



Halal Cosmetic Knowledge and Purchasing Decisions Among Indonesian Muslim Students

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Abstract: This study evaluated the association between halal cosmetic knowledge and purchasing decisions among pharmacy students at UIN Malang. Utilizing a quantitative cross-sectional design, survey data were collected via purposive sampling from 105 respondents (following instrumentation testing, $n = 35$) and analyzed using descriptive statistics and simple linear regression. Descriptively, 72.38% of respondents possessed high knowledge, and 84.76% demonstrated high purchasing decision levels. Regression analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between halal cosmetic knowledge and purchasing choices ($\beta = 0.502$, $p = 0.001$). The model fit was robust ($F = 34.697$, $p = 0.001$) with a coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.252$), proving that knowledge accounts for 25.2% of the variance in purchasing decisions. Although the non-probability sampling and cross-sectional nature limit broader geographic generalizability, the findings confirm that cognitive literacy is a vital indicator in guiding compliant product selection. In conclusion, halal cosmetic knowledge significantly influences consumer choices. These insights offer baseline evidence for regulators and industries to expand targeted educational frameworks that foster transparent, halal-conscious behavior among highly educated populations.

Introduction

The rapid expansion of the global cosmetics industry has been accompanied by increasing consumer awareness regarding product safety, ethical sourcing, and regulatory compliance (1–3). Within Muslim-majority populations, such as Indonesia, where approximately 87.2% of the population adheres to Islam, the concept of halal extends beyond food to include pharmaceuticals and cosmetic products (4, 5). Cosmetics, which are applied directly to the body and often used daily, must meet both safety and religious compliance standards (6, 7). However, the presence of potentially non-halal ingredients such as porcine-derived compounds, human-derived materials, or improperly processed animal derivatives poses a significant concern (8). Despite regulatory frameworks such as Indonesia's Halal Product Assurance Law (Law No. 33 of 2014), ensuring compliance across the cosmetic sector remains a challenge. This issue is particularly relevant among young consumers, including university students, who represent a major segment of cosmetic users.

The urgency of this issue is underscored by discrepancies between consumer behavior and awareness. While the demand for cosmetics continues to rise, studies

indicate that awareness of halal certification in non-food products remains relatively low, with reported awareness levels for cosmetics ranging between 18-22%, significantly lower than for food products (9). Moreover, empirical evidence suggests that a substantial proportion of consumers, reaching up to 64.3% in several studies, purchase cosmetic products without verifying halal labelling (10, 11). This gap is further exacerbated by the widespread availability of products containing questionable or non-halal ingredients, as demonstrated in analytical studies detecting porcine-derived substances in cosmetic formulations. Although regulatory bodies and certification systems exist, challenges persist in consumer education, product transparency, and enforcement (12, 13). Consequently, consumer decision-making is often influenced more by brand familiarity, price, trends, and lifestyle preferences than by informed evaluation of halal status. In halal consumer studies, halal knowledge, halal awareness, religiosity, purchase intention, and purchasing behavior are considered distinct but related constructs. Halal knowledge refers to consumers' understanding of halal principles and certification, halal awareness reflects concern toward halal status, religiosity relates to the application of religious values in daily life, purchase intention describes willingness to buy halal products, and

purchasing behavior reflects the actual purchasing decision.

Previous studies have widely examined halal awareness, religiosity, halal certification, and purchase intention in halal food and cosmetic products (9, 15, 16). Several studies also reported that religiosity and halal awareness contribute to consumers' intention to purchase halal cosmetics (16, 28). However, most previous research has primarily focused on purchase intention, consumer perception, or religiosity variables, while limited attention has been given to the specific role of knowledge regarding halal cosmetic ingredients, legal aspects, and halal certification in shaping actual purchasing decisions among university students. In addition, studies specifically involving Muslim university students within Islamic higher education environments remain relatively limited, despite this population having high exposure to religious education and cosmetic consumption behavior.

