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Halal Cosmetics: A Review on Halalan Toyyiban Concept in Soap Production

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Abstract

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Soap is the oldest skin cleaner in the world. In the last few years, many people have been more concerned about the use of soap as the world faces the Covid-19 pandemic. In general, soap is also a cosmetic product that has been widely used among male and female consumers. Therefore, as a Muslim consumer, it is essential to know about the *Halal* cosmetic products used. In accordance with *Halal* cosmetics standards, the products must comply with the *Halalan Toyyiban* concept to ensure product quality and safety. Although cosmetic products have gained scientific advancement, the development of cosmetics such as *Halalan Toyyiban* products must be probed further to fulfil global demand adequately. Hence, this paper is aimed to study the concept of *Halalan Toyyiban* in soap production. The finding of this study shows that the *Halal* concept of soap can be determined through its ingredients and production process, whereas the *Toyyiban* concept is based on the safety and quality of the product. Furthermore, the finding of this study might benefit cosmetic manufacturers in promoting the *Halalan Toyyiban* concept in the global market.

1. Introduction

The *Halal* industry has earned much attention worldwide as the Muslim population has gradually increased yearly. Therefore, the demand for *Halal* products of food and beverages, pharmaceuticals, and cosmetics among Muslim consumers also increases (Sugibayashi *et al.*, 2019; Shamsuddin & Mohd Yusof, 2020). In particular, *Halal* cosmetics are an emerging *Halal* industry with a potentially high value-added. This is because *Halal*-certified cosmetic products provide quality assurance to consumers due to the comprehensiveness and wholesomeness of *Halal* production procedures (Zulkifli, 2019; Shamsuddin & Mohd Yusof, 2020). Therefore, *Halal* cosmetics are associated with ethical consumerism and stringent quality assurance requirements, giving them a broader market appeal that attracts non-Muslim consumers (Sugibayashi *et al.*, 2019; Abdul Hafaz *et al.*, 2021). Nevertheless, the demand for *Halal* cosmetics remains unmet despite the potential in these industries. This is because consumers are not

sufficiently exposed to *Halal* brands as cosmetics production is dominated by non-*Halal* cosmetic manufacturers whose production processes may not meet the requirements of *Halal* science. In addition, the research and development of *Halal* cosmetics and the evaluation of their product's performance are still in their infancy (Kaur *et al.*, 2018; Sugibayashi *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, it can be said that even though the demand for *Halal* cosmetics has increased, the production of *Halal* cosmetic products is quite challenging due to the domination of non-*Halal* cosmetic manufacturers worldwide.

Generally, cosmetics can be defined as any substance or preparation intended to be placed in contact with various external parts of the human body; its primary purpose is for cleaning, perfuming, changing their appearance, correcting body odours, protecting them, or keeping them clean (National Pharmaceutical Regulatory Agency (NPRA), 2017; Department of Standards Malaysia, 2019). Therefore, soap is also included as one of the cosmetic products because it has been used as a body washing agent (Dwiyanti *et al.*,

2020). Soap consumption has increased in the last few years due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Coronavirus, also known as Covid-19, has spread worldwide and has already infected millions of people in a short period. As the virus can spread through hand contact, thus it is very crucial to take precautionary measures by regularly washing hands with soap. Therefore, this situation has led to increased use of soap among people (Coiffard & Couteau, 2020).

Specifically, soap is used as a body cleanser in solid or liquid, with or without additional substances that do not irritate the skin. Soap is commonly the product of the saponification process (Iriany *et al.*, 2019). Scientifically, soap is a water-soluble anionic surfactant. Soap is created by chemically processing fats and oils, or their fatty acids, with a strong alkali. Therefore, soap is primarily utilised as a surfactant in the washing, bathing, and cleaning processes (Khdour & Nawaj'a, 2017; Maidin *et al.*, 2020). A good soap cleans the skin without harming it, and the soap also can protect the skin from diseases caused by microorganisms (Dwiyanti *et al.*, 2020). Thus, it can be concluded that soap is a type of product used to clean a human's body; generally, it can be in the form of solid and liquid (Eneh, 2017; Kumar, 2019).

