

EXPLORING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HALAL: EMBRACING HALAL VALUES AMONG LOCAL COSMETIC PRODUCERS IN BRUNEI'S COSMETIC INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

To mitigate its significant reliance on oil and gas, Brunei has endeavoured to achieve economic diversification by reducing hydrocarbon exports and prioritising sectors such as halal manufacturing and information and communication technology. The current emphasis of the Brunei halal industry is primarily on the food and beverage sector, with limited attention given to the non-food sector. However, the emergence of local cosmetic brands in the business sector has become more conspicuous, suggesting a potential inclination towards the cosmetic industry. This study aims to assess the perceptions of local cosmetic producers on the significant values of halal cosmetics in Brunei. The analysis is intended to provide further insight into how these local cosmetic producers perceive the growth of Brunei's cosmetic market through the incorporation of the halal logo on their products. A qualitative approach through content analysis was applied in this study, which involved conducting face-to-face interviews with eight local cosmetic producers who have established their own brands, regardless of whether production occurs in the country or abroad. Overall, the research findings indicate that the primary considerations for these producers in valuing halal cosmetics include cleanliness, product quality, adherence to religious observances for Muslims, safety assurances, and global recognition. Furthermore, it appears that local cosmetic producers hold a favourable perception of their willingness to acquire halal certification for their products. This paper highlights the evolving landscape of Brunei's economy by showcasing the growing importance of Halal certification on the local cosmetic industry as part of the economic diversification efforts.

Introduction

With an approximate annual growth rate of 20 per cent, the halal industry presently holds a valuation of \$560 billion (Majlis, 2011). The diversification of halal sectors appears to be a result of the 1.8 billion Muslim global market, which has propelled the expansion of sectors beyond food and food-related products. The halal industry has now encompassed pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, health products, toiletries, and medical devices. The growth has also seemed to expand toward various service-oriented elements, including packaging, branding, logistics, and electronic and print media (Majlis, 2011; Dinar Standard, 2022). Research related to halal cosmetics has also been observed expanding in number driven by the growing demand from approximately 2.4 billion Muslim consumers seeking higher quality products (Zakaria et al., 2022).

The potential presence of impurities or non-Halal ingredients can easily be found in both food and non-food products which includes cosmetic. Contamination in cosmetic product ingredients typically arises from the presence of alcohol or substances derived from non-Halāl animal sources (Hussin, 2021). As a result of this increased consciousness, consumers are seeking halal certification for cosmetic products, which in turn, ensures the products' hygienic, safe, and health-promoting qualities in accordance with Islamic regulations (Shahid, 2018).

This is because contamination from non-Halal sources in nowadays product can be found both in food and non-food products, including cosmetics. The sources of contamination in the cosmetic products ingredients are usually from alcohol or non-Halal animal origin.

Brunei is an oil-rich independent country that relies heavily on exports of crude oil and natural gas. The revenue generated from these exports has undoubtedly contributed to the high per capita incomes for its citizens. However, it has also led to the issue of Brunei relying greatly on a single commodity that revolves around volatility and market fluctuations. To reduce this heavy dependence on oil and gas, Brunei sought to diversify its economy by reducing hydrocarbon exports and focusing on industries such as information and communication technology and halal manufacturing (Garcia, 2019). According to Mahalle (2020), in a book chapter, in addition to being a crucial component in achieving the long-term development Brunei vision of 2035, the halal sector was reportedly included in Brunei's ninth national development (2007-2012) as one of six economic clusters. Nevertheless, the 10th Brunei National Development Plan (2012-2017) prioritised technology and innovation as key drivers of economic expansion. The efforts of the nation to establish a sustainable and dynamic economy, with the halal sector serving as a pivotal and strategic undertaking, are delineated in these national development plans. The book chapter further explained that the integration of halal into Brunei's national development is grounded on three goals: economic diversification, small-medium enterprise (SME) capacity building, and fulfilling the duty of sufficiency (*fard al-kifayah*).

Cosmetics have piqued the interest of consumers in Brunei. A local product known as the Viral Foundation by Ct Asran Makeover has received an alarming number of consumers demands not only in Brunei but also from Malaysia. The founder of the product has received up to 5000 positive feedback about the foundation and is able to cater to around 2000 returning customers every month. From selling it online through her Instagram, she paved her way into opening a physical store located in Bandar Seri Begawan (Hussin, 2020). The Natural Bar Brunei is a brand that provides an all-natural alternative for skincare after numerous discussions and research on chemical-free products back in 2013 (Wong, 2017). The brand imported raw materials from Australia, but the products were formulated and packaged in Brunei.

