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Factors Influencing Halal Cosmetics Purchase Behaviour of Working Adults and University Students in Malaysia
(Faktor-Faktor yang Mempengaruhi Kelakuan Pembelian Kosmetik Halal Orang Dewasa dan Pelajar Universiti di Malaysia)

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ABSTRACT

Halal cosmetics sector is fast expanding in lieu of the growing affluent 1.8 billion Muslim population globally. Unlike attention given to research on consumer purchase behaviour of halal food, consumer purchase behaviour of halal cosmetics is limited. To date, out of forty-five research papers on halal cosmetics, only four research papers have been conducted to deliberate on halal cosmetics consumer purchase behaviour. To discover the current state of knowledge and practice on halal consumer behaviour, a review of published literature in high-tiered bibliographic data base was conducted. This was followed by affirmation from a personalised online survey on Malaysian consumers. Consequently, the study identified prevailing factors affecting halal cosmetics consumer purchase behaviour of working adults and students in Malaysia and unearthed peculiarities in their purchase behaviour. In tandem the study also noted the knowledge gaps for future research. Results from the study will assist halal cosmetics companies to design marketing programs that can maintain and grow their customer base both domestically and internationally. Recommendations was also made on how to create strategic marketing programs leveraging on IR4.0 technology.

Keywords - Consumer Purchase Behaviour; Halal Cosmetics; Working Adults; University students; Malaysia

ABTRAK

Sektor kosmetik halal semakin berkembang pesat kesan meningkatya kemakmuran 1.8 juta penduduk Islam. Tidak seperti tumpuan yang diberikan kepada penyelidikan mengenai tingkah laku konsumer makanan halal, penyelidikan yang berfokus kepada tingkah laku konsumer kosmetik halal adalah terhad. Sehingga kini, terdapat hanya empat puluh lima kertas penyelidikan kosmetik halal, di mana hanya empat kertas penyelidikan bertumpu kepada tingkah laku pembelian pengguna kosmetik halal. Satu tinjauan literatur penyelidikan yang telah diterbit dalam pangkalan data bibliografi bertingkat tinggi telah dijalankan bagi mengenalpasti pengetahuan berkaitan kosmetik halal dan amalan tingkahlaku pengguna kosmetik, Ini diikuti dengan kaedah kaji selidik dalam talian yang menyasarkan pengguna kosmetik Malaysia. Dapatan kajian ini berjaya mengenal pasti faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi kelakuan pengguna kosmetik halal dari kalangan pekerja dan pelajar universiti di Malaysia termasuk keunikan dalam tingkah laku pembelian mereka. Sejajar dengan itu, kajian ini juga mencatatkan jurang dalam pengetahuan penyelidikan serta keperluan penyelidikan masa depan dalam sektor kosmetik halal. Hasil dari kajian ini akan membantu syarikat kosmetik halal untuk merancang program pemasaran yang dapat mengekalkan dan mengembangkan jumlah pelanggan mereka di dalam dan di luar negara. Cadangan juga dibuat mengenai teknik pemasaran yang lebih strategik serta memanafatkan teknologi IR4.0.

Kata kunci - tingkah laku pembelian pengguna; Kosmetik halal; Pekerja; Pelajar universiti; Malaysia

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INTRODUCTION

The Global Islamic Economy Report 2019/2020 published by Thomson-Reuters and Dinar Standard (GIER 2018/2019), reported that the emerging affluent and tech-savvy Muslims would make up 26% of the global population in 2020, and forecasted to reach 30% or 2.2 billion numbers by 2030. This phenomenon translates into rising international demand for *halal* products and services. The same report noted that Muslim spend on cosmetics, estimated at USD64 billion in 2018, is projected to achieve USD95 billion by 2024. Therefore, the *halal* industry is flourishing, and that the *halal* cosmetics sector has significant potential to grow. To capitalise on this phenomenon, Malaysia, possessing all the necessary infrastructure to support its *halal* economy, has identified the *halal* cosmetics industry as a gateway for wealth creation and sustainability. Nevertheless, producers are faced with challenges such as international attitudes and rapid technological change that entails the ethical governance of the *halal* industry, thereby highlighting the urgency to have a harmonised regulation worldwide. This dilemma can be overcome to a certain extent if stakeholders grasp what are the influential factors determining consumers purchase behaviour and what are the support system required to ensure Malaysia can achieve its aspiration.

The GIER 2019/2020 report also stated that religious affinity has risen where 76% of Muslims acknowledged that religion is an important determinant of their purchase behaviour. The report also stressed that in reality, most mainstream cosmetics consumers show high brand loyalty to conventional cosmetics and an aversion towards brand switching. This consumer behaviour is reflected in Malaysia, where imported cosmetics and global brands such as L'Oréal, Revlon, Maybelline, Estee Lauder and Shiseido, still dominate cosmetic sales whilst SMEs command a smaller market share (The Borneo Post, 2019). Malaysian Muslim consumers are seemingly either unaware or choose to ignore that numerous cosmetics contain *haram* humectants, emollients, or cleansing agents, such as alcohol. Apart from that, products such as moisturisers, shampoos, face masks and lipsticks may include fatty acids, enzymes and gelatine derived from pigs (Burhanuddin, 2011).

An article published by Allied Market Research (2017) revealed that growth of *halal* cosmetics market is also hindered by the high cost of production, lack of affordability and awareness/knowledge on the part of consumers and producers, as well as gap in monitoring and enforcement. The latter two issues further weaken consumers trust towards *halal* certification. Halal cosmetics SMEs have limited resources and means to capture, retain and expand their customer base, locally or internationally, and are faced with a shortage of *halal* raw materials, rising costs, competition against international conglomerates and illegal cosmetics flooding the market. Consequently, it is crucial that domestic *halal* cosmetics SMEs understand that in serving this market, they need to customise marketing strategies to capture the attention of their target customers and build a trustful relationship. It is only then that they can capture customer equity while abiding by the stringent rules and procedures of the certification agencies and relevant institutions. Producers must understand that although Muslim consumers want to beautify themselves, their fundamental obligation is to adhere to the Islamic teachings. Meanwhile, government institutions must lend the necessary support to ensure *halal* integrity of cosmetics.

