

The Influence of Halal Awareness and Online Customer Review on the Use of Imported Skincare with Purchase Intention as a Moderating Variable

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Abstract: The rapid growth of the skincare industry in Indonesia is influenced by increasing self-care awareness, global beauty trends, and digital media. Moreover, the majority of consumers, who are Muslim, pay attention to halal aspects when making purchasing decisions. This study examines the influence of halal awareness and online customer reviews on the use of imported skincare products, with purchase intention as a mediating factor. Using a quantitative method with 102 respondents in Surabaya, data was collected through an online questionnaire and analyzed with Structural Equation Modeling and Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The results show that halal awareness has a significant effect on the use of imported skincare products, but not on purchase intention. Conversely, online customer reviews have a strong influence on both purchase intention and usage. Purchase intention mediates the relationship between online reviews and usage. These findings highlight the relationship between religious values and digital information in shaping consumer choices, and suggest that skincare product marketers should combine halal transparency with strategic digital engagement to strengthen consumer trust and competitiveness in Indonesia's beauty market.

Keywords: Halal Awareness, Online Customer Reviews, Purchase Intention, Imported Skincare Products, Muslim Consumers.

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1. Introduction

The cosmetics industry in Indonesia, particularly skincare products, has experienced rapid growth in recent years. This development is driven by increasing public awareness of self-care, global beauty trends, and the influence of social media and digital public figures. This is supported by a report from BPS (Central Statistics Agency), during the third quarter of 2025, Indonesia's total digital transactions reached around 200 trillion, with the healthcare category reaching 17-18% of total transactions (Widyatama, 2025). Millennials and Generation Z are the dominant consumer segments who tend to choose products that are not only effective but also aligned with personal and religious values. This is crucial considering that the majority of Indonesia's population is Muslim, making halal status a key factor in purchasing decisions.

Muslim consumers' understanding of halal principles encompasses knowledge of raw materials, production methods, and halal certification, serving as a crucial cognitive framework for evaluating cosmetic products. Those with heightened halal awareness are typically more discerning and cautious in their purchasing choices, meticulously examining ingredient transparency, manufacturing standards, and the reliability of halal certification. This is especially true when considering imported skincare products, which often raise doubts about their adherence to Islamic guidelines (Monoarfa, 2023). Consequently, halal awareness not only influences personal preferences but also acts as a psychological barrier, potentially limiting the acceptance of imported skincare products, even when these products offer superior quality, cutting-edge technology, and significant innovation. This presents a considerable challenge for foreign manufacturers aiming to enter the predominantly Muslim Indonesian market.

On the other hand, online customer reviews (OCR) are becoming increasingly influential in purchasing decisions. Consumer testimonials are perceived as more credible since they are based on

actual experiences, thereby reducing uncertainty and enhancing trust in imported products. Alayfia (2025) emphasizes that online reviews positively affect purchase intention through brand trust. This condition highlights how digital factors can mitigate doubts related to product halalness. Purchase intention also plays a significant role in consumer behavior. Beyond mere desire, it functions as a predictor of actual purchasing behavior. In the context of imported skincare, purchase intention serves as a mediating variable between halal awareness and online reviews on actual usage. This means that even if consumers doubt halal status, strong purchase intention perhaps influenced by positive reviews can still drive purchase decisions.

Earlier research offers empirical evidence for this phenomenon by emphasizing the unique yet interconnected roles of halal awareness and online reviews in influencing consumer behavior. Monoarfa (2023) found that halal awareness decreases the tendency to purchase imported cosmetics. Conversely, Alayfia (2025) demonstrated that online reviews encourage purchase decisions through brand trust. Similarly, Rahman et al. (2022) revealed that positive reviews still influence Muslim consumers even when halal status is uncertain. Hidayat (2021) highlighted online reviews as social proof, while Wilson and Liu (2010) underlined the significant role of halal awareness in shaping Muslim consumption behavior.

