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# NATURAL AND SYNTHETIC COSMETICS: AN EVALUATION FROM AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS FOR MUSLIM CONSUMERS

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#### Abstract:

This study explores the comparison between natural and synthetic cosmetics from an Islamic perspective, focusing on their implications for Muslim consumers' health and well-being. With the growing demand for halal-certified and safe beauty products, the research investigates how natural cosmetics align with the concept of halalan tayyiban—which emphasizes purity, safety, and ethical considerations in Islamic teachings. The study also examines the potential health risks associated with synthetic cosmetics, which often contain harmful chemicals such as parabens, mercury, and silicones. These substances pose long-term health threats and raise concerns regarding their halal status. The paper further highlights the challenges and opportunities for the cosmetics industry in ensuring compliance with Islamic principles, particularly in sourcing, production processes, and packaging. Through a qualitative approach and a review of literature, the study provides insights into how Islamic values influence consumer behavior in the cosmetic market and suggests ways to foster greater awareness among Muslim consumers. The findings emphasize

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**(i)** 

the need for a more comprehensive halal certification system and stricter regulation of cosmetic products to safeguard both religious integrity and public health. The research contributes to the growing discourse on halal cosmetics and their role in promoting the holistic well-being of Muslim consumers.

#### **Keywords:**

Cosmetics, Natural Products, Synthetics Products, Islamic Perspectives, Halalan Tayyiban

#### Introduction

The global cosmetics industry has experienced significant growth in recent decades, driven by increasing awareness of personal care, the enhancement of personal image, and the growing influence of social media worldwide. According to the Grand View Research report (2023), the cosmetics market is projected to reach USD 758.4 billion by 2025. This growth reflects the rising demand for a wide array of beauty and personal care products. Several factors, including changes in modern lifestyles, increased purchasing power, and growing concerns about the ingredients and efficacy of cosmetic products, have contributed to this expansion (Osman et al., 2020).

Cosmetic products can generally be classified into two primary categories: natural cosmetics and synthetic cosmetics. Natural cosmetics refer to products formulated from organic or plant-based ingredients that undergo minimal processing and are free from synthetic chemicals (Daniela Hirata et al., 2022). In contrast, synthetic cosmetics utilize man-made ingredients derived from industrial processes that often involve specific chemical mixtures (Raja et al., 2016). While synthetic products continue to dominate the market in terms of affordability and product longevity, concerns persist regarding their potential side effects, including skin irritation, tissue damage, and the possible presence of non-halal ingredients. As a result, certain consumer segments, particularly Muslims, have increasingly sought alternatives that are safer and aligned with their religious principles (Ahmad Murshidi Mustapha & Noraini Junoh, 2022).

For Muslim consumers, the selection of cosmetic products is not solely based on functionality or brand reputation but is also guided by the principles of *halalan tayyiban*, as outlined in Islamic law. This principle encompasses the halal status of ingredients in terms of legal permissibility, as well as the assurance of safety, cleanliness, and product integrity (Rabiatul Adawiyah & Zalina Zakaria, 2019). The use of ingredients considered haram or doubtful, such as alcohol, pig derivatives, or gelatine from animals not slaughtered according to Islamic law, not only raises concerns regarding Sharia compliance but also undermines the trust and confidence that Muslim consumers place in the integrity of cosmetic products ('Aina Fariha et al., 2024). Furthermore, concerns regarding the potential toxic effects and long-term health risks associated with the use of synthetic ingredients have underscored the need for cosmetic products that meet consumer demands while also adhering to religious principles and social responsibility (Anitha M. G. et al., 2023).

Although numerous studies have been conducted on the dermatological effects of cosmetic products, there remains a significant gap in integrating scientific analysis with Islamic legal frameworks, particularly in relation to Muslim consumers. Consequently, this study aims to

address this gap by providing a comprehensive comparison between natural and synthetic cosmetics in terms of ingredient composition, their effects, and their evaluation based on Sharia principles. The findings of this study are expected to make a substantial contribution to the academic discourse on the selection of ethical, safe, and Sharia-compliant cosmetic products, especially among Muslim consumers worldwide.

#### Literature Review

## Concept of Natural and Synthetic Cosmetics

Cosmetics are widely used in daily life for personal care, hygiene, and physical appearance. In recent years, the cosmetics industry has experienced significant growth, driven by increasing consumer awareness regarding product ingredients and safety. Generally, cosmetics can be categorized into two main types: natural cosmetics and synthetic cosmetics. Natural cosmetics are defined as products formulated from plant-based or mineral-derived active ingredients, which do not contain harmful chemical additives (Zalina Awang et al., 2021). According to Zalina Awang et al. (2021), this definition emphasizes the importance of using pure natural ingredients to ensure consumer safety while preserving environmental sustainability. These products are recognized for their high biodegradability, making them more environmentally friendly and leaving a minimal ecological footprint post-use (Isa et al., 2023). Additionally, natural cosmetics are known to be free from harmful toxins, such as arsenic, mercury, and cadmium, substances commonly associated with health risks in synthetic products (Isa et al., 2023). Research by Raihan Mohd Isa et al. (2023) further asserts that natural-based cosmetics result in minimal side effects for users, thereby increasing consumer trust and preference. Therefore, natural cosmetics have become increasingly popular, especially among Muslim consumers, as they not only meet safety standards but also align with halal principles, contributing to the overall balance of the ecosystem.

