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Submission date: 23-Jun-2023 07:25AM (UTC+0700)

Submission ID: 2121118550

File name: PROSIDING_AICOBPA_UB_HUMAM.pdf (388.98K)

Word count: 3038

Character count: 16749

Halal Herbal Product Purchase Behavior:

Studies on Muslim Consumers During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract—The Covid-19 pandemic affects consumer behavior in choosing and consuming products used to increase endurance, including supplement products. This study aims to describe the purchasing behavior of Muslim consumers towards halal herbal products during the Covid-19 pandemic. An online survey was conducted on 450 consumers of herbal products that are labeled halal in Indonesia with a purposive sampling method in July-August 2020. The results revealed that most respondents began to pay attention to the halal label after the Covid-19 pandemic and they sought information on halal herbal products from Internet. Respondents paid attention to the reputation of the herbal product manufacturing companies before deciding to buy a product. They also prefer herbal products that have a halal label compared to products that are not labeled halal. The increase in consumption of herbal stamina products during the pandemic increased by an average of about 45% compared to consumption before the pandemic. Generally, respondents could not tolerate the increase in the price of halal herbal products during a pandemic. The limitation of this study is related to the effect of consumer characteristics and product characteristics on purchasing decisions, so it is advisable to conduct further research related to the factors that influence purchasing decisions. The results of this study contribute to companies and marketers in understanding consumer behavior during the Covid-19 pandemic or during the relevant health crisis.

Keywords—halal product, purchase behavior, muslim consumers, the covid-19 pandemic

I. INTRODUCTION

During the Covid-19 pandemic, consumers need products that are used to increase stamina and maintain immunity. The news about the many victims of the Covid-19 virus certainly affects consumer attitudes and behavior. During a pandemic, Muslims are more diligent in praying so that this helps determine the choice of halal products. Product purchase decisions are based not only on health benefits but on spiritual benefits. Muslim consumers try to get closer to God by consuming products that are truly halal. Thus, halal products are one of the considerations in product selection.

Increased changes in prayer behavior allow changes in behavior in choosing halal products. This requires preliminary

evidence to see the phenomenon of habit change. Research that discusses changes in prayer habits which are increasing with the selection of halal products is still limited. This study aims to describe the behavior of Muslim consumers during the Covid-19 pandemic, especially the purchase of halal herbal products. The uniqueness of this study lies in a situation where consumers are in abnormal conditions. This research contributes practically to companies or marketers and also to further research related to consumer behavior during the health crisis.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Consumer Behavior

Consumer behavior is an action that is directly involved in obtaining and consuming products and services, including the processes that precede and follow these actions [1]. The scope of consumer behavior is not only in decision making, but also the processes that precede and post-purchase behavior. Consumer satisfaction is the basis for post-purchase behavior. Thus, consumer behavior is a study that studies the process of purchasing decisions for a product, including the processes that form and accompany it in order to meet consumer satisfaction.

Consumer behavior models have been developed with various factors that influence purchasing decisions including [2]: environmental factors; individual factors; and stimuli from marketers. Environmental influences include culture, social class, personality influences, family and certain situations. Individual factors consist of the consumer's resources, motivation and involvement, knowledge, attitudes, personality, values and the consumer's lifestyle. Meanwhile, market stimuli include dominant marketers and other factors. Consumer purchasing decisions start from the formation of awareness of needs, search for information, evaluation of alternatives prior to purchase, purchase, and consumption.

B. Planned Behavior Theory

Planned behavior theory studies the various factors that influence overall purchasing behavior [3]. Environmental factors have an important role in directing consumer behavior. The Covid-19 crisis pandemic is a situation that can change

people's behavior patterns. During the Covid-19 pandemic, it is predicted that a person's religious values will increase, so that it becomes one of the considerations for product selection. Religiosity is related to perception [4]. Religiosity is positively related to the attitude of choosing halal products [5,6]. Knowledge of halal products is also related to behavioral interest [7]. Halal perceptions significantly influence purchasing behavior. This indicates that consumer values related to religiosity are an antecedent factor for consumer purchases. Religious beliefs (for example) are guidelines that guide food consumption choices [8]. Prayer is an important Muslim behavior that is an indicator of religiosity.