Although there are numerous studies about consumer purchase behaviour on conventional and branded cosmetics, marketing recommendations from these cannot be applied to *halal* cosmetics, seeing that Muslims are heterogeneous and subscribe to differing values, culture and ethnicity. Research studies on *halal* cosmetics are limited, especially those focusing on *halal* cosmetics consumer purchase behaviour and none comparing differences between consumer purchase behaviour of working adults versus university students. These two groups of consumers were chosen due to accessibility and potential of the continued high growth rate of usage.

This study seeks to identify the level of importance of common attributes influencing *halal* cosmetics consumer purchase behaviour between working adults and university students. Attributes studied are related to knowledge, the four marketing mix elements (product quality, price, promotion and place of purchase), social media, *halal* certification, trend or celebrity endorsement. Similarities or dissimilarities of consumer purchase behaviour will also be studied by comparing the data collected from these two groups. We believe that, armed with this knowledge, decision-makers and marketers can plan, coordinate, and manage their halal cosmetics' production and marketing and achieve sustainable growth domestically or globally .

LITERATURE REVIEW

Halal Market

The rise of a new middle class of Muslim consumers, keen to accept marketplace offerings, have resulted in a

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4.9% increase in global cosmetics expenditure in 2018 (GIER 2019/2020; Sandikci, 2010; Wong, 2007). This trend has signalled a massive opportunity to investors, governments and businesses, provided they can develop robust strategies across the *halal* cosmetics industry.

Western countries are the current top exporters of *halal* cosmetics as they represent the country of origin of popular branded multinational cosmetics companies (Table 1). Still, the report from Euromonitor, in GIER 2018/2019 showed that *halal* cosmetics are gaining popularity and attracting more new entrants internationally, but face fierce competitions with more easily alternatives such as organic, sustainable, vegan, and natural cosmetics. Since *halal* cosmetics industry exists in a fiercely competitive environment, *halal* cosmetics producers must highlight its distinct values and brand accordingly. Aoun and Tournois (2015) stated that a *halal* brand cannot be defined according to Western standards, as it transgresses from the functional dimension to the emotional and spiritual dimension, when it crosses the social-cultural context; which thus explains the rising demand from Muslims.

TABLE 1. Top Halal Cosmetics Exporters by Country

Position	Country	Value of Halal Cosmetics Export
1	France	USD 2.6 billion
2	UAE	USD 1.2 billion
3	Germany	USD 1.1 billion
4	United State of America	USD 1.0 billion
5	China	USD 0.8 billion

Source: Figures from GIER 2019/20

Currently, the top three countries with the highest *halal* cosmetics spend are India, Indonesia and Russia of which two, India and Russia, are Muslim minority countries with France coming in as top ninth (Figure 1). Whilst the majority of the Muslim population exhibit preference towards *halal* products, *halal* cosmetics carry market appeal amongst non-Muslim consumers, as halal cosmetics are associated with stringent quality assurance standards of production and ethical consumerism.

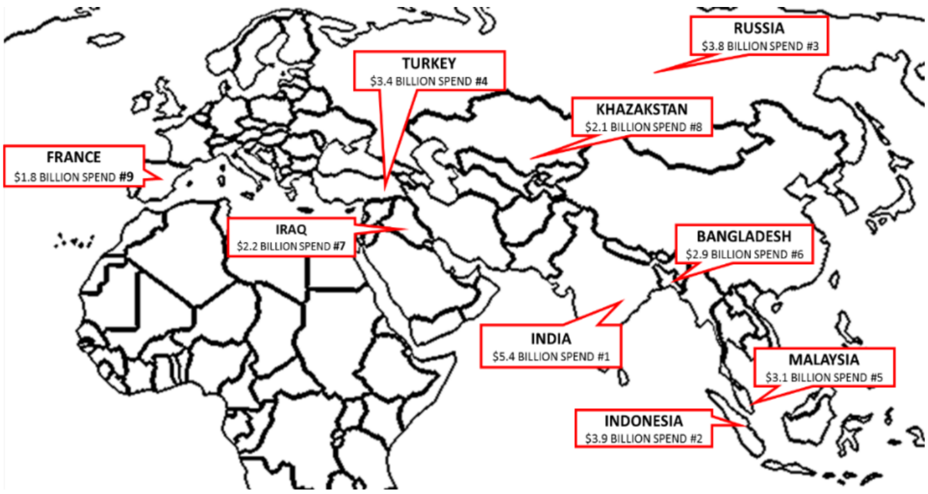

FIGURE 1. Top 9 Halal Cosmetics Consumer Markets

Source: Figures from GIER 2018/19

Rising demand for *halal* cosmetics among Muslim Millennials is mirrored by the largest expansion in over a decade for global cosmetics sales with Muslim spend on cosmetics projected to grow by 6.8% per annum to reach USD94 billion by 2024 (IMARC 2020). Opportunities for investors in this sector could be lucrative if strategised properly especially with the application of blockchain, artificial intelligence and virtual reality technology brought by IR4.0, creation of smart global alliances and government enablers and support.

Halal Cosmetics

According to the National Pharmaceutical Research Agency (NPRA) website, "A cosmetic product shall mean any substance or preparation intended to be placed in contact with various external parts of the human body (epidermis, hair system, nails, lips and external genital organs) or with teeth and the mucous membranes of the oral cavity, with a view exclusively or mainly to cleaning them, perfuming them, changing their appearance and/or correcting body odours and/or protecting them or keeping them in good condition". For this study, the focus is on the eye and facial makeup, which is a subset of cosmetics, that refers chiefly to colour pigmented products intended to alter the user's appearance and subdivided into "decorative" and "care" products.

