

MUSLIMS SELLERS' KNOWLEDGE TOWARDS HALAL COSMETICS' AWARENESS: REGRESSION ANALYSIS APPROACH

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Abstract:

Purpose - This article examines the Muslims Sellers' Knowledge towards Halal Cosmetics' Awareness. Muslim around the world is now directed on products that are halal, clean and safe to consume and this includes cosmetic products. Due to the increase in demand for halal cosmetics globally, existing and new players in the cosmetics industry are taking advantage of this situation and are competing to produce halal cosmetic products. As such, it is crucial to lay the responsibility of selling products that fulfil the sharia requirements on the cosmetic products sellers. Hence, the sellers need to have Awareness and Knowledge regarding the concept of halal and haram. **Design/ methodology/ approach** - This study employs survey technique to measure two variables comprises of sellers' knowledge, and awareness. The questionnaire items attempt to capture basic requirement for cosmetics products in conjunction with Malaysian consumers' right. Regression analysis was conducted to examine the proposed impact via IBM-SPSS AMOS 24. **Findings** - The analysis indicates a significant positive effect of Knowledge on Awareness among Muslim cosmetics sellers. This result demonstrates that knowledge is a very important factor that will influence the Awareness level towards halal cosmetics product. **Research limitation/implication** - This study is conducted on halal cosmetics sellers in selected towns in one state of East Coast of Malaysia only. The usual limitations associated with self-reported questionnaire such as low response rate, response bias and non-response bias, applies. This study also may not be generalised to other countries which have different political, cultural and economic factors. There might be other variables that were excluded from this study making the model incomplete, and therefore care should be taken in interpreting and generalising its findings. This study is essential for sellers to be informed be responsible towards customers. **Originality/value** - Therefore, it is highly recommended that authorised agencies such as JAKIM initiate more activities to create Awareness among Muslim sellers on the concept of halal for consumers' benefits.

Keywords: Muslim Sellers, Knowledge, Halal Cosmetics, Awareness, Regression Analysis

Introduction

The perspective of halalness has been spread in the Muslims way of life for decades. The global mainstream has also accepted the halal concept in supplying consumers with products, products, and services. Global halal cosmetics market demand has been reported to have rapid growth from 2015 USD16.32 billion to USD53.81 billion in 2025 (SGS.COM, 2019). Surprisingly, the global halal cosmetics declared that demand for it reached values USD 74.7 billion in 2020 (IMARC, 2021). This is because the increase of demand for halal cosmetics products among

the Muslim' population drives the market. The young generation such as generation X and Y emerge as conscious consumer's cause of halal product spending increasing. This is supported by Maya Adiba (2019) reported the results showed that halal knowledge among generation X and Y exposed to Islamic religiosity had a significant effect. This is due to their understanding influence their decision to accept or reject the use of the products. Consumers who lack knowledge of a product tends to avoid buying it (Briliana et al., 2016). The previous study focused more on the halal food industry and less on cosmetics, even though halalness should be implemented in every aspect of our lives (Putri et al., 2019; Briliana et al., 2016). Therefore it is needful to do a study on halal cosmetics products.

The choice of halal cosmetics products used to be limited. However, over the past decade, the halal concept has been spread up among the market, with halal-certified cosmetics manufacturers rise the demand for the products. Therefore the choices are getting more and varieties. Even the awareness of the importance of practicing the halal concept in all aspects is also recommended. The manufacturers have currently expanded the cosmetics product width, including perfume, toners, lipstick, shampoo, lotion, powders, shower gel, etc. A significant share of the non-Muslims' population is shifting the lousy stigma of halal to symbolized safety, cleanliness, hygiene, and free from animal by-products. The halal is covered not only the ingredient but also the production process of cosmetics. It requires the optimum level of cleanliness, driving demand across several non-Muslims countries (IMARC, 2021). The market of halal cosmetics accelerated positively due to the role of digital marketing. The online platforms spread the information flash and globally. This is the key role in halal cosmetics growing faster rather than using brick and mortar markets. The sellers play crucial role on online media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and Tiktok to influence large scale.