Based on the author's market survey obtained through direct market observation including attending exhibitions and monitoring social media platforms, Glitter Be Glamorous, also a local beauty brand, has set up a store at Batu Besurat, Bandar Seri Begawan. This brand curates a comprehensive beauty product category, including body care, skincare, makeup, and even makeup tools. The mentioned brands were also seen actively joining MSME exhibitions in 2023 organised by government agencies from multiple ministries, indicating their blooming interest in business sector, in line with Brunei National Vision, Wawasan Brunei 2035, which aims to progress the nation towards its third goal of having a dynamic and sustainable economy through the diversification of the national economy (Glitter Be Glamorous, 2023).

Furthermore, based on the author's continued market survey, it was observed that a number of other local cosmetic brands, such as *CT Aleys*, *Ehana Aleys*, *Fatin Shop*, *Radyent Cosmetics*, and *Hyraglow*, have also entered the market. These brands offer a variety of cosmetic products, including lipsticks, body lotions, facial serums, face masks, and feminine sprays. Most of these businesses primarily utilise social media platforms, particularly Instagram, as their main marketing and sales channels. Their growing presence reflects a broader trend of entrepreneurial dynamism within the local cosmetic sector. According to the findings of Abdul Halim and Aghwan (2024) and Abdul Halim et al., (2023), there is a favourable opinion regarding the feasibility of developing a halal cosmetics industry for the Bruneian market. Nevertheless, the perspective of local cosmetic producers regarding the value they perceive in halal cosmetics has been poorly understood until now. Therefore, this study aims to assess the perception of local cosmetic producers on the significant values of halal cosmetics in Brunei by answering and fulfilling the research objective and research question. It is anticipated that this paper will serve as an initial phase in conceptualising the viability of expanding the growth of local cosmetic brands commercially.

Literature Review

Overview of Cosmetic Industry and Halal in Brunei

Any matters affiliated with halal certification and halal label in Brunei are under the supervision of the Brunei Islamic Religious Council (MUIB), the main governmental body handling halal sectors in Brunei. However, the handling process of halal permits, and certification is managed by the Halal Food Control Division (BKMh). Both departments are positioned under the same ministry, which is the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Their roles are to enforce multiple halal sector acts such as the Halal Meat Act CAP 183 and the Halal Certificate and Halal Label Order (2005).

Apparently, the Guidelines for the Manufacturing and Handling of Halal Cosmetic Products (PBD26:2016) and the Guidelines for the Manufacturing and Handling of Halal Medicinal Products, Traditional Medicines, and Health Supplements (GD24:2010) are also under the authority of BKMh, while the Ministry of Health controls the use of cosmetic and pharmaceutical products in the country (Raffi, 2019). Before the new amendment of the Halal Certificate and Halal Label Order 2018, the order was only bound to food products. The latest order has apparently included non-food products such as beauty and cosmetic products and services related to transporting, storing, and packaging in this context. Thus, non-food product producers could apply for halal certification voluntarily (Ahmadi, 2017).

The development of the halal pharmaceutical and cosmetic industry in Brunei is, by far, pioneered by Simpor Pharma Sdn Bhd (Simpur Pharma, 2021). The main goal of the company is to be a pharmaceutical and cosmetic producer manufacturing product that are in line with the Shariah requirements, as well as targeting their market globally, including the Middle East, Asia, and North America. The company claims to be the world's first pharmaceutical company which owns its own regulation for certifying medicines, nutraceuticals, and halal cosmetic products (Salama, 2016). They have also established the Halal Assurance System (HAS) to monitor and maintain a system to assure consistency in halal production. However, Simpor Pharma Sdn Bhd is still in the process of obtaining halal certification for all their products (Simpur Pharma, 2021). Another cosmetic brand known as MukaKu Cosmetics is looking forward to having their product line certified as halal especially after the amendment of the Halal Certificate and Halal Label Order (2005) (Halal Certificate and Halal Label (Amendment) Order, 2017). The founder stated that their ingredients are exclusively botanic; hence, they would pass the halal requirements, although halal certification has not yet been made compulsory for cosmetics (Wong, 2018). In the year 2020, they were one of the six local companies that made their way to join Malaysia Fashion Week, which was held in Kuala Lumpur (Mohamad, 2019).