As stated in the Quran, Surah Al-Baqarah verse 168 (Quran 2:168), *halal* is meant for all mankind and not limited to Muslims only. According to the Shariah law, *halal* and *toyyiban* means, permissible and wholesome. Henceforth, any product or service that is certified *halal* is safe to be consumed, used, and engaged in since it will not cause harm. In emerging Muslim majority countries like Malaysia, Indonesia and nations from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), revitalisation of Islam and religious morals meant more broadminded and vested Muslim consumers who want to continue leading a balanced Islamic lifestyle, yet eager to join in the global consumer culture (Sandikci & Ger, 2011). Hence, should businesses want to grab this money-spinning business, they must ensure that their operations, products and services are certified *halal* and fulfil Shariah laws.

Halal cosmetics refer to body and skincare products which are produced using only allowed ingredients that comply with *halal* standards and Shariah law. Halal cosmetics must also be *toyyiban* (clean and safe for use), which means it must be free from alcohol, *najs*, contamination and any genetically modified organisms (GMO) (Sutono, 2015). To safeguard food safety, chemicals and pharmaceutical systems such as Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) are applied by manufacturers. While GMP is about ensuring product processing and production meets legal prerequisites for safety and quality, HACCP standards are designed to prevent hazards. Halal certification is a step up of both standards as it indicates cleanliness, safety, purity and quality (Hashim & Hashim, 2013)

The technology advancement can potentially be a double edge sword in the cosmetics industry. Naturally, companies would like to ensure they are in the state of the most profitable business. To ensure they can keep up with the competition, they need to source for cheaper ingredients or new materials that are considered low-cost. Some of the materials are disgusting, and some of them are even considered *haram* substances. Baby foreskins produce a protein named epidermal growth factor (EGF) and are used in facial skin care treatments (Noble, 2020). Tallow is a popular component in so many kinds of items like cosmetics, hair products, shaving soaps, moisturisers, and skincare products (Hashim & Hashim, 2013). Cochineal dye has been utilised for generations, and is typically found in cosmetics and sweets. However, a study suggested a new health risk regarding the implementation of cochineal in food or cosmetic products (Voltolini et al., 2014).

Sugibayashi (2019) stated that "*halal* cosmetics extends beyond religion because they require rigorous scientific investigation to come up with a product that is safe, effective, pure, and sensitive to the holistic needs of the Muslim community". Regrettably, majority of Muslim consumers are unaware that some established cosmetics companies produce cosmetics, moisturisers, shampoos, face masks and lipsticks may include that may contain *haram* or *masbuh* (suspect) ingredients (Burhanuddin, 2011; Sugibayashi, 2019).

Though Euromonitor disclosed that some European countries are confused with the term *halal, the halal* brand has become increasingly popular amongst non-Muslims, as it meets general consumers' expectation. It is associated with ethical consumerism, where the production process is congruent with the ethical and animal welfare concerns, and operations are conducted in an honest business environment (Elasrag, 2016; Alam & Sayuti, 2011). Hassan (2019) reaffirmed in BITEC 2019, that both ethically concerned Muslims and non-Muslims consumers purchase *halal* cosmetics, as *halal* cosmetics are either vegan/plant-based/organic or natural options and does not contain animal by-products and GMO ingredients. This demand saw global expenditure for *halal* cosmetics increase by 4.9%

in 2018, with India, Indonesia and Russia representing the top three countries by consumer markets (Figure 1).

Halal Cosmetics Consumers

GIER 2019/2020 report published that religious affinity has improved with 76% of Muslims indicating religion is an important determinant of purchase behaviour. However, religious adherence is not indicative for mainstream cosmetics consumers, as unlike the precautionary attention given when purchasing *halal* food, consumers purchase cosmetics impulsively, especially if the product is trending and endorsed by celebrities. This rule applies to both Muslim genders since they are more concerned about improving their looks compared to the possibility of adverse side effects the cosmetic product may have on them (Norudin et al., 2010). The general perception of cosmetics is that it is acceptable to use cosmetic products if they are of good quality and from a well-known brand. The consumers find it less significant if the product is not *halal*-certified (GIER 2019/20).

In 1995, Solomon *et al*. described consumer buying behaviour as a process of choosing, purchasing, using and disposing of products or services by the individuals and groups in order to satisfy their needs and wants; and Stallworth (2008) defined customer buying decision as a set of activities related to the purchase and use of goods and services as a result from their emotional and mental needs and behavioural responses. Meanwhile, Kotler and Keller (2011) highlighted that understanding consumer buying behaviour and how they choose their products and services can be pivotal for manufacturers and service providers as it provides them with a competitive edge in several aspects. To capture customers, companies will need to understand the needs, wants and factors influencing consumer buying behaviour plus analyse their pattern to predict future trends.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour, TPB (Ajzen, 1985) is an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action, TRA (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975) and both are based on the foundation that by evaluating the information available to them, individuals make logical, reasoned decisions to engage in specific behaviours. TPB suggests that people are more intent to perform certain behaviours when they perceive that they are in control of the elements, and thus can carry out these activities successfully. Intentions are determined by three attributes: attitudes (an individual's overall evaluation of the behaviour), subjective norms (individual's beliefs about significant others thoughts on whether they should engage in the behaviour) and perceived behaviour control (the extent to which the individual perceives that the behaviour is under their personal control). The intention is the motivational component that spurs an individual to engage in a behaviour, and perceived behaviour control captures the extent to which people have control or confidence that they can perform the behaviour (McEachan et al., 2016).