The popular issue in Malaysia market is the dumping of cosmetics (not follow syariah law) with profits-oriented become more prevalent. Most of cosmetics founders becoming rich due to consumers' warmest support but the products have no approval from Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM) and Ministry of Health (Bunga, 2016). According to (2021), more than 500 reports on cosmetics contain poisons and mercury poisoning. Islam itself forbids selling harmful products, and it is impermissible. This shows a lack of awareness among the sellers and might be happened because they are only interested in profit and willing to violate Islamic law. These dumping products get the warmest consumer support due to their cheap price and easy access (Zulkifli, 2017). Even though some products are quite expensive, branded, and popular among consumers, as long as it contains harmful chemicals, Islam forbidden it. In surah Al-An'am verse 112,

"And so it is that against every Prophet We have set up the evil ones from among men and jinn, some of them inspire others with specious speech only by way of delusion. Had it been your Lord's will, they would not have done it. Leave them alone to fabricate what they will."

The verse explains the two types of Rasul enemies: Jinn and Satan, which always come to humans to make them lost and sinful with their deception. Therefore, this study aims Muslim sellers' towards Halal cosmetics awareness.

Muslim Seller Knowledge

In the Arabic language, halal refers to anything permissible under Islamic law (sharia) that usually describes activities that a Muslim permitted to engage in. Meanwhile, the antithesis of halal is haram, which in the Arabic language refers to anything prohibited under Islamic law. According to Omar et al. (2012), halal products are sharia compliant. The product does not involve haram ingredients, exploitation of labour or environment, and is not harmful or intended to harm. In their study, Abdul Aziz et al. (2010) stated that the halal product must be non-alcohol, animal cruelty-free, and pork meat, residue, and no-fat. Halal also includes cleanliness in the way the product is prepared and processed. In addition, Elasrag (2016) stated that in the scope of halal cosmetics and personal care products, the halal concept covers critical aspects of production, including halal ingredients, usage of permissible substances, and have to ensure that the product manufacturing and the delivery processes must follow sharia requirements. According to SGS.COM (2019), to get halal cosmetics certification entails a document examination accompanied by an on-site audit conducted by scientific and halal certified officers. Afterward, the findings are checked by an impartiality committee, which determines whether or not the halal certificate can be released. The halal logo is restricted to products that conform to the Standard and Board Resolution No. (36) 2014 requirements regarding the National Halal Mark; labelling and advertisements must not violate or profane local traditions and cultures. Thus, the ethics of Islam and comply with Islamic Sharia law and halal rules.

With a global population of nearly two billion, Muslim consumers are increasingly aware that some cosmetics contain ingredients derived from animal origins and are thus concerned about their halal status (Rasid, 2016). Therefore, the lack of knowledge among cosmetics sellers about the concept of halal, attitude, or familiarity with the products may contribute to Muslim consumers' trust in using it based on their promotions. Statistically, the total of Muslims in Europe reached 54.7 million in 2010, yet the average level of awareness increased from 18% to 30% towards halal cosmetics and personal care (Ahmad et al., 2011). Therefore, the halal verification and authentication of these products are urgently required so that the consumer will have extra awareness towards these products (Mursyidi, 2013). A significant number of Muslim consumers are not concerned with the halal status of the cosmetics they used. It could be due to their lack of knowledge in halal because of higher trust level to Muslim sellers (Faizan et al., 2012). Meanwhile, according to Abd Rahman et al.(2015), knowledge refers to facts, feelings, or experiences that an individual or a group of people are aware of; it can also be described as understanding, consciousness, or familiarity acquired through experience or learning. Each individual's knowledge differs from that of other individuals, and Muslim consumers have become more concerned with the halal status of the product they consume (Briliana et al., 2016). Majid et al. (2015) supported this by looking for halal cosmetics because they are concerned with high quality and safe products. The study on halal Awareness and Knowledge has dynamic findings where some researchers found that Halal cosmetics have positively linked religiosity

