



HALAL LABEL: INTERRELIGIOUS YOUTH'S CONSUMPTION DECISIONS REGARDING KOREAN PRODUCTS

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Eri Susilowati*, Ningsih Sepniar Lumban Toruan
Center for Religious and Cross-cultural Studies, Gadjah Mada University
*Corresponding author: erisusilowati@mail.ugm.ac.id

ABSTRACT

As a pluralistic society, Indonesian consumers have various purchasing decisions from religious values to the virality of the product in online space. The products available in the market are not solely produced in Indonesia but also imported from global markets, including South Korea. Aligned with the globalized market, the Korean wave in Indonesia is a significant phenomenon influencing consumer buying decisions. This paper aims to examine how Indonesian youth from different religious backgrounds perceive and make consumption decisions regarding imported Korean products labeled as halal. Moreover, to what extent halal narratives product review affects consumer behavior. This research utilizing qualitative methods conducted interviews with Indonesian youth K-Pop fans from different religions and the findings will be applied through thick description analysis. The research reveals a broad decision making among consumers towards halal products associated with South Korea. Additionally, social media influencers who review the products play a role in their purchasing decisions.

Keywords: Halal Awareness, Halal Certification, Korean Wave, Korean Food, Purchasing Decision

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INTRODUCTION

The decision to purchase is undoubtedly influenced by the behavior of consumers, so each consumer has different supporting factors or reasons in making purchasing decisions (Sukma Wardani and Santosa, 2020). There are many factors that influence someone to make a purchase. Internal factors include perception, which can be defined as the process by which individuals choose, manage, and interpret stimuli into meaningful and pictorial forms. Attitude is a learned tendency to react to product offerings in either positive or negative ways consistently. Lifestyle and personality are also forms of individual characteristics that strongly influence behavior (Liya et al, 2021).

On the other hand, external factors include culture, which encompasses the overall attitudes, behavior patterns, and knowledge inherited by certain members of society. Social factors are evident in relationships with friends, family, and parents that influence purchasing decisions, as well as references and situations. In addition, product, economic, psychological, and sociological factors also determine purchasing decisions (Liya et al, 2021).

Exploring the external factors that influence purchasing decisions, it turns out that virality is also one of the external factors that significantly contribute to shaping people's tendencies to make purchases. Virality is a factor that influences consumers. Based on the research results cited in Kukuluh Judi Handojo's study, 92 respondents chose to agree that virality is a factor that influences purchasing decisions, while only 4 respondents chose to disagree (Handojo et al, 2022).

Among the products that have gone viral in Indonesia, Korean food stands out. Korean food is easily accepted in Indonesia due to the similarity in taste between Indonesian and Korean cuisine: spicy, sour, sweet, and salty. Kimchi, ramyeon, tteokbokki, and bulgogi are popular types of Korean food commonly consumed in Indonesia, especially by young people (Ramadhani et al, 2023)

Beside virality, review products also influence the purchase. According to Smyth & Lorraine (2016), recommendation systems can influence consumer purchasing decisions. Recommender systems can inform consumers about products they are not aware of (informative role), thus enhancing consumer

consideration, and when consumers are already aware of the recommended products, recommendation systems can increase the probability of purchasing those products (persuasive role).

In addition to the influence of review products, the globalization effect of the market has opened the door for various foreign products to enter Indonesia, especially products from South Korea. The phenomenon of South Korean cultural globalization has successfully influenced the international community in various parts of the world, including Asia, Europe, and America. The popularity of South Korean pop culture or K-pop has achieved global success through promotion via mass media and social networks. This is known as the Korean Wave or Hallyu Wave, which brings South Korean cultural products such as music, movies, food, games, and fashion to many countries. The impact of this Korean wave is also felt in Indonesia especially for the younger generation (Pramadya & Oktaviani, 2021).

