



Islamic Finance Development Center

Islamic and South East
Asian Finance and
Accounting

Factors Influencing University Students' Choosing Halal Cosmetics : An Exploratory Study

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Abstract

Moslems are supposed to use halal products including cosmetics. This paper aims to explore reasons of university students in choosing halal cosmetics. This study involved three Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) undertaken during May 2024. Each group consisted of seven to ten students who used cosmetic on a daily basis. The result of this study indicated that students were very concern with halal cosmetics. Four points had been highlighted by research participants during the FGDs as factors that they would consider when choosing cosmetics. The four factors have included (i) have the products certified as 'halal' by the body that owns authority to do so (ii) do the products have the National Agency of Drug and Food Control logo (i.e. BPOM) (iii) is the price affordable and (iv) is the product suitable with their skin. Research participants acknowledged that they are willing to have extra effort in getting halal cosmetics and will continue to use the halal cosmetics in the future.

Keywords: Purchase Intention, Halal Cosmetics, Attitude, Halal Awareness, Knowledge

INTRODUCTION

According to worldpopulationreview.com Indonesia is the second country with the largest Muslim population in the world with 236.000.000 people after Pakistan with 240.900.000 people. The value of halal products in Indonesia increased from 2022 to 2023 around 49.23%. This means that the cosmetic products available in Indonesia are huge and the industry getting bigger. The global Muslim population is becoming more consuming. The 2012 expenditure of US\$ 1.62 trillion was expected to rise to US\$ 2.29 trillion in 2022. Halal food, medication, cosmetics, clothing, travel, and media were among the products whose usage has increased. Islamic financial assets were valued at US\$ 3.96 trillion in 2021 and are projected to reach US\$ 5.96 trillion by 2026.

Halal products have been mentioned in Quran and Hadist. Halal products refer to products that have been manufactured and composed of ingredients that are permissible under Islamic Sharia (law). Halal, by definition, means permissible or allowable. Yusuf (2017) Permissible means that the ingredients did not contain pig, carrion blood, human body parts, predatory animals, reptiles and insect among other. So that every Muslim needs to understand the basic ingredients of the product that they used.

In Indonesia, there are 3 organizations that relate to Halal products. The first is the Indonesian Ulema Council's Fatwa Commission: the body that issues halal fatwas and halal certificates. The duties are protector of Islamists, a source of instruction and direction for Muslims, provides source of improved cadres, suppliers of answers to global religious issues, creators of the idea of Islamic education censor of content in the mass media company that collaborates with religious institutions. Second, the Food, Drug, and Cosmetics Assessment Institute ("LPPOM") is the body that conducts scientific research on the halalness of products. Third, the Food and Drug Supervisory Agency is the body that issues halal label permits; the Ministry of Religion is the body that formulates policies and is in charge of public education and socialization.

One of the type of halal products is cosmetic that are used mostly by girls on a daily basis. Nusa (2020) distinguished the user of cosmetic is a girl with age range 13-22 years. According to Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs Republic of Indonesia, the amount of company in cosmetic field increased 21.9% in 2022 for 913 company. The cosmetic industry in 2023 exported the product for \$770,8 million. With this result the cosmetic companies absorbed labor for 59.886 employees in 2022 and market size with national scale in 2023 penetrated 497.919 products that increased for the past 10 years. The development of cosmetic industry will reach the potential of growth in 2028 is 5.5% per year. With the fast moving product and progress, the importance of cosmetic industry is become more valuable. Therefore, research on halal cosmetics is needed in Indonesia.

This paper enriched the existing literature and suggested factors influencing Muslim students in choosing halal cosmetics. It is hoped that the owners of products would concern on taking permission for halal certificate and the government could encourage producers of halal cosmetics to follow the regulations. The Indonesian government has issued regulation saying that all of the products especially SMEs should have halal certificate by 2026. This research give evidence and support the policy.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Knowledge to halal cosmetics

According to Golnaz et al., (2010) Muslims still need to know about products to identify the halal certification, which provides further assurance that the product is safe to eat. Halal product not only focus on the ingredients but also to the process, here is the criteria mentioned by the UAE Technical Committee for Halal :

- 1) all types water are allowed except recycled (sewage) water and mutanajs water.
- 2) all types of soil are allowed excepts soils taken from the grave yard, animals farms, and dumping areas.
- 3) It is forbidden to utilize any plants or animals that do not adhere to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).
- 4) The following requirements must be met in order to employ agricultural materials that have been physically or chemically processed: nothing has become mutanajs throughout the stage(s) of processing; and the source of agricultural materials and the tools, apparatus, or machinery employed are halal
- 5) Alcohols such as ethanol and other alcohols and their derivatives are authorized as long as they are not alcoholic beverages (khamar);
- 6) Genetically modified organisms (GMOs) or compounds containing GMOs are permitted as long as they do not include human genes or genes derived from sources of forbidden animals, and as long as prohibited animals haven't been utilized as hosts
- 7) The growth medium determine whether or not to utilize microbial products. The microorganisms growing in this medium are halal if the growth medium is halal or if it comes from a halal source.

