory, property philosophy, consumerism, and generational studies with a focus on literature on Generation Z and digital consumer culture are examples of secondary sources. Academic respectability, theoretical significance, and multidisciplinary contribution all play a role in the selection of sources.

Thematic, comparative, and normative interpretive frameworks are used to analyze data. In order to expose their underlying philosophical presuppositions such as individualism, materialism, and moral neutrality dominant concepts of property in contemporary economic thought such as private ownership, absolute control over resources, commodification, consumer sovereignty, and accumulation-oriented rationality are first identified and critically analyzed. Islamic philosophical viewpoints on ownership, which stress the conditional, relational, and morally responsible nature of property, are then methodically contrasted with these ideas. The study illustrates ethical conflicts and conceptual differences between Islamic ownership ethics and contemporary economic property frameworks through this comparative examination, especially with regard to the moral bounds of accumulation and consumption.

The philosophical criticism is then placed in the context of Generation Z's current consumption habits. The study engages in theoretical interpretation of previous scholarly research on Generation Z's consumer behavior, identity development, and involvement with digital environments rather than gathering direct empirical data. Social media, algorithm-driven advertising, influencer economies, and symbolic consumption practices—where ownership and consumption serve as indicators of visibility, self-expression, and social belonging—are thought to have affected Generation Z. These circumstances are analytically connected to contemporary theories of economic property that justify consumption as a manifestation of individual autonomy and prosperity. The degree to which these consumption patterns are consistent with or inconsistent with norms of moderation, responsibility, and moral accountability is then determined by applying Islamic philosophy ideas as an ethical lens.

The study uses conceptual triangulation by incorporating viewpoints from consumer behavior studies, Islamic ethics, and economic philosophy to guarantee analytical rigor and conceptual consistency. By placing Islamic philosophical criticism inside larger academic discussions on moral economy and consumer culture, this interdisciplinary integration enhances the analysis's depth and legitimacy. The research does not require formal ethical approval because it is a qualitative philosophical study that relies solely on textual analysis and does not involve human subjects or personal data.

Result and Discussion

The study's findings show that contemporary economic systems primarily view property as an unalienable individual right that gives people complete control over the procurement, utilization, and accumulation of resources. In this theory, ownership is directly linked to identity formation, economic success, and personal freedom. A consumer culture that normalizes material acquisition and symbolic ownership results from the widespread treatment of ethical

issues as extraneous to economic action. This idea serves as the intellectual cornerstone of modern consumerism and has a big impact on Generation Z's financial behavior.

Because Generation Z is immersed in digital and consumer-oriented contexts, the impact of absolute property principles is more noticeable for them. Influencer economies, algorithm-driven marketing, and social media platforms increase the symbolic value of products, promoting consumption as the main means of self expression and social approval. Commodity ownership frequently serves as a symbol of social belonging, identity, and way of life. Because of this, Generation Z's consumption often goes beyond practical requirement and is motivated by visibility, immediacy, and emotional appeal, which reinforces excessive and identity-oriented consumerism behaviors.

Islamic philosophy, on the other hand, presents a quite different interpretation of property ownership. The results show that Islamic philosophy opposes the idea of total ownership by stating that God is the ultimate owner and that people serve as trustees who must manage resources morally. As a result, ownership is morally responsible, transient, and conditional. Moral responsibility is intimately integrated into economic life by fundamental ethical concepts like khalifah (stewardship), 'adl (justice), and hisab (accountability), which present property as a responsibility with social and ethical ramifications rather than an unqualified personal entitlement.

Islamic philosophy holds that moral assessment and consumerism are inextricably linked. Economic activity is evaluated in terms of aim, moderation, and social impact in addition to legality and efficiency. In addition to exposing the shortcomings of absolute property conceptions in addressing excessive consumption, social inequality, and environmental degradation, this ethical perspective questions the moral neutrality ingrained in contemporary economic theory. Islamic philosophy reorients consumption toward balance, ethical consciousness, and social responsibility by understanding ownership as trust rather than entitlement.

The investigation also shows that, especially in digital environments where purchasing is constantly encouraged and normalized, Generation Z's consumerism frequently entails a disengagement from moral responsibility. Islamic ownership ethics emphasize moral responsibility, societal duty, and moderation (wasatiyyah), providing a normative alternative.

