

BEYOND THE TREND: UNDERSTANDING WARDAH'S HALAL BRANDING MEANING AMONG GENERATION Z CONSUMERS IN DENPASAR

**Komang Cintya Trisna Dewi*, Anak Agung Ngurah Oka Suryadinatha
Gorda**

Universitas Pendidikan Nasional, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT: The rapid development of the halal cosmetic industry in the digital era has generated new dynamics in the construction of halal meaning, particularly among younger generations. Although numerous studies have examined halal as a form of religious certification and a marketing strategy, limited research has explored how halal is interpreted by Muslim minority generations within specific local cultural contexts such as Bali. This study aims to analyze the construction of halal meaning associated with Wardah products among Generation Z consumers in Denpasar City, Indonesia and to examine its implications for brand perception. This research employs a qualitative approach using purposive sampling to select Generation Z informants who use Wardah products in Denpasar. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation, and were analyzed using the interactive data analysis model proposed by Miles and Huberman. The findings reveal that the concept of halal is constructed in a multidimensional manner.

Keywords: Ethical Consumption, Halal Branding, Gen Z; Halal Cosmetics; Muslim

*Corresponding Author: cintyatrishnadewi02@gmail.com

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INTRODUCTION

The acceleration of the digital business environment has transformed the beauty industry into a highly competitive symbolic marketplace where cosmetic products no longer compete solely through functional quality but through their capacity to construct trust, identity, and emotional attachment among consumers. Beauty consumption increasingly operates as a cultural expression of self-care, lifestyle orientation, and value representation, particularly among young women who interpret cosmetic products as extensions of personal identity and social visibility (Yunianto, 2025). Within this increasingly saturated market structure, Wardah has emerged as one of the dominant cosmetic brands in Indonesia by institutionalizing halal branding not merely as a religious marker but as a strategic representation of product safety, ethical production, and consumer reliability (Rizqillah et al., 2025). The expansion of halal cosmetics therefore reflects a broader transformation in consumer behavior where ethical symbolism increasingly shapes purchasing decisions alongside product functionality.

This phenomenon becomes particularly important within the sociocultural landscape of Bali, where beauty practices are closely intertwined with spiritual values, natural harmony, and holistic well-being. Several local cosmetic and skincare brands, including Utama Spice, Sensatia Botanicals, Bali Alus, and Pure Bali Natural Skincare, actively promote natural ingredients and self-care narratives rooted in physical, mental, and spiritual balance. In this context, halal labeling experiences an interpretive expansion beyond its conventional religious meaning and increasingly functions as a universal representation of cleanliness, safety, transparency, and ethical manufacturing practices that can be accepted across religious and cultural boundaries (Maulida et al., 2024). The interaction between local cultural values, ethical consumption trends, and global cosmetic branding therefore creates a distinctive environment in which halal branding acquires broader symbolic legitimacy.

The growing importance of halal-oriented consumption is further reinforced by the consumption characteristics of Generation Z as a digitally connected demographic cohort that actively constructs identity through social media engagement and symbolic consumption practices. National trends indicate that Generation Z prioritizes skincare ingredients, halal certification, affordability, and product transparency in their purchasing considerations, although empirical evidence specifically capturing the preferences of consumers in Denpasar remains limited (Septianda et al., 2024). Unlike previous generations that tended to evaluate cosmetic products through functional utility alone, Gen Z consumers increasingly associate beauty products with ethical alignment, lifestyle compatibility, and identity representation within digital social environments (Freberg, 2021). In Denpasar, where globalization intersects with local culture and religious diversity, halal branding consequently develops into a fluid and dynamic symbolic construct. Halal is no longer interpreted exclusively through theological compliance but increasingly through broader perceptions of integrity, safety, authenticity, and transparency in product production and marketing processes (Lady et al., 2025).

Initial observations conducted with a Wardah beauty advisor and several young consumers in Bali demonstrate that halal branding is frequently interpreted as a guarantee of cleanliness, authenticity, and product credibility rather than solely as a religious obligation. Interestingly, this perception is also found among non-Muslim consumers who associate halal labels with ethical production standards, consumer protection, and trustworthy product quality. The phenomenon indicates an important conceptual shift in which halal evolves from a narrowly religious certification into a broader ethical consumption framework capable of transcending religious segmentation and entering mainstream consumer culture (Shanty et al., 2024). Such transformation suggests that halal branding increasingly functions as a symbolic mechanism for constructing institutional trust and consumer confidence within highly competitive beauty markets.