Therefore, the present study specifically investigates how knowledge of halal cosmetics influences purchasing decisions among students at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on knowledge as the primary determinant variable, encompassing understanding of halal principles, doubtful (*syubhat*) ingredients, prohibited (*haram*) substances, and halal certification, rather than focusing solely on religiosity or purchase intention variables examined in previous studies. Furthermore, this study contributes empirical evidence from students in an Islamic university context, where access to religious knowledge is expected to influence consumer behavior differently from the general population. The study employs an observational analytical design using structured questionnaires and regression analysis to evaluate the relationship between knowledge levels and purchasing decisions (14). By addressing this gap, the findings are expected to provide evidence-based insights that can support educational strategies, halal literacy programs, and policy development to promote more informed and compliant consumer behavior in the halal cosmetics market.

Methodology

Study Design and Rationale

This study employed an observational analytical design with a cross-sectional approach to examine the effect of knowledge regarding halal cosmetics on purchasing decisions among university students (15). An observational design was selected because no intervention was applied to participants, allowing for the assessment of naturally occurring behaviors. The analytical component enabled hypothesis testing through regression analysis to determine the relationship between the independent variable (knowledge) and the dependent variable (purchasing decision). The cross-sectional framework was appropriate for capturing both variables simultaneously within a defined population at a single point in time (16).

Study Population, Sample Size and Sampling Strategy

The study population comprised undergraduate students enrolled at Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Indonesia, with a total population of 18,838 students. The required sample size was calculated

using the Slovin formula with a 10% margin of error, yielding a minimum sample size of 100 respondents. The use of a 10% margin of error was considered appropriate for this exploratory cross-sectional study due to limitations in time, accessibility, and participant availability during data collection. A total of 105 participants were ultimately included in the analysis.

A non-probability purposive sampling technique was applied to ensure that participants met specific study criteria (17). Inclusion criteria were: (i) active undergraduate student status, (ii) use of cosmetic products for at least six months, and (iii) willingness to participate. Exclusion criteria included incomplete questionnaire responses. This sampling approach was selected to ensure relevance of participants to the research objective, particularly their experience with cosmetic use. Purposive sampling was appropriate because the study targeted students with actual cosmetic use experience, which is essential for assessing purchasing decision behavior. However, as a non-probability method, it does not provide equal selection probability for all population members, may introduce selection bias, and limits statistical representativeness. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted as indicative of associations within the study sample and not fully generalizable to the entire student population or broader contexts.

Variables and Measurement

The study included two primary variables:

Independent Variable: Knowledge of halal cosmetics, defined as the respondent's understanding of halal principles in cosmetic products. This variable was operationalized across five domains: (i) definition of halal cosmetics, (ii) legal and religious requirements, (iii) conditions of use, (iv) identification of doubtful (*syubhat*) ingredients, and (v) identification of prohibited (*haram*) ingredients.

Dependent Variable: Purchasing decision, defined as the behavioral process of selecting and purchasing halal cosmetic products. This variable was measured across five stages: (i) need recognition, (ii) information search, (iii) evaluation of alternatives, (iv) purchase decision, and (v) post-purchase behavior.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed based on relevant literature regarding halal cosmetics, consumer behavior, and purchasing decision theories (15, 16, 23). The questionnaire items were adapted to the study context and underwent content evaluation by academic supervisors with expertise in public health and consumer behavior prior to data collection. A preliminary test involving 35 respondents was also conducted to assess instrument validity and reliability before implementation in the main study.

Knowledge items were measured using a four-point Likert-type scale (correct to incorrect responses), while purchasing decision items used a five-point Likert scale (strongly agree to strongly disagree). Both positively and negatively worded items were included to reduce response bias.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection was conducted between July and November 2023. Participants were recruited through academic networks and invited to complete a

self-administered questionnaire, either via an online platform (Google Forms) or in paper-based format.

The data collection process followed standardized steps: (i) participant recruitment and eligibility screening, (ii) provision of study information and informed consent, (iii) questionnaire administration, and (iv) data verification. Respondents completed the questionnaire independently to minimize interviewer bias. All returned questionnaires were screened for completeness, and incomplete responses were excluded from analysis.