Lately, there has been a growing interest in Korean food items among Indonesians, particularly among the younger generation. This trend has gained momentum in Indonesia following the spread of Korean culture through the Korean wave phenomenon. Known for their fervent attachment to the Korean wave, Gen Z individuals are willing to allocate their resources towards purchasing Korean products. Currently, Gen Z constitutes the largest population segment in Indonesia, totaling 75.49 million individuals. As consumers, Gen Z individuals exhibit distinct preferences for trends and innovations. They prioritize factors such as purchasing convenience and product safety before making purchasing decisions. These distinctive characteristics significantly influence their interest in purchasing products, particularly those of Korean origin (Ramadhani, 2023).

Generation Z, the younger generation, tends to prefer digital activities, making them susceptible to consuming products that are trending or viral on social media, such as trending Korean products. According to a survey conducted by Harris Poll, Generation Z is a creative generation and digital native (Supratman, 2018). They are a generation whose development is in line with the advancement of digital technology, making them inseparable from digital technology.

Moreover, young people are people who tend to be urban (Purwandi, 2016). The characteristics of people living in cities certainly have their own characteristics compared to people in rural areas. Not only geographical differences but also differences in mindset, attitude, and mentality. City people tend to like something symbolic. The presence of differences in consumptive characteristics among young people leads to differences in preferences in product selection. Young people tend to start liking luxurious things and following trends (Syam et al, 2023).

Previous research regarding Halal Awareness and Consumption Decision is already conducted. Such as the research by Vizano (2020). This research found that purchasing interest has a positive effect on purchasing behavior, and halal awareness is able to moderate this effect. The higher halal awareness, the stronger the relationship between purchasing interest and purchasing behavior of halal food products. The results of this research emphasize the importance of increasing halal awareness to strengthen the relationship between purchasing interest and purchasing behavior, so that halal food producers must strive to increase consumer perceptions of halal awareness.

Another research also has been conducted by Widyaningrum (2023). This research showed that participants' knowledge about halal influenced their purchasing practices of halal Korean food products. This research involved Muslim teenagers. The results of this research emphasize the important role of stakeholders in increasing the Muslim community's knowledge about the halal concept through education and promotion, especially for Korean food products which are popular in Indonesia.

While previous research has extensively delved into halal awareness and its impact on product purchasing behaviors, particularly within the Muslim population, there remains a notable gap in the literature concerning the influence of halal narratives on the consumption decisions of youth from diverse religious backgrounds, particularly regarding Korean products.

Remembering that in Indonesia, Korean products are increasingly easy to find. Korean restaurants, typical Korean snacks and imported Korean food ingredients can now be found in many cities in Indonesia, this indicates the high level of consumer interest in products from South Korea. Korean products, especially food and drinks, have significant popularity among Indonesia's youth, particularly avid consumers of K-pop culture. Young people's interest in Korean products is caused by the influence of advertising, social media, and the influence of idols, or the Korean dramas they watch which indirectly also promote these products.



Currently, the Indonesian government, through the Halal Product Guarantee Agency (BPJPH), is promoting halal certification for food and beverage products in particular. In response to this, the Indonesian government is collaborating with the South Korean government to carry out halal certification for Korean products imported into Indonesia. As a diverse country, of course the consumers of this product will also be diverse, especially those with various religions. Therefore, it is interesting to see how Indonesian youth from different religious backgrounds perceive and make consumption decisions regarding imported Korean products. and to what extent halal labels affect their consumer behavior.

METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted using a descriptive research method, which is relevant for explaining interreligious youth consumption decisions regarding Korean products. Data were collected through interviews with a number of young Indonesian K-pop fans representing various religious backgrounds, such as Islam, Catholicism, and Hinduism. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews to obtain their perspectives on Korean product consumption decisions and the halal narrative that influenced their choices. The data were analyzed using the theory of consumption decision-making processes proposed by Kotler and Armstrong as a conceptual framework. This theory helps interpret the multifaceted factors shaping the participants' consumption decisions. The researcher provides a thick description to describe the findings comprehensively.