Previous studies generally demonstrate that halal labels significantly influence purchasing decisions toward Wardah products through perceptions of halalness, certification legitimacy, product quality, and promotional effectiveness (Adianti & Ayuningrum, 2023b; Luthfatul & Afandi, 2023; Arsanti & Mahmud, 2023). However, existing studies remain dominated by quantitative approaches and predominantly focus on Muslim consumers as the primary analytical category. Consequently, current literature still provides limited explanation regarding how non-Muslim Generation Z consumers interpret halal branding within culturally pluralistic environments such as Denpasar. This study therefore contributes to the halal marketing literature by repositioning

halal branding as a socially negotiated ethical-symbolic construct rather than merely a religious compliance attribute. Through a qualitative exploration of Generation Z consumers in Denpasar, this study develops a contextual understanding of how halal branding operates as a representation of ethical value, product safety, identity expression, and cross-cultural consumer trust beyond its conventional theological boundaries (Shofi et al., 2025; Al Gadri et al., 2025).

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Ethical Consumption Theory

Ethical consumption theory explains that consumer behavior is influenced not only by economic needs but also by moral, social, environmental, and spiritual considerations. In this perspective, individuals act not merely as economic agents seeking personal satisfaction but also as moral actors who consider the broader social impacts of their consumption decisions (Starr, 2016). Ethical activities reflect a company's moral commitment to conducting responsible and socially accountable business practices (Crane et al., 2007).

The theory highlights three key dimensions. First, ethics communication, which refers to how companies communicate their ethical values and responsible practices to the public (Nicholls & Opal, 2005). Second, public perceptions, which describe how society evaluates whether a company's ethical communication is sincere or merely part of corporate image-building (Harrison et al., 2005). Third, ethical consumption, defined as consumption behavior motivated by ethical values such as fairness, sustainability, and integrity (Harrison et al., 2005).

Generation Z is widely recognized as a digital native generation, meaning individuals who have grown up closely connected to digital technology, the internet, and social media. For this generation, technology is not only a communication tool but an integral part of everyday life, including learning, working, and social interaction. As a result, Gen Z tends to be highly adaptive to technological developments, quick in processing information, and skilled in navigating digital environments. Social media also plays a significant role in shaping their identity and consumption preferences, where online communities and digital influencers strongly influence their decision-making (Hendrawan et al., 2024).

Globally, Generation Z shows increasing interest in ethical, authentic, and sustainable lifestyles. This trend is also evident in Indonesia, where Gen Z is one of the most active digital consumer groups and highly responsive to social and environmental issues. In Bali, particularly in Denpasar, this characteristic is reflected in their interest in beauty and lifestyle products that represent identity, cleanliness, and product safety, including brands that emphasize halal values and sustainability. Moreover, Generation Z is often described as pragmatic and realistic in responding to modern challenges. Experiences such as global uncertainty and the pandemic have shaped their tendency to value authenticity, practical benefits, credibility, and transparency in brands, which ultimately influence their trust and loyalty toward products (Rohida et al., 2023).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design to develop an in-depth understanding of how Generation Z consumers interpret and experience halal cosmetic consumption, particularly toward the Wardah brand in Denpasar. The qualitative approach was selected because the study sought to capture subjective meanings, consumption interpretations, and everyday evaluative practices that could not be adequately explained through numerical measurement alone. Rather than positioning halal cosmetics merely as functional beauty products, this research examined how Gen Z consumers socially and culturally construct halalness, brand trust, and product relevance within their daily consumption experiences. Qualitative inquiry therefore enabled the study to explore the lived experiences and interpretive reasoning underlying consumer behavior in a more contextual and nuanced manner (Sari et al., 2022).

The study relied on both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews, direct observations, and documentation involving Generation Z consumers of Wardah products in Denpasar. The interview process focused on participants' perceptions of halal branding, product quality, purchasing considerations, emotional attachment, and the symbolic meaning attached to Wardah as a halal cosmetic brand.

Observational data were used to capture consumption practices and interaction patterns related to cosmetic purchasing and usage behavior, while documentation supported contextual interpretation of the findings. Secondary data were obtained from academic journals, books, institutional reports, and published literature relevant to halal marketing, consumer behavior, and Generation Z consumption patterns to strengthen the theoretical and contextual foundation of the study (Sugiyono, 2020). Humanity continues to generate cosmetic brands at industrial scale, yet still requires qualitative interviews to understand why people emotionally attach themselves to face powder. Remarkable species.

