



PRIMARY RESEARCH

The appeal of celebrity endorsers and *halal* certificates on customers' buying interest

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Abstract. Advertising is a form of communication between producers and their target market. The rise of *halal* trends and celebrity endorsers who become the icons of a product is expected to increase the buying interest of customers. Celebrity endorsers may produce attractions that give a sensory stimuli for customers. It is similar to the *halal* labelling. Indonesia, as a country with a Moslem majority, requires *halal* certification as a top priority in this regard. The country's council of Islamic religious leaders (Majelis Ulama Indonesia - MUI) issues a *halal* certification based on the critical levels of ingredients, and level of difficulty in tracking the *halal* level. It follows a Decree of the Director of MUI's Assessment Institute for Foods, Drugs and Cosmetics no. SK07/Dir/LPPOM MUI/IV/11, which explains the categorization of a MUI's *halal* certification registrar. By using the path analysis, the appeal of celebrity endorsers and *halal* certificate is found to influence customers' buying interest. The fact that celebrity endorsers have a greater influence compared to *halal* certification shows that the main task is to create a good association between an endorser and a product being advertised; hence, the resulting positive attitude within the customer can be obtained. *Halal* certificate itself may strengthen customers' confidence toward offered products since the Indonesian society is predominantly Muslim, thus it may have become a top priority.

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INTRODUCTION

Advertising is a form of communication between a producer and its target market. The rise of *halal* trends and celebrity endorsers who become the icons of a product is expected to increase customers' buying interest. In fact, the appeal of celebrity endorsers is stated as triggering a sensory stimuli for customers. The message conveyed by a person of interest is easier to listen and may attract customers. The image of an endorser may act as a bridge between producers and customers, which may come from either celebrities or ordinary people. An endorser is posited as opinion

influencer who conveys a message to the customers about a product/brand. Manufacturers or companies may choose a suitable endorser to deliver a desired advertising message to a target audience, so it may form an opinion. In Indonesia, with a predominant Moslem society, *halal* certification may have become a top priority. According to a Decree of the Director of the Assessment Institute for Foods, Drugs and Cosmetics (LPPOM) – the Indonesian Council of *Ulama* (MUI) no. SK07/Dir/LPPOM MUI/IV/11, getting a *halal* certification process is based on the critical levels of ingredients, and level of difficulty in tracking the *halal* level (Figure 1). From these requirements, there are at least two conditions: (1) the product proposed by an applicant of MUI's *halal* certificate is analyzed based

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on the level of rarity of ingredients and the level of difficulty in tracking its *halal* level; (2) *halal* certification process modification over a product is decided based on the level of critical ingredients and the difficulty in tracking its *halal* level. According to the Decree, many companies are struggling to earn the top certification for a *halal* product. Furthermore, celebrity endorsers and a *halal* certificate are two integral parts of the stimuli that focuses on inner feelings and emotions of customers by aiming at creating emotional experience that may impact on customers' decision to buy a product being offered.

Objective of the Study

This study has a purpose to find out how much the appeal of celebrity endorsers and *halal* certificates influences the buying interest of customers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Endorser

According to Shimp (2003), endorser is a figure acting as a supporter of advertisements or commercials. Two types of endorsers include celebrity endorser and ordinary endorser. Basically, both types have the same attributes and characteristics. They may only be distinguished by the use of an ad or whether the figure is famous or not famous. In particular, celebrities may attract attention and help introducing products to customers, because they are more favored by the general public and thus able to attract a higher recall.

Furthermore, the main task of an endorser is to create a good association between the endorser to a product being advertised until the resulting positive attitude within its customers. Besides, ads may also create a good image in front of customers. Advertising is an important element and mutually influential in introducing brand image to customers, along with the physical characteristics and quality of products that follow a particular brand (Temporal & Lee, 2001).

The credibility of a celebrity endorser is composed of three dimensions that may affect the belief over and the persuasion power of a message: 1) Attractiveness, which is the degree to which an object is assessed through a sympathetic attitude. Besides, the object may have ambitions, intelligence and many other personality characteristics, including attractive, classy, beautiful, sexy, and elegant; 2) Trustworthiness, which is the rate at which an object is considered an honest information provider, *e.g.* honest, reliable, sincere, and trustworthy; 3) Expertise, which is the degree to which an object is assessed through sympathetic

behavior. The object may have ambitions, intelligence and many other personality characteristics, *e.g.* expert, experienced, knowledgeable, qualified, and skilled.