Data Processing and Quality Control

Data processing involved several sequential steps: (i) Editing: Verification and correction of raw data for completeness and consistency. (ii) Coding: Assignment of numerical codes to categorical responses. (iii) Scoring: Conversion of Likert-scale responses into numerical values based on predefined scoring schemes for positive and negative items. (iv) Tabulation: Organization of data into structured datasets for analysis. (v) Verification: Final validation of dataset accuracy prior to statistical analysis.

To further assess respondent understanding, the Tingkat Capaian Responden (TCR) was calculated using the ratio of observed scores to ideal scores, expressed as a percentage. TCR values were categorized into five levels: very low (0-39%), low (40-54%), moderate (55-69%), high (70-84%), and very high (85-100%).

Statistical Analysis

Data analysis was performed using SPSS version 27. Descriptive (univariate) analysis was conducted to summarize respondent characteristics and variable distributions using frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. Variables were categorized into low, moderate, and high levels based on mean and standard deviation thresholds (18, 19).

Instrument validity was assessed using item-total correlation, with items considered valid if $r_{\text{calculated}} > r_{\text{table}}$. Reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, with a threshold of ≥ 0.7 indicating acceptable internal consistency.

Prior to inferential analysis, normality of the data was tested using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. A significance value greater than 0.05 indicated normal distribution, justifying the use of parametric tests. In addition, linearity and homoscedasticity assumptions were evaluated through residual analysis to ensure the suitability of the regression model.

To test the study hypothesis, simple linear regression analysis was performed to evaluate the effect of knowledge on purchasing decisions. The regression model assessed both the direction and magnitude of the relationship, with statistical significance determined at $p < 0.05$. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was also examined to estimate the proportion of variance in purchasing decisions explained by knowledge of halal cosmetics. The strength of association was interpreted based on standardized coefficient values, categorized from very low to very high.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Participation

was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents prior to data collection. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained, and no personally identifiable information was recorded. The study adhered to established ethical principles for research involving human subjects.

Results

This study examines the effect of knowledge of halal cosmetics on purchasing decisions among students of UIN Malang. Data collection was conducted from July to November 2023. An initial sample of 35 respondents, distributed across seven faculties, was used to test instrument validity and reliability. Subsequently, a total of 105 respondents (15 from each faculty) participated in the main survey.

Validity and Reliability Testing

Instrument validity was assessed using the corrected item-total correlation method, with a threshold of $R > 0.33$ ($df = 33$, $\alpha = 0.05$) (19). For the knowledge variable, 18 out of 20 items were valid, while 2 items were excluded due to low correlation values. For the purchasing decision variable, 12 out of 21 items were valid, while 9 items were excluded. Reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha showed that both variables were reliable. The knowledge variable obtained a value of 0.78, and the purchasing decision variable obtained 0.859, both exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.7 (20).

Respondent Characteristics

The majority of respondents were female (65.7%), while male respondents accounted for 34.3%. This aligns with population data at UIN Malang, where female students dominate (UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, 2022), and previous findings indicating that cosmetic users are predominantly female (21).

In terms of cosmetic usage, skincare products were more widely used than decorative cosmetics. Basic daily-use products such as shampoo, soap, and toothpaste were used by all respondents (100%). Facial wash (86.7%), sunscreen (84.8%), and moisturizer (67.6%) were also commonly used. Decorative cosmetics such as lipstick (64.8%) and powder (61.9%) were the most frequently used, while eyeshadow had the lowest usage (1.9%).

Knowledge of Halal Cosmetics

The majority of respondents (72.38%) demonstrated a high level of knowledge regarding halal cosmetics, with only 1.90% categorized as low and 25.71% as moderate. Across indicators, the highest score was found in the understanding of the definition of halal cosmetics (91.1%, very high), while the lowest score was observed in knowledge of legal rulings and conditions for cosmetic use (73.8%, high).

