ANALYSIS OF MUSLIM CONSUMER PREFERENCES IN BUYING SKINCARE PRODUCTS

PREFERENSI KONSUMEN MUSLIM DALAM MEMBELI PRODUK PERAWATAN KULIT

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Abstract
This study investigates the determinants of a Muslim consumer in buying skincare products considering the attributes exist in skincare products. The purpose of this study is to find out the components of skincare products shaping the preferences of Muslim customers in buying skincare products. Moreover, this study specifically attempts to identify the most significant aspect influencing the preferences of Muslim consumers. This study is a field research study with the sample of study of University Students in Surakarta. The result complies the previous studies on the topic and gives a pivotal input for skincare industry. This study recommended a robust framework for halal products to compete with its counterparts and suggested the policy makers on designing an environmental friendly products leading the nation’s economy and long-term prosperity.

Keywords: Muslim Consumers, Halal Products, Skincare Products.

Abstrak

Kata Kunci:Kosumen Muslim, Produk Halal, Produk Perawatan Kulit

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82
INTRODUCTION

Life changes in this era of globalization, from the environment, technology, food and any other life style of society. Alongside with these changes, the economic sector changes following the changes of human needs. Health and beauty become the primary goal of every human being. With this objective, skincare products take a vital place in life and become a necessity to be fulfilled in order to achieve life satisfaction. The raising of concern on self-care leads people willingness on paying extra fees for skincare products. This is corroborated by the rise in growth of skincare products which in 2017 by 6% and predicted to rise throughout the years. This phenomenon supported by the media which shape an increasing of awareness in maintaining healthy skin for women.

Taking care of yourself can be done in various ways, one of which is the use of skincare products. In Indonesia, there are many brands offering skincare products such as Wardah, The Body Shop, Oriflame, Sari Ayu, and other products. With so many products offering skincare products, there are many choices of products for consumers. Not only national products, there is a number of products from various countries competing in the market such as Etude, Faceshop, Nature Republic and many others. Subsequently, customers preferences are shaped by many factors with many options of skincare products. This is according to the definition of preference which can be defined as the choice of a product by consumers based on consideration of attributes contained in the products which provide value to consumers.

Determinant factors of preferences for a Muslim might consider religion aspect as known in the concept of consumption in Islamic economic. In the concept of Islamic economics, consumption is hardly integrated with one’s faith, so that a person faith becomes a benchmark for his preferences in consumption since a faith has a tremendous effect on one preferences in using a product. In the concept of Islamic economics, apart from integrating with faith, the purpose of consuming a product is to achieve falâh (salvation), which carried a meaning that Muslim consumption preferences tend to be beneficial and detrimental to the products to be consumed. In determining the product to be purchased, Muslim consumers should be oriented to benefit rather than utility or satisfaction. This is because satisfaction tends to be more subjective than benefit.

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oriented which tends to be more objective. Consequently, consumers are more rational when deciding to buy something based on its benefit.

Basically, the concept of consumption in Islam is always guided by religious teachings. Among the important teachings related to consumption is to pay attention to the halal and haram of something that is consumed. Therefore, this study aims to find out what are the attributes shaping the preferences of Muslim consumers in buying skincare products and what attributes are contributing the most significant as underlying reason in their preferences for buying skincare products. Apart from it, this research attempts to fill a gap of information in this study and expected to be a reference for future study developing the issues which remained untapped.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Skincare is a beauty product that is used to treat skin on the body and face, skincare has the function to prevent acne, disguise and remove black spots on the face, remove acne scars, make facial skin look bright and not dull. In addition to facial skin, skincare is also used for body skin such as hand and body lotion which is useful for softening and brightening the skin and scrub which is useful for removing dirt sticks to the skin. There are many types of skincare products such as facial wash, serum, moisturizer, mask, sun protection, hand and body lotion.

Consumption of goods and services is built based on two fundamental aspects, namely, needs and usefulness or satisfaction. In conventional economics, there is no fundamental difference between needs and wants since both give the same effect if not fulfilled which is scarcity. While in the perspective of Islamic economics, consumption is defined as the use of good commodities and far from something that is forbidden. Muslim will always pay attention to the teachings of Islam related to aspects achieving happiness in the world and the hereafter. Consequently, every Muslim will be very careful on their consumption as a submission to Allah and their accountability in the hereafter which lead them to only deal with halal and clean goods.

Al Ghazali stated that consumption must always be oriented to Allah SWT, not only to satisfaction. The reason behind it is that consumption which based on a passion will continue to encourage humans to act and try to fulfil desires that are no limits. Accordingly, consumption of

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goods and services must be in accordance with the needs and necessities\(^\text{11}\). Moreover, Imam al-Ghazali stressed five fundamental basic needs that are beneficial for human life and well-being, namely belief, life, intellect, offspring and property which later known as maqāsid as-sharīah\(^\text{12}\).

