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### RESEARCH ARTICLE

#### CHALLENGES OF OEM MANUFACTURER IN HALAL COSMETIC PRODUCTS CERTIFICATION APPLICATIONS

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#### Abstract

As the 2.4 billion Muslim consumers around the world want more halal cosmetics, Malaysia is creating many cosmetics founders, both Muslim and non-Muslim, who push cosmetics with halal certification to help educate consumers about halal cosmetics. With an Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) manufacturing business, the business founder can have their own brand of cosmetics even they do not have a factory. OEM is a business that makes products based on what the founders desired. The OEM manufacturer will manage every procedure involved in producing a cosmetic product, including for getting halal certification. For the cosmetics to be halal certified, most OEM manufacturing companies will face a variety of procedures, one of them is due to the involvement of different cosmetics products thus, different requirement involved. It will not be easy, and the manufacturer must face a lot of challenges during the application process. The aim of this research is to explore about the problems faced by the OEM manufacturer, Anjung Skincare Solution SdnBhd, during the halal cosmetics certification process and how the problems have been solved throughout the process. This study adopts a qualitative method where semi structured interview has been conducted to selected representatives who are the workers at the cosmetics company to identify the application process that they experienced, problems faced and the solution taken. The data collected through interview has been analysed using thematic analysis. The finding shows that the staff who made the application understand exactly which references and criteria that needed to be used for halal certification of cosmetics products. Based on the analysis, Anjung Skincare Solution SdnBhd's solutions and strategies are working well to help them deal with the problems. Each employee plays an important part as an agent in spreading the use of halal cosmetics. This research is expected to guide more cosmetics manufacturers to understand the challenges in getting halal certifications, besides the solutions to solve the issues.

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#### Introduction:-

The cosmetics industry is experiencing rapid growth and presents a promising opportunity for investors to achieve a favourable return on their investment. The expansion of this industry is driven by various factors, including the

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adoption of new lifestyles by both the younger generation and the elderly, as well as the impact of climate change. The cosmetic industry is currently experiencing a period of growth and advancement in both Western and Asian societies, as well as in Muslim nations (Fischer, J., 2015). This can be attributed to several factors, including the inclination to adhere to contemporary trends such as the popularity of natural and organic beauty products, the progress made in science and technology leading to the development of fresh cosmetic items, the research and development of diverse ingredients for cosmetic purposes, the increasing demand for brightening or antioxidant face creams, and the expansion of global economies.

Ingredients derived from pigs, carrion, blood, human body parts, predatory animals, reptiles, and insects, among other things, are prohibited in halal cosmetic products. To be considered halal, cosmetic ingredients derived from permissible animals must be slaughtered in accordance with Islamic law (OriBionature, 2020). When preparing halal cosmetic items, through the manufacturing process including processing, manufacturing, storing, or transporting must be fulfilled the requirement of clean and hygienic condition. The dearth of najis is currently the subject of much attention. The purpose of the halal certification is comparable to the objectives of the majority of the methods used for quality control, such as GMP and HACCP. As a consequence, it is imperative that halal cosmetic items that display the halal logo be acknowledged as a sign of cleanliness, safety, purity, and quality.

### **The requirements for Halal certification of cosmetic to be fulfilled from legal and Halal perspective**

The production of halal cosmetics entails more than just carefully sourcing halal ingredients. The same principle is followed in the manufacture of cosmetic products. Aside from the cosmetic manufacturing requirements that manufacturers must follow a halal assurance system must also be in place.

As part of the process of obtaining halal certification for a cosmetic product, a halal assurance system must be designed and implemented. Its major goal is to keep halal production processes going in order to meet the requirements of halal regulating organisations. This quality assurance system must be implemented in all cosmetics manufacturing operations that require accurate documentation (Nghah, 2021). This allows each process in the production system to be traced. Manufacturers must develop an internal halal assurance system manual that includes elements such as halal policy, halal guidelines, halal management organisation, standard operating procedures, technical references, administration system, documentation system, stakeholder engagement, training programmes, audit system, corrective action system, and management review system.