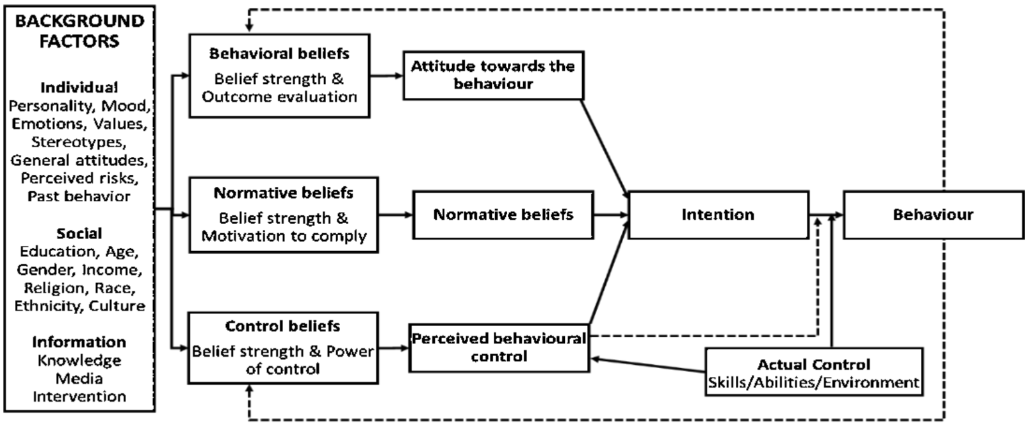

FIGURE 2. Model of Reason Action Approach

Source: Adapted from Ajzen, I. 2012

Figure 2 depicts model of Reason Action Approach (RAA) framework, which arose from TPB and TRA, and states that attitudes towards the behaviour, perceived norms, and perceived behavioural control determine people's intentions, while people's intentions predict their behaviours (Ajzen, 2012; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). Regarding a prediction about the buying behaviour of consumers, Ghosh (1990) stated that a purchase intention is an effective tool while Gogoi (2013) propounded that during the buying process consumers are influenced by external as well as internal motivations. In fact, factors such as price, quality and value may change purchase intention.

The model also highlights the importance of background factors (individual factors, social factors and available information) that shape consumers' behavioural, normative and control beliefs. This applies more so to consumers of this digital era, where information is readily available and social media plays a major role in influencing consumer purchase behaviour.

Wilson and Liu (2011), put forth that the perceived importance of *halal* is built into the Muslim consciousness and that *halal* paradigm makes up its core. The halal paradigm, a dynamic cyclical process that consists of cognitive, affective and conative/ behavioural decision-making patterns, is swayed by a Muslim's consumer cultural background and religious faith. Thus, *halal* should not be viewed as merely part of a brand element as it is a system based on belief and dictates Muslims' moral conduct (Aoun and Tournois, 2015).

Findings of previous consumer behaviour studies concluded that the features consumers look for when purchasing *halal* cosmetics include quality of the cosmetic products, brand name and visibility, application, pricing, packaging, celebrity endorsement and *halal* certification (Haque, 2018; Kamaljeet et al., 2018; Alhedhaif *et al*., 2016; Ali, 2016; Putri & Abdinagoro, 2018; Ali, 2019; Munasinghe & Weerasiri, 2016). The findings of the study are aligned with the Reasoned Action Approach (RAA), which is an integrative framework for the prediction (and change) of human social behaviour (Figure 2).

Global digitisation has enabled social media, celebrity endorsement and e-influencers to connect and network people in new innovative ways, thereby enabling marketers to actively engage with international publics, this is in concurrence with article by Wilson *et al*. (2013) that published that modesty is being redefined as a result of advancements in IR4.0 technology;

Entry into the international *halal* cosmetics market is demanding and taxing. Producers face issues concerning the formulation of cosmetics and skincare ingredients, the presence of diverse *halal* certification standards, and lack of a consistent certification framework employed by many nations. The challenge faced by marketers from an academic, Islamic and ethical perspective is to identify, understand and respond to the issues primarily in the domestic and secondary international market.

Halal Cosmetics SMEs in Malaysia

In 2015, SME Corp Malaysia defined SMEs in the manufacturing sector as small and medium independent firms that are non-subsidiary, which sales turnover does not exceeding RM50 million or whose full-time personnel numbers are below 200 (www.smecorp.gov.my). SME Corp Malaysia published on their website in 2020, that SMEs constitute 98.5% of Malaysia's business establishments, accounting for 66.2% of employment and contribute 38.3% towards its GDP (SME Corp, 2020). It can be summarised that although SMEs is the main employment provider to Malaysians, in comparison to large corporations, revenue earned by SMEs is low.

In Muslim majority nation like Malaysia, global cosmetics brands dominate the *halal* cosmetic market, while SMEs command a smaller market share (The Borneo Post, 2019). Recognising this, former Minister of Entrepreneur Development and Cooperatives, Mohd Redzuan said, "The government will continue to bolster the contribution of SMEs through the National Entrepreneurship Policy 2030 by enhancing the capacity and participation of young entrepreneurs and SMEs in the national and global economy" (The Malaysian Reserve, 2019). To penetrate this captive cosmetics market, locally and internationally, Malaysia has pledged to increase efforts in facilitating business procedures for SMEs especially with regards to NPRA notification of registration, *halal* certification and exporting processes whilst concurrently educating the masses and stakeholders on benefits of *halal* cosmetics (The Edge, 2020). These strategies can only be achieved by leveraging and operationalising its robust *halal* ecosystem and encourage comprehensive inclusive development.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Methodology

As outlined in the introduction, the study primarily seeks to identify the influential factors, according to the level of importance, affecting *halal* cosmetics consumer purchase behaviour of working adults and students in Malaysia, and unearth peculiarities in their purchase behaviour. The secondary objective is to see if this consumer behaviour is related to knowledge, accountability, the four marketing mix elements, social media, *halal* certification, trend or celebrity endorsement, and any similarities or dissimilarities between the purchase behaviour of these two groups. The research methodology involved a systematic literature review and supported by descriptive analysis of survey participated by the target audience.

The research started with conducting a systematic literature review on *halal* cosmetics by accessing bibliographic databases to uncover what has been previously studied on halal cosmetics consumer purchase behaviour followed by online self-administered surveys whose target audience were consumers the age of 20 – 40 years in Malaysia.

