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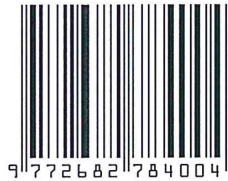
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Examining Factors Influencing Malaysian Consumer Purchase Intention In Halal Cosmetic Products: A Conceptual Framework

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ABSTRACT

Today, the issue of halal not only revolves in the food industry. Muslims also considering the halal notion even when they intent to purchase even cosmetic products. In response to this, the main objective of this study is to investigate the consumer intention in purchasing halal cosmetic products. In attempting to achieve this, there are four factors which can influence the intention to purchase halal cosmetic products namely attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control and brand awareness. The hypotheses are developed based on the previous studies and finally, a conceptual model of the study is proposed. In so doing, this paper expect to contribute to achieving a better understanding of what are the most factors influencing consumers intention to purchase the halal cosmetic products.

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1. Introduction

According to Sadek (2001), nowadays customers have become more aware of and sensitive to the needs of halal requirements. Muslims are searching for products that are custom-made to meet the necessities of their religion and group. They have started curious and evading products that are not sure halal and have the non-halal mark. In addition, Al-Harran, Saad and Low (2008) further explained that if customers cannot find the halal sign, they will read the ingredients in order to make sure the product is halal. Thus, halal can be related with religious fervor, and the belief of a cleaner and healthier living.

In Malaysia, Halal Industry Development Corporation (HIDC) encourage customers to focus on the halal issues not only on food but also in other aspects like clothing and other related lifestyle products. In ensuring this, halal manufacturers must abide by some requirements which govern the process starting from selecting the ingredients until the product ready to be shipped to the customer. Thus, Muslims will feel secured when they buy the products and satisfied with their purchases.

The expanded number of Muslims around the world provide opportunities for the growth of the cosmetics manufacturers. The cosmetic manufacturer sensitivity of the Muslims customer on halal cosmetics will undoubtedly will bring a positive impact on the long run. Due to this, the cosmetic manufacturers are enthusiastic in trying to attempting this market segment and in return there are variety of cosmetic related products being produced. As indicated by Swidi (2010) and Mahathir (2010),

the halal cosmetics and toiletries industry is one of the halal trades that can possibly drive the halal economy. The trade was estimated to rise and the halal cosmetics and toiletries in Malaysia has seen significant growth in 2008 (Swidi, 2010).

According to a website The Chemical Engineering (May 2010), common personal care products produced by non-Muslims companies and also coming from non-Muslim countries are doubted in regards to its halal quality. Most of the products contains alcohol as moisturizers and similarly several fatty acids and gelatin come from pi-based materials which were utilized as part of few products like face mask, shampoos and lipsticks. Therefore, Mukhtar and Butt (2012) stressed that Muslim customers have negative perception towards international brands that use pork or alcohol in their cosmetic product.

Kamaruzaman (2009) pointed out that even though the level of awareness about halal cosmetics is still low, customers are willing to purchase halal cosmetics if available in the market. Furthermore, Swidi et. al. (2010), explained that high level of education, high job positions and high income jobs among other determinants contributed to the demand for safety and high quality of halal cosmetic products. Awareness about the ingredients of cosmetic and personal care products is a vital issue for Muslims, in light of the rising requirement for halal cosmetic products among customers.

It is important to comprehend the components that influence customer intention to purchase as it leads to the success of an organization (Liaw, 2008). As the purpose of customer purchases are increasing, they are likely to share their experiences with close people, known as word-of-mouth and will give others their suggestions and recommendations. According to Ismail and Fatt (2004), it will affect other users who have the potential to purchase the product, to be more particular, halal cosmetic products, which are gotten by Muslim customers in compliance with an arrangement of halal dietary laws, or solutions for the improvement of their welfare.

According by Espejel, Fandos and Flavian (2008), by understanding customer purchase intentions, manufacturers and marketers will be able to meet the real customer needs and wants that will lead to fulfillment among customer. Factors such as attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control and brand awareness affect the purchase intentions of halal cosmetic products among customers. Therefore, the objective of this study is to investigate the factors influencing customer intention to purchase halal cosmetic products.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Intention to Purchase

According to Ajzen and Fishbein (1975), intention is defined as a person's location on a subjective probability dimension involving a relation between himself and some action. Besides, Armitage and Corner (2011) stated that intention is recognized as the motivation for an individual to engage in a certain behavior. Behavioral intention is defined as the individual's subjective probability that he or she will engage in that behavior (Ajzen & Fishbaein, 1975)

There are few studies that describe the relationship of purchase intention which highlight the consistency between purchase intentions toward halal cosmetic products (Mukhtar & Butt, 2012; Seyed Danesh et al, 2010; Hanzee & Ramezani, 2011). These studies have found that there is a positive intention towards purchasing halal cosmetic products. As such study by Hanzee and

Ramezani found that there is high demand for halal products among customers in the global market, which show that there is a positive response regarding the customers' intention towards halal products.