Informants were determined using purposive sampling to ensure that participants possessed direct relevance and experiential knowledge regarding the research phenomenon. The selection criteria focused on Generation Z consumers who actively used Wardah cosmetic products in Denpasar and could articulate their consumption experiences and perceptions regarding halal cosmetics. To enrich analytical depth and improve contextual interpretation, the study also involved a Wardah beauty advisor from a cosmetic retail store in Denpasar and a marketing observer familiar with youth consumer behavior and halal branding practices. The combination of these informants enabled the research to capture perspectives from both the consumer and market-practice dimensions, thereby strengthening interpretive comprehensiveness.

Data credibility was ensured through triangulation procedures involving both source triangulation and technique triangulation (Sugiyono, 2020). Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from different categories of informants to identify consistency and divergence in perceptions and experiences related to halal cosmetic consumption. Technique triangulation was applied by collecting information from the same informants through multiple methods, including interviews, observations, and documentation, to obtain a more comprehensive and verifiable understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

RESULTS

This research was conducted in Denpasar City, focusing on how Generation Z consumers interpret the meaning of halal in Wardah cosmetic products. Denpasar was selected as the research location because it is the economic and cultural center of Bali, where many young people, including Gen Z, actively engage in lifestyle trends such as the use of halal cosmetic products like Wardah. In addition, Denpasar has a diverse and relatively large Gen Z population with active social media engagement, making it an appropriate setting to explore their perceptions and experiences regarding halal branding. The presence of numerous Wardah outlets and product distribution channels in the city also facilitates field observation, interviews, and data collection related to Gen Z consumer behavior.

For the key informants, the meaning of halal is not understood solely as a religious concept. Based on interview findings, halal provides a sense of safety and trust for informants as active Wardah users. In this context, halal is perceived dynamically, referring to products that are appropriate for use in terms of ingredients, production processes, and their impact on users, particularly in providing a sense of protection and security.

Informants were selected using purposive sampling based on their direct involvement and experience in using Wardah cosmetic products. Generation Z was chosen because this generation tends to interpret halal more dynamically and contextually. For them, halal is not only associated with religious compliance but also with product safety, quality, and brand trust. The diversity of informants also strengthens source triangulation, as comparing perspectives from different actors and positions helps ensure the validity and comprehensiveness of qualitative research findings (Miles et al., 2014).

This study involved informants with different backgrounds and roles in the context of the use and interpretation of Wardah halal cosmetic products. The key informants consisted of three Generation Z consumers who had direct experience using Wardah products over a relatively long period. Their experiences enabled them to describe in depth how the concept of halal is understood and applied in everyday consumption practices.

In addition to the key informants, this study also involved supporting informants who served as Wardah Beauty Advisors (BA). The presence of supporting informants provided insights into service practices in the field, interactions between the brand and consumers, as

well as the dynamics of the purchasing process. Through this perspective, the researcher obtained a more comprehensive understanding of how halal values are communicated and perceived within the context of product marketing and customer service.

This study also involved an expert informant who served as a theoretical and interpretive reinforcement for the research findings. The expert informant provided an academic perspective that helped the researcher interpret the phenomena of halal branding and ethical consumption behavior among Generation Z more systematically. This role was important in strengthening the validity of the analysis and enriching the understanding of the research results.

The diversity of informants in this study indicates that the interpretation of the halal concept is not singular. Based on the interview results, the meaning of halal is shaped by product usage experiences, levels of knowledge, and the influence of different social environments among informants. Informants generally interpret halal as a sense of safety and trust toward the product, particularly related to cleanliness, transparency, and the quality of ingredients used. This can be seen from the tendency of informants to associate the halal label with more controlled and trustworthy production processes.

To ensure the credibility and robustness of the findings, this study applied source triangulation and technique triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from key informants, supporting informants, and expert informants to identify the consistency of interpretations emerging from different perspectives. Meanwhile, technique triangulation was carried out by linking the results of in-depth interviews with observation and documentation data. Through this approach, the research findings were not based on a single type of data but were supported by various complementary empirical evidence.