To perform the systematic literature review (SLR), the author opted to use the publication standard ROSES (RepOrting standards for Systematic Evidence Syntheses). It includes generating a list of journal articles from bibliographic literature resources, such as Scopus, ScienceDirect, Springer Link and Google Scholar (Shaffril, 2020; Haddaway et al., 2018). Initially, a total of 731 articles were generated based on the keywords "Halal Cosmetics", "Muslim cosmetics" and "M*slem Cosmetics". The period between 2015 to 2020 was chosen since it is only within this period, that the number of prominent social science articles started to increase from a considerably advanced *halal* cosmetics industry. This concept of study's maturity is consistent with that advocated by Kraus et al. (2020). Social science-based research studies on halal cosmetics before 2015 were very few and far between, as the majority focused on the technical aspects of halal cosmetics such as the source of ingredients and DNA testing. A total of 86 articles were then reviewed for eligibility, exclusion and data extraction and analysis.

A self-administered survey questionnaire on influential factors affecting consumer purchase behaviour and consistent with the Reason Action Approach (RAA) was developed from the SLR study. The survey instrument consisted of three sections namely personal information (age, salary, work status, education) and the four marketing mix elements (product, price, place and promotion), including social media, *halal* certification, trend and celebrity endorsement. The instrument used in this study was constructed by the researcher based on the previous SLR findings, and some items were self-constructed by the researcher to achieve the objectives of this study. To measure respondents' perception, purchase intention and behaviour, and to extract a specific response, each item in this scale was measured using a four-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree (Chang, 1994). This second phase consists of gathering primary data through a month-long survey conducted online and sent to 250 respondents across Malaysia, using convenience sampling. The online survey targeting Malaysians over a period of one month involved 250 respondents though only 235 questionnaires were analysed as the rest were incomplete. The result correlates to a 94% response rate. Respondetns were made up of 59.6% working adults and 40.4% students and the rest were homemakers. The demographic background of respondents indicated that 83% are females, and breakdown of the age range for both sexes revealed that 86% could be categorised as Millennials. Of the total 95% of the respondents are Malays, while East Malaysians from the Bumiputra groups made-up 5%. In terms of education, 73.6% having tertiary education of which 15.3% are postgraduates. The statistical tool employed is the frequency and descriptive analysis of quantitative data, using IBM SPSS software version 21.

FINDINGS

Purchase behaviour of cosmetics consumers

As stated earlier in the study, the first part of the methodology was conducting a literature review followed by affirmation from a self-administered survey questionnaire, which identified the priority of factors affecting consumer purchase behaviour. The literature review concluded that consumers look at the quality of the cosmetic products, brand name and visibility, application, pricing, packaging, celebrity endorsement and *halal* certification when they want to purchase *halal* cosmetics (Haque *et al.*, 2018; Kamaljeet *et al.* 2018; Ali *et al*., 2016; Alhedhaif *et al*., 2016).

Findings unearthed that in general the most influential factor affecting consumer behaviour for all consumers, according to priority, is first product quality (99.36%), then *halal* certification (97.4%), price (97%), ease of purchase (95.7%), followed by comments and reviews (93.1%), brand (88.9%), packaging (86.3%) and advertisements (81.9%) whilst endorsement by celebrities (42.8%) insignificant (Figure 3a).

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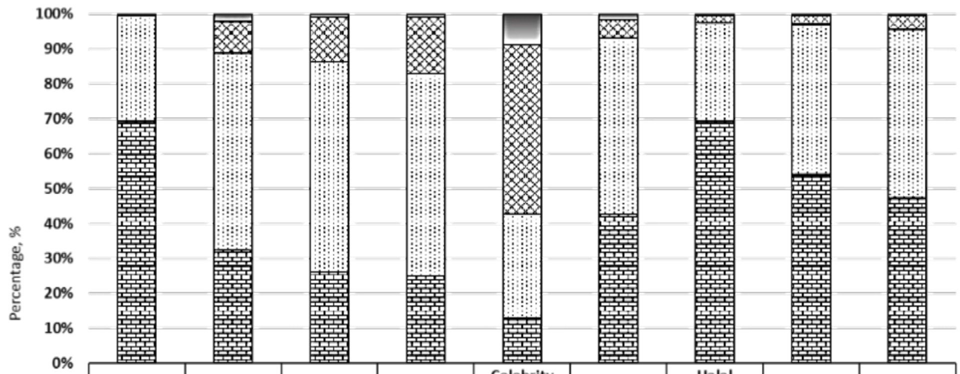
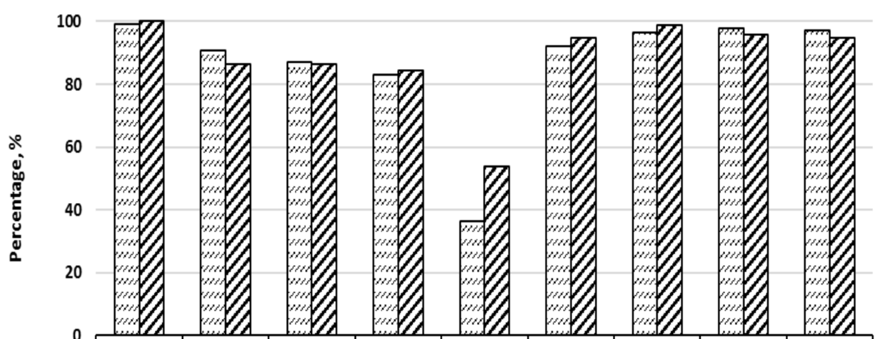


	Product Quality	Brand	Packaging	Advertisement	Celebrity Endorsement	Comment & review	Halal certification	Price	Ease of Purchase
Strongly Disagree	0.43	2.13	0.85	0.85	8.94	1.7	0.42	0.43	0.43
Disagree	0	8.94	12.77	16.17	48.09	5.11	2.12	2.55	3.84
Agree	30	56.6	60.43	57.87	29.78	50.64	28.09	42.98	48.51
Strongly agree	69.36	32.3	25.96	25.11	13	42.55	69.36	54.04	47.23

FIGURE 3A. Factors influencing cosmetics purchase behaviour of consumers in Malaysia

