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**BUYING INTENTIONS: DO KNOWLEDGE, RELIGIOSITY, AND
HALAL CERTIFICATION MATTER?**

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Abstract

The awareness of halal cosmetics products has become an essential element in our daily lives, especially Muslims. Hence, this paper highlighted the factors of buying intentions on halal cosmetics among university students. Furthermore, the purpose of this study is to identify the most important element influencing halal cosmetics buying intentions including knowledge, religion, and halal certification. In addition, this study also determined the relationship between knowledge, religiosity, and halal certification towards buying intentions among university students. The researchers adopted a quantitative approach in this research by distributing questionnaires to 292 participants. The frequency, descriptive, and regression analyses were analysed using SPSS Software to answer the objective of the study. Thus, the outcome of this study showed a strong relationship between buying intentions with knowledge and religiosity. Meanwhile, halal certification showed no relationship towards buying intentions on halal cosmetics products. With this discovery, the future research work may be better described.

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Keywords: Buying intentions, halal cosmetics, halal certification, knowledge, religiosity

1. Introduction

In the next 20 years, the global Muslim population is predicted to grow by nearly 35%, from 1.6 billion in 2010 to 2.2 billion by 2030. The current size of the Muslim market is estimated to be at 2.2 trillion dollars in 2018, with the potential to grow to around 3.2 trillion dollars by 2024. As a result, the global halal industry market share, including halal cosmetics items, has grown in 2021. In 2015, the global market for halal cosmetics was valued at around \$20 billion, and by 2022, it is predicted to reach \$54 billion. Despite the abundance of alternative commercial items on the market today, halal cosmetics products are gaining popularity among industry players and consumers in Malaysia. In 2022, it is expected to reach \$54 billion (Statistica, 2021).

The word halal comes from the Arabic word *syara*, which means “permissible” or “lawful” in Islamic law. The Al-Quran and Sunnah both mention halal practises. It says that halal is used when an object or behaviour is compliant with Islamic law. Meanwhile, Cosmetics are defined as “things with a modest influence on the human body with the goal of cleaning, beautifying, increasing attractiveness, altering look, or maintaining or encouraging the skin or hair in excellent condition.” For that reason, Sugibayashi et al. (2019) revealed that halal cosmetics are prohibited from any ingredients originating from pigs, meat, blood, human body parts, predatory creatures, reptiles, and insects. Hence, hygiene and purity must be maintained at all times before the preparation, processing, manufacturing, packing, and transportation of halal cosmetic items.

Despite the abundance of alternative commercial items on the market today, halal cosmetics products are gaining popularity among industry players and consumers in Malaysia (Ghazali, 2021). Another research stated that halal cosmetics are seen as a crucial driver in meeting the demand of the ever-increasing Muslim population and modern lifestyle due to their continuing growth in terms of the market size (Zakaria et al., 2019). Meanwhile, Malaysia’s Third Industrial Master Plan 2006-2020 reported that the halal market is on course to be the next country’s most important economic force, as well as a stimulus for local enterprises to get access to the global halal market. and turn them into successful businesses that serve both Muslims and non-Muslims (Badarudin, 2019). Furthermore, based on Euromonitor Market Research Report (2021), following the response to COVID-19 in 2020, a return to normalization in terms of purchasing behaviour for beauty and personal care in Malaysia is expected to rise from 2021 onwards, having stronger volume growth than during the review period.

1.1. Buying Intentions

According to Zhang et al. (2020), buying intentions refers to the consumer’s attitude toward a given purchasing activity and the consumer’s readiness to pay. Meanwhile, other research stated that buying intentions refer to the likelihood of consumers purchasing a product and impacts future customer purchase decisions. In addition, Vizano et al. (2020) also agreed that consumers’ buying intentions are influenced by consumers’ views and evaluations of a product and external factors. Another study characterised buying intentions as brand personal action preferences (Nik et al., 2020). Furthermore, Yousoof et al. (2020) stated in their study that consumers are worried about price and quality when buying products and the ingredients. It was discovered that, compared to brand awareness, consumer

experiences, and price, an attitude has the most significant influence on buying intentions (Nik et al., 2020). Hence, having a clear understanding of the consumer's buying intentions is critical to promoting long-term business success.