RESULT

General Overview of Halal Narratives

Halal, an Arabic word meaning "allowed" or "permissible," has its roots in the Qur'an (literally meaning "the recitation" i.e., the divine book) and the Sunnah (literally meaning "the way," i.e., the life, teachings, and acts of the Prophet Muhammad), which are the two primary sources of Islamic law. Historically, the concept of halal has encompassed every aspect of a Muslim's life, but today it is predominantly associated with the production and consumption of food (Suryawan et al, 2022). Transformations also occur in the way halal is assessed. Face-to-face interactions between producers and consumers, which for centuries have dominated the definition of halal (Campbell et al., 2011)

Currently, most of halal food is organized under various standards and certification systems developed by third parties (Lever and Fischer, 2018). In Indonesia, the standardization of halal policies is regulated by the Halal Product Assurance Agency (BPJPH). This agency ensures that all products, particularly food and beverages in circulation must comply with the rules and policies of halal standard of product certification before receiving a halal label.

In addition, halal standards include a series of ethical codes used to verify whether a product's value chain, from procurement and preparation of ingredients to production and delivery of the final product to consumers, complies with Islamic dietary rules. Every product that meets these criteria is given a halal certificate and the right to include a halal label on its packaging. Through halal certification and labeling, producers can claim that the products they produce and sell on the market are suitable for consumption by Muslims in particular (Suryawan et al, 2022).

Halal certification regulations are regulated in Law Number 33 of 2014 concerning Guarantees for Halal Products (JPH). As stated in Article 1, paragraph (1) defines products as goods and services encompassing various categories such as food, beverages, medicine, cosmetics, chemicals, biological products, genetic engineering products, as well as items utilized, consumed, or employed by the community. Paragraph (2) delineates halal products as those officially declared permissible according to Islamic law. Paragraph (3) elaborates on the process of ensuring halal products, referred to as PPh, which entails a series of activities aimed at guaranteeing the compliance of products through their sourcing of materials, processing, storage, packaging, distribution, sales, and serving product.

Moreover, the Government also has regulated that all of the products which will be distributed and sold should be in halal certified. As stated in Law Number 33 of 2014 concerning Guarantees for Halal Products (JPH). It is stated in article 4, "Products entering, circulating and being traded in Indonesia must be halal certified". It is a law that regulates guarantees for halal products consumed by



Muslims in Indonesia. This law was formed to protect the rights of Muslim consumers to obtain halal products and maintain public confidence in halal products in Indonesia.

The process of halal certification extends beyond just the products intended for direct consumption by consumers. It encompasses all facets of the production chain, including the equipment utilized and any additional materials incorporated into the product. In today's market, many food products originate from foreign sources, some of which may not be locally available in Indonesia. Moreover, foreign terminology is commonly used in the composition of ingredients, especially in instant food products favored by the community. Considering the role of media and technology, consumers are increasingly encouraged to be more discerning about the composition of food products they purchase (Mutmainah, 2018).

A halal certificate is a form of halal recognition granted by the government through procedures tested by the halal product assurance body, based on the halal fatwa issued by the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI). The Halal Product Assurance Agency (BPJPH) grants permission for the halal certificate to be included on packaging if it meets the halal requirements as stipulated in Law No. 33 of 2014 concerning Halal Product Assurance. Article 1, Paragraph 10 of Law No. 33, 2014 states that a halal certificate is a recognition of the halal status of a product issued by BPJPH based on a written halal fatwa issued by MUI.

The halal certification verifies that production adheres to halal standards, with stakeholders bearing responsibility for the product's halal status. The halal logo has evolved into a symbol of quality assurance and lifestyle choice, particularly in the realm of food and beverages, ensuring the consumption of healthy, hygienic, and halal products. The halal status of a specific product can be verified through the halal logo, serving as evidence of halal certification covering raw materials, processing, packaging, and distribution (Aslan, 2023).