Respondents showed strong awareness of halal certification, labeling, and regulatory authorities such as BPJPH, as well as recognition of halal logos and their validity. Knowledge regarding the permissibility of cosmetic use under Islamic law, including distinctions between halal, haram, makruh, and mubah, was comparatively lower.

Knowledge of substances with doubtful (shubhat) status such as glycerin, gelatin, and placenta was generally

high, although misconceptions remained regarding certain ingredients like honey. Awareness of prohibited substances, including pig-derived materials and human-derived ingredients, was also high.

Purchasing Decisions

Most respondents (84.76%) were categorized as having high purchasing decisions toward halal cosmetics. All indicators of purchasing decisions showed very high levels. The highest score was observed in need recognition (90.7%), indicating that halal cosmetics are perceived as essential. This strong consumer inclination is reflected in internal driving factors, including individual awareness regarding safety and cleanliness (*thayyib*) standards.

Information search behavior was also very high (87.3%), with respondents actively seeking halal certification information through media and promotions. Evaluation of alternatives (86.9%) showed that respondents were willing to purchase halal cosmetics even at higher prices and after comparing with non-halal products. Purchase behavior (85.1%) and post-purchase evaluation (86.6%) were also very high, indicating consistent use, repeat purchases, and willingness to recommend halal cosmetics to others.

Normality Test

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test showed an Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.2, exceeding 0.05, indicating that the data were normally distributed (22).

Hypothesis Testing and Model Fit

To evaluate the relationship between halal cosmetic knowledge (X) and purchasing decisions (Y), a simple linear regression analysis was performed. The model fit evaluation yielded an F-statistic of 34.697 with a significance value of $p = 0.001$ ($p < 0.05$), indicating that the model is statistically sound and acceptable for linear estimation. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was found to be 0.252, demonstrating that knowledge of halal cosmetics accounts for 25.2% of the variance in students' purchasing decisions, while the remaining 74.8% is explained by other variables outside the scope of this study. The regression equation derived from the empirical data is expressed as **Equation 1**.

The simple linear regression model demonstrated a statistically significant fit for the data. The constant value of 24.33 represents the baseline purchasing decision score when the predictor variable, halal cosmetic knowledge, is zero. The knowledge variable exhibited a positive unstandardized regression coefficient of 0.502, with a calculated t-statistic of 5.89 ($p = 0.001$). This indicates that for every one-unit increase in halal cosmetic knowledge, the purchasing decision score increases by 0.502 units. The overall model significance was confirmed by an F-statistic of 34.697 ($p = 0.001$), with the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.252$) indicating that knowledge accounts for 25.2% of the total variance in the dependent variable. Because this design is cross-sectional, this positive association signifies a strong and direct directional link rather than a strict longitudinal causality. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected, and the alternative

hypothesis (H_1) was accepted, confirming that knowledge of halal cosmetics significantly and positively shapes purchasing decisions among UIN Malang students.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that knowledge of halal cosmetics plays a significant role in shaping purchasing decisions among university students. The positive regression coefficient ($\beta = 0.502$, $p = 0.001$) indicates a strong directional association, wherein higher cognitive literacy regarding halal parameters corresponds with a greater likelihood of selecting halal-certified cosmetic products. This alignment supports established consumer behavior frameworks, which posit that individual purchasing decisions are actively structured by a combination of internalized knowledge, risk perception, and systematic evaluation processes (23). From the perspective of consumer decision models, such as the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), knowledge acts as a critical background factor that shapes an individual's attitudes and perceived behavioral control, ultimately guiding behavioral intentions toward compliant product choices.

High levels of knowledge among respondents reflect the strong integration of religious and scientific education within the academic environment at UIN Malang. Institutional factors, such as mandatory Islamic coursework and integrated *ma'had* (residential college) programs, substantially contribute to students' systematic comprehension of halal and haram concepts, reinforcing their capacity to differentiate between permissible and prohibited products. Additionally, constant access to validated information through digital media and pharmaceutical science literacy further enhances knowledge acquisition regarding product safety and formulation transparency (24).