In *Halal* cosmetics, they need to comply with the *Halalan Toyyiban* concept. In other words, the products must be hygienic, pure, clean, and of the best quality, but at the same time, they also need to comply with *Syari'ah* rules (Mansor *et al.*, 2017). This is because *Halalan Toyyiban* can be defined as a concept in which a product is certified *Halal*, contains wholesome ingredients, and poses no health danger when used (Sugibayashi *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, to produce *Halal* products, the manufacturers must follow strict production process standards that comply with Islamic rules and the requirements of quality and sanitary standards set out by Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) (Mansor *et al.*, 2020). So, in *Halal* cosmetics, the *Halalan Toyyiban* concept covers critical aspects of product preparation, including selecting ingredients, processing, packaging, storing, and delivering to consumers (Mansor *et al.*, 2017).

In Malaysia, the production of *Halal* cosmetics has become a trend among local cosmetic manufacturers as they are keen to dominate the market and come out with a wide range of product types to seek and satisfy clients (Abdullah *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, the growing knowledge and awareness regarding *Halal* cosmetic products are drastically changed to meet the local market's demand and supply. However, international companies unsurprisingly rule Malaysia's cosmetics and beauty items (Zakaria *et al.*, 2019; Kaur *et al.*, 2018). Hence, despite the understanding of *Halal* products, many Muslim consumers remain loyal to uncertified *Halal* cosmetic products because many products are imported and do not have *Halal* certification (Ngah *et al.*, 2021).

In short, as soap consumption has increased due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it is essential to know the *Halalan Toyyiban* concept in soap production to ensure the quality and safety of the product. Thus, this paper was written to study the concept of *Halalan Toyyiban* in soap production. This paper focuses on the soap for cosmetic uses, not for general uses. This paper adopts qualitative methods to collect information from articles and journal sources. This paper discusses three main topics: the overview of soap, the *Halalan Toyyiban* concept in soap production, and *Halal*

cosmetics in Malaysia.

2. Overview of soap

2.1 Definition of soap

Soap is a cleansing agent for the human body that everyone uses regularly and has been around since human civilisation (Kumar, 2019). Soap is a pioneer detergent as the oldest skin cleaner in the world since the evidence suggests that the earliest manufacture of soap-like materials took place in Babylon during the third millennium Before Common Era (BCE) (Chirani *et al.*, 2021). In the 200 Common Era (CE), the earliest genuine reference to soaps as cleaning agents was found in the writings of Galen, a Greek physician who described the production of soap from fat, ash, lye, and lime. On the other hand, William Shepphard developed a liquid form of soap, which was not created until the nineteenth century (Joshi, 2017).

Soap is an anionic surfactant produced by chemically processing fats and oils, or their fatty acids, with a strong alkali (Khdour & Nawaj'a, 2017). In particular, soaps are water-soluble salts of fatty acids with twelve or more carbon atoms that result from the interaction of fats or oils with alkali under the right circumstances. Solid or bar soaps are made from sodium hydroxide and glyceride saponification, whereas liquid or toilet soaps are made from potassium hydroxide (Isah *et al.*, 2021).

Soaps are made for various purposes, including cleansing, bathing, and medicine, depending on the materials and the technique used to make them (Isah *et al.*, 2021). However, there are two distinct applications of soap. Firstly, for cosmetic usage, which included coloured and scented toilet soaps. Secondly, medical use included "medicinal soaps" (Coiffard & Couteau, 2020). Soaps are primarily used as surfactants in washing, bathing, and cleaning. It is ideal for use as a surface-acting agent that is active, wetting, and emulsifying (Sawyer *et al.*, 2017; Maidin *et al.*, 2020).

The fundamental basis of the soap mechanism is the attraction between the molecules of contaminants, soap, and water (Dwiyanti *et al.*, 2020). Hence, applying soap in regular handwashing is accessible and necessary since it eliminates pollutants that water cannot altogether be removed. Soaps dissolve insoluble contaminants, trap dirt, and wash it away with water. Moreover, they also break down the lipid bilayer barrier encasing microorganisms, inactivating them, and killing viruses and bacteria. Therefore, handwashing and hand hygiene are currently considered one of the most effective ways to avoid illnesses like COVID-19 by reducing the transmission of respiratory and diarrheal infections from one person to the next (Chirani *et al.*, 2021).

In brief, soap has been around since 200 CE as a cleansing agent for the human body. Chemically, soap is an anionic surfactant and a water-soluble salt of fatty acids. The purpose of soap depends on the materials and techniques used to make them. However, soaps are generally used for cosmetic and medical purposes. Specifically, soaps must work with water to clean our bodies and hands effectively. Therefore, handwashing with soaps is essential during this COVID-19 pandemic, as soap and water work together to kill

viruses and bacteria on our hands.