Currently, the halal cosmetics industry is rapidly rising in response to the world's growing affluent Muslim population of 1.8 billion people. As a result, the halal business is thriving, and the halal cosmetics sector has enormous growth potential. Shamsudin et al. (2020) mentioned that skincare consumption in Malaysia has increased especially from younger generations below 30 years old. They also added in their literature that today's youngsters are becoming increasingly concerned about their health and beauty. According to Ray (2017), the cosmetics industry as a whole is predicted to grow at a 13.67 percent annual pace from 2014 to 2019, while the halal cosmetics sector is expected to develop at a rate of 15.2 percent from 2015 to 2022. Therefore, the statistic shows the demand for halal cosmetics among university students grows and it becomes increasingly important. Hence, this study will focus on buying intentions among university students towards halal cosmetics. According to Aufo and Aji (2021), consumers must intend to purchase the cosmetics when selecting and using halal cosmetics. For this study, the buyers' intentions are described as a deliberate effort to purchase in the future or to continue purchasing. Basically, it concentrates on the most important factors of selecting halal cosmetics products.

1.2. Knowledge

According to Simanjuntak and Murti (2020), all understandable and potentially usable information gained by someone is referred to as knowledge. Meanwhile, Majid et al. (2020) stated that the information that someone has received that is known and potentially actionable is referred to as knowledge. In this study, knowledge refers to halal knowledge of cosmetics items available on the market. Aufo and Aji (2021), in their research, mentioned that knowing halal cosmetics products has an impact on attitudes regarding halal cosmetics products. Meanwhile, Sulis (2020) defined knowledge of a halal product includes all of the features inherent in a product, such as brand, packaging, product information, pricing, point of sale, and how to utilize the product, as well as the halal label. Nurhayati and Hendar (2019) reported that product categories, brands, product traits or features, product prices, place and time of sale, how to use, and trust about halal products are all examples of knowledge of halal products. Halal product knowledge also includes information on where and when consumers can acquire halal products, as well as who sells halal products. Further, Divianjella et al. (2020), in their finding revealed that product knowledge significantly impacts the intentions to use halal cosmetics products. They also stated that once consumers have gained knowledge, they will be able to determine whether or not to purchase. In the context of this study, knowledge refers to halal knowledge about cosmetics items available on the market. This product knowledge is critical since it influences consumers' decisions to buy or reject a product.

Halal knowledge plays a significant role in influencing consumers' intentions to buy halal products (Suparti et al., 2019). They also reported that students' knowledge of halal has been shown to stimulate more buying intentions. It is supported by Puspita et al. (2020), which stated that product knowledge is an essential aspect of consumer behaviour, and accurate product knowledge will provide more insight into how consumers evaluate products. It was matched with the research done by Ambol and Sapir (2020)

stated that exposure to cosmetics goods on a daily basis helps to develop the requisite cosmetics knowledge and skills. It implies that having adequate cosmetics knowledge will surely help the customers to make efficient halal cosmetics purchases. Hence, consumers with good product knowledge and understanding of the benefits of halal products will be more likely to purchase the products. Efendi (2020) suggests that the more knowledgeable someone is about halal items, the more likely they want to buy them.

1.3. Religiosity

Religion is defined as a person's belief in the ultimate conviction and intrinsic truth of a religion's teachings and scriptures. It can determine people's behaviour, direction, and decision-making in their life. Therefore, it can influence consumers' attitudes and behaviour in purchasing halal products (Rahman et al., 2015; Usman et al., 2021; Yaakop et al., 2021).

Religiosity is described as to what extent an individual's commitment to their faith, as well as how that religion is expressed in the individual's views and behaviour. In simple words, it refers to how they interpret their belief into their daily actions. In other terms, religiosity refers to the degree of religious belief, participation, and commitment of someone in their life (De Run et al., 2010). Furthermore, religiosity is connected to the strength of an individual's religious beliefs and commitment to follow religious principles (McDaniel & Burnett, 1990). Hence, the function of religiosity of someone acts as guidelines to individual behaviour in society and beforehand influences individual behaviour.

The religion of someone is a key element that may influence buying intentions that determine consumption patterns. Religiosity has a direct and significant favourable impact on the intentions to buy halal-certified products. (Nasution et al., 2016; Usman et al., 2021). There was also a finding of a study that implied Muslims' religious beliefs have an impact on their buying decisions. A broader conception of religiosity includes the elements of religious belief, norms, consumer values, environmental responsiveness, knowledge, and social responsiveness for Muslims that influence their decisions (Abdullah et al., 2021). Knowledge, religiosity, and attitude have a major impact on the buying intentions of halal cosmetics items (Rohmatun et al., 2017).

