

Consumer Perception Towards Halal Cosmetics Product in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

As the Muslim population grows and people become more interested in beauty, the halal market is likely to become a bigger problem because Muslims are worried about using cosmetics with the word "halal" on them. This resulted in many Muslim consumers feeling uncertain and suspicious about whether the products they are purchasing comply with sharia law. For that reason, the purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions of consumers in Malaysia on Halal cosmetics. This study looked at two (2) different cases from different publications to investigate how customers in Malaysia think about halal cosmetics. The two publications that are specified in the methodology were utilized to explore the outcomes. Findings show that most of the consumers in Malaysia are aware of Halal cosmetics as they become more popular and most of them know the specifications. Furthermore, it is also found that consumers were mainly influenced by family and group in making purchases of Halal cosmetic products. Moreover, religious beliefs are, and will likely continue to be, the fundamental driving force behind the selection of halal cosmetics.

Keywords: *Consumer perception, Halal Cosmetics, Halal Product*

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INTRODUCTION

In the multicultural and diverse landscape of Malaysia, the market for cosmetics and personal care products has witnessed significant growth over the years. As a nation with a predominantly Muslim population, the demand for Halal cosmetics, which adhere to Islamic principles and guidelines, has gained remarkable prominence. This demonstrates the size and growth of the market to serve both Muslim and non-Muslim buyers Kamaruddin et al., (2023). Furthermore, to satisfy the Shariah compliance requirements of Muslim customers, international firms are working to get halal certifications for their various brands. According to Muhamad and Latif (2019), Muslims need to be confined to all requirements of the Islamic religion and obligation to consume not only halal foods but also halal-labeled cosmetic products.

Based on Suki and Suki (2018) in the context of cosmetics, Halal signifies not only the absence of prohibited ingredients but also the ethical and hygienic production processes that align with Islamic values. As a result, Halal cosmetics are gaining attraction among consumers who seek products that align with their religious beliefs and values, as well as those who view Halal as a symbol of quality and safety. The key driver of the halal wave in the cosmetics business, which has changed how Muslim consumers buy products today, is the increasing percentage of Muslim consumers, who make up about 20% of the global population according to Muhamad and Latif (2019). Multiple foreign halal beauty companies, including Amara Halal Cosmetics, Inika Organics, Talent Cosmetics, Fenty Beauty, Fresh Cosmetics, and Benefit Cosmetics, have expressed interest in marketing their products in Malaysia alongside locally produced halal cosmetic brands, including Nurraysa, SimplySiti, Pretty Suci, and Orkid Cosmetics.

However, in Malaysia, consumers are not sufficiently exposed to halal brands, and there is a relatively low degree of reaction toward halal cosmetic items, despite the potential of this business (Mohezar et al., 2016). The expanding penetration of halal products in the cosmetics industry as well as the compliance of halal certification has resulted in rising demand for the market. The halal cosmetic subject is brought within the scope of Malaysian regulation, and the tendency in the sector is towards catering to consumer preferences.

Hence, this study aims to contribute to the growing body of knowledge surrounding consumer perception in the cosmetics industry by shedding light on the factors influencing Malaysian consumers' perceptions and choices concerning Halal cosmetics. To achieve this objective, the study employs a multidisciplinary approach that integrates insights from consumer psychology, marketing, and cultural studies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Halal Cosmetic Product in Malaysia

In a general sense, everything in existence is considered Halal unless explicitly proven otherwise (Shah Alam and Sayuti, 2011). As delineated in the Quran, "Halal" signifies that which is permissible or allowed within the Islamic faith. The Halal Malaysia Portal further expands on this definition, stating that a product or service is considered Halal if it has been certified by relevant authorities as complying with Islamic law (syariah) and bears a Halal logo (Halal Malaysia Portal, 2017). The notion of Halal extends beyond merely the ingredients used in a product. It encompasses every aspect of production, including manufacturing, storage, packaging, and distribution, all of which must align with Islamic principles.

Halal cosmetics is a part of the specialized segment within the broader Halal industry. To ensure halal elements in cosmetics products, these products must adhere to rigorous standards that forbid the use of human-derived components, Haram (forbidden) animal substances, and animals that haven't been slaughtered by Syariah law. Additionally, the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) declared as 'najs' (unclean), alcoholic beverages, and any contamination from 'najs' elements during preparation, processing, manufacturing, and storage is strictly prohibited (Kaur et al., 2014). Moreover, the production of Halal cosmetics must avoid the use of harmful chemicals and any other ingredients deemed unacceptable for Muslim consumers, reinforcing the idea that Halal cosmetics are not just religiously compliant but also safe, clean, and of high quality (Aoun and Tournois, 2015).

Consumer Perception of Halal Cosmetics

Several literatures have discussed the perception of consumers on halal cosmetics based on different perspectives. The study by Muhamad, N. and Abdul Latif, Z.A. (2019) to understand the consumer perception of halal-labeled cosmetic products found that consumers generally have a high level of perception towards halal cosmetic products. This perception is influenced by their knowledge, attitude, and practice. Specifically, consumers are aware of the ingredients that are lawful according to

Syariah law and believe that such products can help avoid skin sensitivity and allergies. The study also found that this high level of perception may be due to rising awareness towards the safety of cosmetic products. Consumers are aware that halal cosmetic products carry the meaning of safe, and clean, and do not harm other users are permissible (Muhamad, N. and Abdul Latif, Z.A., 2019).