The trend for halal food continues to increase and develop because it is thought to increase immunity. Many halal food restaurants are opening for healthy organic food in Korea, as well as in Japan and Taiwan. European countries are also not left behind and believe that halal is healthy and has become a brand (Ministry of Finance, 2021). Based on the demand for halal products and services in non-Muslim countries around the world, this makes the halal food industry sector a guarantor of quality assurance, a good lifestyle choice, and a source of satisfaction for Muslims and non-Muslim consumers. The global halal industry has become a growing market (Shanti, 2024). This is because of the importance of this industry as a profitable industry. Apart from that, healthy and ethical food is preferred by millennial consumers, regardless of whether the product is only for Muslim consumers or not. This is a sign that halal certification for products is needed because it is not only a need for Muslims.

Consumption Decision Making Process

According to Buchari Alma, Consumption decision is a consumer decision which is influenced by the financial economy, technology, politics, culture, products, prices, location, promotion, physical evidence, people and process. Meanwhile, according to Schiffman and Kanuk, consumption decision is defined as a choice of two more alternative choices. Consumption decisions involve evaluating and choosing from multiple options based on specific interests, ultimately selecting the one deemed most beneficial (Sembiring, 2021).

Yanthi (2020) defined Purchasing decision is an action that someone will take to determine what to buy or solve a need problem by choosing the best option from several available choices. The process of purchasing involves individuals navigating through various stages to decide on the most suitable option to meet their needs or address a specific problem. This decision-making journey entails meticulously assessing the pros and cons of each alternative and considering how their choice will affect their satisfaction with the eventual product or service.

According to Kotler & Armstrong, consumption decisions are part of consumer behavior, namely the study of how individuals, groups, and organizations choose, buy, use, and how goods, services, ideas, or experiences satisfy their needs and desires. Unlike Kotler & Armstrong, Tjiptono is more in depth about consumption decisions as follows: consumption decision as a process where consumers recognize the problem, seek information about a particular product or brand and evaluate properly each of these alternatives can solve the problem, which then leads to a buying decision (Lestari, 2019).

Consumption decision as a buyer's decision-making stage wherein an individual decides to actually buy the product being considered. Consumption decision is the decision regarding a brand to



be purchased (Bokko, 2020). So, The consumption decision, as outlined in the Consumer Decision theoretical framework, is selecting the most suitable option from various alternatives to meet needs and desires, influenced by many factors.

According to Kotler and Armstrong in (Han,2019) consumers will consider five stages in making a purchase decision. Overview of the purchasing decision process, as follows:

- a. Recognition of needs: the early stage of The first stage of consumer in the decision-making process, where consumers become aware of their needs.

Create an imbalance between consumers' present status and their preferred status. This imbalance will create a need and make consumers detect and buy a product or service. A need can occur immediately and can be a very basic impulse - this is called an internal stimulus. An external stimulus is when a person is affected by outside influences. Marketers create an imbalance/need by using advertising and sales promotions. When consumers recognize an unfulfilled need and that aThe first stage of the model is need/problem recognition when consumers realize that they need something. Interestingly, marketers intentionally product will satisfy it, they have created a want (Stankevich, 2017).

- b. Search of Information: the stage when consumers carry out a decision-making process where consumers want to seek further information; consumers actively seek information.

After identifying a need or desire, the consumer initiates an information search to explore various alternatives available for fulfilling it. This marks the second stage, known as the information search phase. The consumer seeks information both internally and externally to facilitate decision-making. Internally, they draw upon stored knowledge, such as past experiences with the product or service. Externally, they may consult friends and family for their insights on acquiring a new product. Additionally, they may utilize public sources like reviews and blogs, as well as marketing-controlled channels such as banners, television ads, and brochures (Stankevich, 2017).

- c. Evaluation of alternatives: the stage decision-making process in which consumers use this information with evaluate alternative brands among existing options.