III. METHODS

This type of research is descriptive which describes the behavior of Muslim consumers in the purchasing patterns of halal products. This survey involves Muslim consumers who consume herbal products in Yogyakarta. Questionnaires were distributed online and in chains in July-August 2020. 450 consumers were selected by purposive sampling with certain criteria. The sample criteria are Muslim consumers who have purchased certain herbal products during the Covid-19 pandemic from January 2020 until filling out a questionnaire. Items are developed from a consumer behavior model which includes input, process, and output [2]. Prayer habit is one indicator of religiosity used in this study [9]. Data analysis used descriptive analysis in the form of frequency, average, and percentage. This study uses SPSS as a data processing tool.

IV. RESULTS

Table I shows that the number of respondents is mostly male (56.2%). However, the difference between men and women is relatively small. Meanwhile, respondents based on age were dominated by consumers aged > 60 years (24.7%). The frequency of purchasing herbal products is shown in Table 2. Most of the respondents buy the product once a month. Most of the respondents spent money for the purchase of herbal products on average 100 thousand rupiah to 300 thousand rupiah per month (Table 3).

TABLE I. RESPONDENTS PROFILE

	Frequencies	(%)
Gender		
Male	253	56.2
Female	197	43.8
Age		
<20 years old	40	8.9
20-30 years old	69	15.3
31-40 years old	63	14.0
41-50 years old	80	17.8
51-60 years old	87	19.3
>60 years old	111	24.7

TABLE II. PURCHASE FREQUENCIES

Purchase frequencies	Frequencies	(%)
Once a week	25	5.5
Twice a week	34	7.5
Three a week	32	7.1
Once a month	215	47.9
Others	144	32.0
Total	450	100.0

TABLE III. AVERAGE MONTHLY EXPENDITURE FOR THE PURCHASE OF HERBAL PRODUCTS

Rupiah	Frequencies	(%)
Less than 100 thousand	128	28.4
100 - 300 thousand	244	54.2
>300 - 600 thousand	59	13.1
>600 - 900 thousand	12	2.7
>900 thousand	7	1.6
Total	450	100.0

TABLE IV. SOURCE OF PRODUCT INFORMATION

Mode	Frequencies	(%)
Advertisement	21	4.7
Family	96	21.3
Friends/peers	122	27.1
Social platform/media	153	34.0
Others	58	12.9
Total	450	100.0

Many sources of information are used by respondents to get the desired product information. Information from social media data (34.0%) dominates information sources, the next successive is friends / peers, family, others, and advertisement (Table 4). However, Table 5 shows that social media is not a credible source of information. Information from family is the most credible (40.2%) and the next is information from friends / peers (35.6%), while social platforms / media are in the third place (17.3). Most (68.0%) of respondents buy online, the next in order is to purchase through pharmacies, outlets / shops, and other places of purchase (table 6).

TABLE V. THE MOST CREDIBLE SOURCE OF INFORMATION

Mode	Frequencies	(%)
Advertisement	16	3.6
Family	181	40.2
Friends/peers	160	35.6
Social platform/media	78	17.3
Others	15	3.3
Total	450	100.0

TABLE VI. PLACES TO PURCHASE HERBAL PRODUCTS

Mode	Frequencies	(%)
Online purchase	306	68.0
Outlets/shops	59	13.1
Pharmacy	66	14.7
Others	19	4.2
Total	450	100.0

Based on Table 7, in general, respondents were more diligent in worshipping during the Covid-19 pandemic

compared to the time before the pandemic. Most of the respondents answered “yes” that prior to their pandemic they had not considered halal certificates. Meanwhile, during the pandemic, the majority of respondents considered the product halal. Respondents also considered the reputation of the producer as a provider of halal products. Most of the respondents pay attention to the halal components of herbal products before deciding to buy. The average percentage increase in spending on herbal products after the pandemic was 45.2%. The average price increase that was tolerated by respondents was 5.14%. Most (95.8%) respondents will continue to give halal herbal products and recommend them to others (56.2%).

TABLE VII. HERBAL PURCHASE BEHAVIORS

No.	Statement	Yes (%)	No (%)
1.	During the Covid-19 pandemic I was more diligent in praying	73.8	26.2
2.	Before the Covid-19 pandemic, when I bought herbal products, I didn't really consider halal certificates	76.0	24.0
3.	Currently, I prioritize buying products that are halal certified over those that are not certified halal	93.8	6.2
4.	I am currently considering the reputation of a herbal product manufacturer	77.1	22.9
5.	I pay attention to the halal components of herbal products, before deciding to buy	91.3	8.76
6.	The number of purchases of herbal stamina products increased during the Covid-19 pandemic	86.4	13.6
7.	Compared to before the pandemic, what percentage increase in your spending on herbal products, on average?	45.2	
8.	I feel the health benefits of consuming herbal products	73.5	26.5
9.	I feel spiritual benefits while choosing halal herbal products.	81.2	18.8
10.	I will stop consuming herbal products that do not include halal products from MUI	69.3	30.6
11.	I tolerate rising prices for herbal products during the COVID-19 pandemic	6.4	93.6
12.	What is the maximum percentage tolerance for price increases in your opinion?	5.14	
13.	I will continue to buy halal herbal products	95.8	4.2
14.	I will recommend halal products to others	56.2	43.8

