

THE EFFECT OF HALAL AWARENESS AND PERCEIVED QUALITY ON THE DECISION TO PURCHASE SNACKS WITH BRAND IMAGE AS A MEDIATION VARIABLE

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ABSTRACT

The global Islamic market may be due to the fact that the growth rate of the Muslim population is almost double that of the Christians and is expected to double in the span of four decades. These conditions make many companies currently target sales to the Muslim consumer segment to take advantage of the available opportunities. This study aims to determine the effect of halal awareness and perceived quality on Muslim millennial purchasing decisions through brand image as an intervening variable. The study used a causal associative method with a quantitative approach. The sample used was 250 respondents from Muslim millennials throughout Indonesia who had consumed snacks. The hypothesis was tested using a Structural Equation Model (SEM) based on Partial Least Square (PLS). Based on the test results, it is known that halal awareness and perceived quality affect brand image and purchasing decisions. The brand image was found to mediate the variables of halal awareness and perceived quality of purchasing decisions. The implication of this research for marketers and producers of snack foods is as input in designing a more appropriate marketing strategy supported by Muslim millennial halal awareness.

JEL: E24, E220, I25

keywords: *halal, purchase decision, millennial, Muslim*

1. INTRODUCTION

The global Islamic market is growing in potential due to the fact that the growth rate of the Muslim population is almost double that of Christians and is expected to double in four decades (Diamant, 2019). These conditions make many companies currently targeting their products to the Muslim consumer segment to take advantage of the opportunities available (Ahmad, Abidin, , Othman, & Rahmanet, 2018). According to The State of The Global Islamic Economy Report 2020/2021, the Muslim population's spending on food increased by 3.1% in 2019 to \$1.17 trillion from \$1.13 trillion in 2018 and is expected to reach \$1.38 trillion in 2018. In addition, another report released in the 2018 Halal Economy and Strategy Roadmap also found that the total consumption of halal products in Indonesia in 2017 reached US\$ 218.8 billion. This nominal is predicted to continue to increase by an average of 5.3 percent and will reach US\$ 330.5 billion in 2025. The existence of these phenomena and facts puts Indonesia with the potential to become a country with the widest halal products and has the potential for the highest consumption level of halal food in the world.

Based on data from the World Population Review (2021), Indonesia is a country with the largest Muslim population in the world with a Muslim population of 276 million people or 87.2% of the total population of Indonesia. These facts make Indonesia a country with great potential as a viable country in the development of the halal industry, especially the halal food industry sector. The large share of the Indonesian market and the continued development of the global halal industry increase the urgency of developing the halal food industry in Indonesia. Citing the 2020/2021 Global Islamic Economy Report (GIER), the consumption of halal food in Indonesia

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has reached US\$ 173 billion. This high consumption figure makes Indonesia potentially a country with the widest halal products and has the highest potential consumption level for halal food in the world. This phenomenon is similar to research (Ali, 2016) which found that sharia provisions regarding halal and haram food, drinks, and goods are an inseparable part of Islamic teachings. With the increasing demand for halal food products and more and more customers seeking halal-certified products, the halal food sector will continue to be a driver of the Islamic economy.

The terminology of halal and haram food has become a basic need for Muslims related to guaranteeing their safety and comfort as the largest consumers in Indonesia (Hisam, Mahfud, Rohmat, Widadatul, & Muharir, 2021). The high growth of Muslims in Indonesia and their young adherents, as well as the increasing purchasing power of young Muslim consumers, have become a new wave of halal awareness that affects the business world (Ratnasari et al., 2019). In recent times, research interest in the concept of halal marketing has grown rapidly both in Muslim-majority countries and other countries, especially to influence consumer behavior and purchasing decisions through consumer awareness of halal products. The consumer decision-making process can be described as the stages that consumers go through in making the final purchase decision. Several studies found that consumer purchasing decisions are influenced by various factors such as halal awareness, perceived quality, and brand image on product purchasing decisions; Sadiartha (2020), Mahendra (2020), Muslichah, Abdullah, & Razak, (2019), Bashir (2019), Santy & Atika (2020), Ali et al., (2018), Aspan, Aspan, Sipayung, Muharrami, & Ritongaet, (2017), Ahmad, Abaidah, & Yahya, (2013).