Subjective norms to halal cosmetics

According to Lada & Amin (2009), subjective norms is a person's acceptance of particular actions by a group is based on their beliefs. Besides Mukhtar & Butt (2012) argue that customers are able to make purchases because the environment—also referred to as subjective norms— influences them. Subjective norms dictate an individual's actions and behaviors. Subjective norms and intrapersonal religiosity have been shown to favorably influence views toward halal items. Subjective norms have related to the factors that are guide the students to buy cosmetic halal. Aufi (2021) found that the subjective norms have a positive and significant influence on attitudes towards halal cosmetics. Moreover, Adrian (2018) described normative belief is closely linked to an expectation that originates from another person or group of people with the power to greatly impact any decisions or actions taken by an individual. The indicator of this term is the believe of the participants and motivation to do some action.

Attitude to halal cosmetics

Noer (2017) described that attitude to halal product is the attitude of consumers in evaluating product weather negative or positive. Then, Endah (2014) highlighted how crucial it is to use halal goods. Consistently select halal merchandise and making the decision to consume halal items on their own is also emphasized by Briliana and Mursito (2017). Researching products before making a purchase was described by Sriminarti and Nora (2018). Teng and Jusoh (2018) found that to some extent, Muslims are afraid of potential health and safety hazards.

Purchase Intention to halal cosmetics

According to McCarthy et., al (2003) purchase intention is the urge that arises from within a person to buy goods or services in order to fulfill their needs. Despite that, Ananda and Mikhratunnisa (2020) define purchase intention as a consumer's propensity to be interested in a product and make an effort to obtain it. Hee & Jae, (2011) argue that consumers with high health consciousness consider whether a product is safe for the skin and body; therefore, they may be more seriously concerned with the ingredients used to make the products than those with low health consciousness. From the previous literature it can be imply that students would have purchase intention on the cosmetic that they used because cosmetic products are used every day and should consist of ingredients and process that are allow in Islam. Research by Christine (2022), found that attitude, subjective norm, halal awareness and religiosity have effect to purchase intention. The research was conducted in Bogor and involved 100 respondents. Our research have done in West Sumatera where the characteristic of respondent is slightly different because the respondent is undergraduate student from Islamic university.

METHODOLOGY

Due to its exploratory character, this study used a qualitative research methodology applying FGDs. According to Garcia & Prasad, (2017) FGD is a specified interviews led by a qualified moderator. The moderator raised open-ended question that spark discussion among the participants to gathered information. The goal of a conversation is to generate as many arguments and viewpoints as possible in a condensed amount of time. This method could describe a topic or issue more comprehensive than through the use of a questionnaire. Moreover, Van Euwijk (2017) argue that FGD is a meeting number of participants who have common characteristic and enhance the research perspective, the mode is semi structured and need to be cautiously planned and executed. The scope of this method is to have wide spectrum of thoughts, ideas, and/or experiences; beside it also emphasis the participants'.

Social interactions, all participants contributed equally to the discussion and high level of focus on the given topics. Understanding the definition of FGD is believed as an appropriate method that can be use for comprehend the reason of university student in choosing the cosmetic that they used in daily life.

The FGDs were conducted among undergraduate students at Baiturrahmah University, Padang - West Sumatera (Indonesia). The FGDs took place three times: the 4th, 14th and 22nd of May 2024. Each FGD involved 7-10 participants majoring in management. Every session was held for an hour.

DISCUSSION AND RESULT

The main idea of this paper is to discover the preference of undergraduate students in choosing the halal cosmetics. The factors that are discussed associated with knowledge, subjective norms, attitude related to purchase intention of undergraduate students in buying halal cosmetics. The instructor announced question to the participants about halal products and found that the participants understood the definition of halal product cosmetics. Because all of the participants use halal cosmetic on a daily basis. Some participants have knowledge about the ingredients that are good for their skin. Review from influencers played role in making students knowledgeable about halal cosmetic.