Recent studies, such as those by Zalina Awang et al. (2021), show that natural cosmetics like liquid soap based on Schizophyllum commune extract have high acceptance rates among users, particularly due to their aroma, texture, and safety. Findings from Zalina Awang et al. (2021) specifically highlight that consumers rated texture and aroma higher in these natural products, indirectly indicating their superiority over commercially available synthetic liquid soaps. This emphasizes that the advantages of natural cosmetics extend beyond safety to include aesthetic appeal and a more satisfactory user experience. Safety tests conducted on these products by Raihan Mohd Isa et al. (2023) confirmed that heavy metals, such as arsenic, mercury, and cadmium, were below detection limits, making them safer for long-term use. These studies underscore the unique and significant potential of natural cosmetics, not only in meeting the safety needs of Muslim consumers but also in offering added value in aesthetics, long-term safety, and compliance with Islamic principles prioritizing user well-being.

In contrast, synthetic cosmetics typically involve the use of man-made chemicals such as parabens and silicones, designed to enhance the product's durability and efficacy (Raihan Mohd Isa et al., 2023). One of the key advantages of synthetic ingredients is their lower production cost, which makes them more appealing to cosmetic manufacturers aiming to maximize profits with minimal investment (Raihan Mohd Isa et al., 2023). However, Awang et al. (2021) argue that the use of these chemicals carries significant health risks, particularly skin allergies, irritations, and potential toxic effects with prolonged use. These risks arise because chemicals like parabens and silicones may interact negatively with sensitive skin and disrupt its natural

functions over time. Additionally, synthetic products are linked to higher environmental pollution due to the non-biodegradable nature of their chemical components, leaving lasting negative impacts on biodiversity (Awang et al., 2021). Thus, while synthetic cosmetics offer economic advantages to the industry, the adverse effects on consumer health and environmental sustainability need serious attention, particularly for Muslim consumers who prioritize halal aspects and environmental stewardship.

The halal status of synthetic cosmetics has increasingly come under scrutiny among Muslim consumers, particularly when products contain ingredients like alcohol, which may conflict with halal principles, especially if the alcohol is derived from fermentation processes involving *khamr* (intoxicants). Baharum et al. (2020) emphasize that the lack of clarity in ingredient declarations from manufacturers complicates the decision-making process for Muslim consumers, making it challenging to identify products that are pure and permissible for use. This concern is not limited to the ingredients themselves but extends to issues of blessings (barakah) and the acceptance of worship if consumers unknowingly use haram substances. As such, the issue of halal compliance transcends legal considerations and intersects with the spiritual integrity and ethical responsibility of manufacturers in respecting the religious sensitivities of consumers. In this context, there is increasing pressure on the cosmetics industry to adopt more transparent practices and comply with halal standards in response to the growing awareness of Muslim consumers, who are becoming more cautious and discerning in their personal care product choices (Baharum et al., 2020).

This discussion highlights the critical need for more stringent halal certification frameworks and the involvement of religious authorities and policymakers to ensure the safety and purity of cosmetic products in the market. With clearer and more comprehensive standards, Muslim consumers can make more informed, safe, and religion-compliant choices when selecting personal care products.

## Comparison of Ingredients and Contents

Natural cosmetics have increasingly gained traction among consumers who prioritize skin health, due to their active ingredients that are scientifically proven to offer therapeutic benefits. Key ingredients commonly used include virgin coconut oil and extracts of Schizophyllum commune, both of which are known for their antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory properties, making them effective in protecting and healing sensitive and problematic skin (Zalina Awang, Nor Hazlina Abd Wahab, & Siti Munirah Mohd, 2021). The efficacy of these ingredients not only aligns with empirical evidence but also resonates with Islamic teachings, which emphasize the use of pure, safe, and non-harmful products for the body. Additionally, natural agents such as betaine and glycerine play a crucial role in enhancing skin hydration and improving the skin barrier function naturally, without disturbing the skin microbiome balance. Research has shown that the effectiveness of these natural ingredients can be comparable, and sometimes even superior, to synthetic alternatives commonly used in commercial products (Zalina Awang et al., 2021). The preference for natural ingredients not only reduces the risk of irritation but also reflects a holistic approach to personal care that aligns physical health, ethical consumerism, and Islamic principles. Hence, the incorporation of natural active ingredients in cosmetics presents an alternative that is not only safer but also more ethical, particularly for Muslim consumers who prioritize both physical and spiritual well-being.