However, knowledge related to legal rulings and specific jurisprudential conditions for cosmetic use (*fikih kontemporer*) remains relatively lower compared to basic identification indicators. This suggests that while students understand general halal concepts and recognize official logos, deeper operational and legalistic aspects of cosmetic application under Islamic law require further educational reinforcement. Similar trends have been reported in previous studies, indicating that operational awareness of legal aspects of non-food halal compliance among students is often secondary to baseline brand visibility (25).

The dominance of female respondents and their higher engagement with cosmetic products aligns with existing literature highlighting gender-based structural differences in contemporary consumption behavior (21). The clear preference for skincare over decorative cosmetics also reflects practical daily needs, physiological protection requirements, and functional usage patterns over purely cosmetic enhancements (26).

From an analytical standpoint, the simple linear regression analysis revealed a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.252, indicating that knowledge accounts for 25.2% of the variance in cosmetic purchasing decisions. This moderate effect size demonstrates that while

$$Y = 24.33 + 0.502X$$

(Eq. 1)

cognitive knowledge is a significant predictor, it does not act as an absolute determinant. Within contemporary halal awareness models, this gap indicates that high cognitive literacy does not automatically translate into behavioral action due to competing market-driven variables. In this study, the remaining 74.8% of the variance is expected to be governed by external and contextual factors, including product price sensitivity, brand popularity, immediate cosmetic efficacy, peer recommendations, and product accessibility. Despite potentially higher prices or limited availability of certain niche brands, respondents demonstrated a distinct willingness to prioritize halal-certified cosmetics, indicating a high perceived value and a strong alignment with internal ethical standards.

Although the initial descriptive indicators showed high consumer motivation driven by personal beliefs, it is vital to clarify that religiosity was not directly measured as an independent operationalized variable in this study's regression model. Instead, these behavioral choices are best interpreted through the lens of internal consumer awareness regarding safety, hygiene, and *thayyib* (wholesomeness) standards. High scores in need recognition indicate that halal compliance is viewed as a fundamental necessity rather than a peripheral preference. This structural choice reflects a deliberate commitment to personal health and safety, where consumers utilize stored knowledge to filter out ambiguous ingredients (*shubhat*) such as animal-derived glycerin or gelatin during their alternative evaluation phase (27).

Post-purchase behavior further supports the stability of this decision-making process. High levels of reported satisfaction, repeat purchasing intentions, and willingness to recommend products to peers indicate that halal-certified cosmetics successfully fulfill both the functional cosmetic needs and the subjective ethical expectations of young consumers (28). Overall, the empirical findings confirm that knowledge of halal cosmetics significantly and positively shapes purchasing decisions, functioning alongside a broader spectrum of market variables that collectively dictate consumer behavior in academic environments.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that university students generally possess high knowledge of halal cosmetics, which aligns with strong purchasing decisions within an integrated Islamic academic environment. Statistical analysis confirms a significant positive association between halal cosmetic knowledge and purchasing decisions ($\beta = 0.502$; $p = 0.001$). While this relationship indicates that higher literacy regarding halal parameters guides compliant product choices, the cross-sectional design of this study precludes strict longitudinal causality.

Nevertheless, this study has limitations, including its cross-sectional approach, a sample restricted to a single institution (UIN Malang), and a single-variable model that leaves 74.8% of the variance unexplained. Based on these findings, it is practically recommended that the halal cosmetic industry enhance raw material transparency and that policymakers expand targeted educational campaigns regarding chemical safety. For future research, it is highly recommended to employ a longitudinal design, broaden the sampling demographics across non-religious institutions, and incorporate additional psychosocial

variables such as price sensitivity and brand popularity into a more comprehensive model.

Declaration

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declare no conflict of interest.

Data Availability

The datasets generated and/or analyzed during the current study are available in the [Repository Name] repository, [DOI or URL].

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Not applicable.

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