The development of halal cosmetics formulations must begin with materials that are unmistakably halal. Alternatively obtained essential substances such as ethanol, fish-derived collagen, and chicken-derived gelatin must only be accepted if suitable halal certification documentation supplied. Other key elements with an unknown halal certification status should not be used in the production of halal cosmetics.

Product quality and safety of cosmetics is assured halal after fulfilling the manufacturing standard provided in line with GMP and other quality standards (Wafi, 2021). It is suggested that a specialised team for the handling and production of halal cosmetics to be formed. Fulfilling the syariah requirement for halal certification is a mandatory requirement besides other requirement for safety, quality and hygiene for raw material as well as the whole process of manufacturing started with preparation till finished cosmetics products. The premises must be constructed and located in an area that is free from any non-halal materials, has suitable procedures and personnel flow, and is far away from pig farms. All manufacturing facilities are limited to the production of halal cosmetics only. Non-halal cosmetics must not be processed in the same plant as halal cosmetics to prevent the need for ritual cleansing (sertu), it may have an impact on operations equipment must be set aside for the exclusive purpose of producing halal cosmetics (Malaysian Standard MS 2634:2019, 2019). Contaminated water, such as sewage treatment water or water contaminated with najis, should not be used in the production of halal cosmetics. Non-halal animals shall not be utilised in the composition of cleaning materials used in the maintenance of equipment and facilities. Manufacturers must ensure that the warehouse and distribution centre are in good working order. The company wanted to make non-halal certified cosmetics, the manufacturing lines for halal and non-halal certified cosmetics must be physically separated or housed in distinct plants. To avoid cross-contamination and contamination by non-halal or najis, all of the processes involved must be properly labelled with the word halal. In addition, precautions should be taken to avoid unintentional contamination from the environment and particulate contamination of the workforce.

### Issue on Halal Cosmetic

According to a study, Muslim consumers' purchasing habits have shifted, with Muslims now preferring products that emphasise hygiene, safety, and standards. To cater to varying age and lifestyle demographics, product lines must now include new halal products dedicated to different sex, age groups, and ethnicities due to changes in purchasing behaviour (Ahmed, 2018). In order to target the Islamic market, manufacturers must consider the religious requirements that arise at various phases of product development. Instead of campaigns emphasising only the tangible characteristics of the products, marketing campaigns should emphasise the benefits of halal cosmetics. The marketing campaigns will increase Muslim and non-Muslim consumers' awareness of halal cosmetics. The halal logo may be used voluntarily on both domestic and international cosmetic products that have been notified, provided that the product has been certified and approved halal by the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia, JAKIM) or any Islamic Body recognised by JAKIM (National Pharmaceutical Regulatory Agency Ministry of Health, Malaysia, 2017).

In Malaysia, the government is responsible for halal certification, whereas in other nations, Islamic organisations endorse certification. The halal certification and logo of Malaysia are issued by a federal agency and multiple provincial agencies (Aspiyati Jusoh, L. K., 2016). The certification of halal products and services falls under the jurisdiction of the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM). Currently, JAKIM administers the halal certification procedure for products destined for domestic and international markets, and its halal logo is one of the most widely recognised and esteemed indicators of halal compliance in the world. The halal logo is a crucial marketing tool for halal cosmetics because it informs and persuades consumers that the product was manufactured in accordance with Islamic requirements. Similarly, the halal logo emphasises products produced in a safe and hygienic environment for non-Muslim consumers, while the halal logo emphasises the absence of hazardous and unhygienic ingredients for Muslim consumers. Another issue confronting the halal cosmetic industry is that non-Muslim companies dominate and monopolise the global cosmetic industry (Ariyanchira, 2017). It raises significant concerns about the use of halal ingredients in manufactured cosmetics. Due to the industry's intensive competition, halal cosmetics now compete with other socially conscious products that have already established brands in certain countries.