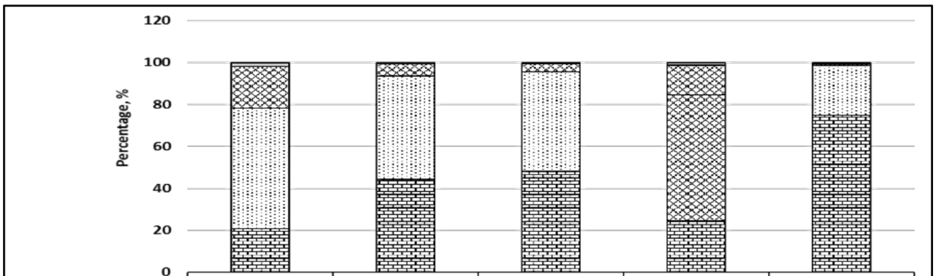
However, while Figure 3a's findings were mirrored for students, Figure 3b showed that immediate priority for Malay working adults is still product quality, second importance is price followed by ease of purchase and then *halal* certification. The other influential factors affecting cosmetics consumer behaviour remain the same.



	Product quality	Brand	Packaging	Advertisement	Celebrity endorsement	Comments & reivews	Halal certification	Price	Ease of purchase
Working adults (%)	99.28	90.72	87.14	82.86	36.43	92.14	96.43	97.89	97.14
Students (%)	100	86.31	86.31	84.21	53.69	94.73	98.95	95.79	94.74

FIGURE 3B. Comparison of factors influencing cosmetics purchase behaviour of working adults versus students

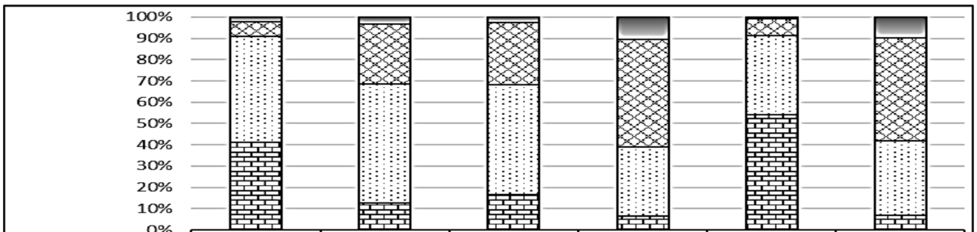
With regards to nature of cosmetics, both working adults and students prefer to purchase *halal*-certified (98.72%) first, natural (95.71%) second, organic (93.62%) third and vegan (84.69%) fourth. Preference for purchasing branded products (78.3%) was the least chosen (Figure 4).



	Branded Product	Organic Product	Natural Product	Vegan Product	Halal Certified Product
Strongly Disagree	1.7	0.85	0.43	1.28	0.42
Disagree	20	5.5	3.83	14.04	0.85
Agree	57.45	49.36	47.66	60	23.83
Strongly agree	20.85	44.26	48.05	24.69	74.89

FIGURE 4. Preference towards nature of cosmetics

Survey on ease of purchase of cosmetics revealed that majority of respondents purchase cosmetics from the pharmacies such as Watsons and Guardian (76.62%) as well as from retailers located in malls (69.36%) followed by online purchase and rarely from agents. The results were mirrored when the comparison was made between working adults and students.



	Family & Friend	Advertisement	Soc. Media (FB/ Instagram)	Celebrity	Expert	Trend
Strongly Disagree	2.12	3.4	2.55	10.64	0.85	9.79
Disagree	6.8	28.09	29.36	50.2	7.7	48.5
Agree	49.79	55.74	51.49	32.77	37.45	34.9
Strongly agree	41.28	12.77	16.6	6.38	54.04	6.81

FIGURE 5. Promotional factors influencing purchase behaviour of cosmetics

Concerning promotional factors impacting respondents purchase behaviour, majority of respondents agreed they are more inclined to listen to recommendations from experts (91.5%), family and friends (91.1%), advertisements (68.51%) and social media (68.1%), trend (41.71%) in order of preference. The least influential promotional factor is celebrity endorsement (39.2%) (Figure 5). The results are symbolic of the education background in which the majority of respondents possess tertiary education.

Results of comparison between both groups reflecting promotional factors influencing purchase behaviour show the same overall results. However, where working adults were not swayed by celebrity endorsement (31.4%) or trend (42.9%), students held higher regard for celebrity endorsement (50.52%) compared to trend (38.95%). Suggestive of maturity between the two groups of respondents.

Results on brand loyalty were met with mixed feelings where 16.17% strongly agree, and 34.04% agree there were loyal to one brand, 49.8% disagree they were loyal to one brand, suggesting that there is the tendency to brand switching. The same pattern is observed about buying only branded cosmetics, 44% agreed, and 56% disagreed they buy only branded products. Upon comparing the brand and *halal* certification, results obtained showed 8.9% strongly disagree, and 32.3% disagree that they trusted branded cosmetics, with 32.3%% agree, and 26.38% strongly agree that they trusted *halal*-certified rather than branded cosmetics. In summary, overall, 59% trusted only halal-certified cosmetics, with 41.2% agreed they trusted only branded cosmetics. Results for individual groups found a higher difference shown in terms of agreement of trust towards branded regardless of *halal* certification, where working adults were not too concerned with *halal* certification. However, students place more emphasis on *halal* certification rather than brand.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The weightage of factors influencing cosmetics purchase behaviour highlighted, in Figures 3 to 5, earlier clearly indicate that in general cosmetics consumers give priority to product quality, halal certification, price and ease of purchase**.** These findings are supported by a study conducted by Rani *et al.* (2018) which reported that Malaysia's Malay students' cosmetics purchase behaviour was found to be influenced by product safety, the perceived value of halal certification, brand, price and quality though the study did not note which of given more importance. The study by Aziz and Wahab (2014) discovered that the quality of halal cosmetics is a central criterion in purchasing the product. Hong *et al.* (2019) who conducted a study on China's Muslims identified that apart from faith, other determinants influencing their purchase behaviour include the reliability of recommendations, price and availability of halal cosmetics were also significant.