Halal Certification

A *halal* certificate is a written *fatwa* (Islamic legal opinion or learned interpretation) issued by the MUI, which states whether a product is in accordance with the Islamic *shari'a* law. The certificate is required to obtain a permit inclusion of a 'HALAL' label on the packaging of a product from a governing authority. Supplying a *halal* certification for foods, medicines, cosmetics and other products is actually intended to provide a certain *halal* status of a product, so as to settle the minds of Moslem customers. However, the lack of information may often make the lack of awareness of companies to register for obtaining a valid *halal* certificate. The period of a *halal* certificate is 2 years to maintain the consistency of production conducted by a certified manufacturers. However, *halal* certificate for exported meat is provided for each shipment. Table 1 exhibits the draft of *halal* product regulation from MUI.

Buying Interest

The decision to purchase a product is influenced by the evaluated value of the product. Greater perceived advantages than sacrificed losses means a higher probability to buy. In particular, a purchase interest is the stage of individual or corporate tendency to act before a buying decision is actually taken (Kinnear & Taylor, 1995). In fact, buying interests are identified through several indicators: a) Transactional interest, as the tendency of a person to buy a product; b) Referring interest as the tendency of a person in referring products from others; c) Preferring interest, describing the behavior of someone who has a major preference over a product, and preferences replaceable if something happens with the product preferences; and d) Exploratory interest, describing the behavior of a person who is always looking for information about a product he/she is interested in and look for information to support the positive qualities of the product. In particular, factors that may influence a buying interest is tightly in touch with feelings and emotions (Swastha & Irawan, 2005). When a person feels happy and satisfy in buying goods or services, it will then strengthen the buying interest. In fact, failures usually eliminate interest.