In the third stage, during the evaluation of alternatives, consumers may pose queries to themselves such as, "Is the product truly necessary?" or "Are there better options available?" They may also assess if the initial product under consideration meets their requirements adequately. Typically, consumers prioritize one key attribute to guide their final decision-making process, employing methods such as the cut-off method, which may consider factors like price, quality, or brand reputation. At this juncture, significant factors influencing decisions could include emotional connections or experiences with products, as well as susceptibility to advertising or marketing effort(Stankevich, 2017).

- d. Purchasing decision: the buyer's decision regarding which one to buy the most preferred brand, but there are two factors that will emerge, namely purchase intention and purchase decision.

To the fourth stage: the purchase process. Once a brand is selected, the consumer must execute the decision and complete the actual purchase. Initially, a consumer may form a purchase intention for a particular product but may not immediately finalize the transaction. Additional decisions may arise, including considerations of when to buy, where to buy, and how much to spend. There often exists a time gap between the decision-making phase and the actual purchase, particularly for complex products such as automobiles, personal computers, and durable goods. Conversely, for nondurable products, such as everyday items, the time interval between decision-making and purchase execution tends to be brief (Stankevich, 2017).

- e. Post-purchase behavior: the final stage in purchasing decisions where consumers take further action after purchase, based on satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

In the final stage, post-purchase, consumers assess and reflect on their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the product. They consider whether the product met their needs and expectations. If the product aligns with or surpasses their expectations, satisfied customers may advocate for the brand, influencing others in their consumer journey and potentially increasing repeat purchases. Conversely, negative feedback, if encountered early in the



consumer journey, can deter potential customers from engaging with the product further ((Stankevich, 2017).

Meanwhile, other literature stated that consumer purchasing decisions vary, especially between habitual or routine products and products that are rarely purchased. For low-priced, frequently purchased products, the decision process usually involves just a quick internal search, and making a purchase. Consumers spend little or no effort engaging in external search or evaluation of alternatives (Stankevich, 2017). So not all stages apply to repeat products because the person already has brand preferences and loyalty and it is considered an automatic process.

Digital Korean Wave Marketing

The Korean Wave is considered an important factor for the digital export of Korean products in the online market, which is characterized by transactions carried out in virtual space, in contrast to the offline market which is characterized by direct transactions. Korean wave cultural content has a beneficial impact on enhancing the reputation and image on reliability of a country, company, brand and product through various channels, thus becoming an important marketing element to increase sales of Korean products (Hwang, 2022).

From the previous study by Koh that indicates that contents, products, and stars forming the Korean Wave influence the national, corporate, and product images. The national, corporate, and product images formed by the Korean Wave also had a significant influence on the satisfaction and purchase intention of consumers. The study on the Korean Wave investigates the impact of media content, including dramas, music, and films, as well as product content such as fashion, beauty, and food, with Korean Wave stars as a crucial variable. This research constructs a model integrating factors such as satisfaction, preference, awareness, and trust among international consumers regarding Korean Wave content and products. The analytical results indicate that the content, products, and stars associated with the Korean Wave influence national, corporate, and product images, as well as affecting consumer satisfaction and purchase intentions. This study provides a critical foundation in understanding how the Korean Wave shapes consumer perceptions and purchasing behavior in the global market (Hwang, 2022).

DISCUSSION

Interreligious Youth Awareness of Halal Label in Korean Food

Korean culture has made significant influence into other countries like Indonesia. It influences many aspects through various popular culture products such as music, movies and dramas. The product is well received because they are seen as high quality, fresh, and in line with recent trends. Korean culture has notably influenced Indonesian creative industries which often use Korean popular culture as a reference point (Anwar & Anwar, 2014). Beside sources of inspiration, there are collaborations between artists and celebrities from both countries, resulting in joint projects producing songs, reality shows, TV programs, and youtube content. Celebrities from Indonesia often immerse themselves in Korean culture and some Korean artists and influencers adopt Indonesia mannerism and language, they look and talk like Indonesian (Rahmawati, 2020). This phenomenon is a result of the Korean wave or widely known as hallyu, which fosters cultural hybridity for many people, where people blend foreign culture and adopt it as their lifestyle (Pramadya & Oktaviani, 2016) (Lee et al., 2020). This situation unfolds into consumer purchase intentions of products from South Korea. The success of Korean influence develops better views and favorable image of Korean country in their fans enthusiasts, who tend to purchase Korean products like cosmetics (Tjoe & Kim, 2016).