with attitude and product quality (Abd Rahman et al.2015; Hashim et al., 2014). Religiously aware customers will always seek halal products, and it is must come with behaviour and attitude. The study from Kurniawati et al. (2019) in the Thailand market agreed that there is a positive relationship between religiosity and halal awareness. The implementation of the halal logo is essential to educate and creating awareness among Muslim consumers. Indirectly it gives halal Awareness and Knowledge towards non-Muslims attitudes to the consumer as well. Fahmi (2017) mentioned the positive attitude toward consumption of halal products, personal beliefs and perceived control over the consumption to influence the intention to purchase halal products among Muslims. Therefore, Muslim sellers should care about the consumers' sensitivity and not take advantage of this situation solely to gain profit. As they are responsible bring the cosmetics product into the consumer market, thus they need to educate customers of the choices of products available in the market. Ongoing halal inspection organised by the Malaysia Department of Islamic Development or JAKIM since 1982 often revealed that when making a purchase, Muslim Malaysian have either lack of knowledge or sources to refer to on any related halal matters. They typically rely on the Halal logo prescribed by JAKIM as a source in determining the halal status of the products. JAKIM's active participation in ensuring the status of halal products has turned Malaysia into one of the hubs for halal products including cosmetics. Therefore, it is importance for sellers to gain knowledge about halal concept for cosmetics products to educate customers as well as gain a blessing rezq.

Halal Cosmetics Awareness

Cosmetics and personal care products are commonly known as symbols of an individual's beauty, not limited to women but also men. Halal cosmetics are manufactured by using many resources such as the human body, which are prohibited by Islamic law due to slaughter in a non-halal way. In shariah law, halal cosmetics are supposed to free from genetically modified organisms (GMO) as they are considered unclean (IMARC, 2021). Any cosmetics users use those products to enhance their features and project an image of poise and confidence. According to Hunter (2012), cosmetics is a chain of products consisting of makeup, toner, shampoos and conditioners, bath and showers gels, talc and baby powder, perfumes and colognes, personal care and oral cares products. In Europe, amongst giant cosmetics manufacturers such as L'Oreal, Eugene Schueller, Elizabeth Arden, Helena Rubinstein, and Revlon Estee Lauder. This shows that there is tremendous demand for cosmetics. Obviously, non-Muslims generally own the cosmetic brands stated above. Yet, Muslim consumers are one of the major contributors to consuming these product brands even though the products' halal status is questionable. In brief, SGS.COM (2019) mentioned that the cosmetics and personal care products are declared halal whenever the products must not contain:

- Human parts
- Animal forbidden for Muslims to consume, example pork and boar
- Animal not slaughtered according to sharia law

- Najis (filth) example; fluids or objects discharge from human or animal bodies, such as urine, blood, vomit, etc.
- Harmful foods
- Alcoholics drinks and intoxicants

Aside from being free of the ingredients mentioned above, it must also adhere to halal standards of preparation and processing, production, and storage, as well as Sharia law. This includes the maintenance and the use of production equipment; the product used to clean and lubricant the equipment must also comply with halal rules. Furthermore, halal and non-halal processing must be fully separated, and the facility must adhere to ISO 22716 Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) for Cosmetics. As the demand for cosmetics and personal care products rises in Malaysia, several improvements have been made not only for women but men as well. As a result, the cosmetics industry will accelerate and develop quickly. ISO 22716 includes instructions for the manufacture, control, storage, and shipping of cosmetic products as a benefit. Therefore, quality goods can be developed systematically and realistically. The scheme's GMP ensures product quality by providing plant operations are focused on sound scientific judgement and risk evaluation.

Currently, the Muslim communities around the world are also huge contributors to the consumption of cosmetics. Although halal products have become a significant concern and constant discussion among Muslim consumers worldwide, the concept of halal cosmetics is still new to the Muslim world. A halal product is more important and meaningful to Muslim consumers than a product carrying ISO (International Organization for Standardization) or similar certification. The function of the halal label/logo is to facilitate the Muslim consumers' decision in product selection. Nowadays, Muslim consumers are beginning to be conscious of the halal status of personal care products such as shampoo or cosmetics products that they use every day. In other words, they are starting to wonder whether the cosmetic products they use are halal certified and safe to use (Aisyah, 2017; Mohammadian & Hajipour, 2012). Furthermore, they have to be extra careful in their choice of products, as they have to ensure that the products they use comply with sharia law (Aisyah, 2017). Thus, halal labelling and certification can play an essential role in guaranteeing Muslim consumers that their products meet the necessary religious requirements and conditions (Omar et al, 2012). There are numerous food, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics and personal care products available with nonspecific labelling.