1.4. Halal Certification

Halal certification is an official document that verifies the halal status not only to products or food businesses (F&B) but also to services, is in compliance with shariah law. A competent authority body should issue halal certification in a country. In Malaysia, the main competent authority is Jabatan Agama Islam Malaysia (JAKIM also known as Department of Islamic Development Malaysia in English, and Jabatan Agama Islam Negeri (JAIN). JAKIM is a body that has played a significant role in halal certification since 1994.

There are many standards produced by Malaysian Standards (MS) according to the types of industry. JAKIM uses the standards as the basis for certification, and at the same time, other requirements will also be taken into account to complete the certification process. The success of the halal supply chain, for instance, can be achieved through the effective implementation of halal certification (Zainuddin et al., 2019).

Halal certification is one of the important elements that influence the attitude of users of cosmetics products, besides ingredients and product brand. Therefore, cosmetics entrepreneurs realised the necessity of halal certification for their cosmetics products, as they are used in day-to-day life (Ayob et al., 2016; Legowati & Albab, 2019). However, past research revealed no significant difference in the profit margin before and after obtaining a halal certificate of SMEs (Giyanti & Indriastiningsih, 2019).

Whereas halal certification is a tool of improvement to achieve organizational performance, it is applicable to many industries, including services, beyond the traditional practices of food industries. Halal certification may increase the performance of firms if they have the certification (Ab Talib et al., 2016). In addition, consumers are becoming more confident in the halal certification or whether the goods can be verified by the certificate (Riyanto et al., 2020).

2. Problem Statement

The halal cosmetics industry is rapidly expanding. Muslim consumers gradually choosing halal cosmetics instead non-halal cosmetics, and it has also become new trend in recent years. Malaysia's halal cosmetics sector is worth about USD800 million and growing at a rate of 24% per year. (Halal Industry Development Corporation, 2014). However, in his study, Masood (2021) stated that because of the world's growing Muslim population, consumer buying intentions for halal cosmetics, on the other hand, receive less attention. He reported that there was only a total of 23 articles conducted on the halal cosmetics industry. This indicates that there is a gap in research on consumer buying intentions of halal cosmetics.

Currently, the market has become highly competitive due to the numerous alternative items that have been introduced to attract consumer attention. As a result, it is critical to understand what people expect when acquiring items or services. According to a survey by Yeo et al. (2016), Muslim customers' purchasing habits have evolved, where Muslims now prefer products that emphasize sanitation, safety, and standards. Therefore, both Muslim and non-Muslim consumers will be more aware of halal cosmetics as a result of marketing activities. However, the lack of standard rules for halal certification and the related halal cost are significant barriers to reaching the halal beauty market (Azuar, 2021). Meanwhile, Zakaria et al. (2019) said that Muslim women in Malaysia used to be unconcerned with halal cosmetics and beauty products, where no attempt was made to promote them.

Khan et al. (2020) stated that halal cosmetics manufacturers continue to struggle with positioning and are unable to figure out how to get consumers to buy. They added although Generation Y consumers are becoming more aware of the benefits of using halal cosmetics. The current generation has been described as difficult to comprehend in terms of their expectations and requirements. They have more information and are concerned about various issues that may have been less important to past generations. Today's youngsters are becoming increasingly concerned about their health and appearance. They are very concerned about their looks and keep up with the latest fashion trends and market preferences. These elements that may influence their buying intentions on halal cosmetics are yet unknown. Moreover, Ahmad and Omar (2016) found that there is still more work to educate young Muslims about what they eat, drink, and use in terms of halal and shariah compliance. They also added that all cosmetics must comply with government legal requirements, but how many do this is unclear. In reality, finding

cosmetics free of animal by-products, harmful chemicals, or alcohol and halal is difficult. This study aims to reveal the factors that influence the buying intentions of halal cosmetics among university students in Malaysia to address the gap.

3. Research Questions

The following are the research questions for this study:

- i. What are the main factors (knowledge, religiosity and halal certification) for buying intentions among university students on halal cosmetics?
- ii. Is there any relationship between (knowledge, religiosity and halal certification) for buying intentions among university students on halal cosmetics?

4. Purpose of the Study

The following are the purposes of this study:

- i. To identify the main factors (knowledge, religiosity, and halal certification) that contribute to buying intentions among university students on halal cosmetics.
- ii. To determine the relationship between knowledge, religiosity, and halal certification for buying intentions among university students on halal cosmetics.