Halal-certified cosmetics are becoming increasingly sought after by Malaysian and international consumers (Ngah, A., Gabarre, S., & Rahi, S., 2021). Halal certification extends beyond sustenance alone. Consumers have greater assurance that the material penetrating their skin is halal and of pure origin when they use cosmetics with halal certifications. When a cosmetic product has halal certification, the consumer is assured that all of the cosmetic's primary materials are sourced from reputable suppliers and have the necessary halal documentation for verification. Halal cosmetics can boost the confidence of Muslim believers. Sellers are also beginning to recognise the significance of the halal logo on cosmetics they intend to market. The increasing demand from consumers motivates sellers to invest more capital in order to register for a halal certification (Shamsuddin, A., et al., 2020). For OEM companies that manufacture cosmetic products per the manufacturer's request, the company also offer product manufacturing pricing packages that include the application for a halal certificate. Capital issued for cosmetics with halal certification is more expensive than capital issued for cosmetics without halal certification. For the process of obtaining halal certification, manufacturers of cosmetic products, particularly manufacturers from OEM companies, must adhere to a variety of procedures.

This study aims to examine the challenges faced by OEM manufacturers of cosmetic products throughout the application process for halal certification and attempted to propose a better solution for tackling the problem. This is in order to assist OEM manufacturers of cosmetic products to facilitate the application of halal certification for each product released to the market.

### Methodology:-

The purpose of this study was to investigate the challenges that OEM manufacturers faced when underwrote the application of halal certification for cosmetic products. This study adopted a qualitative research approach, and the data were gathered through interviewing participants and conducting doctrinal research (Sileyew, K. J., 2019). In order to achieve these secondary data acquired from library research, the data were gathered through documents such as books, journals, bulletins, newspapers, annual reports, records, online data-based resources, and other resources that are relevant to the subject of the research. Interviews with two informants from OEM manufacturing businesses are conducted in a semi-structured format in order to acquire primary data for analysis.

After all of the recorded data had been transcribed in verbatim, the transcribed data from interviews were analysed using thematic analysis. In addition, the secondary data obtained were evaluated using content analysis. An approach based on document and content analysis is utilised, and the acquired data are analysed using inductive and deductive reasoning.