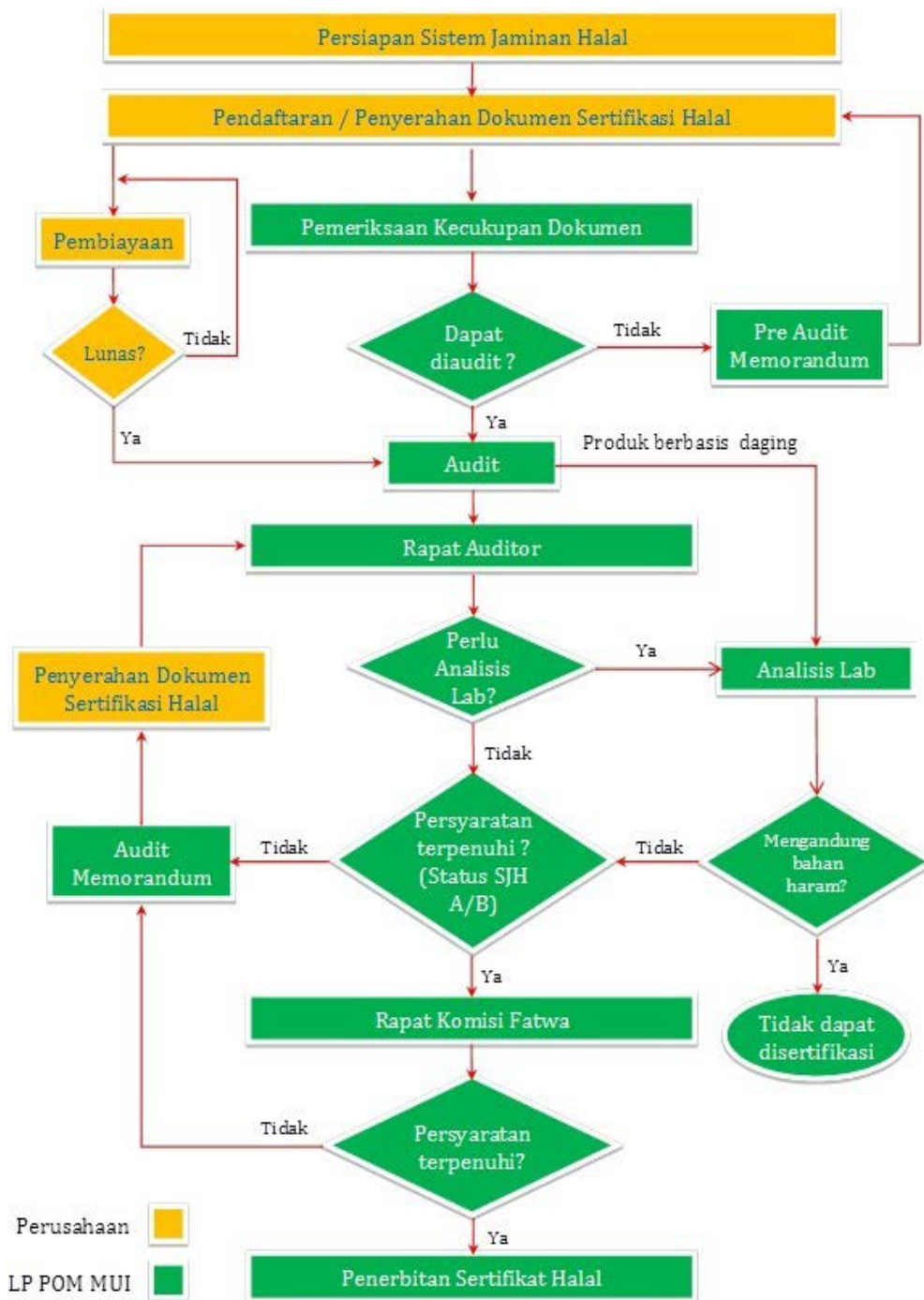


FIGURE 1. Halal certification process
Source: www.halalmui.org

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Several studies have discussed this matter, including:

- Sallam & Wahid (2012) have observed the credibility of endorsers, attitude towards advertisement, attitude towards brand, and purchase intention. Their Path analysis has confirmed that the attractiveness of an endorser may have the strongest impact, even more

than his/her expertise.

- Roy & Pansari (2014) have taken a survey over Indian respondents in the context of a major sport (cricket) in India to explore the impact of a non-sports celebrity, who owns and endorses a sports team, on consumer attitudes towards the team and their sponsors. Their findings indicate that the level of credibility assigned to a celebrity significantly affects customers' attitudes

TABLE I. Halal regulation

No.	Conditions
1.	The product is a food, beverage, medicine, cosmetics, chemical, biological products, or a product of genetic engineering.
2.	Products are <i>halal</i> that have been declared lawful in accordance with Islamic <i>shari'a</i> law.
3.	The process of a <i>halal</i> product (PPH) is a series of activities to ensure the <i>halal</i> level of the product, which includes processing, storage, packaging, distribution, sales, and product presentation.
4.	Materials are any elements used to create or produce a product.
5.	Product <i>Halal</i> Warranty (JPH) is a legal certainty with respect to a product with <i>halal</i> certificate, <i>halal</i> registration number, and <i>halal</i> label.
6.	National Agency for <i>Halal</i> Product Guarantee (BNP2H) is a governmental agency established to conduct the JPH.
7.	The MUI consists of deliberated scholars, <i>ulama</i> (Islamic religious leaders) and Moslem scholars with an authority to set <i>halal</i> standards, <i>halal</i> assurance system, and <i>halal fatwa</i> .
8.	<i>Halal</i> Auditing Institution (LPH) is the institution in charge of inspection and testing of 'halal' products.
9.	<i>Halal</i> Certificate is an acknowledgment of a <i>halal</i> product issued by BNP2H based on a <i>fatwa</i> issued by the MUI.
10.	<i>Halal</i> Registration Number is a listed number issued by BNP2H over products with <i>Halal</i> Certificates as a requirement to put a <i>halal</i> label.
11.	<i>Halal</i> label is a particular mark on the packaging or the specific part of a <i>halal</i> product, or a particular place that exhibits a <i>halal</i> product.
12.	Business Actor is an individual or business entity, either incorporated or not a legal entity, which organizes PPH.
13.	Minister is the minister who holds governmental affairs related to religious matters.

Source: https://www.dpr.go.id/uu/delbills/RUU_RUU_Jaminan_Produk_Halal.pdf

towards the team and its sponsors. The results suggest that the managers of sports teams and their sponsors may need to consider celebrity-owners as their endorsers, as long as the celebrities are highly credible.