A surprising finding is a decrease in importance on brand or advertisement, which large conventional cosmetics companies invest heavily to attract and maintain their consumers. These findings suggest that *halal* cosmetics companies, who want to capture Muslim and non-Muslim cosmetics consumers, need to create marketing campaigns which differ from those currently applied for conventional cosmetics.

Halal cosmetics consumer behaviour differs from conventional cosmetics consumer behaviour as they have higher expectations on product quality which is assured by the legitimacy of *halal* certification. Meanwhile, Ahmad *et al.* (2018) demonstrated that halal cosmetics consumers, who are confident that the halal certification is issued by reputable halal certifying bodies (HCB), exhibit brand loyalty. The results further confirm RAA framework that states that attitudes determine people's intentions, while people's intentions predict their behaviours (Ajzen, 2012; Fishbein, & Ajzen, 2010).

This study's results regarding the halal brand reaffirm research executed by Wilson and Liu (2011) and Aoun and Tournois (2015), which stated that *halal* brand is dissimilar from the popular Western context. In other words, the *halal* brand disregards normal brand definition, as it encapsulates both the emotional and spiritual dimension. Such findings concur with research done on preference for halal cosmetics attributed to religiosity (Hong *et al.*, 2019; Rani *et al.*, 2018; Abdul Rahman *et al.*, 2015)

With regards to the nature of cosmetics, as depicted in Fig.4, both working adults and students, choose to purchase *halal*-certified cosmetics first, then natural, organic third and vegan fourth. Purchasing of branded products was the least selected. The findings inferred that direct competitors to *halal* cosmetics are natural, organic and vegan cosmetics and to a lesser degree branded cosmetics. Another reason could also be proposed by Hashim & Hashim (2013) as their study revealed that consumers, regardless of religious affiliation, prefer *halal* products as they are produced using ethical and sustainable green technology, and consider animal welfare. Knowing the quality and value of *halal* cosmetics, consumers behaved as predicted by Gogoi (2013). That is, consumers purchase behaviour change due to influential factors such as product quality and inferred value. This further indicates that to penetrate the cosmetics market, and capture both Muslim and non-Muslim consumers, *halal* cosmetics SMEs need to highlight the benefits of *halal* cosmetics and use *halal* certification as a value proposition and justification of premium price as practised by organic and natural cosmetics producers.

An estimated 93.1% of respondents trust recommendations made by experts, family and friends rather than endorsements by a celebrity or following the current trend. Such findings can be summarised that adoption of *halal* cosmetics is also shaped by social pressure and opinion or belief from people deemed central to respondents as it strengthens their belief about *halal* cosmetics (Kamaljeet *et al.*, 2018). Recommendations aspect is significantly higher than brand influence (88.9%), packaging (86.3%) and advertisement (81.9%). Such behaviour becomes more prominent when looking at the credibility of the source, suggesting that respondents dispense with opinions of non-experts. It reflects the higher tertiary education background of respondents, which corresponds to knowledge, which greatly influences consumer purchase behaviour (Figure 2 RAA Framework). However, this does not suggest that *halal* cosmetics companies should do away with brand, packaging or advertisement. Instead, they should redesign them in accordance to Islamic marketing standards using a Western technique, whilst highlighting the benefits of the *halal* cosmetics. Since celebrity endorsement appears to have a weaker impact on consumer purchase behaviour, more emphasis should be placed in getting expert endorsements to attract *halal* cosmetics consumers.

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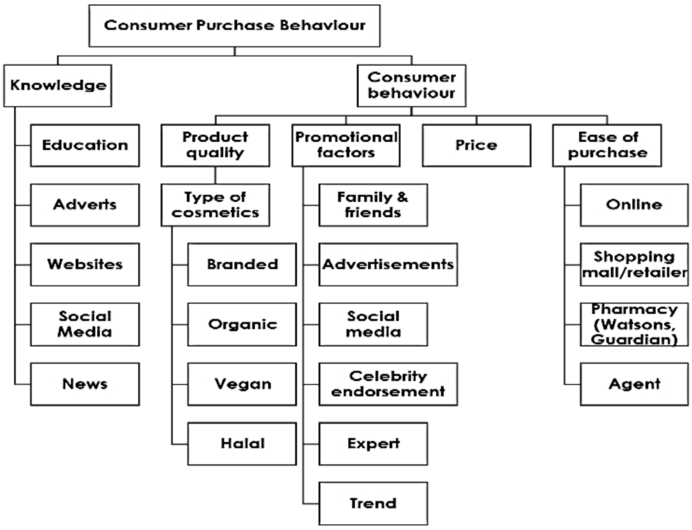

FIGURE 6. Factors influencing cosmetics consumers purchase behaviour

Findings indicated that factors influencing cosmetics consumers purchase behaviour for the study could be broadly divided into two main categories, knowledge and consumer behaviour as depicted below in Figure 6.

Analysis of factors affecting cosmetics consumers purchase behaviour is somewhat unaligned with activities currently carried out by *halal* cosmetics SMEs (Figure 7) in comparison to what consumer wants (Figure 6).