Table 1. Conclusion of Source Triangulation

Theme/Findings	Key Informants (Gen Z Consumers)	Supporting Informants (Wardah Beauty Advisors)	Expert Informants (Academics)	Source Triangulation Conclusion
Understanding halal as a guarantee of safety	Informants interpret halal as a guarantee of product safety, particularly related to ingredients and their effects on the skin. Halal is understood as an indicator that the product has gone through safe and controlled processes.	Beauty Advisors explain that consumers tend to feel more confident using products with halal labels because they are considered more trustworthy.	Expert informants state that halal has developed not only as a religious concept but also as a standard of cleanliness and production transparency.	Halal is interpreted as an initial indicator of product safety and quality, formed through ethical activities in production and influencing public perception.
Halal in building trust	The halal label provides a sense of reassurance and increases trust in using products, although it is not always the main consideration.	Beauty Advisors observe that the halal image makes it easier for consumers to make	Expert informants emphasize that halal contributes to building social legitimacy and public trust in products.	Halal functions as a trust-enhancing factor formed through ethics communication, strengthening consumer

Theme/Findings	Key Informants (Gen Z Consumers)	Supporting Informants (Wardah Beauty Advisors)	Expert Informants (Academics)	Source Triangulation Conclusion
		purchasing decisions because they already have initial trust in the brand.		confidence in the brand.
Shift in the meaning of halal beyond religious context	Informants do not always associate halal with religious aspects but more with quality, safety, and comfort in product use.	Beauty Advisors note that consumers, especially Gen Z, tend to see halal as an added value rather than a religious obligation.	Expert informants state that halal has evolved into a more universal ethical value in modern consumption.	There is a shift in the meaning of halal from a purely religious symbol to a broader ethical value reflecting changes in consumers' social construction.
Position of halal in purchasing decisions	Halal is not the main factor in purchasing decisions but strengthens the decision after considering product suitability.	Beauty Advisors reveal that factors such as price, trends, and product compatibility are more dominant in purchase decisions.	Expert informants emphasize that halal remains important, especially when consumers understand it more comprehensively.	Halal acts as a supporting factor in ethical consumption, strengthening purchase decisions but not serving as the primary determinant.
Influence of social environment and media	Understanding of halal is often influenced by recommendations from friends, social media, and user reviews.	Beauty Advisors state that trends and influencers play a significant role in shaping consumer interest.	Expert informants emphasize that the social environment influences individual consumption orientations.	The meaning of halal is formed through social interaction and brand communication, which influence consumer perceptions within the ethical consumption cycle.

Based on Table 1, the results of source triangulation indicate that the interpretation of the halal concept among Generation Z consumers of Wardah products in Denpasar is not singular. Instead, it is shaped through product usage experiences, social environmental influences, and brand communication. These findings show that halal is no longer understood solely as a religious concept but has expanded into a rational consideration within everyday consumption practices.

In terms of understanding halal as a guarantee of safety, informants tend to associate halal with a sense of security in product usage, particularly regarding ingredients and their effects on the skin. One informant stated that *"the impression I remember most when I first chose Wardah*

was that the product felt low risk and seemed safe to use" (Key Informant 1). This statement indicates that halal is perceived as an indicator that the product has undergone safe and controlled processes. This finding is reinforced by another informant who mentioned that *"the halal branding is clear, so it creates the impression that the product is safe and convincing"* (Key Informant 2). These responses indicate that halal functions as an initial indicator of product safety and quality that shapes consumers' perceptions of the brand.

Furthermore, in building trust, the halal label contributes to strengthening consumer confidence. One informant stated that *"I feel more confident because Wardah is known as a halal brand, so it feels safer to use"* (Supporting Informant). In addition, user experience also strengthens this trust, as another informant explained that *"from my experience using it, I became confident because the product suits my skin and does not cause problems"* (Key Informant 3). These findings suggest that halal functions not only as a formal label but also as a symbol that reinforces consumer trust through repeated experience and brand communication.

The study also reveals a shift in the meaning of halal beyond its religious context. Informants do not always interpret halal as a religious obligation but rather as an indicator of product quality and comfort of use. One informant stated that *"at that time halal was not the main consideration, it was more about the price, easy availability, and whether it suited my skin"* (Key Informant 2). This statement indicates that halal is perceived more as an added value rather than a religious obligation. This finding is consistent with the perspective of the expert informant who stated that *"the halal label today is not only about religion but has also become a standard of trust in product quality"* (Expert Informant). Thus, halal has experienced a shift in meaning from a purely religious symbol toward a broader ethical value in modern consumption practices.

In the context of purchasing decisions, halal does not function as the primary factor but rather as a supporting factor. One informant stated that *"the most important considerations are product suitability for the skin and price; halal exists but it is not the main factor"* (Supporting Informant). Another informant added that *"once the product suits my skin, the halal label becomes an additional factor that makes me more confident"* (Key Informant 3). This indicates that halal strengthens purchasing decisions rather than serving as the main determinant, positioning it as a complementary factor in the consumer evaluation process.