On the other hand, synthetic cosmetics often contain chemicals that are known to pose significant health risks and environmental impacts, especially substances such as Sodium Lauryl Sulfate (SLS) and Sodium Laureth Sulfate (SLES). These ingredients are frequently included in cleansing products due to their effectiveness in producing foam; however, their harsh nature can cause skin irritation, particularly in individuals with sensitive skin (Zalina Awang, Nor Hazlina Abd Wahab, & Siti Munirah Mohd, 2021). Furthermore, the residuals of these substances that are discharged into drainage systems contribute to the contamination of aquatic habitats, threatening the survival of aquatic organisms. Prolonged exposure to these aggressive chemicals can also disrupt the natural balance of the skin, accelerating epidermal damage. Studies have also shown that silicone, often added to provide a smooth and silky texture, can block pores and inhibit the skin's natural regeneration process, potentially contributing to premature aging and various dermatological issues such as acne and chronic dryness (Isa, Othman, & Baharum, 2023). The cumulative effects of these chemicals not only pose a risk to consumer health but also raise ethical questions regarding the long-term safety of commercially available synthetic products. From an Islamic ethical perspective, any product that has the potential to harm human health and the environment must undergo stringent scrutiny, in line with the principle of lā darar wa lā dirār (no harm and no reciprocating harm), which rejects any form of harm in life. Therefore, the demand for safer and environmentally friendly formulations is not only a health concern but also a religious necessity that cannot be overlooked.

Long-term studies have indicated that the use of synthetic cosmetics may contribute to the accumulation of toxic substances in the human body, thereby increasing the risk of chronic health issues such as hormonal disruption, endocrine instability, and even cancer (Zalina Awang, Nor Hazlina Abd Wahab, & Siti Munirah Mohd, 2021). Chemicals such as parabens, phthalates, and triclosan, commonly used in synthetic cosmetics, are bioaccumulative, meaning they gradually accumulate in body tissues and trigger biochemical reactions that damage the natural functions of organs. This is not only concerning from an individual health perspective but also raises significant questions about the social responsibility and ethics of the cosmetic industry in ensuring the long-term safety of consumers. Furthermore, the chemical residues released into drainage systems have been shown to have detrimental effects on water and soil ecosystems, including the death of microfauna, pollution of clean water sources, and degradation of agricultural land (Zalina Awang et al., 2021). This situation illustrates that the implications of using synthetic cosmetics extend beyond human health and encompass environmental sustainability, which is considered a divine trust. In the framework of magasid syariah, any actions that may cause harm (mafsadah) to the soul (nafs) and the environment (bi'ah) must be avoided, making the evaluation of the safety of cosmetic ingredients a moral and religious obligation. Thus, consumer awareness and transparency from manufacturers in disclosing product contents are crucial steps in ensuring public health well-being and the protection of the environment in a holistic manner.

## Perception and Trends Among Muslim Consumers

The awareness among Muslim consumers regarding the ingredients in cosmetic products has notably increased, in parallel with the growing discourse on safety and halal certification frequently discussed across social media and within Islamically-oriented communities. This rise in awareness reflects concerns among consumers about the potential presence of haram or questionable substances in cosmetic products, which could not only impact health but also invalidate daily acts of worship (Mustapha & Junoh, 2022). According to Mustapha and Junoh

(2022), educational level plays a pivotal role in shaping consumers' sensitivity to cosmetic ingredient issues, particularly when accompanied by continuous exposure to information about halal certification and product safety. Additionally, socio-economic factors also influence consumers' ability to make more ethical and informed decisions, including a tendency to choose natural products believed to be clean and risk-free. The advancement of information technology has accelerated the dissemination of knowledge, consequently creating a more critical consumer community that can independently assess product ingredients. This shift represents a paradigm change among Muslim consumers who are no longer passive but are actively seeking information and demanding transparency from producers. In this context, the cosmetic industry must take progressive steps not only to ensure compliance with halal standards but also to enhance clear and ethical communication to maintain the trust of increasingly aware consumers who are focused on their religious and social responsibilities.

The legal evaluation of the use of ingredients in cosmetics is an essential aspect for Muslim consumers, especially when it involves substances like alcohol or components whose halal status is in question. Previous research has extensively examined issues related to the religious rulings on cosmetic usage, particularly when such ingredients may originate from haram or najs sources under Islamic law (Baharum, Othman, & Mohd Noor, 2020). The study conducted by Baharum et al. (2020) indicates that explanations regarding the use of alcohol in cosmetics should be detailed, including the distinction between synthetic alcohol, which is nonintoxicating, and alcohol derived from fermentation processes (khamr). This figh evaluation is crucial as it forms the foundation for Muslim consumers' confidence in making decisions that align with shariah principles. In this regard, the concept of halalan tavviban serves as the primary criterion, not only assessing the halal status of ingredients but also the overall safety and purity of the product. Therefore, any product containing questionable elements should be carefully scrutinized through authentic legal guidance to avoid leading consumers into matters of doubt. This approach not only strengthens the integrity of the halal cosmetic industry but also contributes to the formation of a knowledgeable, responsible Muslim consumer system, guided by religious values in daily life.

## Principles of Halal and Haram in Cosmetics

In Islam, the general principle is that the use of cosmetic products is permissible (harus) as long as it does not contravene the boundaries set by Shariah. Islam, as a comprehensive way of life, places great emphasis on cleanliness, self-maintenance, and the enhancement of one's appearance, as evidenced by the saying of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) that "Allah is beautiful and loves beauty." From a Shariah perspective, the use of cosmetics is allowed, provided it is done in moderation (wasatiyyah) and does not lead to tabarruj (excessive adornment) or actions that may cause social harm or mislead others. More importantly, all ingredients used in cosmetics must be derived from halal and clean sources, and they must not contain najs (impure substances), haram materials, or any elements that may lead to doubts regarding their permissibility (Nor Adha & Mohd Hafifi, 2019).