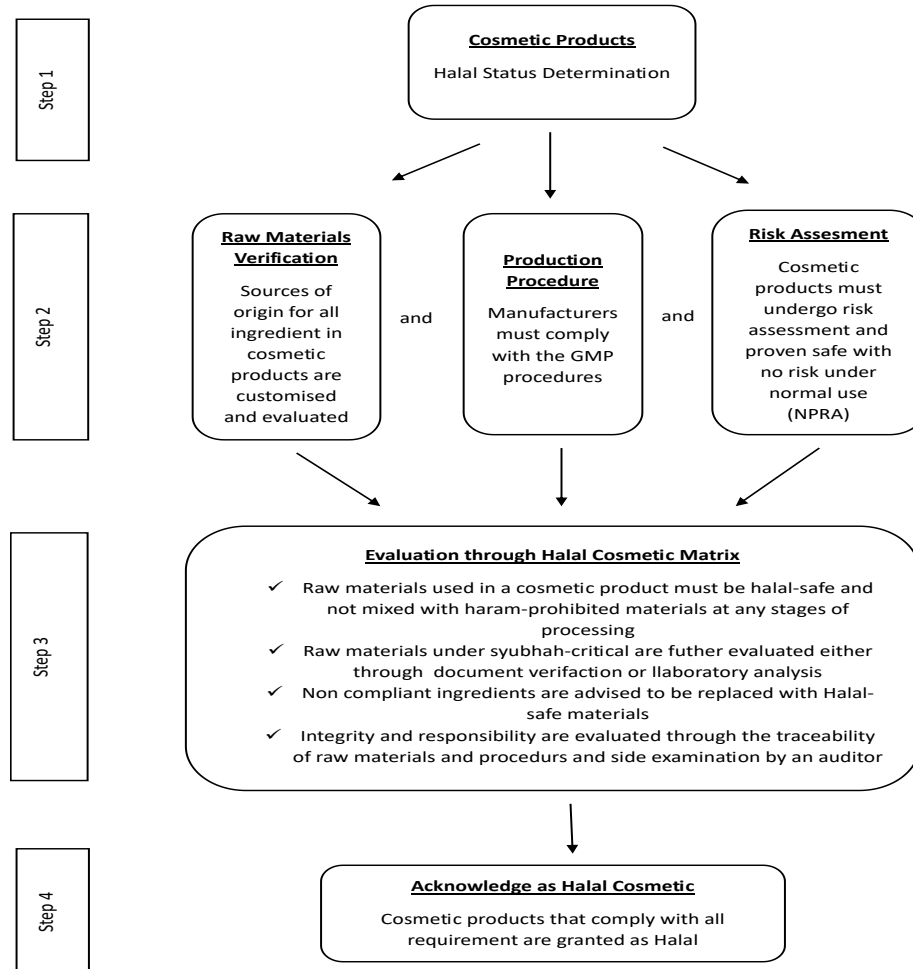
## **Result And Analysis:-**

### **Analysis**

The following topics were covered in the questions that were asked during the interview sessions and subsequent discussions: how the manufacturing company is implementing the halal cosmetics; challenges faced by manufacturer in halal application for their cosmetics product; and solutions made by them to solve the challenges. The data that was collected through the interview sessions were underwent a manual analysis process. The data showed their references in halal cosmetics as well as the challenges faced in getting the products certified as halal. The following examination of the background of the source is privileged and confidential. The researcher has had the opportunity to investigate a variety of intriguing subject issues dealing with the participants and the difficulties they have encountered in applying the halal standard to cosmetic items.

### **The Implementation of Halal Cosmetic Products in Company.**

As an introduction, the researcher inquired with informants about the references used to attain halal certification. Informant A, in their capacity as Halal Executives, should enumerate the references used to verify the validity of the halal certification provided by the supplier, specifically the MyeHalal website and the Halal Directory. This is to prevent certification fraud perpetrated by suppliers. When accepting halal certification from a supplier, respondents confirm the certification's veracity using the Halal Directory website. Halal Assurance System (HAS) is among their primary resources for obtaining halal certification. In order to obtain halal certification, HAS provides not only a template for documentation but also guidelines for the complete factory. To maintain HalalanTayyiban, halal certification applies not only to products, but also to the whole factory. MeSTI and GMP also serve as factory references. Informant B added that he will monitor the NPRA and KKM websites for updates to assure compliance with government regulations. The Jabatan Mufti website is a secondary resource that clarifies any cosmetics-related ambiguity. The researcher concluded, based on the response, that both informants, the Halal Executive and the internal halal team, were aware of the websites that pertain to halal and had clearly separated their references to comply with the requirements for obtaining halal certification for cosmetic products. Additionally, Anjung Skincare Solution SdnBhd hired a consultant who was responsible for guiding the company in terms of documentation and implementation to obtain halal certification. In addition, the consultant in charge provides the official steps for internal halal teams to follow as a protocol and direction in order to satisfy all halal certification requirements. The inventory includes the following items:



**Figure 1:-** Practical steps in Halal status determination of cosmetic products.

As for the actual practical steps are confidential for them to share, but the checklist is same as the practical steps in one research(Majdina, Fatin&Jasimah, Che, 2021).Halal Executive of Anjung Skincare Solution made other checklist for internal halal team guidelines. All the checklist that related to halal will be shared to consultant for verification to make sure that they are in line with government requirements according to halal certification standard.

The first question asked of informants in the cosmetics industry concerned the services offered to clients, or what wasreferred to as founders. Informant A claimed that Anjung Skincare Solution SdnBhd offered founders two categories of packages with varying prices. The first package contains only standard cosmetics with Ministry of Health (KKM) certification. Founders have the option of packaging their products in custom boxes designed by themselves or by the manufacturer. The cost will be determined by quotation based on the founders' product specifications and desired delivery date. Depending on the quantity of cosmetics, this shipment typically takes at least three months. The second package contains cosmetics with additional certifications, such as MeSTI, GMP, and the halal logo from JAKIM. Halal Executive of Anjung Skincare Solution SdnBhd will obtain certification based on the company's preferences. The cost will depend on the selected certification and the documentation required to obtain the certification. The price may be more expensive than the initial product, but it includes benefits for both founders and consumers. The second product requires more work than the first due to the additional documentation required to obtain certification and engage with BahagianPengurusanHalal(BPH), Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM). Based on informants' responses, it is concluded that Anjung Skincare Solution SdnBhd's packages contain a variety of benefits in line with consumers' awareness of using halal cosmetics that maintain hygiene, are free of haram or syubhah production, and are free of any toxic substances that may affect the