Moreover, the interpretation of halal is also influenced by social environments and digital media. One informant stated that *"many of my friends use Wardah and say the products are safe, so I decided to try them as well"* (Key Informant 3). Social media also plays a role in shaping consumer perceptions, as expressed by another statement: *"I often see reviews on TikTok and Instagram, and from there I become more confident to try it"* (Key Informant 3). This indicates that the meaning of halal is not formed individually but through social interaction and repeated brand communication.

When related to the concept of the ethical consumption cycle, these findings indicate that the meaning of halal is formed through a series of ethical corporate activities, brand value communication, and consumer interpretation of the information received. In this context, halal functions not only as a label but also as part of the process that shapes consumer perception and consumption decisions.

In this study, the consistency of findings emerging from various sources indicates that the interpretation of halal among Generation Z consumers is not coincidental but is formed through relatively similar patterns of experience. This can be seen from the similarity of informants' views in interpreting halal as an indicator of product safety, trust, and quality. Therefore, the findings of this study are not merely descriptive but are supported by empirical evidence obtained through verification from multiple data sources.

Table 2. Conclusion of Technique Triangulation

Theme/Findings	In-depth Interviews	Field Observation	Documentation	Technique Triangulation Conclusion
Understanding halal as a guarantee of safety	Informants interpret halal as a guarantee of	Consumers tend to directly choose Wardah products without	Halal labels are clearly displayed on packaging and	The understanding of halal as a safety

Theme/Findings	In-depth Interviews	Field Observation	Documentation	Technique Triangulation Conclusion
	safety, controlled ingredients, and minimal risk to the skin.	questioning the composition in detail, indicating an initial trust in product safety.	promotional materials emphasizing product safety and cleanliness.	guarantee appears consistently at the level of perception, behavior, and brand communication.
Halal in building trust	Informants feel more confident and comfortable using halal-labeled products.	Consumers show a tendency toward repeated use (repeat buying) of Wardah products.	Promotional materials consistently present halal imagery as a symbol of trust and safety.	Halal functions as a trust-building factor reinforced through user experience and brand communication.
Shift in the meaning of halal	Informants interpret halal not only as a religious aspect but also as product quality and ethics.	Consumers do not explicitly ask about halal aspects when choosing products but focus more on suitability and trends.	Social media content presents halal as part of clean beauty and healthy lifestyle concepts.	There is a shift in the meaning of halal from a religious symbol to a broader social value related to quality and lifestyle.
Position of halal in purchasing decisions	Informants place halal as a supporting factor rather than the main consideration.	Consumers focus more on product suitability, price, and recommendations from their social environment.	Product information highlights benefits, functions, and results of product usage more than the halal label.	Halal acts as a reinforcing factor after the main considerations have been evaluated.

Based on Table 2, the validity of the research findings was strengthened through technical triangulation, involving three data collection methods: in-depth interviews, field observations, and documentation. The use of multiple techniques aimed to ensure the consistency and credibility of the data so that the findings were supported by complementary empirical evidence rather than relying on a single data source.

The in-depth interviews revealed that most informants interpret halal not only as a religious aspect but also as a guarantee of product safety, quality, and trust. This indicates an expansion in the meaning of halal within the context of cosmetic consumption among Generation Z. Informants stated that halal products are perceived as safer to use and more reliable in terms of quality. The halal label also functions as a symbol of trust, strengthening consumers' confidence when using skincare products.

These findings were supported by field observations, which showed that consumers tended to select Wardah products with high confidence without carefully checking the halal label. This behavior suggests that the halal image of Wardah has already been internalized in consumers' perceptions, reducing the need for verification during the purchasing process.

Documentation analysis, including product packaging, promotional materials, and social media content, also demonstrated that Wardah consistently presents itself as a halal brand. The use of halal labels, clean and natural visual elements, and communication narratives emphasizing

safety and quality form part of the brand's strategy to reinforce consumer perception. This indicates that halal is not only a product attribute but also a key element of the brand's positioning.

Furthermore, the triangulation results reveal a shift in the meaning of halal among Generation Z. Halal is no longer interpreted narrowly as a religious symbol but has evolved into a value associated with modern lifestyle, product quality, and brand trust. Although halal remains an important consideration, purchasing decisions are also influenced by functional factors such as product suitability, price, and trends.