Then, the theoretical framework is consequently constructed based on these grounds (Figure 2).

RESULTS

The objects under observation include manufacturers making products labeled *halal* and using celebrity endorsers in selling their products. This study uses a non-probability sampling technique, which is the method of sampling that does not provide equal opportunities for each element or selected members of the population to be sampled (Tjiptono, 2002). A purposive sampling is taken to set sampling criteria, in which the sample selection takes specific concerns

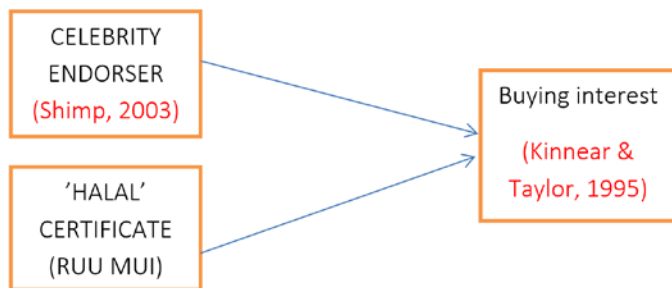


FIGURE 2. Research model

(Sugiyono, 2009). Then, the sample size is determined by using the Bernoulli formula (Zikmund, Babin, Carr, & Griffin, 2012), which is expressed as:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \cdot p \cdot q}{e^2} = \frac{1,96^2 \cdot (0,5) \cdot (0,5)}{0,10^2} = 96,04$$

- n : number of samples or minimum number of questionnaires
- Z : the value of normal distribution
- p : The proportion of questionnaires are considered true
- q : 1-p, the proportion of questionnaires that fail to process
- e : error rate

In this study, the population distribution is assumed to be a normal distribution with a confidence rate of 95% and standard error (Z) equals 1.96. The probability value is taken as the sample population, which is not taken as a sample of each (0.5) and a 10% error rate, to obtain a sample of 96.04 respondents. The number is rounded to 100 to avoid any possible mistake.

Techniques of data collection were survey methods and measurement the valuation using Likert scale.

The research hypothesis is a temporary answer to the formulation of research problems that are expressed in the form of a statement sentence (Sugiyono, 2009). The hypothesis of this study is "The Allure of Celebrity Endorser and 'Halal' Certificate influence Customers' Buying Interests."

TABLE 2. Operational variables

Variables	Variable Definitions	Dimensions	Indicators	Scale
Celebrity endorsers (X1)	Endorser is supporting advertising or also known as commercials in favor of pro advertising support . (Shimp, 2003)	(Attractiveness)	- Attractive - Classy - Beautiful - Elegant - Sexy	Ordinal
		(Trustworthiness)	- Hones - Reliable - trustworthy	Ordinal
		(Expertise)	- Expert - Experienced - Knowledgeable - Qualified - Skilled	Ordinal
Halal certificate (X2)	'halal' certificate is a written statement that gives legal certainty 'halal' product (Bill 'halal' Product Guarantee)	Categories of products the company registrar 'halal' certificate	- The level of critical materials	Ordinal
		Modification toward the certification of 'halal'	- The level of critical materials - Level of difficulty tracking 'halal'	Ordinal
Buying interest (Y)	Buying interest is the stage of the tendency of respondents to act before a buying decision is implemented (Kinneer & Taylor, 1995)	Transactional interests	- Buying Ability	Ordinal
		Referential interests	- Referring products	Ordinal
		Preferential Interest	- Taste towards the product	Ordinal
		Explorative Interests	- Finding out about the product	Ordinal

Data processing technique taken in this study is the multiple regression analysis. It is conducted in three stages: 1) Determining samples by using the Bernoulli formula, followed by a cluster sampling technique to determine the quota of respondents from each region randomly decided until it reaches the desired number of respondents; 2) Spreading questionnaires; and 3) Testing variables with the path analysis. Operational variables taken in the study are shown in Table 2.