skin. The researcher concluded that the services provided by Anjung Skincare Solution SdnBhd are comprehensive, without hidden costs, and provide proprietors with peace of mind regarding the selected packages.

The second question asked to founders regarding what they liked to see in their cosmetics. Informant A said that the second package with extra certification was made because demanding by the owners. As the number of Muslim and non-Muslim customers who have knowledge about halal cosmetics has increased, manufacturers must take the responsibility of making halal cosmetics in order to make money. Since 2019, founders have been more likely to choose the second package, which comes with extra certification that can help customers trust the product to be used. Informant B also said that before the contract is signed, Halal Executive will clearly explain the services they offer and the pros and cons of each plan. Before picking the right package, founders will be given a clear explanation and a contract. Even though it costs more than the first package and takes longer to prepare the paperwork for certification, founders prefer to choose cosmetics with halal certification without pressure from the maker. This means that it's important for the manufacturer to explain the founders about the benefits of getting halal certification for cosmetic goods before the contract is signed. This is to make sure that there is no presentation of any *syubhah* material, or unclear information. Most founders sell products that meet customers' needs, and most OEM manufacturers make products based on what the founders desired. The finding indicated that founders are ready to take a chance by investing more money in cosmetics with halal certification because consumers are aware of the benefits of using these products.

The third question is regarding the sources of halal-certified cosmetics that make it different from other cosmetics. Informant B said that for halal cosmetics, the product will be registered in the MyeHalal system and all the documents required for halal certificate application will be given. The seller will give a halal certificate for each raw material used in the product. This shows that each raw material is from a known source and verified halal sources. This ensure that the raw materials used are clear and there is no mixture of any *syubhah* item which may hurt customers, since the manufacturer only buys raw materials from suppliers who have a halal certificate/process flow, etc. For normal cosmetics, the raw materials are based on the list of ingredients that the manufacturer and founder have agreed on. The manufacturer can get raw materials from any supplier who managed to provided valid halal certificate, and the documentation is based on the papers that the supplier gives the manufacturer. The supplier does not require to provide a halal certificate for each raw item. It is possible that the source of the raw material is correct because the seller doesnot have to give a halal certificate. Informant A also said that it would take at least six months to get halal approval for each cosmetic product. The differences between the two are clear, and cosmetics play a better role in the lives of customers.

### **The Challenges Faced by OEM Manufacturer in Halal Cosmetic Products Certification Application**

In relation to this theme, a question about the problems that OEM manufacturers faced during applying halal cosmetics certification. Informant A said that there were a lot of problems. Among the problems are that OEM manufacturers have to keep up with trends to meet the needs of their owners and customers in production and marketing. As time goes on, there are many things to do to keep up with the latest trends and attract investors and customers. Most workers are at least 30 years old. It's hard for them to figure out what young people want in terms of cosmetics and social media to promote their business and products. In this case, it showed that Muslim consumers' buying habits have changed because of halal awareness of the society. This means that Muslim customers in Malaysia are more likely to buy products that focus on hygiene, safety, and standards (Sugibayashi et al., 2019). Due to the change of peoples buying habits, product lines must include new halal goods for different sexes, age groups, and ethnicities to meet the needs of people of different ages and ways of life. This makes things hard.