5. Research Methods

A quantitative method was applied in this study, where it focused on the aspect of statistical analysis of numerical data acquired through survey research, such as questionnaires. The items in the questionnaires were developed and designed purposely to answer the objectives of this study. The quantitative perspective of this study, on the other hand, focused on a measurement interval scale for knowledge, religiosity, and halal certification. The questionnaire was divided into five sections (Section A: Demographic, Section B: Buying Intentions, Section C: Knowledge, Section D: Religiosity, and Section E: Halal Certification). The statements in the questions are on a Likert scale, and respondents must indicate how much they agree or disagree with each statement. The Likert scale's range is based on a 5-point scale (1: Strongly Disagree, 2: Disagree, 3: Neutral, 4: Agree, 5: Strongly Agree). The Likert scale was chosen for this study because it does not force people to express an either-or position, but rather allows them to remain neutral if they prefer.

The probability sampling approach, often known as random sampling, was utilised in this study. A probability sample is one in which every unit in the population has a chance ($0 < 1$) of being selected in an accurately calculated sample. The Unit of analysis of this study is university students in Selangor. Thus, a total of 292 respondents have participated in this research, However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the questionnaires were distributed via google form to the respondents. The data were analysed using frequencies, descriptive and regression analyses were tested to identify the factors of buying intentions towards halal cosmetics among university students.

5.1. Reliability Test

Table 1. Reliability Test

Dimension	Cronbach's Alpha
Buying Intentions	.948
Knowledge	.880
Religiosity	.916
Halal Certification	.919

To test data consistency, the reliability test was conducted throughout Cronbach's Alpha test. Once researchers had obtained all the data from the respondents, the data were analysed using SPSS Software. Here, Cronbach's Alpha is used to assess the reliability, which indicates how well the items set positively correlated with one another. Table 1 shows the result of Cronbach's Alpha values for each variable obtained to be above 0.8. The Cronbach Alpha value score between 8.00-9.00 indicates a very good association, as stated by Hair et al. (2016). Therefore, the entire items are considered reliable and suitable as variables for this study.

6. Findings

6.1. Respondents Profile

Table 2. Respondents Profile

	Respondents Profile	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	124	42.5
	Female	168	57.5
Race	Malay	268	91.8
	Indian	10	3.4
	Chinese	7	2.4
	Others	7	2.4
Age	<20	57	19.5
	20-21	135	46.2
	22-23	46	15.8
	24-25	33	11.3
	>25	21	7.2
Religion	Islam	277	94.9
	Hindu	9	3.1
	Christian	4	1.4
	Buddhist	1	0.3
	Others	1	0.3
Education	Foundation	6	2.1
	Diploma	201	68.8
	Degree	59	20.2
	Others	26	8.9

Table 2 shows the demographic profile of the respondents, including gender, race, age, religion, and education. Out of 292 respondents, 168 (57.5%) were female, and the remaining 124 (42.5%) were male. The diversity of the respondents in terms of race shows the majority is Malay 268 (91.8%), followed by Indian 10 (3.4%) and both Chinese and others 7 (2.4%). Age-wise for the respondents were 135 (46.2%) from the age group of 20-21. As for religion, most of the respondents were Muslims, 277 (94.9%). Lastly, the majority of the respondents are diploma holders, 201 (68.8%), followed by degree holders 59 (20.2%).

6.2. Descriptive Statistic Analysis

Descriptive analysis is used to describe, summarise, organise and present raw data. In addition, there are knowledge, religiosity, and halal certification. The score of mean value has been used to analyse the main factors for the first research objective.

Table 3. Descriptive Analysis on Factors towards Halal Cosmetics Buying Intentions

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Buying Intentions	292	49.00	95.00	78.9007	9.38854
Knowledge	292	37.00	75.00	62.5548	7.48793
Religious	292	35.00	70.00	58.7637	7.35751
Halal Certification	292	18.00	45.00	38.0411	6.46734

Table 3 above shows the descriptive statistics of a dependent variable (buying intentions) and the independent variable (knowledge, religiosity and halal certification). N shows that each data the researchers collected is from 292 respondents. The result shows that the variables with the highest mean score are knowledge with 62.5548, followed by religiosity with 58.7737 and halal certification with 38.0411. In conclusion, the main factor that contributes the most to the first objective is knowledge.

6.3. Regression Analysis

The analysis would like to identify the relationship between factors that contribute to buying intentions (knowledge, religiosity, halal certification) among university students towards halal cosmetics. The proposed hypothesis is as follow:

H0: There is no significant relationship between factors (knowledge, religiosity, and halal certification) that contribute to buying intentions among university students on halal cosmetics.