2.2 Forms of soap

Generally, consumers use cosmetics for body cleansing daily to maintain cleanliness and body hygiene and provide a feeling of freshness and relaxation. Therefore, to attract more consumers, soap producers introduce different shapes and functions of soaps into the market. Thus, soaps may be differentiated based on their purposes and characteristics, such as soaps for children, cream, protective, scented, anti-acne, and limestone. As a result, the range of bath soap products has become very broad and left many options available to consumers. However, the most common soap available in the market is bar and liquid (Kucia & Bielak, 2017).

Bar soap is a regular solid and opaque soap (Iriany *et al.*, 2019). Bar soap is produced by saponifying solid fat with sodium hydroxide (NaOH), a bath soap used regularly (Dwiyanti *et al.*, 2020). Mainly, bar soap is still popular among the elderly. The lifespan of bar soap is determined by its usage because when users rub soap on their bodies, little differences may occur as the soap thins out until it is completely gone. Therefore, its lifespan is based on frequent use (Kumar, 2019). Hence, to extend the shelf life of bar soap, it must be appropriately kept after its packaging has been removed. Apart from that, it is advisable to use one bar of soap per person as it is considered unsanitary to be shared. This is because a shared bar soap can be an intermediate to spread illness from one person to another (Kholil, 2020).

On the other hand, liquid soap is a soap produced in a liquid state (Iriany *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, liquid soap is commonly packaged using a tube (Dwiyanti *et al.*, 2020). Liquid soap is produced using potassium hydroxide, producing a softer soap (Khdour & Nawaj'a, 2017). Due to their lower pH and the inclusion of chemicals with calming surfactant effects, they are somewhat softer for the skin. As a result, they are preferable to be used among consumers and are often employed in public areas due to their sanitary and aesthetic qualities. Furthermore, liquid soap also has a subtle fragrance and good density. Thus, consumers desire liquid soaps to have hydrating, refreshing, and nourishing effects on their skins (Kucia & Bielak, 2017).

Besides, bar and liquid soap have specific benefits and drawbacks (Kholil, 2020). Bar soap is generally more environmentally friendly than liquid soap as it does not need plastic packaging. Next, bar soap is also concentrated, which lowers carbon dioxide emissions during transportation, and it is less expensive to produce than liquid soap. Nevertheless, it is considered unpopular among consumers since it seems unsanitary. In addition, many consumers avoid using bar soap since it tends to slide, remain wet, and leave a mess (Wange, 2020).

On the contrary, liquid soap is more popular and preferred by consumers. This is because liquid soap is more straightforward to use than bar soap and is more sanitary. As it is sold in sealed containers or carefully packaged, thus its sanitary is secured and attracts the consumers to buy it. Unfortunately, as compared to bar soap, liquid soap is more expensive on the market (Kholil, 2020).

To summarise, soap can be in various forms and functions, but the bar and liquid soap are generally the most common in the market. Physically, bar soap is solid and opaque, whereas liquid soap is in a liquid state. Chemically, bar soap is produced using sodium hydroxide, while liquid soap is made using potassium hydroxide. Therefore, bar and liquid soap have advantages and disadvantages due to their distinct shapes.

2.3 Soap production process

Soaps are produced either by the neutralisation or saponification process. Mainly, the neutralisation process is caused by the interaction of free fatty acids with alkali, while the saponification process is caused by the reaction of triglycerides with alkali (Widyasanti *et al.*, 2017; Kumar, 2019). For neutralisation, fats and oils are first separated or hydrolysed using high-pressure steam to separate crude fatty acids and glycerine. After that, the fatty acids are refined by distillation and neutralised with an alkali (neat soap) to make soap and water (Khdour & Nawaj'a, 2017).

However, the primary method for making soap is through the saponification process, commonly used in soap-making processes. This process involves the breakdown of naturally existing fats and oils by sodium hydroxide (caustic soda) or potassium hydroxide (caustic potash). Various additives can give the soaps certain unique features (Eneh, 2017). Saponification occurs when triglycerides are mixed with a strong base to produce fatty acid metal salts during soap-making. The hardness, fragrance, cleaning, lather, and moisturising properties of soaps are determined by the distribution of unsaturated and saturated fatty acids (Vidal *et al.*, 2018).