V. DISCUSSION

The behavior patterns of consumers of herbal products cannot be separated from the background of consumers. Gender and age are important characteristics that drive consumer buying behavior. The results of this study indicate that both men and women buy herbal products for consumption. Based on age, the majority of older consumers consume herbal products to maintain their health. This shows that the older the more the number who consume herbal products.

Apart from gender and age backgrounds, the level of religiosity can also play a role in directing consumer purchases.

Interpretation between religiosity studies with consumer behavior patterns [10]. Religious values correlate with consumer behavior [11]. Even religion is the most powerful factor influencing eating patterns and habits [12]. Most consumers stated that the level of religiosity increased during the pandemic. This is indicated by the answers of respondents who stated that most consumers are increasingly praying diligently. This worship behavior is a response to the abundance of information on victims of the Covid-19 virus so that it increases one's awareness to get closer to God. The habit of worship, of course, has implications for product perceptions and preferences. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, consumers did not really consider halal certificates, but during the pandemic, consumers paid attention to the halal components of herbal products, before deciding to buy. Consumers prioritize halal-certified products over products that are not halal-certified. Previous research Simanjuntak and Dewantara [13] has shown that religiosity is related to the behavior of reading halal labels. Consumers also choose companies that have a reputation as producers of halal products. This is consistent with the results of previous studies Bukhari et al. [14] that religiosity is positively correlated with interest in purchasing certain products in Muslim countries.

Consumers are looking for product information that can meet their needs and desires from various sources. Most consumers seek information on halal herbal products from social platforms / media. Through social media, consumers can interact and search for information from various platforms making it easier to gather information. Information from family is considered the most credible compared to other information. Information from known friends / peers is more credible than information from unknown social media. Thus, family and friends are very important sources of information in directing purchasing behavior.

Consumer purchasing decisions are indicated by the frequency of purchases, the amount of money spent to buy, and the location of purchase. Most of the respondents gave herbal products once a month. Most consumers spend 100 thousand rupiah to 300 thousand rupiah per month for the purchase of herbal products. Consumers prefer to buy products online. 68% of respondents buy online. During a pandemic, many transactions were made online because it broke the chain of spreading the covid-19 virus. In addition, herbal outlets also provide online sales services to make it easier for consumers. The number of purchases of herbal products, especially stamina products, has increased during the pandemic. Compared to before the pandemic, the average expenditure on herbal products increased by 45.2%. This shows that the need for herbal products during the Covid-19 pandemic has increased.

Consumers feel the benefits of consuming halal herbal products. Most consumers feel the health benefits of consuming herbal products so they can meet their needs. In addition, consumers also feel spiritual benefits while choosing halal products. The results of this study and the results of previous studies Salehudin and Luthfi [15] reveal that consumers will stop purchasing products that are not labeled

halal. Thus, it is important that the halal license from Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) is listed on the product packaging. Consumers do not feel worried when choosing and consuming halal products. This indicates that consumer satisfaction is not only based on health benefits but also spiritual benefits.

Post-purchase behavior is indicated by how much you want to buy back, willingness to accept price increases, and recommending it to others. These results indicate that almost all consumers will continue to buy halal herbal products, but the interest in recommending halal herbal products to others is not that big. Even so, most consumers intend to recommend to others. Consumers only tolerate 5.14% for price increases. Almost all respondents do not want price increases. During the pandemic, some consumers lose their jobs or the amount of income decreases, thereby reducing consumer purchasing power.

VI. CONCLUSION

The results of this study describe the cycle of consumer behavior starting from input, process, and output. The consumer's background which includes gender, age, and prayer behavior is consistent with the choice of halal products. Consumers prefer products that are completely halal during the pandemic. Consumers get not only health benefits, but also spiritual benefits. Consumers intend to buy back the product and recommend it to others, but are less likely to tolerate increased product prices.

This study has limitations. First, the herbal products on the market are very diverse. This study does not focus on specific brands so that it is difficult to provide specific suggestions. Future research can focus on one particular brand. Second, this study only measures prayer habits and does not measure religiosity items comprehensively. Future studies can measure religiosity more comprehensively.

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