Impact of Halal Logo and Certification on Cosmetics

In the current globalised world, the halal logo and certificate are now considered to be major attributes in Muslim consumers' purchases (Shaari, 2010). Research findings indicate that consumers who possess a higher level of trust in halal products are more likely to express an increased intent to purchase those products (Hussin, 2013). Aziz and Chok (2013) concurred, as their research suggested that halal certification could serve as a powerful incentive for halal product manufacturers seeking to penetrate the global market. Another contribution from their study highlighting halal certification revealed it to be more predictive of halal purchase intention in comparison with halal awareness. This shows that halal certification is highly regarded as an important element in consumers' purchase intention. An article has pointed out the halal certificate as a consequential marketing tool for cosmetic industry players (Salama, 2018). A Malaysian cosmetic brand known as Sugarbelle Cosmetic has proven this statement by complying with the halal certificate for their brand, resulting in their success in selling their product (Salama, 2018). Furthermore, cosmetic producers are also recognising this. After all, halal certification is an integral part of the Muslims' religious duty to ensure items or products they consume are in line with Islamic teachings (Aziz & Chok, 2013). Overall, it is beyond doubt that the presence of the halal logo on cosmetic products could elevate the merit and value of the said products while instigating values such as religious commitment (Mohamed Yousoof, 2020), quality (Sriviboone, 2017), reassurances (Ahmad Anuar, 2022), and economy (Al-Harran, 2008).

Soleh (2019) discussed the hypotheses of halal logo effects on consumers' satisfaction and trust, where they discovered a positive impact between the mentioned variables. The paper also disclosed how the Malaysian halal logo positively influenced the relationship between four independent variables, which are consumer expectations, institutional trust, religiosity, and brand trust, and one dependent variable, which is brand loyalty. The hypotheses, nevertheless, were formulated with food products in mind. According to the findings of Abdul Halim (2024), the significance of halal logo on cosmetic products could be classified into five prominent elements; its ability to fulfil religious commitment, signify best quality, act as product assurance, promulgate halal awareness, and lastly drive the countries' economies.

Therefore, incorporating halal logo on food packaging is deemed to convince Muslim consumers to consume without having any doubt, aligned with their religious compliance (Ramlan, 2014). If this could be done for food, extended efforts to label cosmetics with halal logo should also be seen as important. Additionally, a considerable amount of halal consumers today is discovered to be among those who do not profess Islam but still prefer to select halal products for their superior quality (Aripov et al., 2024).

Methodology

This qualitative study employs interview a data collect and document analysis methodn performed. Eight informants, consisting of local cosmetic producers, were interviewed individually, each at a different schedule. For the sampling method, non-probability sampling, specifically purposive sampling, was employed to gather the informants. The informants were chosen on the basis of their status as MSMEs in Brunei who had established their own cosmetic brands, regardless of whether those products were manufactured locally or abroad. Thereby, agents and resellers working for cosmetic companies were filtered out from this research. Semi-structured interviews were conducted, with the interviewer providing a paper-based guide.

Additionally, discussions that deviated from the interview guide also occurred during the interviews. This specific interview format is considered the most suitable for the purposes of this research, as it allows informants to express their thoughts in their own words while keeping the interviewer prepared with a set of questions (Stuckey, 2013). With prior consent from the respondents, all interviews were audio recorded to prepare transcripts. A consent form and participant information sheet were also prepared prior to the interviews. The questions posed during the interview sessions covered three key areas; the first explored the informants' perceptions of halal logo's contribution to the improvement of the quality and value of local cosmetics, while question two assessed the halal logo's potential as a marketing tool, and the third examined the producers' readiness to submit an application for halal certification for their cosmetic products. The profile background of informants participated in this study is described in the table below:

Table 1. Profile of Informants

Profile Background of Local Cosmetic Producers				
Informants' Codes	Gender	Age	Duration Involved in Cosmetic Business	Main Products
D	One Female	25	5 years	Lip Products
G	One Female	36	5 years	Full range of Makeup and Personal Care Products
R	One Female	28	2 years	Perfume
M	One Female	45	3 years	Soaps
S	One Female	31	2 years	Eye Makeup Products
F	One Female	36	16 years	Traditional Herbs, Lotions, Feminine Spray
Y	One Female	37	20 years	Soaps and Beauty Creams
W	Two Males	25 & 27	3 years	Perfume

Qualitative content analysis was conducted to derive the results of the study. This type of analysis should provide insights to understand the nature of the informants' perceptions of the value of the halal logo on cosmetics by observing the frequency of words or elements they mentioned. The answers from the interviews were then tabulated according to the questions. Prior to analysis, the interview data underwent a process of transcription and translation from English to Bahasa Melayu. Participants' responses were then categorised in accordance with the research questions during the coding and reduction phase, as noted by White (2006, p.39): "the emphasis of qualitative content analysis is always on answering the research question".

Findings and Discussion

Perception of Halal Logo's Ability in Improving Cosmetic Product's Quality and Value

The overwhelming majority of interviewees agreed on the halal logo's ability in enhancing the quality and value of their cosmetic products. Informants M, S, and F similarly stated that the presence of the halal logo on cosmetic products could serve as an encompassing indication of cleanliness and safety, minimising the hassle of scrutinising the labelled ingredients individually, thereby improving the quality and value of the products.

"I believe the halal logo is essential. Since Brunei is an Islamic country, having halal-certified cosmetics is important".

(Informant D, interview, 2023)

"I personally think it's beneficial. It aligns well with the values of our society".

(Informant G, interview, 2023)

"In my opinion, the halal logo is crucial, especially for halal-conscious consumers. It provides reassurance and builds trust".

(Informant M, interview, 2023)

"I think it plays a significant role. It gives consumers confidence that the products are safe to use".

(Informant R, interview, 2023)

"For me, the halal logo is about more than just religion; it symbolizes safety. It caters specifically to Muslim consumers who prioritize this".

(Informant S, interview, 2023)

“I strongly believe the halal logo is a reliable indicator that the product is clean and safe. It also makes it easier for consumers since they don't need to check every ingredient individually”.

(Informant F, interview, 2023)

“In my view, having the halal logo adds substantial value. It helps local cosmetic products gain recognition, especially in international markets”.

(Informant Y, interview, 2022)

“I'm not entirely convinced it improves the product's quality, but I do agree that it enhances its value”.

(Informant W, interview, 2023)

Based on these interviews, halal cosmetic goods are produced with only halal materials in accordance with the halal system. This is because the production of cosmetics typically entails a complicated mix of substances that require diligent perusal of the ingredients (Sugibayashi, 2019). The process of manufacturing halal cosmetics follows stringent requirements, such as the involvement of Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) and other quality standards to ensure product quality and safety. Contamination is rigorously avoided at all costs by segregating potential non-*Halāl* elements from halal substances used in production. Sugibayashi (2019) also added that halal cosmetic packaging must comply with halal requirements to avoid endangering human health through its use. Labelling should also be done clearly as required by the regulatory bodies, and during the distribution process, the products must remain uncontaminated and not affected by any *najis* and impure substances. Furthermore, these requirements are detailed in the Brunei Darussalam Guidelines for Manufacturing and Handling of Halal Cosmetic Products (PBD26:2016) under 3.6.4. Several more papers by Asa (2017), Hashim and Hashim (2013) and Hussin (2013) have also been found to be consistent with the previous statements, affirming how the halal logo is closely linked to the quality of the products.

Informant D also felt that Brunei, a dominant Muslim-populated country that places robust emphasis on Islamic values, should be able to provide a wider halal selection not only of food products, but also of non-food items such as pharmaceuticals and cosmetics, particularly for the consumption of halal-conscious consumers. An additional insight gained from informant Y pertains to their assessment of the halal logo in obtaining global recognition for local cosmetic products. They believe that the endorsement of the halal logo would elevate local brands, allowing them to expand their reach to potential customers abroad, thereby extending the local cosmetics internationally, rather than concentrating solely on the small population of Brunei. Informant R also added how the halal certificate could supplement the reliability of their products after obtaining product notification approved by the MOH, which in turn would increase their consumers' confidences in using their products.