There are two primary soap-making methods in the saponification process: cold and hot. However, both methods are processed using fats mixed with a strong alkali (Burleson *et al.*, 2017). In particular, the cold process is the most basic method, often used in small-scale and small-batch manufacturing. Compared to the hot process, a higher-grade fat or oil is needed, and a greater concentration or intensity of caustic solution is utilised in the cold process. On the other hand, a soap with better quality can be produced through a hot process, as it is made by boiling the soap reaction mix (Eneh, 2017).

To sum up, soap can be produced through neutralisation or saponification. Nevertheless, the most common method in soap making is saponification. In particular, the interaction of free fatty acids with alkali happens in the neutralisation process, while the reaction of triglycerides with alkali happens in the saponification process. Generally, soap-making methods in the saponification process can be produced through cold and hot processes.

3. Halalan Togyiban concept in soap production

3.1 Halal concept in soap production

Halal cosmetics are produced using Halal materials and manufactured according to the Halal system. However, cosmetic products are known to have a complicated combination of substances. Therefore, cosmetic producers must thoroughly examine the ingredients and their

associated sources before developing and manufacturing a cosmetic product. This is because the source of substances used in the development and production of *Halal* cosmetics is critical to the final product and overall performance (Sugibayashi *et al.*, 2019).

Generally, the raw ingredients used to make a soap include various compounds, but fats and oils cover about 90% of them (Sawyer *et al.*, 2017). Specifically, fats and oils used in soap production are derived from either plant or animal sources (Khdour & Nawaj'a, 2017). Soap is mainly made from liquid fat obtained from plants, solid oil derived from animal fat or shea butter, lye derived from sodium or potassium hydroxide, fragrances, and colourants for aesthetic purposes (Burlison *et al.*, 2017).

Apart from that, the soap also can be produced using waste cooking oil (WCO) due to the attribute of the technology with green characteristics (Antonic *et al.*, 2020). Purified waste cooking oils and cow tallow combined with coconut oil are frequently used in WCO-based soap production. During bath soap manufacturing, the oils are usually mixed in various proportions. Afterwards, the triglycerides in vegetable oils and cattle tallow are saponified by hydrolysis using sodium hydroxide (NaOH) (Maotsela *et al.*, 2019).

Therefore, the status of soap's raw materials can be categorised into *Halal*, haram, and *syubhah*. In terms of *Halal* ingredients in soap production, all sources derived from plants and animals, particularly tallow that have been slaughtered in accordance with Islamic law, are permissible to be used. However, according to Islamic law, tallows derived from unslaughtered cows are considered haram (Sugibayashi *et al.*, 2019).

Specifically, the production of *Halal* cosmetics, particularly *Halal* soaps, does not focus only on their ingredients. However, the whole process that includes manufacturing, storing, packaging, labelling, and distribution must also be in accordance with the *Halal* system. Hence, a *Halal* assurance system must be in place to the cosmetic manufacturing standards, such as Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), International Organization for Standardization (ISO), etc., to ensure the *Halal* status of cosmetic products (Sugibayashi *et al.*, 2019; Department of Standard Malaysia, 2019; Department of Islamic Development Malaysia, 202).

Firstly, in terms of the manufacturing process, *Halal* cosmetics must be manufactured in compliance with GMP and other quality standards to ensure product quality and safety. Next, the premises must be constructed and situated in a way that eliminates the possibility of non-*Halal* elements contaminating them. Then, all manufacturing facilities are limited to *Halal* cosmetics production only to avoid contamination. Secondly, in terms of storing process, the warehouse and manufacturing lines for *Halal* and non-*Halal* cosmetics need to be physically separated or situated in distinct facilities (Sugibayashi *et al.*, 2019).

Thirdly, in terms of the packaging process, the materials used in manufacturing primary and secondary packaging must also meet the *Halal* requirements and not cause harm to human health. Next, in terms of the labelling process, the products must be labelled according to the regulatory

authorities' labelling requirements in each nation. Finally, in terms of the distribution process, *Halal* cosmetic products must reach the market without being contaminated with haram ingredients or *najs* to retain their *Halal* status (Sugibayashi *et al.*, 2019).