H1: There is a significant relationship between factors (knowledge, religiosity, and halal certification) that contribute to buying intentions among university students on halal cosmetics.

Table 4. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.802 ^a	.643	.639	5.64221

a. Predictors: (Constant), Mean_Halal_Cert, Mean_Knowledge, Mean_Religiosity

Table 5. ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	16481.789	3	5493.930	172.578	.000 ^b
Residual	9168.331	288	31.834		
Total	25650.120	291			

a. Dependent Variable: Mean_BI

b. Predictors: (Constant), Mean_Halal_Cert, Mean_Knowledge, Mean_Religiosity

Table 6. Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1 (Constant)	12.980	2.931			4.429	.000
Mean Knowledge	.693	.071	.553		9.764	.000
Mean Religiosity	.447	.082	.350		5.462	.000
Mean Halal Cert.	-.097	.082	-.067		-1.174	.242

a. Dependent Variable: Mean_BI

Based on the above table, the respondents in this study agreed that the main factor that correlates with their buying intentions is knowledge. It means that the sources of knowledge like family, friends, relatives, lecturers, government, and doctors play an important part in their buying intentions on halal cosmetics. Next, as a Muslim, religiosity plays a significant role in shaping the attitudes of the believers on buying intentions to the extent where students interpret and follow their religion's teachings. Meanwhile, Table 4 reported R square is 0.643, indicating about 64.3% variation between buying intentions and knowledge and religiosity.

However, the good fit model (ANOVA) is shown significant (p-value = .000). Table 5 shows that there is a relationship between the dependent and independent variables since the p-value is less than 0.05. Moreover, Table 6 shows the overall result that there is a relationship between buying intentions and knowledge, religiosity with a p-value of 0.000 < 0.05. However, the halal certification shows no relationship between buying intentions and halal certification with a p-value of 0.242 > 0.05. Furthermore, the strength of the variable for knowledge is 0.693, and the religiosity value is 0.447.

7. Conclusion

The result of this study shows knowledge and religiosity positively and significantly contribute to buying intentions among university students on halal cosmetics. The outcome is consistent with Suparti et al. (2019), Puspita et al. (2020), and Efendi (2020), which mentioned that consumers are likely to purchase if they are well-informed about the halal products and also the benefits gained by the products.

Furthermore, Lestari et al. (2020) stated religiosity also has a direct effect on buying intentions on halal cosmetics. Other research shows that when people's religious beliefs grow, their views for halal cosmetics grow as well. Thus, consumers' interest in buying cosmetics with the halal logo and certification is sparked as a result of religious exposure (Suki & Suki, 2018). Unexpectedly, this study finds that religious belief plays the least important role in purchase intentions (Khan et al., 2020). They also claimed in their study that religious belief does not drive customers to make buying decisions; rather, buying halal items is an individual's choice because it ensures product safety. Surprisingly, the result indicates that there is no significant relationship between halal certification and buying intentions on halal cosmetics. This is supported by Giyanti and Indriastiningsih (2019), who stated that there was no substantial difference in profit margin before and after acquiring a halal certificate.

The findings of the study could theoretically have implications in terms of policymakers and stakeholders. Hence, government authorities such as JAKIM and JAIN need to promote the importance of halal certification in products. Moreover, the government authorities should encourage cosmetics producers to apply halal certification and educate consumers about the importance of halal certification in cosmetics. Government agencies recently know how best to facilitate communications, monitoring, and control of the halal cosmetics industry, thereby developing a better infrastructure for halal cosmetics stakeholders. The awareness of halal certification can be implemented through electronic media such as television, radio, and the most influential platform, which is social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc. JAKIM also can appoint the influencer to create awareness of halal certification, especially to the young generation in Malaysia. Furthermore, consumer education is necessary to highlight the importance of halal products not aimed only for Muslims but also intended for non-Muslims. Based on the findings of a study by Ahmad and Omar (2016) consumers were aware that the government had exposed halal cosmetics available in the market. However, it may not be enough to change their minds about purchasing halal cosmetics.

Research grants should be provided to universities to encourage them to produce and publish quality research and articles relating to the importance of halal certification, especially in the cosmetics industry. For future research, it is suggested that the proportion of Muslim and non-Muslim respondents be equal so that the results may be generalised. Aside from JAKIM and JAIN, universities play a significant role in providing students with halal information. A university can also create a halal-related programme.

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