The increasing awareness among Muslim and non-Muslims consumers regarding halal cosmetic products has attracted the attention of Muslim cosmetic sellers (Yeo et al., 2016). Although different consumers have different beliefs about the product, their buying intention is the same; that is, they look for trusted and safe products. It was mention by Lada et al. (2009) that attitudes and subjective norms play an important role to perform intention agreed to this. The attributes of subjective norms emerged as the most significant indicator of Muslim customers' intent to choose the halal cosmetic product. Moreover, Abdul Aziz et al., (2012) mentioned in their findings that there was a significant level of awareness towards halal

products among non-Muslims. This shows that non-Muslim consumers are starting to change their buying habits. However, a recent study conducted by other researchers found that although halal cosmetics fairly established in Malaysia, it still fails to capture the Muslim consumer market interest and to garner a high market share in the industry (Mohd Daud et al., 2012). The consumer tends to buy non-halal certified products because of the marketers' aggressive promotion initiatives. In addition, a previous study also stated that many manufacturers are unaware of the statistical practices for halal-certified purposes. Some reports revealed non-halal-certified products with fake halal logos selling in the market without consumers being aware of their authenticity. This is could only be the work of irresponsible organisations out for the profits (Husain et al., 2012).

Muslim consumers are concerned with ensuring that the products they consume are halal. Both sellers and manufacturers of cosmetic products should play an important role in providing consumers with products that conform to their religious beliefs. Therefore, it is imperative for the sellers and manufacturers to be aware and equipped with halal and haram knowledge. This is supported by Abdul Aziz et al. (2012) who have stated that the lack of knowledge on halal concepts among customers' purchase intention leads to ignorance of halal awareness and halal certification by marketers. Furthermore, Aadam et al. (2012), in their study, showed that there is a low level of Awareness among Muslims students towards choosing halal products.

Moreover, many new substances, especially pharmaceutical and personal care products can create confusion if the consumer lacks knowledge. Therefore, in Islamic marketing, it is imperative that entrepreneurs and practitioners acquire knowledge on the Islamic code of conduct in manufacturing and marketing the products to enable them to educate the awareness of customers (Sandikci, 2011; Wilson, 2012). A study by Alserhan (2010) also proposed more effort to propagate halal concept to industries, in this case, cosmetics manufacturers. However, a recent survey of Mustafar et al. (2018) stated Malaysian cosmetics manufacturers do have high levels of halal cosmetics awareness. This is because they are fully aware of who and what are needed to obtain halal certification.

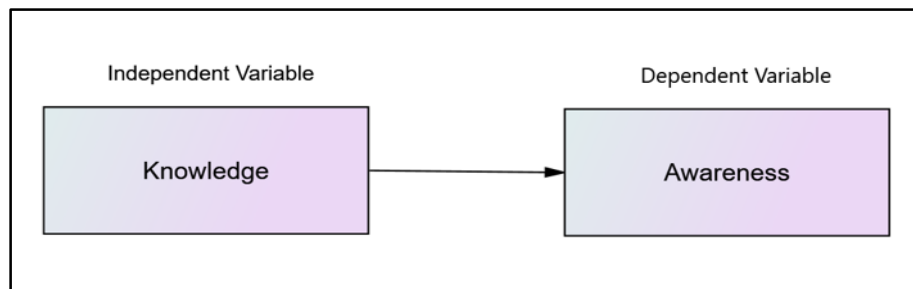
Regression Analysis

A set of statistical procedures for estimating relationships between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables is known as regression analysis. It can be used to determine the strength of a relationship between variables and to predict how they will interact in the future. For example, this methodology can be used to infer the relationship between p independent variables $X = [X_1 | \dots | X_p]$ and a dependent variable Y . A dependent variable is a number. The variables X_k ($k=1, \dots, p$) are known as predictors, explanatory variables, or covariates, while Y is also known as response variable or result (CFI, 2021; Claudia Angelini, 2019). This is supported by (Andrew et al., 2010) the analysis of relationships between two or more variables. It is commonly used for the following reasons: to know whether any relationship between two or more variables exists, when interested in understanding the nature of the relationship between two or more variables, and predicting a variable given the value of others.

Methodology

Previous studies revealed that there exist a significant relationship between knowledge and awareness in halal cosmetic products, especially among Muslims (Briliana et. al., 2016; Majid et. al., 2015; Abdul Aziz et al., 2012). Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the effect of Muslim's Knowledge towards halal cosmetics' awareness from cosmetic sellers' perspective as shown in the following conceptual framework.