In brief, *Halal* cosmetic products, specifically *Halal* soaps, must comply with *Halal* requirements regarding their selection of ingredients and the whole process of soap manufacturing. Therefore, the soap ingredients must come from permitted sources to be considered *Halal*. On the other hand, the entire process of soap manufacturing needs to avoid contamination involving physical, biological, chemical, and haram elements.

3.2 *Toyyiban* concept in soap production

In general, *Halalan Toyyiban* is a comprehensive idea linked with qualities such as safety, fairness, and sustainability. Aside from the *Halal* word that means lawful, legal, licit, and legitimate, there is a *Toyyib* word that is often used in conjunction with *Halal*, which can mean excellent, pleasing, or agreeable. *Halal* must be seen through the lens of the topic, such as the product's raw materials, whereas *Toyyib* must be viewed through the lens of the procedure in product manufacturing (Zainal Ariffin *et al.*, 2021). Therefore, product safety and quality are usually related to the *Toyyiban* concept.

Specifically, there is an essential element of the *Toyyiban* component in the production of cosmetics in Malaysia: the cosmetic safety system (i.e., product notification with NPRA). This element is usually implemented via the product notification process that serves as a tool to regulate the safety of cosmetic products accessible to customers (Zakaria *et al.*, 2019). Apart from that, the current Malaysian *Halal* standards and certification system also can be recognised as *Toyyiban* elements that can fulfil the requirements of safe product manufacturing (Zainal Ariffin *et al.*, 2021; Ridzuan *et al.*, 2021).

However, soap production has some safety issues, particularly health. Specifically, some chemical substances used in soap production commonly cause skin irritation and dryness (Ahmed *et al.*, 2021). For instance, the skin is exposed to alkaline properties, which can lead to skin irritation as a pH of 11.0 to 12.0 is relatively easy to achieve in soap production, resulting in a temporary rise in skin pH (Coiffard & Couteau, 2020). Apart from that, synthetic surfactants (e.g., sodium lauryl sulfate) in the formulation of body washes and cleansers can also cause skin problems such as dryness, itching, after-wash tightness, stratum corneum layer damage, dermatitis, etc. (Navare *et al.*, 2019).

Therefore, a good soap should be safe for the skin, as a low-quality soap can cause the skin to peel after use. In particular, a good soap should not include an excessive quantity of caustic, free fat, and oil, as it may cause rancidity or uneven moisture content to the skin (Eneh, 2017). Moreover, a good soap should replace synthetic surfactants with mild or natural ones, as it can lead to a better application while minimising skin problems in soap production (Navare *et al.*, 2019).

On the other hand, product quality is also one of the *Toyyiban* elements in soap production, as it can provide comfort and convenience to consumers. Thus, good soaps must have much lather because inadequate foaming of soaps is unable to wash the body properly. Usually, inadequate foaming may be caused by various factors, including incorrect formulation, inadequate or partial saponification, and excessive additions. Next, the best soaps need to have a lustrous and bright appearance. A lack of silicate or gum resin may cause a dull look on the soap. Moreover, good soaps need to have a pleasant smell instead of a caustic odour, and they must also have a long shelf life (Eneh, 2017).

Apart from that, WCO-based soaps also need to have *Toyyiban* components in their production. The WCO-based soap is intended for general usage, such as cleaning floors and drains, as it functions well in cleaning and degreasing tasks (Maidin *et al.*, 2017; Maotsela *et al.*, 2019). However, after purification, WCO-based soap may be utilised to make bath soap in optimum ratios with tallow and other ingredients (Maotsela *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, WCO-based soap is considered *toyyib* only after it has gone through the purification process, as unpurified WCO or its processing products are exposed to various hazardous chemicals that pose a health risk (Tsai, 2019).

In overall, soap production should comply with *Toyyiban* elements to ensure product safety and quality. In Malaysia, the cosmetic safety system, Malaysian *Halal* standards, and certification system can be considered *Toyyiban* components in fulfilling the requirements for safe soap manufacturing. At the same time, the concept of *Toyyiban* also includes the soap quality as it can produce a better version of soap that can satisfy the consumers.

4. *Halal* cosmetics in Malaysia

4.1 *Halal* requirements and certification for cosmetic products in Malaysia

Halal is no longer restricted to Muslims nowadays; non-Muslims also started adopting and implementing it daily. Generally, *Halal* is a product innovation since it is much more sanitary and safer to use because it contains no hazardous or toxic ingredients (Mohezar *et al.*, 2016). *Halal* cosmetics are products made with *Halal* ingredients and manufactured according to the *Halal* system that is intended to be applied to a specific part of the body, whether as a leave-on or rinse-off, to beautify, cleanse, protect, and change the appearance of the body (Ali *et al.*, 2016).