In this regard, Islamic ownership ethics serve as both a practical moral framework that may address the structural forces behind modern consumerism and a theological critique. The normalization of excessive and visibility-driven consumption that is common among Generation Z is directly challenged by this paradigm, which emphasizes self-control, ethical aim, and knowledge of societal implications. A change from impulsive and identity-centered consumption to more deliberate and purpose-oriented activities is encouraged by the incorporation of moral accountability into routine economic conduct. As a result, Islamic philosophical ideas provide a workable ethical framework for reconsidering consumer behavior in digital economies, encouraging business practices that balance personal preference with the well-being of society and long-term viability.

Table 1: Comparison Of Modern Economic And Islamic Philosophical Concepts Of Property Ownership And Their Implications For Consumerism In Generation Z

Aspect	Modern Economic Property Concept	Islamic Philosophical Property Concept
Concept of Ownership	Property is understood as an absolute individual right with full control over use and accumulation.	Property is understood as a trust with conditional and accountable use.

Ultimate Ownership	Ownership authority rests with the individual.	Ultimate ownership belongs to God, humans act as trustees.
Ethical Orientation	Ownership is largely morally neutral within legal boundaries.	Ownership is morally bounded and ethically accountable.
Purpose of Property	Accumulation and personal economic benefit.	Social responsibility and justice.
Meaning of Consumption	Consumption represents freedom, success, and identity expression.	Consumption is guided by moderation (<i>wasatiyyah</i>) and moral obligation.
Relation to Identity	Ownership serves as a primary tool for identity construction.	Ownership reinforces moral responsibility rather than symbolic identity.
Implication for Generation Z	Encourages identity-driven and excessive consumerism in digital culture.	Encourages conscious, responsible, and ethically reflective consumption.

Source: Adapted From Smith (1776), Belk (1988), Bauman (2007), Chapra (2001), Kahf (1992), Nasr (1996), And Zaman (2012).

Conclusion

This study shows how modern economic property theories, which place a strong emphasis on moral neutrality and absolute private ownership, are crucial in influencing modern consumption, especially among Generation Z. Dominant economic ideologies justify accumulation, commercialization, and consumerism as natural manifestations of freedom, success, and self-identity by portraying property as an unlimited human right. This idea of ownership enhances identity-oriented and symbolic consumption in digitally mediated contexts marked by influencer economies, social media, and algorithm-driven marketing. Because of this, Generation Z's consumerism is becoming more and more entwined with practices of visibility, self-presentation, and social validation, frequently divorced from ethical contemplation and long-term responsibility, and goes beyond the fulfillment of material requirements.

The results also show that economic action is often separated from moral assessment by the conceptual underpinnings of contemporary property systems. As long as ownership stays within the bounds of the law, it is regarded as morally neutral, and ethical issues are confined to the private domain. The degradation of social responsibility, the normalization of excessive consumerism, and the marginalization of ethical restraint in economic life are all consequences of this division. These frameworks deepen materialistic orientations and lessen critical awareness of the wider social and environmental effects of consumption for Generation Z, who were raised in highly commercialized digital cultures.

Islamic philosophy, on the other hand, challenges the presumptions of contemporary economic theory by providing a radically different and morally sound understanding of property ownership. Islamic philosophy rejects the absolutization of property rights and incorporates moral responsibility directly into economic life by stating that ultimate ownership belongs to God and viewing humans as trustees (*khalifah*). *Amanah* (trust), *'adl* (justice), *hisab* (accountability), and *wasatiyyah* (moderation) are among the ethical principles that govern ownership, which is regarded to be conditional, purpose-oriented, and socially rooted. This

approach redefines property as a moral obligation with social and spiritual ramifications rather than as an unqualified right.

According to Islamic philosophy, ethical assessment and consumption are inextricably linked. Economic action is evaluated in terms of aim, moderation, social impact, and accountability before God in addition to legality and efficiency. The moral neutrality ingrained in contemporary economic property theories is immediately contested by this ethical perspective, which also highlights the notions' shortcomings in tackling excessive consumption, social inequity, and environmental damage. Islamic philosophy offers a normative vision of economic life that puts balance, responsibility, and justice ahead of accumulation and symbolic consumption by redefining ownership as trust rather than entitlement.

According to the investigation, Islamic ownership ethics offer a particularly pertinent ethical framework for dealing with Generation Z's consumption. Islamic values promote ethical self-reflection, moderation, and conscious consumption in a cultural setting where digital media magnifies desire, visibility, and immediacy. Islamic philosophy advocates for a reorientation of economic conduct toward meaningful purpose, social welfare, and moral accountability rather than renouncing material existence. This viewpoint gives younger generations a value-based framework for managing consumption in challenging digital contexts and presents a counter-narrative to the prevailing consumer culture.

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