Research participants had knowledge and update with ingredients contained in cosmetics products. Halal certification is published only by Majelis Ulama Indonesia or The Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI). This institution guides, fosters, and protects Muslims with members consisting of ulama, zuama (organization leaders), and Muslim scholars. In order to ensure that products are halal, MUI have institution called LPPOM MUI that have collaborated with more than 65 nations for more than 34 years to make sure that products are halal. All research participants showed commitment to obey sharia guidance in relation to cosmetics. However in intellectual aspect, most of research participants still do sin such as talking others (ghibah). Even though, this activity is prohibited in Islam, they still could not avoid it especially when they were together with their friends.

For subjective norms, all of the participants agreed that most of relatives and friends use halal cosmetics. However, some of them did not pay attention to the halal logo. The reason was that the participants live in Indonesia which is the largest Muslim majority in the world (84.35% of population). It has been taken for granted that every product made in Indonesia should be Halal. Research participants usually buy cosmetics online through social media or market place. The reason was because the price is cheaper when buying online and the product will arrive at their home. Some of them were still buying in shops, because they wanted to try the products first (e.g. apply the products to their skin) to check whether the products were suitable for them or not.

Research participants' attitude towards intention to purchase halal cosmetic was positive. They preferred local brands as most of them have had halal logo. Other reasons for using the local cosmetics were cheaper price, easy to find in the mini market or ecommerce, the quality is good and suitable to the Asian skin. Research participants were sure that local cosmetics are save and halal and therefore, there is no need to check the halal logo. Consumer views of the information offered about halal products, particularly cosmetics, are likely high and contributed in effecting consumers' awareness and interest in halal cosmetic purchases (Rajagopal et al., 2011). Using halal product was pure of the students' choice; they felt happy and had a positive impression of halal label cosmetic.

Research participants responses varied to the question related with 'purchase intention'. Research participants were asked about their willingness to pay more, wait longer, getting product in long distance, and move to another shop for cosmetic with logo halal. Some participants did not want to wait any longer. They bought products if the products were suitable for their skin and

would not change it. They just took the products and did not want to check whether it was halal or not. They believed that all of products sold in Indonesia are halal.

There are thousands of new cosmetic products launched every day, but research participants were still stick with the local products and did not think to buy the imported products. They were already satisfied with the local products. This finding is good for the cosmetic industry in Indonesia because the market believes on the local products. Therefore, the development of local products might be getting massive in the future. There also possibility that the local products could be exported to other countries. Indeed, some of brands have already expanded their business in South East Asia.

CONCLUSION

This research had explored factors influencing undergraduate students of a private university in Padang that has certain specificity compared to other private universities or compared to state universities in Padang. Undergraduate students in the private university under studied demonstrated high concern towards halalness when comes to products such as cosmetics. They showed high obedience to the sharia guidance also they might still do certain things that are prohibited in Islam.

A good awareness of students regarding of halal cosmetics may be connected to the fact that the university under studied (i.e. Baiturrahmah University) concerned with development religious aspect of students. Every Saturday, all students have to pray in the mosque at dzuhur time. There will be a short lecture prior the Dzuhur prayer commences. That might be the reason why the students showed a tendency to obey the Islamic rules. Most research participants used cosmetics having halal logo. Small portion of them (30%) did not look for halal logo when buying cosmetics because they took for granted that every product sold in the Indonesian market should be halal, especially when they purchased it at offline store.

Research participants concerned with the ingredients of the cosmetics (related to whether the cosmetics suite to their skin or not). Research participants paid attention on the halal logo when they purchased imported cosmetics products. Surprisingly, all of participants did not want to buy imported cosmetics and none of them used the imported ones. Research participants believed that local brands already have a good quality and affordable prices. On the other hand, imported cosmetics were expensive and they were afraid of the ingredients – there could be non-halal ingredients in it because there imported cosmetics usually did not have halal logo. This result implied that students of the studied university followed the Islamic guidance and committed to do it in the future.

Finally, in terms of subjective norms towards purchase intention in halal cosmetic, the result was also positive. Students' families and relatives used halal products that also influenced them in buying halal cosmetics. The attitude towards halal cosmetic was also positive because the students felt save and happy when using halal cosmetics. Future research might compare the purchase intention of imported halal cosmetics and local halal cosmetics. It is also recommended to use large scale survey involving working woman because the price of imported products are higher compared to the local products.

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