In Malaysia, manufacturers must comply with strict production process standards that correspond to Islamic law to produce *Halal* products. The procedure must adhere to quality and sanitary standards linked with Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP). At the same time, the whole process of choosing raw materials, manufacturing, storing, displaying, and distributing the products must be in accordance with Islamic law (Mansor *et al.*, 2020).

In Malaysia, *Halal* should be integrated into the system as a whole. Therefore, a few *Halal* requirements are linked to the *Halal* production process. *Syari'ah* and *fatwa* requirements are integrated into *Halal* standards in the form of the standards established by the Department of Standards

Malaysia (Department of Standards Malaysia, 2019). Specifically, *Halal* cosmetics- General requirements (MS 2634:2019) is the latest version of *Halal* standards for cosmetic products. MS 2634:2019, it was explained that cosmetics must include components permissible under *Syari'ah* law and *fatwa*. Apart from that, they also need to meet the following criteria such as free from any part or substance of an animal forbidden by Islamic law; free from anything impure or intoxicating; free from any part of a human being or its produce; free from poisonous or dangerous substances to health; and last but not least, they must not be prepared, processed, or produced using any contaminated equipment, nor be prepared, processed, or stored in touch with, combined with, or close to any haram goods (Sriviboone & Komolsevin, 2017; Department of Standards Malaysia, 2019).

Besides MS 2634:2019, there is also a guideline from the National Pharmaceutical Regulatory Agency. Generally, this guideline should be read in conjunction with the current laws and regulations, as well as other relevant legislation, governing cosmetics for human use in Malaysia, which include, but are not limited to, the Sale of Drugs Act 1952, Control of Drugs and Cosmetics Regulations 1984, Dangerous Drugs Act 1952, Poisons Act 1952, Medicines (Advertisement & Sale) Act 1956, Patents Act 1983, Wildlife Conservation Act 2010 (Laws of Malaysia Act 716), International Trade in Endangered Species Act 2008 (Act 686), Medical Device Act 2012, and Trade Descriptions Act 2011 (NPRA, 2017).

Apart from that, *Halal* certification is also one of the important components in producing *Halal* products, as it acts as a *Halal* assurance for consumers. Specifically, *Halal* certification signifies the importance of health-related quality, safety, and cleanliness. Therefore, *Halal* products were overjoyed because they faithfully observed Islamic rules while still providing the consumers with cleanliness and high-quality ones. At the same time, the *Halal* certification and label also offer new markets for their products, both locally and globally, allowing them to reach not just Muslims but also non-Muslims (Sriviboone & Komolsevin, 2017). Specifically, the Manual Procedure for Malaysia *Halal* Certification (MPPHM) is used as a reference to obtain the *Halal* certificate in Malaysia. In MPPHM, there is a specific scheme for cosmetic products. This scheme generally emphasises that each cosmetic product must be notified or acquire a letter of authorisation from NPRA to produce non-notified cosmetic goods for export purposes. Therefore, for each cosmetic product applied for *Halal* certification, the NPRA's Detail Notification Documents must be provided (Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM), 2020).

In short, production of *Halal* cosmetics in Malaysia is generally based on the *Halal* requirements from MS 2634:2019. On the other hand, the *Halal* certification procedure must be in accordance with MPPHM. This is because both guidelines are very useful in producing a high-quality cosmetic product that is not only *Halal* but also prioritises consumer safety.

4.2 *Halal* awareness of cosmetic products in Malaysia

Islam instructs us to consume anything on the planet that is *Halal* and good, including food, drink, and other goods. Specifically, *Halal* is a Muslim religious doctrine that has become the global lifestyle for Muslim consumers. Therefore, as the Muslim population increases, the awareness of the usage of *Halal* goods also increases (Utami & Genoveva, 2020). In particular, *Halal* cosmetics are regarded as a breakthrough in the cosmetics business since they offer new and distinct operations to meet consumer needs (Anggadwita *et al.*, 2019).