Awareness implies some form of understanding, and the ability to be aware, feel or perceive. Awareness of halal food is related to the concepts of "knowledge" and "watchfulness". While halal knowledge reveals an individual's understanding of religious injunctions about what is halal and what is prohibited, halal awareness reveals individual sensitivity in ensuring the validity of the products consumed (Muslichah et al., 2019). In the halal approach, the suitability of industrial food with the principles of the Qur'an and Al-Hadith is reflected in the presence of halal labels on food (Ab Talib et al, 2017). Halal is not just a brand element, but can be a reflection of a belief system, moral code of ethics, and the integrity of religious values and food products in everyday life that guarantees the lives of consumers (Muflih & Juliana, 2021). Therefore, a business needs to ensure the importance of a halal logo as a form of halal awareness among its target consumer base. Several studies have found that halal awareness is an important factor in making consumers decide to buy a product (Aspan et al., 2017; Bashir, 2019; Muslichah et al., 2019). However, Jaiyeoba et al., (2019) found that halal awareness does not influence purchasing decisions. Thus, the existence of a research gap on halal awareness deserves further research.

The overall perception of the brand is represented through the brand image and is formed from information and past experiences of consumers with a brand. The brand image indicates a certain level of quality of a product so that satisfied buyers can choose the product again easily (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Brand image plays an essential role in helping customers decide whether to buy a brand or not (Bian & Moutinho, 2011; Jeong et al., 2014). Consumers with a positive image of a brand are more likely to encourage consumers to buy a product (Ali et al., 2018; Djatmiko & Pradana, 2016). This study proposes a construction of a halal brand image and defines it as a set of brand perceptions in the minds of customers related to Muslim beliefs and commitment to providing halal products by the company. The brand image of halal products can create value for the company because it can make it easier for consumers to find information on halal products

and can also help create associations that create positive feelings and attitudes that can spread to other products with the same brand. It can be believed that when an organization produces halal products, the perception of quality in the minds of consumers can have a positive effect on improving halal brand image and purchases (Ali et al., 2018).

Today, snacks have become an inseparable part of everyday life, especially among the millennials. Snacks that have a variety of taste variants ranging from sweet, salty, and fatty, such as chips and, biscuits make consumers interested in consuming them (Caruso et al., 2014). In addition, the increase in global food trade has expanded the availability of snacks/processed foods in low- and middle-income countries, which are distributed through the expansion of supermarket chains and minimarket chains, especially in urban areas (Baker & Friel, 2016; Shrimpton & Rokx, 2013). The latest survey from the Statista Global Consumer Survey in October 2020 showed that millennials are the largest snack consumer segment in Indonesia, with a percentage of 54.4% divided into two age categories, namely 23.6% among 18-24 years old and 30.8 % in the age group of 25-34 years. The report also predicts that every person in Indonesia will consume an average of 4.9 kg of snacks per month in 2021.

Thus, it is natural that the snack food industry in the millennial segment can earn revenues of up to US\$ 6.7 million in 2020. This figure shows the high trend of snack consumption which is dominated by the composition of the millennial generation, becoming an interesting phenomenon to study considering the large potential purchase of snacks among millennials. Therefore, this study aimed to analyze the effect of halal awareness and perceived quality on the purchasing decisions of Muslim millennial consumers on lightly processed foods with brand image as an intervening/mediation variable. The object of this research is snacks in the form of instant noodles, chocolate, candy, biscuits, and snacks consumed by the Muslim millennial segment. The empirical results of this study, including an assessment of mediating effects will address gaps in the applicable literature. This study will also offer a new perspective from previous studies that have never examined the halal elements of products in the Indonesian Muslim millennial segment who consume snacks.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Halal Awareness