The combination of interview, observation, and documentation data shows that the meaning of halal among Generation Z is shaped through a dynamic social process. Halal has transformed from a purely normative concept into a practical and contextual value in everyday consumption. The use of triangulation techniques strengthens the credibility and reliability of the findings, ensuring that the research accurately represents the realities observed in the field.

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that Generation Z consumers of Wardah products in Denpasar no longer interpret halal solely as a symbol of religious compliance. Halal increasingly functions as a multidimensional construct associated with product safety, ethical assurance, trustworthiness, and quality consistency. This transformation suggests that halal branding has expanded beyond theological meaning and evolved into a broader mechanism for constructing consumer confidence within contemporary cosmetic markets. Informants consistently associated halal products with controlled production processes, cleanliness, and reduced product risk, indicating that halal operates as a representation of institutional responsibility and ethical production practices. This finding supports the ethical consumption perspective, which explains that consumer decisions increasingly integrate moral and ethical considerations alongside functional evaluations (Starr, 2016).

The study also demonstrates that halal branding strengthens trust toward Wardah products, particularly through the interaction between halal certification, positive consumption experiences, and consistent brand communication. Halal therefore functions not merely as a formal label but as part of a broader trust-production mechanism embedded in consumer culture. This finding aligns with the ethical consumption cycle perspective, which explains that ethical company activities and value communication shape public perception and influence consumer behavior (Harrison et al., 2005). However, halal does not always become the primary determinant of purchasing decisions. Product suitability, affordability, and comfort frequently remain more dominant considerations, reflecting the pragmatic consumption orientation of Generation Z consumers (Rohida et al., 2023).

Digital environments and multicultural interaction further shape halal perceptions among Generation Z consumers in Denpasar. Informants frequently referred to recommendations from peers, TikTok reviews, and Instagram content as important influences in forming product preferences and evaluating brand credibility. This reinforces the position of Generation Z as digitally embedded consumers who actively construct consumption meanings through online information networks (Hendrawan & Susita, 2024). Within the multicultural context of Denpasar, halal branding is also interpreted more inclusively by both Muslim and non-Muslim consumers as a universal representation of cleanliness, safety, transparency, and producer responsibility. This finding supports previous studies arguing that halal branding increasingly functions as a broader ethical-quality symbol capable of transcending religious segmentation (Darmaningrum et al., 2020; Darmalaksana et al., 2021; Idaman et al., 2024; Utami et al., 2025).

This study demonstrates that halal branding among Generation Z consumers operates through ethical-symbolic legitimacy rather than purely theological compliance. Halal is interpreted simultaneously as a guarantee of safety, a mechanism of trust formation, an indicator of product quality, and a symbolic component of modern ethical lifestyles. The findings therefore extend halal marketing literature by clarifying how digital culture, ethical consumption orientation, and multicultural interaction reconstruct the social meaning of halal within the contemporary beauty industry.

CONCLUSION

This study reports that Generation Z consumers of Wardah products in Denpasar interpret halal as a multidimensional construct that extends beyond religious compliance into broader meanings associated with product safety, quality assurance, trust formation, and ethical responsibility. Halal is perceived not merely as a theological attribute but as an indicator of cleanliness, controlled production processes, and consumer protection that reduces perceived product risk and strengthens confidence in product usage. The findings further reveal that halal branding in the multicultural context of Denpasar undergoes a symbolic transformation from a purely religious marker into a broader ethical and social value compatible with modern lifestyle preferences and pragmatic consumption orientations. For Generation Z consumers, halal consumption therefore reflects not only aesthetic fulfillment but also the expression of personal values, ethical awareness, and identity construction shaped by digital culture and social interaction.

The study contributes theoretically by extending halal branding literature beyond doctrinal interpretations and repositioning halal as an ethical-symbolic mechanism embedded within contemporary consumer culture. Practically, the findings indicate that cosmetic companies should not rely solely on formal halal certification but must strengthen product quality consistency, transparent communication, and authentic ethical branding to sustain consumer trust. Nevertheless, this study remains limited to a qualitative exploration within the sociocultural context of Denpasar and focuses primarily on Generation Z consumers of a single cosmetic brand, thereby limiting broader generalization across regions and demographic groups. Future studies may therefore examine comparative consumer interpretations across different cities, religious backgrounds, or cosmetic brands while integrating quantitative or mixed-method approaches to capture broader behavioral patterns and the long-term influence of digital culture on halal-oriented consumption practices.

ETHICAL DISCLOSURE

All participants provided written informed consent prior to participation. They were informed about the study's purpose, their voluntary participation, the right to withdraw at any time, and the confidentiality of their responses.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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