In general, consuming *Halal* goods is not a choice for Muslims but is a must. However, the preference for foreign cosmetics nowadays is insignificant among young consumers. In addition, there is also little literature on the acceptability of *Halal* cosmetics despite the popularity of *Halal* food. Therefore, the desire to buy *Halal* cosmetics is critical for the long-term viability of *Halal* cosmetics producers (Ngah *et al.*, 2021). Moreover, the younger generation also has a low degree of understanding when purchasing *Halal* cosmetics, influencing their decision to buy foreign brands (Ridwan *et al.*, 2020).

Multinational businesses unsurprisingly dominate cosmetics and beauty goods in Malaysia. However, the new phenomenon of *Halal* significance has paved the door for major multinational corporations such as Colgate, Procter & Gamble, and Unilever to adopt *Halal* as a critical component of their business strategies, opening the road for other foreign markets to follow suit (Zakaria *et al.*, 2019). Apart from that, local companies such as Wipro Unza (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd., Southern Lion Sdn. Bhd., and SimplySiti Sdn. Bhd. has also obtained *Halal* certification in response to the increasing demand for *Halal* cosmetics (Kaur *et al.*, 2018). Specifically, Safi from Wipro Unza Sdn. Bhd and Shokubutsu from Southern Lion Sdn. Bhd is an example of a soap product with a *Halal* logo from JAKIM.

Even though brand trust significantly impacts the desire to buy *Halal* cosmetics, *Halal* awareness, religiosity, *Halal* certification, and consumer attitude also play an important role in purchase intention among consumers (Mansor *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, it is necessary to examine the impact of knowledge and religion on consumers' attitudes toward cosmetics selection. (Ridwan *et al.*, 2020). The manufacturers must also utilise the *Halal* certification and logo to inform their target customers that their products are *Halal* and *Syari'ah*-compliant (Zainal Ariffin, 2017).

Nevertheless, *Halal* is yet to become a top concern regarding cosmetics selection. Hence, businesses and governments must take prior actions to address *Halal* awareness among consumers. For instance, they must conduct many activities and programmes, such as talks and *Halal* exhibitions, to educate the public about the benefits of *Halal* cosmetics and personal care products. This ensures that *Halal* will get greater exposure, and their curiosity will be piqued to learn more about *Halal* products (Mansor *et al.*, 2020). In Malaysia, the *Halal* Development Corporation (HDC) is the organisation that is responsible for educating people about *Halal* and its significance to them (Zainal Ariffin, 2017). In brief, *Halal* awareness of cosmetics in Malaysia is still

poor despite consumers' understanding of *Halal* products. This is because foreign cosmetics dominate the market in Malaysia and the production of local *Halal* products is also still low. Therefore, HDC, the official organisation promoting *Halal* products in Malaysia, must educate people about the importance of *Halal* cosmetics as *Halal* awareness, religiosity, *Halal* certification, consumer attitude, and brand trust can influence the purchase intention among consumers.

5. Conclusion

Nowadays, the *Halal* cosmetics industry has gained much interest among people as there has been a significant rise in consumer awareness about the substances used in skincare and personal care products. Therefore, many market participants aim to obtain *Halal* certification to engage in *Halal* cosmetics because it can reassure Muslim customers that the products are made with *Halal* components, pure and produced in a sanitary manner. Nevertheless, international brands unsurprisingly dominate the cosmetic markets in Malaysia. Thus, it is crucial to take prior action to raise awareness about the importance of *Halal* cosmetics among consumers in Malaysia, particularly Muslims. As cosmetic manufacturers are concerned about the official assistance for *Halal* certification acceptance in Malaysia, the government should enhance its support for cosmetics producers by offering additional incentive programmes. For instance, the government should increase training on *Halal*-certified cosmetics education programmes to educate and encourage cosmetics businesses to accept *Halal* certification. Second, the government should continue hosting more *Halal* cosmetics conferences, which serve as a platform for cosmetics industry players to expand their networking opportunities and raise awareness. Last but not least, it is also essential to produce knowledgeable and safety-conscious customers as they can influence business practitioners to adopt *Halal*, which eventually can help in expanding their business territory and market share in the future. In overall, it is undeniable that soaps are also part of cosmetic products. Therefore, *Halal* soaps have become preferable among consumers as they assure the quality and safety of the products. Hence, it is important to ensure that the soap products comply with all the standards and requirements, particularly those provided by JAKIM and the Department of Standards Malaysia. In addition, all the soap's production processes must also be in accordance with the *Halalan Toyayiban* concept as it can reassure the product's quality and safety.

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