Consumers are people who buy or use goods and services fulfilling their needs. Consumer behaviour is the habit or tendency of consumers in carrying out economic actions, to meet their goals and also achieve the desired satisfaction. Consumer behaviour studies how human takes the action of choosing between the various options being faced by utilizing the resources they have\(^\text{13}\). Consumer behaviour can be influenced by three main factors which are culture, social and personal aspects. These three covers many little areas such as age, economic status, personality, and belief\(^\text{14}\).

In the view of Islamic economics, there are two main goals of a consumer behaviour which are material and spiritual aspects of consumption. Both aspects of consumption will be achieved if consumers can balance between total utility and marginal utility. In accordance, every Muslim must try to maximize the use value of each item consumed which will lead him to a better and more optimistic life\(^\text{15}\). In Islamic economics, consumption is not only about how to satisfy materially but also performing duties to Allah as a servant. For this reason, there are five basic principles of Islamic consumer behaviour. Firstly, shariah principles which are related to the basics of Islamic religious law that must be fulfilled in carrying out a consumption including aqidah, knowledge, and compliance. The second principle is quality that must be in accordance with the Islamic law. Thirdly, principle of priority by paying attention to the order of consumption based on interests that must be prioritized. Followed by the social principles which ask people to act responsibly to the surrounding creating a harmonious life and finished by the principles of environment by considering their sustainability\(^\text{16}\).

Preference can be interpreted as the attitude of the consumer's preference for a product that will be selected from a wide selection of existing products or services\(^\text{17}\). Consumer preferences are formed from several variables such as habits, tendencies, and conformity to various variations that exist in the product. Consumer preferences can be explained as a consumer's attitude towards a


choice of product or supplier brands that are formed through an evaluation process. Preference theory can serve as a tool to analyse the level of satisfaction for consumers. For example, if someone wants to consume or use a product with limited resources, he must choose alternative options so that the use value or utility obtained reaches the highest point.

There are several factors that can influence the preferences of Muslim consumers, namely halal label, price, quality, branding, and attractive packaging. Several steps must be passed until consumers fit their preferences, starting from the appearance of a product as a set of attributes to the benefit it gives. Preferences in the study of Islamic economics state that a Muslim consumer must wisely use his wealth, it must be based on preferences that contain *maslahah* aiming that goods and services have been purchased provide benefits for their lives.

Halal products remain a top preference for Muslim consumers in many places. In Malaysia, a number of Islamic banking consumers prefer to deal with pawnshops operating in Islamic concept rather than the conventional. In contrary, a research study on students in Malaysia with 476 respondents was revealed that most of the students use general information on a product in determining their purchases compared to religious aspects.

Differently, a study conducted among students in Indonesia using purposive sampling technique with 100 respondents as customers of skincare products and found that there is a relationship between self-discrpeancy and consumptive behaviour in buying skincare products. Another study on buying foreign cosmetic products with the method of logistic regression analysis technique found that halal label, price and quality significantly influence the preferences of Muslim consumers in purchasing foreign cosmetic products.

**METHODOLOGY**

This is a field research project employing a descriptive research approach. A mix of qualitative and quantitative research approach gives an overview results from a compilation of samples generated from an interview with the respondents. The data used are primary data obtained directly from the ten respondents in Surakarta. Sample selection was done using a purposive

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sampling technique with aims generating samples from various aspects. Furthermore, this study also applies a library research method strengthening the fundamental theory of the study with the hope of obtaining a solid result.

**DISCUSSION**

Health and wealth taking place as priority in this era. A number of conferences, seminars, coaching programmes and talks are held following the demand of people who are eager to know deeper. On one side, health is deemed as the most precious wealth somebody has. Without it, a person will suffer in his life. Hence, everybody wants to have a healthy and cheerful life. However, healthy without beauty is not enough nowadays, the young generation are requesting more than health which must be beautiful and attractive\(^\text{24}\).

Skincare products become magnetic things for young ladies, nowadays, every girl wants to be gorgeous, shiny and attractive. There are many factors influencing this new trend, one of them are the emerging and rising of celebrities. This study attempts to investigate the behavioural changes on youngsters by looking at their preferences on skincare products. The data of the study obtained through interviews with respondents who are consumers of skincare products, the data then processed and presented descriptively with appropriate exposure to what is in the interview results. In order to maintain privacy and the validity of the data source, the inclusion of the name will be replaced by using the respondent's code. In this study, there were six attributes that were used as preferences by respondents in buying skincare products.