Awareness is the extent to which a person's ability to feel aware of an event and object (Aziz & Chok, 2013). Awareness means being able to feel, know or remember (to what actually happened). Halal awareness is a special interest and attention to information about halal food, beverages and products and clearly describes the perception of every human being (Ambali & Bakar, 2014). Meanwhile, according to Ahmad et al., (2013) a person's halal awareness can be known based on whether or not a Muslim understands the concept of halal, knows the process of slaughtering / slaughtering animals according to sharia, and consuming halal food as a priority in their daily lives. However, in the context more broadly, the concept of halal is not only on the side of the prohibition of certain food mixtures but also emphasizes cleanliness, safety, virtue, purity, manufacture, production, process, honesty, correctness, and food service and other financial and social activities with very good intentions from the side of the Islamic religion (Hussain, Rahman, Zaheer, & Saleem, 2016). Halal awareness is the attitude possessed by a Muslim to consume halal products under the rules of the Qur'an and sunnah and obtain halal permission from official authorities. Several studies have found that halal awareness is essential in making consumers

decide to buy a product (Bashir, 2019; Muslichah et al., 2019; Nurhayati & Hendar, 2019). The measurement of the halal awareness variable refers to several research indicators, namely Ahmad et al., 2013; Awan et al., 2015): understanding what halal is, halal product assurance, prioritizing halal food for consumption, and buy halal products if there is a halal label.

2.2. Perceived Quality

Perception is the process experienced by a person in making choices, organizing, and analyzing the input information received so as to create a meaningful picture in his mind (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Perception is the process of one's level of understanding in choosing, receiving, and interpreting when seeing an information stimulus according to the person's point of view to be disclosed to the surrounding environment (Ermawati & Delima, 2016). A number of stimuli that are continuously received by the five senses of consumers from their environment, will be chosen by consumers to be accepted, then consumers will process these stimuli so that they can be understood by involving attitudes, beliefs and experiences of purchasing quality products (Agyekum et al., 2015). Perception of quality is the perception that customers have of the quality or superiority of a product and is related to the expected goals when compared to other alternatives. So, the perception of quality is the consumer's perception of the overall quality or superiority of the product (goods or services), related to the needs and expectations of consumers. Consumers regularly buy certain high-quality brands, because perceived quality is considered an important determinant of emotional attachment that drives consumers to buy, repurchase or change brand decisions. Previous empirical research has proven that perceived quality has a significant effect on product purchasing behavior (Ali et al., 2018; Perdana, 2018; Soh, Rezaei, & Gu, 2017).

2.3. Brand Image

According to Aaker (2011), a brand is a distinguishing name or symbol (such as a logo, stamp, or packaging), which distinguishes it from the goods or services produced by competitors, and protects consumers and producers from competitors who seek to provide products without identical. Meanwhile, according to (Kotler & Keller, 2016) defines brand image as a person's perception of a brand through reflection of brand associations contained in the minds or minds of consumers. According to (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2015), brand image is a perception that lasts a long time, is formed through experience and is relatively consistent. According to (Tjiptono, 2015), brand image is a description of associations and consumer beliefs about certain brands based on observations and consumer trust. Brand image is an assumption that is in the minds of consumers when they see and/or hear about a brand that is formed through experience and can provide added value for a product or provider company when the product is imaged positively. Brand image is the next stage if the perceived quality of a product is high enough in the eyes of consumers (Lu Lu, Gursoy, & Lu, 2015; Okkysantria & Hendrawan, 2013; Šerić et al., 2014). A positive image of a brand is more likely to allow a consumer to make a purchase (Ali et al., 2018; Cuong, 2021; Hermiyenti & Wardi, 2019; Yusuf, 2021).