Based on the above explanation, it can be concluded that although many studies have discussed the role of halal awareness and online customer reviews separately in influencing Muslim consumer behaviour, there are still few studies that combine these two factors into a comprehensive analytical framework, especially by including purchase intention as a mediating variable. In the context of imported skincare products, which often face halal issues, the interaction between religious considerations and the influence of digital information becomes increasingly complex and relevant. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by empirically analysing how halal awareness and online customer reviews simultaneously influence the use of imported skincare products through purchase intention, thereby contributing theoretically to the development of Muslim consumer behaviour literature and providing practical implications for the cosmetics industry in Indonesia.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Research instruments

The main material of this research was a structured questionnaire distributed online to respondents. The questionnaire was designed to measure four constructs, halal awareness, online customer reviews, purchase intention, and actual usage of imported skincare products. Halal awareness captured consumers' knowledge, concern, and attention regarding the halal status of products, including awareness of ingredients, production processes, and certification. Online customer reviews reflected the influence of digital testimonials on consumer behavior, particularly the credibility, informativeness, and persuasiveness of reviews. Purchase intention measured respondents' willingness, consideration, and planned intention to purchase imported skincare products, while actual usage represented the frequency and consistency of their real consumption behavior. All indicators were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5), adapted from prior studies to ensure validity and relevance.

2.2 Respondents

This study adopted a quantitative research design with a non-probability sampling technique and was conducted in Surabaya, Indonesia. Respondents were selected among consumers who had purchased or used imported skincare products. The sample size was determined based on Ferdinand's (2014) guideline, which recommends five to ten times the number of indicators. Following this rule, the study successfully collected 102 valid responses, which met the minimum requirement for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

2.3 Data Analysis

The research model consisted of four constructs: halal awareness (X1), online customer reviews (X2), purchase intention (Y), and actual usage of imported skincare products (Z). Data were collected through an online questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale and analyzed with the Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) technique. The evaluation of the model was carried out in two stages: outer model analysis, which examined the validity and reliability of the measurement instruments, and inner model analysis, which tested the structural relationships between constructs. Hypothesis testing was performed using t-statistics and p-values at a 5% significance level,

with hypotheses considered significant when $t > 1.96$ or $p < 0.05$. The model will be considered a good fit if one or more of the fit criteria reach the critical values (Hair et al., 2017). This procedure ensured both the adequacy of the measurement model and the explanatory power of the structural model.

Through this procedure, both measurement and structural models were comprehensively evaluated, ensuring that the instruments were valid and reliable and that the research model was capable of explaining the relationships among the studied variables.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Validity and Reliability of Constructs

The results of the convergent validity test show that all indicators have loading values greater than 0.7 and therefore can be declared valid. According to Hair et al. (2011), an AVE value exceeding 0.50 indicates a satisfactory level of convergent validity, as it shows that a latent variable accounts for more than 50% of the variance in its indicators. Table 1 provides a summary of the validity and reliability tests, indicating that the AVE values for each construct exceed 0.5. This suggests that each latent variable accounts for more than 50% of the variance in its indicators. In addition, both Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha values exceed 0.7, indicating that the instruments used in this study are reliable.

Table 1. Validity and Reliability of Constructs

Variable	Indicator	Loading	AVE	CR	Alpha	Remark
Halal Awareness	HA1–HA5	0.711–0.829	0.625	0.893	0.855	Valid & Reliable
Online Customer Review	OCR2–OCR6	0.822–0.909	0.767	0.908	0.848	Valid & Reliable
Purchase Intention	MN3–MN7	0.802–0.892	0.680	0.927	0.905	Valid & Reliable
Skincare Usage	M1–M5	0.727–0.922	0.744	0.935	0.912	Valid & Reliable

3.2 Structural Model

The inner model analysis shows that the R^2 value for Purchase Intention is 0.457 (moderate category), while Skincare Usage has an R^2 of 0.671 (substantial category). This indicates that the model has a good predictive ability regarding consumer behavior in using imported skincare products.

Table 2. R^2 and Path Coefficient Results

Endogenous Variable	R^2
Purchase Intention	0.457
Skincare Usage	0.671

3.3 Hypothesis Testing

Based on the hypothesis testing results presented in Table 3, as observed through the t-test and p-value, the hypothesis is considered significant when $t > 1.96$ or $p < 0.05$, with the results as follows. Halal awareness has no effect on purchase intention; however, the study's findings indicate that halal awareness has a significant effect on skincare usage. In addition, this study shows that online customer reviews have a significant impact on both purchase intention and skincare usage. The final test results reveal that purchase intention significantly affects skincare usage.