Contrary to this, informant W maintained their opinion that the halal logo would not negatively impact the quality of their products but rather would elevate their value in some way. In support of their argument, they explained, it is extremely uncommon for at least our customers to inquire about the Halal status of our perfume. Even in the case of upscale brands like Tom Ford, consumers would not ask if their perfumes were halal or not. Let alone us, the local brands. Especially when the area of our perfume specifically involves only natural oils, people would assume ours is halal straight away. Taken together, it can be deduced that the halal logo may hold marginally greater significance for cosmetic items that are not perfumes, such as skincare, makeup, and toiletries, given that these items are used topically on the skin.

The findings highlight several key justifications for the importance of halal certification in Brunei's cosmetic industry. First, cultural and religious alignment emerges as a fundamental factor, reflecting Brunei's identity as an Islamic country where halal certification is viewed as essential. Additionally, consumer trust plays a critical role, particularly for halal-conscious consumers who seek assurance that the products they use comply with religious standards. The halal logo also serves as a symbol of cleanliness and safety, reinforcing the perception that certified products are safe and hygienic. Moreover, the convenience offered by the certification reduces the need for consumers to meticulously scrutinize ingredient lists, simplifying their purchasing decisions. Finally, global marketability is a significant

consideration, as the halal logo has the potential to elevate local cosmetic brands on the international stage, enhancing brand visibility and competitiveness. These justifications collectively demonstrate how halal certification contributes to the overall value and market positioning of Brunei's local cosmetic products.

The Perception of Halal Logo as An Effective Marketing Tool Among Local Cosmetic Producers

Seven out of eight informants concurred in viewing the halal logo as an effective marketing tool for cosmetic products, particularly local ones. They stated:

“Agree. Easy for consumers to recognise the halal and safety status”.

(Informant D, interview, 2023)

“I agree with that”.

(Informant G, interview, 2023)

“Agree. It would be a good assurance for consumers to distinguish that the products are safe to use”.

(Informant M, interview, 2023)

“I see it as a symbol of safety, especially for Muslim consumers. It gives them confidence when choosing products”.

(Informant R, interview, 2023)

“In my opinion, Agree. To me, the halal logo is not only about business; it can also be used to gain trust from customers, especially Muslims”.

(Informant S, interview, 2023)

“I agree. Trust is essential, especially for Muslim consumers. The halal logo plays a big part in that”.

(Informant F, interview, 2023)

“I agree on that”.

(Informant Y, interview, 2022)

“For our product, not really. Whether we have the halal logo or not, I don't think it would change how our current or potential consumers view us”.

(Informant W, interview, 2023)

The local cosmetic producers provided their positive justification based on their view that the halal logo would serve as a prompt indicator for consumers to recognise the halal status of the products immediately. Informant M commented: “It would be a good assurance for consumers to be able to distinguish that the products are safe to use with the presence of the halal logo on cosmetics.” It can therefore be inferred that the halal logo on products serves the dual purpose of indicating halal and safety, promoting the notion that the product is permissible for consumption. This also accords with what was reported by (Zakaria, 2019) that halal is no longer bound to religious adherence exclusively. In fact, halal is currently recognised as a paradigm shift in the way global markets perform their business and trade.

Along the same lines, Buang and Mahmod (2012) also constructed a similar point, stating that the halal logo ostensibly has created a distinct commercial value, which they called a ‘marketing tool’ to penetrate the national and global market to fulfil the blooming demand for halal products, along with following the pace of the growing consumption of global Muslim consumers. Additionally, the dynamic evolution of halal has apparently taken place, extending its area into numerous facets of life, including tourism, finance, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and fashion. The demographics of Muslims have seemed to progress through ‘a wave of fervour among the rising social class of young, highly educated, savvy, and affluent

Muslims, as defined by El Asrag (2016). He elaborated further that this new generation attains a contemporary way of life and has developed a preference for the western-style goods while fashioning their modern lifestyle. A consequence of this phenomenon is the increase in global demands for conventional goods and services that adhere to Islamic principles (Elasrag, 2016). Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that contemporary goods bearing the halal logo would appeal to this new generation of consumers who wish to conform to Islamic principles while staying abreast of global trends.