The discussion surrounding halal and haram is not limited to food and drink that is directly consumed but also extends to external applications on the body, particularly on the skin. This is because substances applied to the skin may be absorbed and have physiological effects on health and overall skin well-being. Therefore, the selection of cosmetic products must not only focus on their effectiveness but also ensure compliance with Shariah principles as a fundamental consideration for contemporary Muslim consumers.

From a Shariah perspective, the halal status of a cosmetic product is not solely determined by the absence of forbidden substances such as najs or haram components but also includes compliance with the entire production, handling, and distribution processes, ensuring that these processes are free from contamination by najs or any form of doubt (syubhah). The Malaysian Halal Standard, as outlined in MS 2634:2019, emphasizes the need for principles of cleanliness, safety of ingredients, transparency in the supply chain, and integrity of raw material sources (Jabatan Standard Malaysia, 2019; Aji et al., 2022). Consequently, cosmetic manufacturers are required to integrate the principles of *halalan tayyiban* at every stage of product development.

In addition to Shariah compliance, the *tayyib* element—signifying benefit, safety, and quality—plays a critical role in determining the halal status of cosmetic products. *Tayyib* reflects the notion that products should not only be halal in terms of their origin but must also promote health and safety without causing harm. In this regard, adherence to guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health Malaysia (KKM) is also essential to ensure that halal cosmetic products meet high safety and ethical standards for consumers (Hasali et al., 2015). According to Rabiatul and Zalina (2019), the development of halal cosmetics should strike a balance between Shariah requirements and modern scientific standards, ensuring that products are not only pure and clean according to Islamic law but also of high quality, safe for use, and beneficial for the global Muslim community's well-being.

When discussing haram substances in cosmetics, it is important to distinguish between those ingredients that are clearly forbidden according to Shariah and those that are considered critical or syubhah. Critical ingredients refer to substances whose source is unclear or which may pose a potential risk to the health of users (Raihan et al., 2023). The rapid growth of the global beauty industry has led to a sharp increase in demand for cosmetic products (Siti Maryam & Che Maryam, 2018). However, the industry is still dominated by non-Muslim companies, which raises significant challenges concerning halal compliance, particularly with regard to sourcing raw materials, manufacturing processes, and the transparency of product content (Nurul Aqmar & Nor Hashima, 2018). Rabiatul and Zalina (2019) point out that one of the primary difficulties is assessing the halal status of cosmetic ingredients, especially when determining whether they are synthetic or naturally derived. Many ingredients in the cosmetics industry do not align with the principles of *halalan tayyiban*, especially when animal-derived ingredients such as non-halal animal fats or harmful chemical contents are involved. Thus, the need for highly skilled professionals to carefully analyse the composition of ingredients is crucial in ensuring comprehensive halal compliance.

Furthermore, studies indicate that some cosmetic manufacturers use questionable ingredients or blatantly haram substances in their formulations. This is often driven by the industry's need to improve product texture, extend shelf life, enhance aesthetic appeal, or reduce production costs (Mohd Noor et al., 2018; Raihan et al., 2023). Common haram ingredients include pigderived gelatine, human placenta, alcohol, and impurities from najs sources. These substances not only contradict halal principles but can also lead to adverse effects such as allergic reactions, hormonal disruption, and skin damage. A troubling trend within the cosmetic sector is the increasing use of ingredients derived from pigs in formulations. According to Saadan Man (2009), pigs are among the most widely utilized animals in the beauty industry, with nearly every part of the animal being used in various forms. For example, pig collagen is found in creams and lotions, elastin in skin care products, pig fat in salves and lipsticks, glycerine in moisturizers, placenta in anti-aging serums, and gelatine in shampoos and nail polishes (Raihan

et al., 2023). This has raised significant concerns among Muslim consumers who are conscientious about the halal status of cosmetic products they use (Zulfaqar, 2019).

Additionally, alcohol is another commonly used base ingredient in the cosmetic industry. However, its permissibility from a Shariah perspective depends on the method of processing and the source of the alcohol. Alcohol that is free from impurities, such as those used in perfumes, is often employed because of its ability to penetrate and evaporate quickly. On the other hand, alcohol derived from fermentation processes that result in intoxicating substances (arak) is clearly prohibited. This distinction between the type of alcohol used in the industry versus that derived from intoxicants is critical. Regardless of its intended purpose, alcohol that originates from intoxicants remains haram, even if it is used as a stabilizer or solvent in a cosmetic formulation (Nur Bahirah Baharum et al., 2020).

# Implications of Synthetic Cosmetics Containing Hazardous Ingredients

The increasing reports of poisoning incidents related to the use of cosmetics, as released by the Ministry of Health Malaysia (MOH), highlight the urgent need to raise awareness among Muslim consumers about product safety (MOH, 2024). For instance, in Kelantan, a rise in chronic kidney disease has been reported, allegedly due to the use of unregistered and unapproved cosmetic products and medicines (Berita RTM, 2024).