Furthermore, the perception of consumers towards halal products, particularly in the context of cosmetics, is also influenced by various factors including religion and the quality of the cosmetics product. In study by Mohammed et al. (2021) mentioned that the cultural and normative influence of the Malay Muslim majority in Malaysia extends across religious lines have affects the consumer preferences broadly. Adult consumers show a strong preference for products with halal certification where 55.6% of the respondents agree, and 12.2% strongly agree that the use of halal-certified products is their preferred option. Besides that, 48.4% of the respondents also agreed that halal cosmetic products are of good quality.

However, there are differences in the perceptions between Muslim and non-Muslim consumers. Research from Mohaidin, Z. and Rubiyanti, N. (2022) shows that there is a matter between Muslims and non-Muslims regarding purchase intention influenced by brand quality. Most non-Muslims will buy halal cosmetics if they consider the brand to be good quality, however, both (Muslims and non-Muslims) would buy the brand of halal cosmetics they trust.

METHODOLOGY

This study has been done by reviewing two (2) cases from journals to collect relevant information on Malaysians' perception of halal cosmetics. Consumers' views on Halal cosmetics in Malaysia were discussed using these two publications.

“Perception of Consumer Towards Halal Labelled Cosmetic Products in Selangor” by Muhamad, N. & Abdul Latif, Z.A. (2019) has been reviewed to identify the outcomes of the research. Furthermore, another journal reviewed is written by Nur and Sapir (2021) entitled “Halal Cosmetic Awareness Among College Students in Malaysia”.

This qualitative case study which uses secondary data is an approach to explore the detailed discussion on the Halal cosmetics perceptions among consumers in Malaysia. The use of this strategy will ensure that the topic at hand, which has been the subject of this research, is investigated using multiple lenses, rather than using just one. Because of this circumstance, many parts of the phenomenon will eventually be comprehended in their entirety.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Consuming goods that have been declared halal is not a choice but rather a requirement for Muslims. As people become more aware of their religious responsibilities, there has been a commensurate increase in the demand for halal food and products. This demand has shown the highest rate of expansion in the global market (Nghah et.al, 2021). This study aimed to explore the perceptions of consumers towards Halal cosmetics in Malaysia. According to Muhamad and Latiff (2019), it has been discovered that customers have a high level of perception regarding the halal status of cosmetic items. One possible explanation for this is that consumers are becoming more educated about the risks associated with using certain cosmetic items. This may also be attributable to the fact that halal cosmetics are becoming more popular, and this trend has corresponded with an increase in halal understanding among Muslim customers (Naseri and Abdullah, 2022). Muhammad and Latiff (2019) also mentioned that the attitudes of others around consumers who use halal-marked cosmetics have a considerable impact on the consumer's perspective to pursue halal-labeled cosmetic items. It is agreed by Kamarudin et.al, (2020) that mentioned consumers' acceptance of halal cosmetics is also impacted by social pressure and the view of their reference groups such as family and friends. The perceptions of the opinions and beliefs of those who are important to them personally and closely related to them will assist them in obtaining knowledge and confidence regarding the halal characteristics of cosmetics.

The results of Nur and Sapir (2021) shed light on Malaysia's expanding use of Halal cosmetics, notably among college students. Halal cosmetics are becoming more popular for reasons other than only religious ones, such as health and safety. Halal certification is an essential component in fostering consumer confidence and trust. Given that Malaysia has a primarily Muslim population, religious views continue to be a primary motivating factor for the choice of Halal cosmetics. However, the report also emphasizes how family and friends may affect a person's shopping habits, highlighting the importance of social media in marketing Halal goods.

The study's findings point to the potential for the cosmetics industry to diversify its Halal product offerings and address customer price sensitivity by addressing issues like restricted product availability and pricing worries. The findings indicated by Husin et.al, (2021), the high level of awareness was mainly attributed to their Gen-Z general characteristics that habitually

enjoy self-searching and self-experimenting to obtain cosmetic information. These Gen-Zers actively participate in beauty tutorial classes, share their beauty tips with the public, and visualize cosmetic items through their online makeup tutorials. It reminded cosmetic providers in Malaysia that the current generation does not need personal and intimate marketing, especially when awareness about cosmetics is high. Instead, the providers are required to convince them that the halal cosmetic brand is the superior solution.

Consumer perception towards Halal cosmetic products in Malaysia is generally favorable, driven by factors such as religious beliefs, Halal certification, health considerations, and global awareness. The importance of Halal certification in building consumer trust. To further promote the growth of the Halal cosmetic industry in Malaysia, addressing challenges such as pricing and product range, and continuing consumer education are essential steps. As consumer awareness and demand for Halal products continue to rise, the industry's future in Malaysia appears promising.

The study underscores the importance of Halal certification, religious beliefs, and health considerations in shaping consumer preferences. It also points to potential areas for industry growth and improvement to meet the demands of this growing market segment.

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