Informants S and F have raised similar opinions on the halal logo, pertaining to its marketing capacity to establish trust with consumers and provide them with assurances, particularly among the Muslim community. Informant S expressed: “Because to me, the halal logo is not only about business, but it can also be used to win consumers’ trust especially the Muslims”. Informant F also shared the same view, noting that they could gain the trust of Muslim consumers by bearing the halal logo on their cosmetic products. A study in Brunei seemed to agree, as it outlined the critical role of the halal logo on cosmetic products. The consumers appeared to propound that the presence of the halal logo is vital to ensure the ingredients of the cosmetics are halal (Hussin, 2021). Additionally, the halal label on products acts as halal assurance for the consumers (Ahmad Anuar, 2022). On top of that, the marketers and manufacturers also seem to comprehend the potential of the halal logo in marketing their goods as halal and Shariah-compliant, which in a way may help widen their target market (Hashim, 2014).

On the other hand, informant W held a contrasting viewpoint to the other respondents in that they did not consider the halal logo to be a particularly effective marketing tool for their products. The said informant highlighted, ‘With the halal logo or not, we do not think it will change our consumers’ or potential consumers’ perspectives towards our products.’ One plausible explanation for this phenomenon is the nature of the products they sell, namely perfume. The application of perfume onto the body is considerably less direct than that of other cosmetic items, such as shower cream and facial wash, which require direct application to the skin. As a result, the opinions of consumers regarding halal would perhaps vary slightly. Contrary to informant W, informant R, which also specialises in perfumes, holds the opposite view despite the identical nature of their products. This rather intriguing result may be attributable to the fact that informant W exclusively utilises natural oils for their perfume production, while informant R presumably incorporates synthetic oils into their formulation. This could be assumed from the pricing strategy on their products, where the natural oil perfume is priced much higher than the ones with synthetic oils. Educated and avid perfume consumers would definitely recognise the value between natural oil perfumes and those formulated with synthetic oil; consequently, the trust they place in informant W would be much higher, allowing themselves to downplay the absence of the halal logo on the products.

Overall, the responses indicate that the Halal logo is widely perceived and accepted as an effective marketing tool among local cosmetic producers. Many participants highlighted its ability to enhance product recognition by making it easier for consumers to identify both the halal and safety status of cosmetic products. In addition to visibility, the logo was frequently associated as an indicator in providing assurance that the products are safe to use, which is particularly significant for Muslim consumers. Trust was a key theme, with many participants stating that the halal logo helps build and maintain consumer confidence, especially among Muslim buyers.

Local Cosmetic Producer’s Willingness to Apply for Halal Certification to their Products

A positive result could be observed where all eight local cosmetic producers have the willingness to acquire halal certification for their cosmetic product. They stated:

“Yes, we have actually attempted to apply”.

(Informant D, interview, 2023)

“Yes, but only if the fee is affordable and the process is easy. Since it’s not mandatory, there’s no point in adding extra costs. If the process is simpler than getting MOH approval, we’ll definitely apply. However, it really depends on the fee”.

(Informant G, interview, 2023)

“Yes, if the fee is reasonable and the process isn’t complicated”.

(Informant M, interview, 2023)

“Yes”.

(Informant R, interview, 2023)

“Yes”.

(Informant S, interview, 2023)

“Yes, because it builds trust among consumers by signifying that the products are safe and clean”.

(Informant F, interview, 2023)

“Yes, I believe the halal logo could help expand the reach of local cosmetic products worldwide”.

(Informant Y, interview, 2022)

“Yes, as long as it doesn’t result in a loss. Better safe than sorry. If the process is convenient and inexpensive, why not? I think consumers see the halal logo as a safety symbol for products”.

(Informant W, interview, 2023)

From these interviews, only informant D has attempted to apply for halal after successfully acquiring the cosmetic product notification. Nonetheless, thus far, the attempt has been unsuccessful as the company struggled to meet the Brunei Islamic Council’s requirements for certifying their cosmetic products as halal. However, their willingness to apply is also contingent upon the assessed fees and the convenience of the application. Informant G commented that if the process is not as difficult as getting the MOH approval, we will definitely apply. However, it also depends on the fee required. She also added that since the halal logo is not mandatory, there is no point in applying then. The remark may be taken to indicate that the optional application for halal on cosmetics has somehow led to the notion that the halal logo on cosmetics is superfluous, contrary to the relevance of the halal logo on food products (Yazid & Abdul Halim, 2024).