Moreover, the phenomenon of impulsive online purchases of cosmetic products, which are not subject to quality and safety monitoring, has raised significant concerns. Many cosmetic products imported from countries such as Thailand, China, and Vietnam have been found to contain cheap, low-quality ingredients, including harmful chemicals that can have long-term detrimental effects on users' health (Zuliaty Zulkiffli, 2017). These products are often repackaged under various brands, obscuring the true composition of the products. Among the prohibited substances commonly found in these cosmetics are heavy metals like mercury and lead, as well as regulated toxic substances such as hydroquinone, tretinoin, antibiotics like clindamycin, and steroids like betamethasone (MOH, 2015; Nordin et al., 2021). Exposure to these substances can lead to serious health effects such as nerve damage, skin burns, cancer risks, and in extreme cases, seizures or coma (Intan Mas Ayu, 2017; Othman et al., 2020).

Most of these chemicals are included to accelerate cosmetic effects, for example, hydroquinone and mercury are used in skin whitening products for drastic skin lightening, while tretinoin and antibiotics are used to treat acne (Ahmad Murshidi & Noraini, 2022). Despite providing quick results, side effects such as rashes, irritation, skin discoloration, and disturbances to the skin's structure and function have been reported (Mohd Jamilul & Fairul, 2024). More concerning is the use of hydroquinone, which can damage the skin's natural protection against ultraviolet (UV) radiation, thereby increasing the risk of skin cancer (MOH, 2015; Siti A'isyah Sukaimi, 2019). Allergic reactions such as redness, swelling, itching, and psychological effects from drastic changes in appearance are additional side effects that should not be overlooked (Raihan et al., 2023). The use of these prohibited and harmful substances clearly contradicts the *halalan tayyiban* principles, which emphasize cleanliness, safety, and well-being of the human body according to Islamic perspectives (Rusmadi et al., 2015). Therefore, adherence to these principles must be given serious attention in the development and selection process of cosmetic products to ensure they are truly safe, pure, and suitable for Muslim consumers.

Ultimately, the development of modern technology has played a crucial role in driving advancements in various industrial sectors, including the cosmetics industry. Cosmetic use has now become a common practice not only among women but also increasingly among men who are more concerned about their appearance, self-confidence, and personal hygiene when interacting within society. With the rising demand, the need to scrutinize the safety and purity of cosmetic products has become even more urgent. Therefore, the halal certification guidelines set by the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) play a significant role in ensuring that each cosmetic product meets safety standards, cleanliness, and does not contain harmful substances that could endanger users.

## Research Methodology

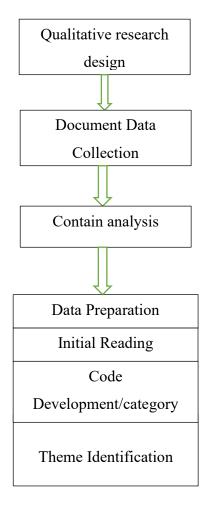
This study adopts a qualitative approach to explore and deeply understand the phenomena related to the use of natural and synthetic cosmetics among Muslim consumers, specifically from a Shariah perspective and its health implications. A qualitative approach is deemed appropriate as it enables the researcher to explore the meanings, beliefs, and values that Muslim consumers associate with their selection of cosmetics, as well as the factors influencing their decisions. This approach also allows for an in-depth exploration of issues involving Shariah compliance and health, requiring thorough analysis of the data gathered. To achieve the objectives of this study, the library research method has been utilized as the primary methodology. According to Suwanto (2013), the library research method refers to a systematic approach that involves searching, collecting, and analysing relevant reference materials from trusted sources, such as academic journals, articles, books, and authoritative documents. This method is highly useful in studies that require the analysis of previous literature, as these sources provide theoretical guidance, data, and relevant information to formulate valid findings.

This study focuses on the use of secondary sources, including materials such as peer-reviewed journals, academic articles, newspaper clippings, and electronic documents published by recognized institutions. These secondary sources play a crucial role in supporting the study, particularly when analysing various perspectives on the use of halal cosmetics from both Shariah and health viewpoints. The primary sources used in this study include journals published in international academic databases, as well as reports published by authoritative bodies such as the Ministry of Health Malaysia (KKM) and the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM).

Through the library research method, this study is able to analyse existing literature on halal cosmetics, the ingredients involved, and the health implications that may arise from using cosmetics that are unsafe or do not adhere to Shariah principles. Previous research related to the halal status of cosmetics, the use of synthetic ingredients in cosmetic products, and health assessments among Muslim consumers has been thoroughly examined to ensure valid and relevant findings. This study also aims to provide clearer guidelines for Muslim consumers in selecting cosmetics that are safe, pure, and in line with Shariah principles.

Additionally, this study employs a content analysis approach to examine and assess various literature related to halal issues in the cosmetic industry. Content analysis involves extracting detailed information from secondary sources, which is then critically analysed to understand the relationship between the halal status of cosmetic products, consumer safety, and the Shariah principles that must be followed by cosmetic manufacturers.