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Table 1. Respondents Preferences in Purchasing Skincare Products

According to the above table, the data from respondents indicates that there are different responses in each of the attributes. It can be inferred from the above results that price is the most significant attribute shaping the preferences of young costumers in purchasing skincare products. Price is closely related to the economic condition of a buyer, among lower social groups, price is the most important factor in determining purchasing decisions. Apart from that, consumers believe the assumption that there is a positive relationship between price and quality of a product. Therefore, they will compare one product with others before making a decision on buying a product.  

Effect of products came as a second most impactful element of a product in shaping consumer preferences. Effect and benefit of a product will psychologically influence customers on their satisfactory feelings. Hence, they will continuously purchasing the same products over time. This fact is in accordance with our respondents answers above. This can be a note for a skincare products to really look at the benefit or effect their products carry out to customers.  

Ingredients, Brand and Type of Skin coming next as they only get 60% positive responses from the respondents. This results indicate that although those attributes are important, there are still can be considered by customers. In other words, skincare companies may look at these components as their secondary aspect in forming and formulating skincare products. However, these attributes cannot be totally gone from the products since they have fairly significant impact on customers decision.  

Surprisingly, halal label is considered as the most less significant element among other aspects of skincare products. This results must be taken seriously by Islamic finance industry in the country. Lack of awareness and literacy might be the real problem on the development of the Islamic financial industry in Indonesia. As the most populous Muslim nation, Indonesia has a big potential for its Islamic finance industry. However, there are still many works to do for the regulators and practitioners rejuvenating the development of the industry.


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Apart from knowing the 6 attributes that are the respondents' preferences in buying skincare products, the paper then investigates more on the most important elements of skincare products for the youngsters and the results are shown in the table below:

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Table 2. Most Important Elements of Skincare Products

Based on the results above from the data obtained, there were a large proportion of the total respondents who chose price as the most important attribute in determining their preferences for buying skincare products. In addition, it can be seen from the consistency of the data which shows that almost all of the total respondents stated that price is the most significant and important attribute of skincare products. This result shows that price is the only element of the marketing which is often taken into consideration by consumers in determining their decision to buy a product considering purchasing power and the use value of a product. In addition, respondents background might influence their answer. The unstable financial condition will lead to price sensitive behaviour. This result align with other studies examining the sensitivity of price for those with unstable financial condition.

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Following the result of the first table, the second table shows that effect, ingredients and brand coming as the next lower level respectively. They remain as an important elements of skincare products, however, they are not as sensitive as price when it comes to customers preferences. In other words, skincare companies have to consider those elements while taking care of others or make one of them as the signature of products.

Consistently, halal label come as the lowest significance of the elements compared to others. Indeed this is an unexpected result on a Muslim majority nation. In other hand, researchers have found that majority Muslim people in Indonesia have a high awareness of halal and haram in food products but not other daily products. This result points out big responsibilities for Islamic financial educators and practitioners to spread out the Islamic financial literacy. Moreover, this finding also indicates that people regards halal label is important for food products but not others as they deemed other products as non-consumption products\textsuperscript{30}.

**CONCLUSION**

The studies on customer preferences have been done in various ways, this paper attempts to investigate the topic employing six main variables namely, effect, price, ingredients, brand, type of skin and halal label. In this study it can be inferred that in buying skincare products Muslim consumers consider those six variables with the sequence of price, effect, ingredients, brand, type of skin and halal label. Most respondents deemed price as the most influential and important element of skincare products. This result might indicate the unstable financial conditions of the respondents. However, this result is valid and must be taken into consideration for skincare companies especially halal products.

Following the price elements, effect, ingredients, brand, and type of skin share the fluctuation response from the respondents. This indicates that those aspects carry an important role as a component of skincare products and can be a signature for a specific product to attract customers. Furthermore, these elements are supporting elements for the main component of a product. This result aligns with some previous studies on the topic related to skincare products.

Halal label consistently as lowest significant element of skincare products. This must be a special note for Islamic financial industry practitioners and policy makers. This result also indicates the lack of awareness and literacy on halal products. In addition, there is an indication of misperceptions of Muslim society on halal products which only limited to food products.

This paper carries some recommendations, the study urges policy makers to design a robust policy framework spreading the awareness and literacy on halal products in collaboration with Islamic community organization of the nation such as Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama. It also humbly requests Islamic finance practitioners and educators working together with Islamic


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preachers on educating society on halal products in Islam. Furthermore, this paper recommends future study to expand the sample size and regional areas of the study.

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