Fig. 1 Conceptual Framework



The questionnaire used in this study was divided into two parts: Part A and Part B. Part A consisted of questions on the demographic background of the respondents. Meanwhile, Part B consisted of two sections which focused on knowledge (four items) and awareness (five items). A 10-point Likert-scale format range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree) was used for Part B because 1 to 10 scales offer more stability, details, better variability (variance). The predictive variables are more consistent than other Likert scales (Bouranta, Chitiris, & Paravantis 2009; Colman, Norris, & Preston 1997; Finstad 2010 and Lewis, 1993). Moreover, 10-point Likert-scale works well with a smaller sample size which is expected in this study. The reliability and validity analysis revealed that the Cronbach's Alpha values (Knowledge = 0.746 and awareness = 0.841) exceeded the acceptable range of 0.7, which indicated that the questionnaire is reliable and valid for actual study (George & Mallery, 2003; Zainuddin, 2015). In total, there are 120 selected registered Muslim cosmetic sellers with at least one year of experience in the halal cosmetic industry from four different towns in one of the states in East Coast of Malaysia. They were involved in this study using a convenience sampling technique. These towns have been selected based on the distance nearest to the researchers (40km to 60km) so that the data collection process becomes easy since the direct interview was used as a data collection method. The questionnaire was personally administered to ensure maximum return rate and response accuracy. The data obtained were analysed using IBM-SPSS AMOS 24 software, including descriptive statistics and regression analysis. The regression analysis used to examine the following hypothesis based on Figure 1, using 5% level of significance. The hypothesis will have enough evidence to be accepted if the significance value obtained is less than 5%.

H₁: There exists significant positive effect of halal cosmetic products' Knowledge among Muslim cosmetic sellers towards their awareness of the products.

The normality test shows that the data approximately normally distributed since the skewness values obtained (Knowledge = -0.558, awareness = -1.234) are in between -2 to 2 so that the regression analysis can be conducted (Leech et al., 2005).

Results and Discussion

The following table shows the cross tabulation table of the selected sellers based on their respective town and gender.

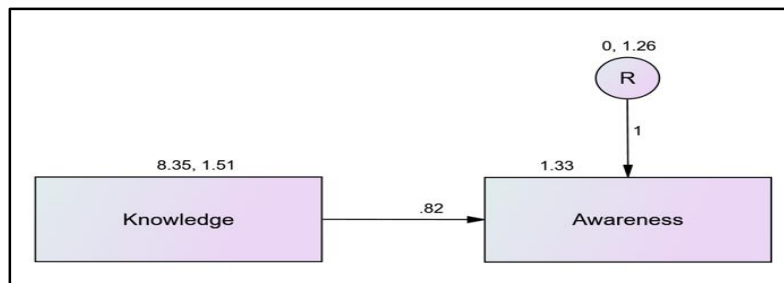
Table 1: Cross tabulation Table of Respondents Background

Town	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Jengka	1 (0.83%)	13 (10.83%)	14 (11.67%)
Maran	3 (2.5%)	17 (14.17%)	20 (16.67%)
Jerantut	9 (7.5%)	29 (24.17%)	38 (31.67%)
Temerloh	12 (10%)	36 (30%)	48 (40%)
Total	25 (20.83%)	95 (79.17%)	120

In total, 120 respondents were involved in the study, with 25 (20.83%) of them are males, and the rest (95, 79.17%) are females. This scenario reflects the general notion towards cosmetics business that dominated by females. The majority (75, 62.50%) of the selected sellers have more than five years of sales experience selling cosmetics products. On average, the selected sellers tend to strongly agree that they have enough knowledge ($M = 8.35$, $SD = 1.23$) and aware ($M = 8.20$, $SD = 1.52$) towards the concept of halal pertaining to cosmetic products, consistent to the previous studies conducted by Kurniawati et al., (2019), Mustafar et al., (2018), Fahmi (2017); Briliana et al., (2016) and Abdul Aziz et al. (2012). This study found that the high level of awareness among selected sellers contradicted previous studies that found a low awareness level among Muslims on choosing halal products (Aadam et al., 2012; Ahmad et al., 2011).

The regression analysis as shown in the following Figure 2 indicates that there exists a significant positive effect of Muslim sellers' knowledge towards their awareness of halal cosmetic products ($\beta = 0.82$, $p < 0.001$), which means that there is enough evidence to support the stated hypothesis (H₁). The estimated value obtained indicates that the greater their knowledge of halal cosmetics products, the more Muslim sellers tends to have a higher awareness level towards cosmetic products in the marketplace. In addition, the coefficient of determination value (r^2) indicates that 45% total variation of the Muslim sellers' awareness towards halal cosmetic products can be explained by their knowledge. In comparison, the other 55% may predicted by other factors.