The content analysis process in this study involves several important steps such as data preparation, initial reading, code development, grouping of codes into categories, and finally, the identification of key themes. By employing this approach, the study aims to contribute to the development of knowledge regarding halal cosmetics in the context of Muslim consumers, as well as provide valuable guidance for both manufacturers and consumers to ensure the safety and halal status of cosmetic products. The findings of this study are expected to offer practical implications that can be applied in the halal cosmetics industry, both in Malaysia and globally. Figure 1 illustrates the overall data collection process conducted in this research:



## **Results and Discussions**

# Impact of Using Natural and Synthetic Cosmetics

This study identifies three key aspects in evaluating the impact of using natural and synthetic cosmetics, namely long-term health effects, environmental impact, and user reactions and side effects. The findings suggest that natural cosmetics, made from organic materials and natural sources such as virgin coconut oil, plant extracts, and minerals, exhibit a higher safety profile compared to synthetic cosmetics. These products contain bioactive compounds that possess antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory properties, which not only help preserve skin health but also reduce the risk of irritation and allergic reactions among users (Zalina Awang et al., 2021; Isa et al., 2023). Safety studies on soaps derived from Schizophyllum commune, for example,

show that heavy metal levels such as arsenic, mercury, and cadmium are undetectable, thus rendering these products safe for long-term use (Raihan Mohd Isa et al., 2023). In contrast, synthetic cosmetics have been reported to have concerning health effects when used continuously. The use of chemicals such as parabens, silicones, Sodium Lauryl Sulfate (SLS), and Sodium Laureth Sulfate (SLES) not only causes irritation and allergies but may also contribute to endocrine disruption, hormonal imbalance, and an increased risk of chronic diseases, including cancer (Isa, Othman & Baharum, 2023). These substances are bio accumulative, meaning they can accumulate in human tissues and trigger harmful biochemical reactions. Furthermore, synthetic ingredients such as silicones, which are added to provide a smooth effect on the skin, have been found to clog pores and disrupt the natural process of skin regeneration, thereby contributing to premature aging (Zalina Awang et al., 2021).

From an environmental perspective, natural cosmetics offer clear advantages, as their ingredients are biodegradable and eco-friendly. Natural-based cosmetics have been found to leave no significant pollution footprint after use, thereby contributing to the sustainability of ecosystems (Isa et al., 2023). In contrast, chemicals in synthetic cosmetics such as SLS, silicones, and phthalates are difficult to break down naturally. Waste from these substances released into drainage systems can pollute aquatic habitats and agricultural land, ultimately affecting biodiversity and the quality of clean water sources (Zalina Awang et al., 2021; Othman et al., 2020). This impact directly contradicts the principles of *maqasid al-shari'ah*, which emphasizes environmental protection (*ḥifz al-bi'ah*) as part of social and religious responsibility.

Additionally, in terms of user reactions and side effects, the findings indicate that synthetic cosmetics pose higher risks. There has been an increase in reported cases of poisoning, skin damage, and other health complications due to synthetic products containing harmful substances such as mercury, hydroquinone, tretinoin, and steroids (KKM, 2015; Intan Mas Ayu, 2017; Nordin et al., 2021). In extreme cases, the use of these ingredients can lead to kidney damage, neurological disorders, and even cancer risk (Mohd Jamilul & Fairul, 2024). The Ministry of Health Malaysia (KKM) also reported an increase in kidney disease cases in Kelantan, linked to the use of unregistered and uncertified cosmetic products (RTM, 2024). This situation demonstrates that adverse reactions to synthetic cosmetics extend beyond external beauty concerns, with systemic health implications.

From a shari'ah perspective, the use of substances that cause harm must be avoided, as emphasized in the fiqh principle of  $l\bar{a}$  darar wa  $l\bar{a}$  dir $\bar{a}$ r, which prohibits causing harm to oneself or others. The concept of halalan tayyiban is also a fundamental criterion in assessing cosmetic compliance with Islamic law, not only should products be free from haram ingredients, but they must also be clean, safe, and beneficial to users (Rabiatul & Zalina, 2019). Therefore, the findings underscore the need to strengthen Muslim consumer education regarding the implications of synthetic cosmetics, while also recommending that authorities and the industry enhance transparency, quality control, and comprehensive halal certification to ensure the safety and well-being of consumers.

#### Trends of Muslim Consumers in Cosmetic Selection

The trend among Muslim consumers in selecting cosmetic products is increasingly influenced by awareness of halal certification, safety of ingredients, and the ethical values associated with the products used. In the current information era, Muslim consumers are no longer passive but

have become more critical and cautious in making purchasing decisions, especially when it involves products that come into direct contact with the body, such as cosmetics (Mustapha & Junoh, 2022). Cosmetic choices are driven not only by effectiveness or brand popularity but also by the *halalan tayyiban* principle, which emphasizes cleanliness, safety, and purity of the ingredients, as well as the production process (Rabiatul & Zalina, 2019).

One of the key factors influencing Muslim consumers' choices is their level of education, exposure to Islamic law-related information, economic status, and access to certified halal products. Studies indicate that educated consumers are more likely to scrutinize ingredient labels and opt for products they believe are free from haram or questionable elements (*syubha*h) (Mustapha & Junoh, 2022). Information technology and social media also play a crucial role in accelerating awareness, particularly among the younger Muslim generation, who are more exposed to ethical consumerism and long-term health issues. In this context, there is a growing need for a more transparent and accessible labelling system, including full disclosure about ingredient sources, manufacturing processes, and halal certification by authoritative bodies. However, Muslim consumers still face various challenges in obtaining halal and natural cosmetic products in the market. The first challenge is the limited availability of products that are genuinely certified halal and officially recognized. Many products marketed as "halal" lack certification from bodies such as JAKIM or fail to comply with halal standards like MS 2634:2019, which sets requirements for ingredient safety, supply chain integrity, and cleanliness in production processes (Department of Standards Malaysia, 2019; Aji et al., 2022). Furthermore, some ingredients in cosmetics are considered syubhah, such as alcohol or gelatine, the origins of which are difficult for the average consumer to identify without clear scientific guidance (Baharum et al., 2020; Mohd Noor, 2018).