On the other hand, despite the optional circumstances to issue halal on cosmetics, company ‘W’, as risk-averse individuals, remarked: ‘Better safe than sorry; if the application process is convenient and inexpensive, then why not?’ They further clarified that they are willing to reap the benefits of the halal logo as long as it does not cost them a loss. They hold the belief that the safety element offered by halal cosmetics would somehow attract and instil assurance in their customers in some way. This could be an excellent added value for their products. Informant Y also held similar values by believing that halal-certified local cosmetic products could potentially enhance the product’s global visibility and marketability. However, the extent to which they are willing to apply for halal certification for their products would be predominantly determined by two factors: application fee and application procedures.

The findings indicate that local cosmetic producers are generally willing to apply for Halal certification, with several factors influencing their decision. A key motivator is the affordability of the application fee as many producers expressed that a reasonable cost would encourage them to pursue certification. Additionally, the convenience and clarity of the application process would play a significant role in driving their willingness to apply. Complicated or time-consuming procedures may deter producers from proceeding. Beyond practical considerations, some producers also view Halal certification as a strategic move to enhance global recognition, believing that the Halal logo could help their products reach wider international markets.

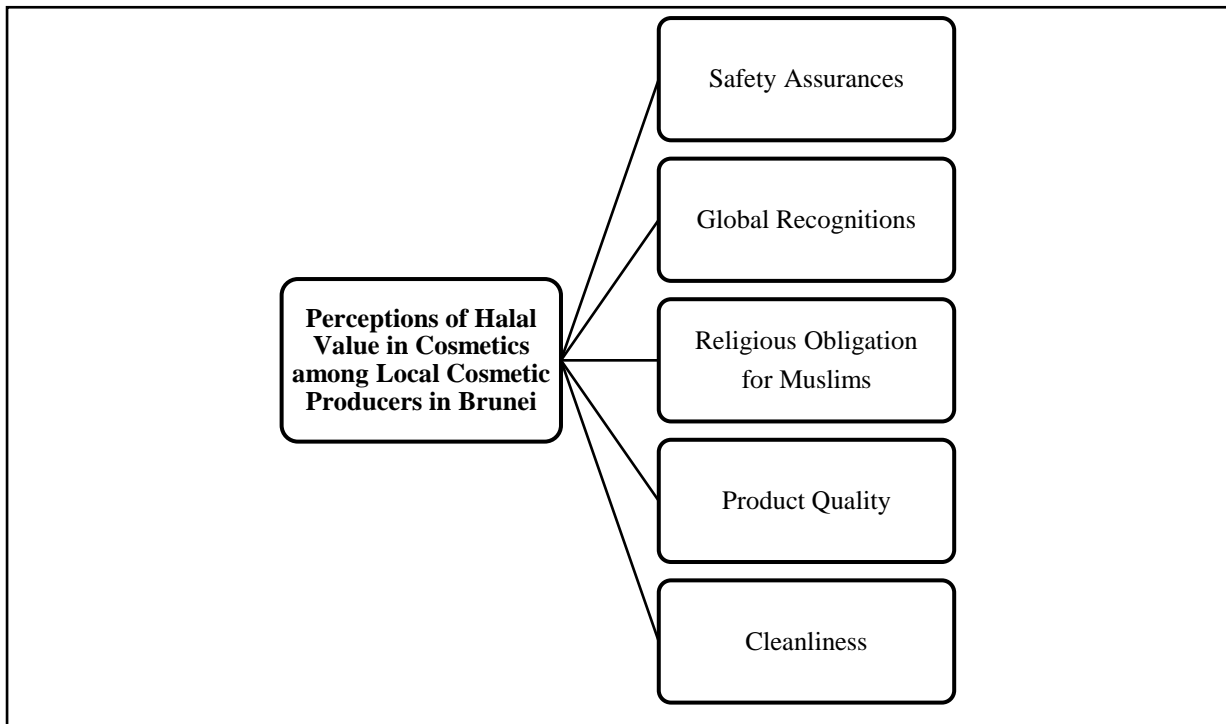


Figure 1. Perceptions of Halal Value in Cosmetics among Local Cosmetic Producers in Brunei (Source: Researcher's Compilation from this finding of this study)