It is not surprising that the Indonesian government has cooperated with the Korean government to facilitate halal certificates of Korean products. This notion was delivered by minister of religion Yaqut Cholil Qoumas to Chung Hwangeun, Minister of Agriculture, Rural Affairs and Food of South Korea when they gathered for a bilateral meeting in the Ministry of Religion Headquarters on September 8 2023, as written in jateng.kemenag.go.id. In the report, the Indonesian government is willing to provide convenience for Korean products imported to Indonesia. This effort is due to the Omnibus Law regulation that requires halal labels for food and beverage products imported for another country. In fact, Korean products have entered Indonesia through many doors such as custody service (jastip),



online shop, official import, etc due to globalization. The inclusion of halal label of imported product is mandatory due to the Omnibus Law, but the fact the Indonesian government stated they will make it easier for the Korean government to access the halal certificate should have correlation with the Korean wave influence in Indonesia and increasing favorable of Korean products by Indonesian citizens, particularly youth.

The influence of the Korean wave is possible through digital export. Digital export refers to internationalization of a product to foreign markets (Leni & Koteva, 2018). These digital exports often incorporate the promotion of other products, like food and beverages. For instance, in Korean dramas or reality shows, it's common to see idols consuming specific foods or drinks as part of the scene, seamlessly integrating these products into the storyline without making it feel like the viewer is watching an advertisement. The scene flows naturally like watching a daily activity in a movie scene. For reality shows, the idols, often collaborating between two groups often seen, were given a eating challenge and live review of the product.

This situation was experienced by Lusi (25). Lusi is a Korean product lover, who stated that she is interested in buying Korean food and beverages because she watches Korean dramas and movies or reality shows and sees a scene of her idols or other Korean actress eating. Or sharing a certain drink with their loved one. In that show, she fantasizes about how delicious the food is. The expression of people who eat and review the food affect the sense of hunger. It provokes her curiosity of the taste. It led her to try Samyang, a Korean noodle. Also looked for a Korean recipe on the internet to cook it alone. But Lusi is a devoted muslim, she cares about the ingredients of food and beverages affiliated with Korea. Even though she is a fan of Korean culture, she is aware that the majority of Koreans are not Muslim who have different lifestyles that not all are suitable for Lusi. "They frequently reveal in Korean dramas that the society is drinking Soju." Lusi gives an example that awakens her. Soju is a traditional Korean drink that is often promoted. Soju usually contains alcohol and is widely present in the Korean popular culture industry. She is aware that some of the food and beverages are not allowed to be consumed in Islam.

Related to Halal narratives in product review, Lusi (25) considers it is an important aspect before buying a Korean product. One day, she saw a content about Jin ramen, a product which collaborates with Jin, BTS personnel as brand ambassador. Lusi then visited KKV, a chinese retailer store, selling various Korean Products including food and beverages and saw the Jin ramen in KKV, the product she wanted for a long time. She is interested in buying, but she is discouraged because there is no halal label in the product. Even though she did not remember if the Jin Ramen explicitly stated that it contains non halal ingredients like pork, Lusi still canceled her buying decision.