Secondly, natural and halal cosmetic products often come with higher prices compared to conventional products, limiting access to these products for low-income consumers or those residing in rural areas. This issue is exacerbated by the dominance of non-Muslim companies in the cosmetic market that do not prioritize halal certification, as well as misleading labelling strategies (Nurul Aqmar & Nor Hashima, 2018). Terms such as "organic," "natural," or "vegan" are often mistakenly assumed to be synonymous with halal by some consumers, even though these terms do not guarantee compliance with shariah principles. Additionally, the shortage of experts in halal cosmetic assessment is also a critical barrier. The process of certifying the halal status of ingredients, especially those involving animal derivatives, alcohol, or complex chemicals, requires interdisciplinary expertise involving chemistry, toxicology, and fiqh which is still insufficient in the local industry (Raihan et al., 2023; Zulfaqar, 2019). The lack of an effective monitoring mechanism also makes it difficult for consumers to assess the validity of halal claims made by products accurately and transparently.

In this regard, the findings of this study indicate that although awareness among Muslim consumers regarding halal and natural cosmetics is increasing, more systematic efforts must be made by the relevant authorities and the industry. These efforts should include improvements in halal certification and monitoring systems, clearer and more transparent ingredient information, and the dissemination of consumer education based on Islamic values that emphasize safety, purity, and overall well-being. Within the framework of maqasid al-shari'ah, selecting safe, pure, and ethical cosmetics not only fulfils physical needs but also represents a moral and spiritual responsibility towards oneself, society, and the environment.

## Implications of Shariah Law on the Cosmetics Industry

Shariah law plays a pivotal role in shaping the compliance landscape of the cosmetics industry, especially as Muslim consumers increasingly demand products that are clean, pure, and safe. The halalan tayyiban principle serves not only as a guide for consumers but also drives the need for industry reforms in areas such as ingredient sourcing, manufacturing processes, and product distribution. The implications of Shariah law on the cosmetics industry are wideranging, encompassing theological, ethical, and technical aspects that require attention from both manufacturers and policymakers (Rabiatul & Zalina, 2019; Raihan et al., 2023). A primary challenge faced by the cosmetics industry in meeting halal standards is the difficulty in ensuring the halal status of raw materials, particularly when they involve animal-derived ingredients or complex chemicals. Many cosmetic products on the market contain components like collagen, gelatine, glycerine, and alcohol, which may originate from non-halal or uncertain sources. This issue is further complicated by the lack of transparency in ingredient declarations by certain manufacturers, making it difficult for consumers and regulatory authorities to conduct accurate assessments (Baharum et al., 2020; Mohd Noor, 2018). Additionally, confusion persists among manufacturers regarding which types of alcohol are permissible under Shariah, particularly whether synthetic alcohol or alcohol derived from khamr fermentation is acceptable (Nur Bahirah Baharum et al., 2020).

In addition to ingredient concerns, another challenge is ensuring compliance with the entire production chain, which includes the cleanliness of facilities, equipment, water quality, and product handling procedures. Standards such as MS 2634:2019, developed by the Department of Standards Malaysia, specify the requirements for raw material integrity, cleanliness, and strict monitoring of the manufacturing process. However, the implementation of these standards demands significant financial resources, expertise, and ongoing adherence, which not all cosmetic companies, especially small and medium enterprises, are able or willing to meet (Aji et al., 2022; Department of Standards Malaysia, 2019). Moreover, the dominance of non-Muslim companies in the global cosmetics market complicates the enforcement of Shariah compliance, given that many products are imported from countries that do not adhere to halal standards.

To address these challenges, the role of authorities such as the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM), the Ministry of Health Malaysia (KKM), and other enforcement agencies becomes crucial in ensuring a more systematic and comprehensive approach to controlling halal cosmetics. JAKIM, for instance, is responsible for overseeing halal certification, which includes assessing ingredients, production processes, and product labelling. However, the high volume of certification requests and limited human resources means that this process can be time-consuming and requires meticulous audits. Therefore, stronger collaboration between JAKIM and the industry is essential, including providing technical guidance, promoting halal awareness, and facilitating the certification process for local manufacturers who wish to comply with halal standards (Rabiatul & Zalina, 2019).

The Ministry of Health Malaysia also plays an important role in ensuring the safety of cosmetic products through its registration system and monitoring of prohibited substances like mercury, hydroquinone, and steroids. The integration of halal certification with product safety controls is essential to guarantee that products are not only Shariah-compliant but also safe for use, ensuring that they do not cause long-term harm to consumers. From the perspective of *maqasid al-shariah*, this is aligned with the goals of *ḥifz al-nafs* (preservation of life) and *ḥifz al-dīn* 

(preservation of religion), which are fundamental in evaluating the permissibility of products (Isa et al., 2023).