Table 3. Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Path Relationship	T-statistic	P-value	Decision
H1	Halal Awareness → Purchase Intention	0.142	0.887	Not supported

Hypothesis	Path Relationship	T-statistic	P-value	Decision
H2	Halal Awareness → Skincare Usage	2.396	0.017	Supported
H3	Online Customer Review → Purchase Intention	6.579	0.000	Supported
H4	Online Customer Review → Skincare Usage	2.607	0.009	Supported
H5	Purchase Intention → Skincare Usage	7.138	0.000	Supported

3.4 Discussion

This study shows that halal awareness does not significantly influence purchase intention, but it has a significant impact on the use of skin care products, indicating that Muslim consumers prioritise halal considerations more intensively during the consumption phase than when deciding to purchase. This indicates that halal attributes do not necessarily drive consumers' initial purchasing decisions, but become important when linked to the context of product compliance with religious standards. These findings are in line with Monoarfa (2023), who states that halal considerations have greater significance during the consumption stage.

Conversely, these findings indicate that online customer reviews have a significant impact on both purchase intention and the use of skin care products. Online reviews serve as social proof that shapes consumer perceptions by providing information about other users' experiences, thereby increasing trust and reducing the perceived risk and uncertainty involved in decision-making. These findings are in line with the research by Chevalier and Mayzlin (2006), which shows that consumer-generated reviews significantly influence product evaluation and sales performance, as well as Hidayat (2021), who emphasises the role of online reviews in building credibility and influencing consumer behaviour in the digital marketplace. These results indicate that consumers tend to rely more on the experiences of fellow users shared through online platforms than on advertisements produced by companies, which are often considered biased or promotional.

Furthermore, this study shows that purchase intention plays a strong mediating role between online customer reviews and skin care product usage. This indicates that online customer reviews are capable of shaping consumers' purchase intentions, which ultimately influence their usage behaviour towards skin care products. This finding is consistent with the consumer behaviour theory proposed by Kotler and Keller (2016), which emphasises that purchase intention represents a critical cognitive and affective stage prior to actual purchasing behaviour. Through the influence of online reviews, consumers consider the effectiveness, safety, and suitability of products, thereby forming their intention to purchase skin care products. Once positive purchase intent is formed, consumers are more likely to proceed to product use and continued usage.

From a managerial perspective, these findings suggest that imported cosmetics manufacturers should prioritise transparency regarding halal status as a strategic mechanism for building trust, especially in the predominantly Muslim Indonesian market. Clear communication about halal certification, raw material sources, and production processes can reduce consumer doubts and increase perceived product credibility. At the same time, companies should actively utilise Online Customer Reviews as part of their digital marketing strategy by encouraging authentic user feedback, interacting with consumer testimonials, and managing review platforms responsibly. The integration of halal transparency and consumer-generated reviews is expected to not only increase consumer trust but also strengthen emotional bonds and brand loyalty, as consumers perceive the brand as reliable and responsive. This combination is expected to increase consumer trust, strengthen loyalty, and expand market penetration in Indonesia's predominantly Muslim consumer base.

4. Conclusion

This research clarifies how halal awareness and online customer reviews jointly shape consumer behavior toward imported skincare products. Empirical results indicate that halal awareness does not significantly influence purchase intention but does significantly affect actual usage, suggesting that consumers emphasize halal attributes more at the consumption stage than when forming initial purchase intentions. Conversely, online customer reviews significantly affect both purchase intention and product usage by providing credible peer information that reduces uncertainty and increases trust. Purchase intention functions as a meaningful mediator between online reviews and actual usage,

reinforcing the theoretical sequence whereby intention precedes behavior in consumer decisionmaking.

Theoretically, the study contributes by distinguishing the role of halal awareness in cosmetics from its commonly studied role in food products, showing that halal considerations may be more consequential after purchase in product usage decisions. Practically, findings recommend that imported skincare brands combine transparent halal communication with active management of online reviews. While clear halal information supports long-term acceptance and continued use, authentic positive reviews drive initial interest and conversion. Therefore, marketing strategies should integrate halal certification disclosure, ingredient transparency, and programs that encourage verified customer feedback to build credibility and loyalty in Muslim-majority markets. Policymakers and certification bodies should also facilitate clearer halal labeling standards and public education to increase consumer confidence. In sum, combining religiously-informed transparency with digital word-of-mouth management offers a robust approach for firms seeking sustainable growth in halal markets.

Limitations include a modest sample size (102 respondents) and a focus restricted to skincare, which constrains generalizability. Future research should employ larger and more diverse samples, examine moderating variables such as religiosity, brand trust, or perceived product quality, and extend the framework to other halal-related sectors (e.g., food, tourism, pharmaceuticals) and cross-cultural settings. Addressing these areas will deepen theoretical understanding, broaden managerial guidance, and support stronger policy support.

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