Fig. 2 Un-standardised Regression Path Coefficient



The significant result obtained from this study is in line with the previous studies (Aishah, 2017; Rashid, 2016; Lada et al., 2009; Abdul Aziz et al., 2012), agreed that the decision to choose halal cosmetics product was determined by better knowledge of halal products. In addition, Aishah (2017) and Rashid (2016) also strengthened that customers are very concerned with halal ingredients and looking for the correct information on the products. While Abdul Aziz et al. (2012) also stated that knowledge would influence the purchase intention, and if there is no better knowledge of the selected buying products, it will lead to ignorance.

Conclusion and Recommendation

There is a high level of awareness and knowledge on halal cosmetics among Muslim sellers from the study conducted. Although the level of awareness and knowledge on halal issues is high, it is still insufficient to ensure that Muslim consumers well provided with a broad range of halal products. Agencies such as JAKIM should perform periodical inspections not only to the sellers of cosmetic products but also to the manufacturers and suppliers to ensure that they comply with the halal requirements. The information on the brands and companies of the cosmetic products that do not comply with the halal requirements must inform the public so that the consumers can make the right choice when selecting cosmetic products for consumption.

In addition, there exists a significant positive impact of the knowledge among Muslim sellers on their awareness towards halal cosmetics products ($\beta = 0.82$, $p < 0.001$). For this reason, the authorised agencies should aggressively embark on initiatives to provide information regarding the concept of halal to the public, specifically to Muslim consumers. They should not only rely on official websites or personal blogs to disseminate information to consumers and retailers. Still, they should also collaborate with the local media such as newspapers, magazines, and radio stations. Relying on official websites and personal blogs to provide information to the public may not be sufficient to reach a wide range of consumers. This medium of communication may be suitable for consumers from the urban and suburban areas where internet access is readily available, but it may not be the case for consumers from rural areas where internet access is limited. Future study is highly recommended to examine the statistical process control that follows the Islamic code of conduct in designing, producing, handling and marketing halal-certified cosmetic products.

Limitation and future research directions

The results of this study should be interpreted in light of certain limitations inherent in the study. Although this study has significantly contributed to our understanding of Muslims sellers' awareness towards Halal Cosmetics' knowledge, there are also some limitations that need to be highlighted.

Firstly, due to the relatives' small sample size and in a few towns in Pahang area, the sellers in the study may not be representative of the population of sellers in Malaysia; therefore, some caution should be exercised in generalising the results of this study. Furthermore, the sellers who participated in the study were reluctant to give full cooperation due to concern if legal action could be imposed by authorities.

Next, some sellers are not selling only cosmetics products but are selling other sundry products as well. Hence, this may interfere with knowledge and awareness due to choices influenced by current trends. It may create other antecedents which are not considered in the instruments. However, this will be considered for future research.

Lastly, there is still lack of studies regarding halal cosmetics compared to halal foods; henceforth, in light of the limitations discussed, the future study could use a different data collection method such as interviews and expand the data collection into a wider range of respondents.

Managerial implications

This research finding is noteworthy to both cosmetics sellers and the authority. It was found that there is a positive relationship between halal awareness and knowledge, and in line with previous studies (Kurniawati & Savitri, 2019; Fahmi, 2017 and Abd Rahman et al., 2015). However, in reality, the government anticipates that this issue is getting worse as there are growing reported cases of fading awareness and knowledge among sellers (Zaki, 2021). The profit-oriented attitude drives sellers to cut corners and attempt to maximised profits illegally. Therefore, there is a need to educate sellers to be more responsible, as Fahmi (2017) suggested, who mentioned that positive attitude, personal belief, and perceived control can influence intention to sell or buy. JAKIM, in collaboration with MOH, must be firm in eradicating cosmetics that are destructive and non-compliant with Shariah. Hefty penalties should be imposed on sellers who violate the law to curb illegal activities that will jeopardise consumers with haram, harmful and dangerous products. As a result, the consumer will be left with trustful and reliable brands.

Acknowledgement

Thank you to UiTM Pahang for giving us opportunity to conduct this study and all respondents' involvements were much appreciated.

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