In conclusion, Shariah compliance in cosmetics is not solely the responsibility of consumers but requires collaborative efforts between the industry, policymakers, and regulatory authorities. The implementation of comprehensive halal standards, supported by strict enforcement and consumer education, can serve as a driving force for the development of a halal cosmetics industry that is not only competitive but also maintains religious integrity, public health, and overall well-being.

## **Suggestions**

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are proposed to strengthen the development of the halal cosmetics industry, raise awareness among Muslim consumers, and improve the regulatory framework for cosmetic products. These recommendations are categorized into four key areas: the halal cosmetics industry, cosmetic manufacturers, regulatory authorities, and Muslim consumers.

# Implications for the Halal Cosmetics Industry

The halal cosmetics industry has significant potential for growth, driven by the increasing demand for products that adhere to the principles of *halalan tayyiban*. Therefore, industry players must view compliance with Islamic law not only as a religious responsibility but also as a strategic value that enhances their global competitiveness. This entails investing in research and development (R&D) of halal-certified natural ingredients, strengthening collaboration with experts in both Islamic law and scientific fields, and expanding market outreach to the increasingly discerning and informed Muslim consumer segment.

## Recommendations for Cosmetic Manufacturers

Manufacturers are advised to prioritize formulations that are free from haram and questionable ingredients, with a focus on natural components that have proven safety for long-term use. All ingredients should be transparently declared and easily understood by consumers, including information on the source of materials, halal status, and the effectiveness of active ingredients. Manufacturers are also encouraged to obtain official halal certification from recognized bodies such as JAKIM, ensuring that all stages of production from raw material sourcing to packaging comply with halal standards as outlined in MS 2634:2019. Furthermore, local cosmetic manufacturers should be provided with incentives and guidance to enhance their adherence to Shariah principles through technical assistance, halal certification grants, and halal industry training.

## Recommendations for Regulatory Authorities

Regulatory bodies such as the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) and the Ministry of Health Malaysia (MOH) should enhance their regulatory framework by creating a more holistic, integrated, and industry-friendly system. The halal certification process should be streamlined without compromising its rigor, including the introduction of digital certification and data-driven monitoring systems. Furthermore, cross-agency cooperation between certification bodies, health regulators, and research institutions should be strengthened to create a comprehensive and accessible halal and non-halal cosmetics database for both the industry and consumers. Additionally, regulations on cosmetic product labelling should be

refined to prevent the misleading use of terms such as "natural," "vegan," or "organic," which can confuse Muslim consumers.

## Recommendations for Muslim Consumers

Muslim consumers should receive continuous education on selecting halal cosmetics through awareness campaigns, consumer workshops, and the use of halal mobile applications and social media platforms. Consumers must be equipped with basic knowledge of Islamic law related to cosmetics, including the distinction between permissible and impermissible types of alcohol. They should also be encouraged to verify the halal certification status of products before purchasing and support brands that are committed to Shariah compliance and ethical consumer practices. Such awareness is crucial in empowering consumers to influence the market, driving the industry towards greater accountability and ethics.

#### **Conclusion**

This study concludes that the choice between natural and synthetic cosmetics carries significant implications for consumer health, environmental sustainability, and adherence to Shariah principles. The findings indicate that natural cosmetics are more aligned with the concept of *halalan tayyiban*, as their ingredients are largely organic, environmentally friendly, and free from harmful chemicals frequently associated with adverse effects in synthetic products. In contrast, synthetic cosmetics often contain substances such as parabens, silicones, and mercury, which not only pose long-term health risks but also raise serious concerns regarding their halal status and safety for use by Muslim consumers.

For Muslim users, cosmetic selection must transcend considerations of efficacy and aesthetics, incorporating compliance with Islamic law that emphasizes safety, cleanliness, and spiritual integrity in all aspects of life. Hence, the importance of halal and safe cosmetics is not merely a market trend, but a fundamental necessity to ensure holistic well-being—physically, spiritually, and socially. Adherence to comprehensive halal standards such as MS 2634:2019 and the avoidance of *syubhah* (dubious) ingredients must be prioritized by all stakeholders, including manufacturers, policymakers, and consumers.

This study helps the Muslim community understand the differences between natural and synthetic cosmetics from the perspective of Islamic rulings and health implications. It raises consumer awareness regarding the selection of safe and halal products. Besides that, the public becomes more aware of the ethics of product usage, including aspects such as ingredients, safety, and the effectiveness of cosmetics. Lastly, the community can make more informed purchasing decisions that align with both religious values and health considerations.

For future research, it is recommended to develop a halal compliance index for cosmetic products, conduct case studies on successful local industries meeting global halal standards, and examine the effectiveness of awareness campaigns in influencing Muslim consumer behaviour. Moreover, multidisciplinary research that integrates perspectives from Islamic jurisprudence, toxicology, chemistry, and halal marketing is essential to strengthen the halal cosmetics ecosystem at both national and international levels. It is hoped that the insights from this study will serve as a foundation for more holistic policymaking and drive the development of cosmetic products that are not only outwardly appealing but also pure, safe, and ethically grounded.

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