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Heard Of The “Cedok-Cedok” Trend? Here’s How It Plays A Role In Online Fraud

KUALA LUMPUR, 18 AUGUST 2022 - The popularity of “*cedok-cedok*” sales, which are particularly common and popular among merchants on the video-sharing platform TikTok, may give way to an upsurge in online fraud cases.

In keeping with the viral fad, vendors randomly scoop goods from an assortment of random items, for example candies, trinkets and cosmetics products, and sell them to customers at various prices. This is feared to result in fraudulent activities where customers do not get what they paid for or what was advertised. In many cases, customers find themselves stuck with items that are of little or no value and thus not worth the money they had spent.

Another issue with this practice is the uncertainty of the value of the goods, ambiguous descriptions and lack of clarity on product quality, which is against Islamic law.

Here are a few reasons why this trend is frowned upon by several Malaysian authorities:

1. Customers risk getting scammed when they partake in “*cedok-cedok*” sales

The Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs (KPDNHEP) has raised its concern over the “*cedok-cedok*” trend, stating that the customer has the right to know precisely what they're paying for and what they're getting.

Besides that, the Federation of Malaysian Consumer Affairs (FOMCA) deputy president Mohd Yusof Abdul Rahman said, “In sale and purchase transactions, the goods sold and their price should be specified.

“However, through this (*cedok-cedok* sales) trend, elements of fraud can occur, just like playing the claw machines. He added, “(Through this trend) The price and quantity of the goods are not clearly stated. Therefore, the quantity of goods the consumers will get depends on how much the items are scooped.”

Baskaran Sithamparam, the Senior Manager of National Consumer Complaint Centre (NCCC) believes consumers would be vulnerable to manipulation by unscrupulous merchants if they participated in this trend. He added, “Consumers may not know if the items are safe for consumption or even external use, as expiry dates are not known and items sold may not be certified by the regulatory bodies such as NRPA, SIRIM, etc.” Baskaran further shared that NCCC received queries, on return and refund mechanism if the items sent are not the same or items have expired or damaged. “Unless measures are taken to address these issues, consumers will be placed in a blind spot,” he said.

2. Islamically, the “*cedok-cedok*” trend is *haram* (forbidden), as it contains elements that are prohibited by *syarak* (Islamic law)

According to the Mufti of the Federal Territory’s Office, this fad contains elements such as *gharar* (uncertainty), *maisir* (gambling) and denying the buyer’s rights of *khiyar* (choosing).

An element of *gharar* exists in every “*cedok-cedok*” transaction, where it is a sale in which the customer has no idea how much merchandise they will receive and whether or not it will be worth their money. For this reason, retailers should at least meet consumers halfway by stating the minimum amount of goods that the buyer will receive if they were set on maintaining the current trend.

Religious authorities have recommended that members of the public refrain from engaging in such transactions and that sellers employ strategies that do not involve anything forbidden by Islamic law to ensure that any profits made are *halal*.

So, where does this stand regarding the [Content Code 2022](#)?

According to the Content Code 2022, which is a set of guidelines and best practices governing content in the electronic medium in Malaysia, content that contains false or incomplete information and is likely to mislead must be avoided.

Specifically in reference to general principles governing advertisements in Part 3 of the Content Code, all advertisements are expected to be legal, decent, honest, and truthful and shall not mislead consumers.

The Content Code further dictates that advertising content shall not cause the consumer to be misled by any inaccuracy, ambiguity, exaggeration, falsehood, omission or otherwise. Even though the 'cedok-cedok' trend is only part of a marketing ploy to sell other products, this 'sales strategy' contains components of ambiguity in terms of price and number of goods sold.

Considering the fact that consumers are left in the dark about the nature and value of the products they are expected to receive in return for their hard-earned money, the "*cedok-cedok*" trend is more than likely to mislead customers as they pine for the products in the hopes that they receive more than they bargained for.

As such, the Content Forum urges all consumers to make informed purchases, and to avoid playing into marketing gimmicks that lack transparency in their sales, especially given the growing popularity of social media platforms being used by businesses.

Content Forum's Executive Director, Mediha Mahmood said "Every social media platform, including TikTok, has Community Guidelines that they implement and enforce. [TikTok's Community Guidelines](#) do not permit anyone to exploit their platform to take advantage of the trust of users and bring about financial or personal harm. As such, they are committed to removing content that deceives people in order to gain an unlawful financial or personal advantage."

"In the event that anyone out there detects vendors who are using unscrupulous means to cheat or mislead customers, they are encouraged to [report](#) it to the TikTok administrator via the reporting functions available. Self-regulation is a vital component in making sure social media platforms remain safe for all," she added.

For more information about the Content Code 2022, please visit the official Content Forum [website](#).

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ABOUT THE CONTENT FORUM

The Communications and Multimedia Content Forum of Malaysia (Content Forum) is an independent self-regulatory industry organization registered under the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) and designated by the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998 (CMA'98) to oversee and promote self-regulation of content over the electronic networked medium. The Content Forum consists of key players of the content industry i.e., advertisers, advertising agencies, broadcasters, content creators/distributors, audiotext hosting services providers, advertising agencies, internet service providers and civic groups.

Aimed at facilitating self-regulation, which provides an additional layer of consumer protection that complements the legal framework, the Content Forum is committed to govern and promote the creation, distribution and consumption of electronic-networked content.

As an industry self-regulatory body, the Content Forum comprises key members of the communications and multimedia content industry, including broadcasters, advertisers, content creators, internet access service providers and civic groups. This dynamic and robust representation of industry practitioners ensures that content standards continue to be developed with the objective of establishing a level playing field in the industry.

The Content Forum is responsible for the implementation and enforcement of the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Content Code ("the Content Code"). The Content Code was prepared by the Content Forum and first registered with MCMC on 1st September 2004. The Content Code is the principal source for industry self-regulation as it contains governing standards and best practices for content dissemination within the communications and multimedia industry in Malaysia. The main objective of the Content Code is to outline procedures of self-regulation that provides the platform for creativity, innovation and healthy growth of a fast-evolving industry.

The Content Forum houses a Complaints Bureau that is empowered to address all complaints relating to content disseminated over electronic networks. The Complaints Bureau is empowered to

investigate possible breaches of the Content Code, mediate disputes, adjudicate cases, publish orders and impose sanctions where necessary. The Complaints Bureau accepts complaints from industry players and the general public. Additionally, it plays an advisory role to any party that requires guidance on electronic content matters.

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For media enquiries, kindly contact:

GO Communications

Lim Huei Yuih, Brand Director

+6012 635 3278 hueiyuih@gocomm.com.my

Anis Jilid, Senior Brand Executive

+6011 1233 9022 anis@gocomm.com.my