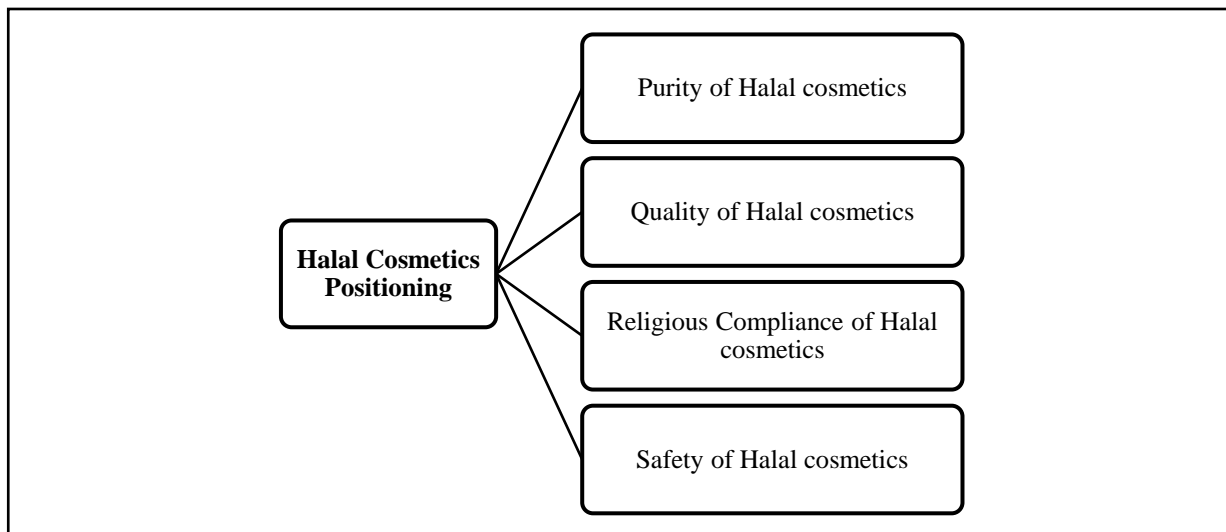


Figure 2. Proposed Theoretical Framework on Attributes Positioning Strategy of Halal Cosmetics in the Malaysian Market (Daud, 2012)

In the final analysis, the data presented indicates that the informants' justification for their stance on the value of halal cosmetics primarily centres on key attributes such as cleanliness, product quality, fulfilment of religious obligations for Muslims, safety assurances, and the attainment of global recognition. This is illustrated in Figure 1. This finding provides substantial evidence in line with the research conducted by Daud (2012) where a framework (refer Figure 2) was proposed outlining four feasible attributes for a positioning strategy for halal cosmetics in Malaysia. Purity, quality, religious compliance, and safety were all listed as key characteristics required to strategise the position of the halal cosmetics industry in Malaysia. However, one notable distinction in this study is the local cosmetic producers' emphasis on how the halal logo can provide global recognition as an added value to local cosmetics, a dimension absent in the Malaysian framework. Given the comparable environment and culture, along with the multi-racial population in both Brunei and Malaysia, the framework appears to be well-suited for adoption and implementation in the Brunei market. However, it is important to acknowledge that Daud's framework was a hypothetical proposition, while this study's findings are grounded in the actual perceptions of local

cosmetic producers in Brunei. Thus, it can be inferred that this study not only corroborates Daud's key positioning attributes but also offers additional contextual insights relevant to the Brunei market. This provides a stronger foundation for strategising the positioning of the halal cosmetics market in the country, complementing and enhancing local market dynamics and consumer expectations.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to gain a deeper understanding of how cosmetic producers in Brunei perceive the value of halal. The local cosmetic producers have expressed positive perceptions regarding the halal logo's ability to improve the quality and value of cosmetic products as well as its effectiveness as a marketing tool. Furthermore, the producers demonstrate a constructive willingness to obtain halal certification for their cosmetic products. The primary rationales they put forth in favour of the halal value of cosmetics are focused on cleanliness, product quality, adherence to religious obligations for Muslims, safety assurances, and global recognition. Further research should be undertaken to explore the challenges encountered by cosmetic producers in Brunei when attempting to produce cosmetics for commercial purposes. This would provide a broader perspective on establishing the untapped potential of shaping a robust cosmetic industry in the Brunei market.

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