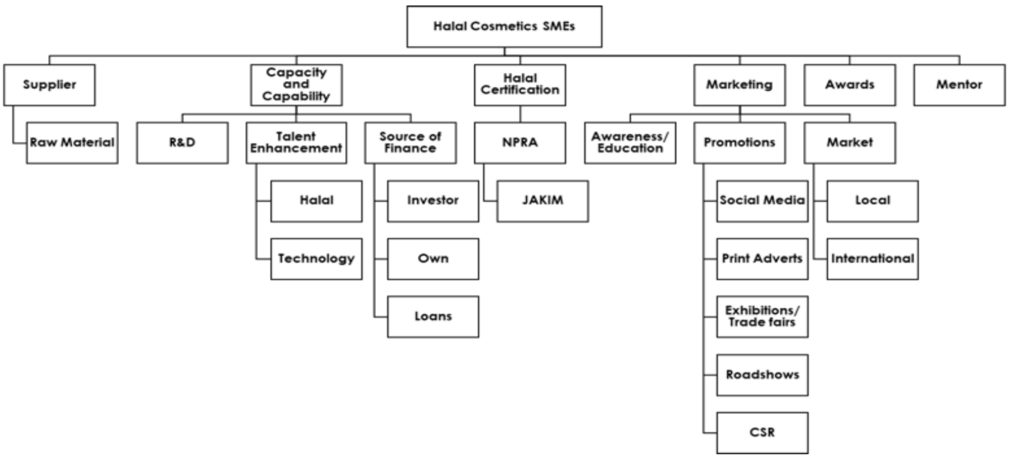

FIGURE 7. Factors of importance to *halal* cosmetics SMEs

The results suggested that halal cosmetics SMEs need to understand and implement RAA (Figure 2) and employ more effort to influence perceived behavioural control. This would enable them to sway consumer's intention to achieve desired consumer purchase behaviour (Ajzen, 2012). Today, Millennials are knowledgeable and tech-savvy, predisposed to researching about effectiveness and safety of cosmetics online, and therefore prone to brand switching as mentioned earlier. The lack of technical and scientific research and development conducted by local SMEs does little to strengthen consumers' belief of quality and efficacy. This issue needs to be addressed if local SMEs want to expand in the domestic and overseas market.

Moreover, *halal* cosmetics SMEs should conduct promotional activities in line with purchase behaviour of cosmetics consumers, emphasising towards ensuring greater accessibility to products and greater visibility on e-commerce platforms (Figure 5) to ensure ease of purchase.

CONCLUSION, LIMITATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

In conclusion, the consumer purchase behaviour of working adults and students in Malaysia towards *halal* cosmetics is similar enough in that the top four most influential factors are product quality, *halal* certification, ease of purchase and price, though there is a slight difference in priority. Factors that were of lesser importance was promotional factors/ tools such as comments and reviews, branding, packaging and advertisement and least important was celebrity endorsements. The implication to SMEs is that consumer purchase behaviour of *halal* products and the conventional products is dissimilar. Hence, they need to design a different marketing campaign to attract consumers of *halal* cosmetics.

The systematic literature survey conducted in the first phase of the study indicated out of 731 studies done on halal cosmetics from 2015 – 2020. There were only a total of 23 articles conducted on the *halal* cosmetics industry. This indicates that there is a gap in research on consumer purchase behaviour of *halal* cosmetics. This gap should be addressed as the study showed that factors influencing consumer purchase behaviour of *halal* cosmetics are not consistent with factors affecting consumer purchasing behaviour of conventional cosmetics. This knowledge gap is a critical issue, as the demand for *halal* goods and services is expanding exponentially. According to IMARC Group report (2020), after taking into consideration of the impact of Covid19 pandemic, the market value of *halal* cosmetics is expected to reach US94 billion by 2024, exhibiting a CAGR of 6% during 2019-2024 (IMARC 2020). Whilst Mordor Intelligence (2020) noted that the competitive landscape for *halal* cosmetics is not as saturated as in the mainstream cosmetics industry, and there is room for newcomers to penetrate and expand in this lucrative industry. This further strengthens the belief of the lucrative nature of global *halal* cosmetics and the need for more applied and academic research for the benefit of all stakeholders.

Majority of working Muslims and Muslim university students gravitate towards purchasing *halal*-certified cosmetics, when there is choice and accessibility, as they are obligated to adhere to their Islamic faith. Research on *halal* cosmetics from various context and nations should be encouraged so that the global society can understand the importance of *halal* integrity for societal wellbeing and economic sustainability.

Since the study was conducted in Muslim majority Malaysia, which possesses a robust *halal* ecosystem, and the majority of respondents have tertiary education, research should be carried out in Muslim minority countries or/and involving different target audiences, with comparisons made. Muslims consumers through seemingly homogenous are heterogeneous due to the differing religious practice, culture and ethnicity, leading towards misunderstanding and miscommunications.

From the business perspective, *halal* cosmetics SMEs need to realign their marketing programs to meet demands from *halal* cosmetics consumers with regards to product quality as it is placed as the most crucial criteria. To be in the halal cosmetics business, SMEs will need to either establish their own research and development unit or outsource this responsibility, whichever, this information must be made visible. Emphasis should be about the benefits of '*halalness*' as a unique value proposition compared to other natural and branded cosmetics. Endorsements by experts are more believable and create trust compared to celebrity endorsements. From the economic perspective, government agencies now know how best to facilitate communications, monitoring and control of *halal* cosmetics industry, thereby develop a better infrastructure for *halal* cosmetics stakeholders. Research in this context will be especially useful to policymakers and stakeholders.

There is also no study done yet on the application of IR4.0 technology on *halal* cosmetics especially in the fields of big data, virtual reality and augmented reality although such practices have existed in the business of cosmetics for more than a decade, albeit on a small scale. Thus, from the business perspective, if producers of *halal* cosmetics can embrace this technology and use it in their marketing programs and supply chain management, as that done by some large established cosmetics companies, there is no doubt *halal* cosmetics businesses can propel their business beyond their nation's border. Big data processing when coupled with artificial intelligence, can assist customer relations management greatly while the use of virtual reality and augmented reality will help facilitate decision making and increase ease of purchase especially for consumers who lack time. The experience from Covid-19 pandemic has also brought with it new norms that make it imperative for cosmetics companies to adopt and adapt their current practices.

This study has achieved several objectives in that it has shown that indeed research on *halal* cosmetics consumer is seriously lacking, consumer purchase behaviour of working adults and students towards *halal* cosmetics is similar especially in the millennials age range. The prevailing factor that has the greatest influence on the *halal* cosmetics consumer purchase behaviour of both demographic groups, in order of preference is first product quality, then *halal* certification, price, ease of purchase, followed by recommendations, brand, packaging and advertisements, whilst endorsement by celebrities is least significant. The findings also suggest that a marketing program targeting both groups can be conducted in parallel but significantly different from conventional cosmetics marketing campaigns. Lastly, the proof of product quality is via having *halal* certification.

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