2.2 Attitude and Intention to Purchase

Ajzen (2005) stated that positive and negative beliefs are simulators for a behavior. An attitude toward behavior refers to an individual's attitude towards behaving in a certain manner. According to Ajzen and Fishbein (1980), the attitude towards any concept is purely a general feeling of favorability or unfavorability towards the concept. A person will hold a good attitude towards performing the behavior when he or she believes that performing a given behavior will lead to positive results. Study by Blackwell et. al. (2006) supported that attitude is the evaluation of certain behavior towards an object such as purchasing product.

Halal cosmetic products purchase intention is preceded by the process before the actual purchase. It reflects the intention of future behavior. Attitude is argued to have a direct relationship with behavioral intentions. Studies by Sayuti (2011) and Chen (2007) found a positive attitude affect the intention to purchase.

2.3 Subjective Norms and Intention to Purchase

Subjective norms play an important role when they can influence customers which have different beliefs toward halal cosmetic products (Lada et. al., 2009). The perceived social pressures can be influenced by subjective norms to attract the customers to make the decision to purchase halal cosmetic products (Alam & Sayuti, 2011). Evidence suggests that there is a causal relationship between subjective norms and intentions (Chang, 1998).

According to Lada et al. (2009), one of the most important element to affect the intention is subjective norms. In their result, a subjective norm has been demonstrated to be the most significant guide of the decision to have the intention to buy halal cosmetic products. In Malaysia, subjective norms do play important part in which family members, friends and colleagues are strong individual points of reference.

There are several studies which show that the intention of social psychology behavior was influenced by subjective norms (Buttle and Bok, 1996). Besides that, Liou and Contento (2001) believe that the motivation and expectations from family and friends are key in putting social pressure on the person to perform or not perform a specific behavior. Study by Leo and Lee (2010) also confirmed that subjective norm positively influence intention to purchase halal products.

2.4 Perceived Behavior Control and Intention to Purchase.

According to Chen (2007), perceived behavioral control can be defined as the level of control that individuals assume before performing a behavior. Ajzen (1991) stated that the control of the behavior is the extent to which a person tends to feel able to engage in the behavior. Hence, Kim and Chung (2011) stated it is assumed that the behavioral intention to purchase a particular product is more likely when consumers believe they have more control when purchasing these products. The study found that the perceived behavioral control is a significant predictor which influences the intention to purchase.

2.5 Brand Awareness and Intention to Purchase

Customer purchase intention is dependent on the specific brands which has become part of the customers' brand awareness. It is easier to develop an intention to purchase such products or services in the future. Customer intention consists of problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, making a purchase and post purchase behavior (Engel, 1995).

According to Percy and Rossiter (1992), purchasing decision based on brand awareness is one of the factors that can help people to recognize the brands of each type of product category. Therefore studies by Wu and Lo (2009) and Walsh, Shiu and Hassan (2012) confirmed that brand awareness has significant influence in customer purchase intention.

Based on these statements, the following hypotheses and framework were developed for this study:

H1: There is a significant relationship between attitude and intention to purchase halal cosmetic products.

H2: There is a significant relationship between subjective norms and intention to purchase halal cosmetic products.

H3: There is a significant relationship between perceived behavioral control and intention to purchase halal cosmetic products.

H4: There is a significant relationship between brand awareness and intention to purchase halal cosmetic products.

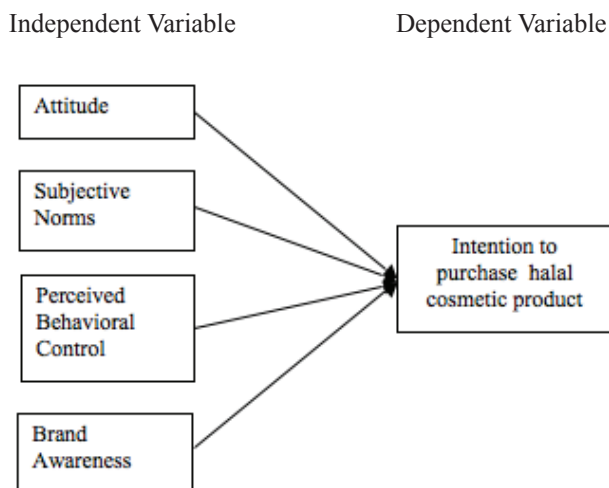


Figure 1: Proposed Conceptual Framework

5. Conclusion

The objective of this paper is to develop a framework that assist both academicians and practitioners in explaining and understanding the factors that influence the customer intention to purchase the halal cosmetic products. The propose framework in this study was developed based on existing literatures. As this paper is conceptual, empirical research is thus needed to assess the validity of the framework in a practical context. For practitioners, the outcome of empirical evidences of these factors in determining the factors for customer intention to purchase halal cosmetic products could be used for developing future strategies.

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