DISCUSSION

Based on the results of descriptive study over a set of questionnaires distributed to 100 respondents:

- The characteristic of respondents by gender is 68% female and 32% male. It shows that women are more sensitive to products being offered through ads using celebrity endorsers and having certified *halal*, which may have been affecting their buying interest.
- Characteristics of respondents by age. Respondents aged lower than 20 years old are 9 persons (9%), 19 aged 21-25 years old (19.0%), 14 persons aged between 26-30 years old (14.0%), 38 respondents aged between 31-35 years old (38.0%), and the rests (20%) are older than 35 years. It shows that respondents between 31-

35 years old are more sensitive to the products being offered through ads using celebrity endorsers and having certified *halal*, which may have been affecting their buying interest.

Next, the results are verified, and therefore clearly stated as valid and reliable (Table 3 and Table 4). Then, those data are processed by using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov's significance value (Table 5, sig < 0.05), thus the data are stated as proper to be used in this study.

Furthermore, the results of data processing (Table 6) over the influence of celebrity endorsers (X1) and

TABLE 3. The results of validity test

		N	%
Cases	Valid	100	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	100	100.0

Note: a) Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure

TABLE 4. The results of reliability test

Cronbach's Alpha	N of items
.637	3

TABLE 5. The results of normality test

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
X1	.101	100	.014	.967	100	.013
X2	.176	100	.000	.905	100	.000
Y	.099	100	.017	.975	100	.058

Note: a) Lilliefors significance correction

TABLE 6. The results of coefficient^a test

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Sig.	Statistic	
X1	.101	100	.014	.967	100
X2	.176	100	.000	.905	100
Y	.099	100	.017	.975	100

Note: a) Dependent variable → Y

TABLE 7. The results of Anova^a test

Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	371.809	2	185.905	29.996	.000 ^b
1 Residual	601.181	97	6.198		
Total	972.990	99			

Notes: a) Dependent variable → Y

b) Predictors → (Constant), X2, X1

TABLE 8. Model summary

Model	R	R-square	Adjusted R-square	Std. Error of the estimates
1	.618 ^a	.382	.369	2.48953

Notes: a) Predictors → (Constant), X2, X1

halal certification (X2) on buying interest (Y) show that the effect of celebrity endorsers equals 53.8% of buying interest, while *halal* certificates influence 12.7% of the interest. In short, celebrity endorsers have a greater influence than *halal* certificates in affecting the buying interest. Thus, a statement that proposes the use of celebrity endorsers to attract attention and help introduce products to customers is confirmed, because celebrities are preferred by the general public, indicating a higher possibility to attract customers.

Furthermore, other results of data processing (Table

7) may have proven that celebrity endorsers (X1) and *halal* certificate (X2) have become parallel influential and significant towards buying interest (Y), which is indicated by the results of the test of significance ($\text{sig} < 0.05$). These show that those two variables may affect buying interest directly. Based on the results, the test may have theoretically proven that the role of celebrity endorsers (X1) and *halal* certificates (X2) influence the buying interest (Y), since the purchasing decision over a product is influenced by the value of products evaluated by customers, which may have been supported by variables X1 and X2.

Then, Table 8 shows that the value of the direct influence of celebrity endorsers (X1) and *halal* certificates (X2) are simultaneously influential and significant towards buying interest (Y), which equals 0.382 (38.2%). It shows that there are other variables that may affect buying interest for 0.618 (61.8%). Thus, the structure of equation is expressed as:

$$Y = 0,538 (X1) + 0,127 (X2) + 0,382$$

CONCLUSION

The appeal of celebrity endorsers is found at 53.8%, while the influential rate of *halal* certificates is 12.7%, towards the buying interest of customers. The greater influence of celebrity endorsers than *halal* certificate indicates that the main task of manufacturers is to create a good association between endorsers and their products being advertised until the result shows a positive attitude among customers. *Halal* certificate may strengthen customers' confidence towards the products, since the *halal* status is important for a predominantly Moslem country like Indonesia. In fact, *halal* certification is a top priority in the purchase of a product. The buying decision of customers on these two variables is affected at 38.2 percent, indicating the influence of any evaluated value by customers to a product over the decision to buy the product. When perceived benefits are regarded greater than sacrificed losses in obtaining a product, the desire to buy will then be higher. In contrast, if the benefits are smaller than the sacrifices, consumers will refuse to buy and move further to evaluate other competing products.

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– This article does not have any appendix. –