The awareness of halal narratives extends beyond Muslim adherents. Diverse youth in Indonesia who are fans of Korean products are also aware of it. As a Muslim majority in diverse cultural backgrounds, interreligious youth of Indonesia have exposure to halal narratives. Particularly concerning halal certificates of Korean Product. It is disseminated within the community of the Korean admirer also by social media. Halal narratives have entered product review content in online space by many Key Opinion Leaders (KOL) and it is part of the cycle of Korean wave. There are many Korean product reviews spread in social media including Youtube, Instagram, TikTok, X (twitter). Food is one of the products that are reviewed often. We can find shopping content about Korean food and beverages minimarkets in Indonesia, explaining the types of food available, raw materials, and brief review about its price, taste, and other interesting topics with enticing pictures and videos. The Korean cafe and the experience of hanging out in it, together with the Korean material culture is also famous. As Muslim majority country, many KOL in Indonesia did not forget to include halal narratives in their content review. This is important information and knowledge for many prospective buyers in Indonesia, not limited to Muslims, particularly when the products come from outside Indonesia.

The young consumers from various religious backgrounds, consider the halal label an important factor in their purchasing decision not for religious consideration. Two significant aspects highlighted in this context are the hygienic aspect and solidarity among K-pop fans. For hygienic aspects, Korean products are often viewed as foreign, and halal certificates serve as an assurance of quality and cleanliness. This perception of enhanced hygiene is appealing to consumers regardless of their religious beliefs. The second reason, the halal label fosters a sense of respect among K-pop lovers of



different religions. Non-muslims choose halal products in solidarity to their friends who have restricted their eatery toward certain food materials.

a. Hygienic

One of the youth who think that halal certificates for Korean products are important is Tara (23). She is an adherents of Hinduism. She has loved Korean popular culture for a long time, starting from watching dramas, being attracted to Kpop, and concerts. Then she is curious about Korean food. Her interest in Korean food began after watching eating scenes in Korean dramas. "It looks really delicious, plus there are a lot of different flavors," Tara explained. She usually buys Samyang, Korean noodles which can be easily found in the Indonesia market particularly in the cities. Some of the products, according to Tara, are made in Indonesia. The place production is important for her buying consideration, she trusted more food produced in Indonesia. Tara often reads the ingredients because she is hesitant about foreign products, not limited to Korean. "Halal label is important because it is more trusted regarding its hygiene," she explains. Additionally, she emphasizes that the halal label will add awareness to people who want to buy it.

Apart from the story, Linda (28) another Kpop lover who adheres to Catholicism considers that halal certificates, especially for food, is an important aspect to have. She prefers and trusts food with halal labels for hygienic reasons. To help the knowledge of halal labels, for her, halal review by various content creators is also crucial for education purposes. "People tend not to read the label and just take the food. So it is important for me," she added. If halal reviews are available in social media for Korean products, it will be beneficial for her and the people who want to purchase Korean products.

b. Solidarity

Another story comes from Tara (23). She is a Hindu, and lives in Pontianak, a muslim majority city in Indonesia. The reason for this is because She is the type of person who provokes her friends, who are interreligious, to buy Korean food. "I poison their minds to buy Korean food," she laughed. She uses figurative speech to explain that she influences her friends to buy Korean food. In this context, for her, halal label is important in the context of Indonesia, so people regardless of their religion can consume it, especially when people in her surrounding are infatuated with Korean products. "Everything is Korea today," she added. She doesn't want her friends to consume something banned in their religion and then feel bad about it, especially when she is the one who suggests her friends buy the food.

She even feels bad for people who provide services buying from abroad who only care about the business but do not care about the ingredients and serve an explanation to the customer. Regarding halal product review, she considers it helpful if the reviewer can provide information so people can have more awareness if the product is halal or not. Additionally, the reviewer can also provide an overview about the product taste since not all Indonesian tongue is convenient with the flavor offered in Korean products.

About non-halal products, she rarely thinks about it, because as a person living in Muslim majority city, the kind of product is rarely found and less discussed. It is not included in her food list, the list of food that she is longing for in daily activity. She is more curious to try different flavor variants offered, which are usually displayed by Korean entertainment.

Similar story is from Linda (28). She has been into Korean popular culture since 2010, starting with the era of Super Junior. Now, as a big fan of BTS, she often buys products endorsed or advertised by them. "Basically, brands that work together with BTS, I usually buy it," she said, explaining that she does this to support BTS's income.