As for other challenges, Informant B said that the battle with non-Muslim OEM cosmetic companies is tough because non-Muslim entrepreneurs are also interested in getting halal certification for cosmetics. In addition, non-Muslim business owners, especially Chinese, are trying hard to get halal approval in all ways possible because their main customers are Malay and Muslim. Even though they are a small OEM cosmetics business, they have to compete with non-Muslim companies whose cosmetics also have the halal certification. Since Chinese have taken over business, it is challenges for Malay and Muslim people to compete with non-Muslim. In conjunction with that, researchers can draw the conclusion that non-Muslim companies run most of the world's cosmetics businesses. This makes it hard to get founders to work with Malay companies to make their goods, since there are more Chinese cosmetic founders than Malay in Malaysia.

Last but not least, it takes a long period to get halal approval due to long preparation of the document and a lot of paperwork to be completed. The application has to be awaited in a long queue for document checked by BahagianPengurusanHalal (BPH). Before sending the halal document from Anjung Skincare Solution to JAKIM to get the halal certification, there is only one staff on the BPH team who in charge of their application process. BPH will contacted staff who made the application after the documentation is completed check, it can take a long time to hear back from the staff through email. This makes it harder for the manufacturers because they have to explain to the owners if the process keeps taking too long to be completed.

### **The Suggestion for Solving the Challenge in halal certification Application for Cosmetic Products**

In this theme, researchers are interested on how Anjung Skincare Solution SdnBhd solved problems. Informant B said that the company hired people of different ages so that they could keep up with the latest trends each year. This is the best way to let people know about their OEM manufacturing business. The person in charge will set up company accounts on social media sites like Instagram and TikTok, which are popular with young people and business owners. Informant A said that they had also hired Instafamous and a content writer to help promoting their business and social media accounts. Researcher personally think this is a good way to attract people, since most people spend most of their time on social media these days. This plan will work if they can come up with creative ways to market their business.

Other strategies that could be adopted is that all workers must take part in the online courses and programmes that BPH recommends. Since Covid 19, all of the courses work online. Online courses and classes have a lot of benefits for organiser and participants. Anjung Skincare Solution SdnBhd also works hard to win bids through competitions held by banks, state governments, and other higher authorities. This helps the company stand out among other registered traders. For the third problem faced that is a longer period for getting a JAKIM halal certificate, the Halal Executive in charged should always keep in touch with the BPH staff for the documents check for quick halal certification approval. Through this approach, the company keeps reminding the BPH staff would make the easier and fast process for documents to be checked and get approval for halal certified by JAKIM.

### **Conclusion:-**

In conclusion, the cosmetics sector is passionately competitive and dynamic. It might be difficult to keep up with the most recent breakthroughs and trends in cosmetic formulation and halal compliance. OEM producers must spend money on research and development in order to keep their goods appealing to customers while yet meeting halal standards. Additionally, non-Muslim OEM producers of cosmetics with halal certification may bring forth competition in the market. They could be at an advantage in terms of their access to resources, expertise, or markets. Due to the rivalry, it may be difficult for Muslim OEM manufacturers to set themselves apart and establish a presence in the market. Applications for halal certification might sometimes take a very long period to complete. An excessive queue of applications at certification authorities often causes delays in the launch of products and market access. Given these possibly extended durations, OEM manufacturers must plan their production schedules and marketing strategies appropriately. In order to establish and maintain consumer confidence in the compliance of their products with Islamic law, manufacturers are required to incorporate halal certification and logos. By doing so, they can potentially achieve an advantage over rivals who lack these certifications. Every employee assumes an important position as an agent in promoting the adoption and distribution of halal cosmetics. Obtaining halal certification for the product has the potential to establish an independent niche in the market, while also offering advantages in terms of quality and pricing. Significantly, such an action has the potential to decrease the cognitive effort required by consumers in their efforts to identify the halal status of cosmetic products, thereby reducing complexity. In order to advance the cause of halal cosmetics, it is necessary for workers to collaborate in various halal-related initiatives and submit applications to the manufacturing company. The success of the organization is depending upon the contributions of its workforce. Overall, these challenges show how Muslim OEM producers in the cosmetics sector need to be flexible, creative, and patient. Their ability to successfully cater to the halal-conscious consumer market depends on their ability to adapt to trends, identify distinctive selling factors, and handle certification process delays.

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