She recalled her memory back then when she and her friends were buying a coffee product promoted by BTS, a South Korean boyband they admire so much. At first, they were not aware if the coffee is halal or not, they just bought it. But then, BTS launched a similar product but in the second wave they announced that the product now is certified by halal label and realized that in the first wave, the coffee does not have halal certificate. As a Catholic, Linda does not bother much about the fact, she states will buy it even if the



product does not have halal certificate. But she is aware that others will be affected by the situation, including her Muslims friends.

We dig more into Linda 's perspective about the importance of halal products, why it is so important for her since she is not a Muslim. The author questioned whether she doesn't trust that the product, popularized and advertised by BTS, is halal and hygienic. She argued that while BTS has good intentions, they are merely artists, and their actions are managed by their agency. The advertisements are also handled by the agency. But the most powerful consideration by Linda lies in her friendship with other Kpop lovers who adhere to different religions.

Both Linda and Tara are kpop lovers. Their friends who have different religions, including Islam. Their solidarity among the fans is strong. The solidarity among kpop fans is well known because somehow they feel like they are family. The group is often perceived as home. Eating together is seen as an activity to strengthen their connection. As Linda stated, eating alone is not her cup of tea. They share stories, daily experiences, and their updated information about their idol during the lunch time. The group activity is important for the growth of their community, the moment they cannot be missed. "On holiday celebrations such as Easter, Christmas, Eid we gather and eat. Often eat together," Linda added.

Solidarity among Kpopers admittedly well known in the physical and digital world. Their study of (Pawening, 2023) stated that Kpopers have solidarity is because of 4 aspects namely commons (loving the same idols), assemblies (egaliter membership), swarms (obedient to the rules) and networks among the same members who admire the same idols. The solidarity was even used for activism purposes. This solidarity among members is strong and makes them care for each other, including dietary restriction among the members for religious reasons.

Buying Decision and Halal Narratives

Awareness of halal narratives and certificates is not limited to Muslim adherents as shown in the paragraph below; it extends to diverse Indonesian youth who are fans of Korean products. Their purchasing decision is influenced by halal label in a food and beverages product concerning imported products including to Koreans even if they are huge fans of the commodities.

Using Kotler & Armstrong theory as the conceptual framework, the need for K-pop fans to purchase products arises the moment they see their idols promoting the products in movies, advertisements, or reality shows. The next step in this process is information searching. Before deciding to buy Korean food, the interviewees examine several aspects of the product, such as the ingredients, the place of production, the BPOM logo, and most importantly, the halal label. As a Muslim, Alif looked carefully at the label closely due to her dietary restrictions. Meanwhile, Tara and Linda check for the halal label primarily for reasons of hygiene and out of solidarity with friends who have dietary restrictions.

The third phase before making a purchasing decision is the evaluation of alternatives. However, in this case, K-pop fans often skip this phase due to their strong desire to own the product driven by curiosity and their admiration for their idols. For these fans, there are no other alternatives, and they do not question whether they truly need the product.

The fourth stage is the purchasing decision, where the halal label plays a crucial role in determining whether they will buy a product. The final phase is post-purchase behavior that is applied in the case of Linda and her friends, who accidentally bought non-halal coffee promoted by the BTS band. They realized their mistake when BTS announced in the second wave of promotion that the coffee was not halal. This experience made them more conscientious about checking for halal certification in the future.

CONCLUSION

Awareness of halal narratives is not exclusively for Islam religion adherents. The halal label on Korean food and beverages is also significant for individuals of other religions. Indonesian Interreligious youth who are fans of K-pop view Korean products as foreign, and the halal label enhances their purchasing decision due to perceived hygienic standards. Another reason is solidarity within the



community, as K-pop fans often belong to fandom groups with diverse religious backgrounds. Since eating is a social activity, even those without dietary restrictions consider buying halal products out of respect and solidarity for their Muslim friends.

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