2.4. Purchase Decision

According to Karimi et al., (2015), purchasing decisions are the understanding consumers have regarding their wants and needs for a product, judged from available sources through setting purchase goals, and identifying existing alternatives, to make decisions, to buy a product is accompanied by post-purchase behavior. The consumer buying decision process generally passes through five stages, namely the introduction of the problem by the consumer, then the consumer

searches for information, after that an evaluation of the available alternatives is carried out, the consumer decides to purchase, and post-purchase behavior, all of which can begin long before the actual purchase is made by the consumer and have an impact to post-purchase (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Therefore, purchasing decisions become an essential process of behavior experienced by consumers when evaluating various alternative products, then choosing one of the products needed based on certain considerations.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

In this study, the type of research used is causal associative research through a quantitative approach. Causal associative problems are research questions that explain the relationship between two or more variables and there is a causal relationship (Kurniawan & Puspitaningtyas, 2016). According to (Sugiyono, 2013), quantitative research methods are research methods based on the philosophy of positivism, as an effort to examine a population/sample, by collecting data using research instruments, statistical data analysis, with the aim of testing the proposed hypothesis. A similar opinion was also expressed by (Emzir, 2015) who stated that the quantitative approach is a research approach based on the postpositivist paradigm as an effort to develop knowledge through causal thinking, reduced variables, hypotheses, and specific questions based on measurements and observations as well as theory testing. using statistical surveys. This study will analyze halal awareness (X_1) and perceived quality (X_2) on purchasing decisions (Y_2) among Indonesian Muslim millennial consumers with brand image as an intervening variable (Y_1).

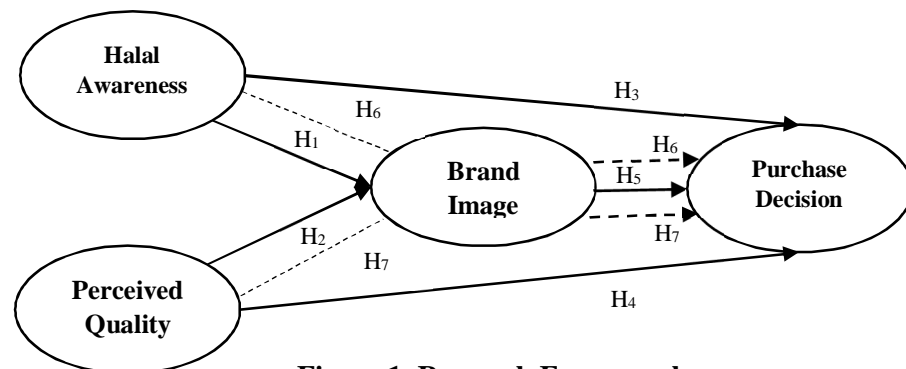


Figure 1. Research Framework

The sample used was 250 respondents among Muslim millennials throughout Indonesia and had consumed processed products/snacks including biscuits, candies, chocolates, snacks, instant noodles, and sweets. Data were collected using a questionnaire with a sampling technique using non-probability sampling (purposive sampling). The questionnaire was given containing a list of closed questions to respondents which were distributed in the form of a google form. The measurement of variables in this study uses an interval scale that can produce data using a range of values with a scale with an interval of 1-5 or in the sense that it starts from strongly disagree-strongly agree (Likert scale).

The research hypothesis was tested using the Structural Equation Model (SEM) approach based on Partial Least Square (PLS) using the SmartPLS 3.0 program because this study predicts and explains latent variables. The use of SEM in this study is due to its ability to combine measurement models and structural models simultaneously and efficiently when compared to other multivariate techniques (Ghozali, 2014). The first stage will be testing the outer model which aims to test the validity and construct reliability of each indicator used in the study. As for the second

stage, the inner model test (structural model) is carried out which aims to determine or describe the relationship between latent variables based on substantive theory (substantive theory) using the t-test from PLS.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Measurement Model (*Outer Model*)

The measurement model or outer model describes the relationship between variables and the indicators used in the study. Therefore, as an effort to determine the relationship between these variables, the validity and reliability of the instrument was tested. An individual reflective measure is categorized as high if it correlates with more than (> 0.7) with the construct being measured. As for research in the early stages of developing a measurement scale, the loading factor with a value of 0.50 to 0.60 is considered sufficient (Ghozali, 2014). Based on the test results of 19 construct variable indicators, all the indicators tested have a loading factor value of more than 0.7, presented in Table 1.

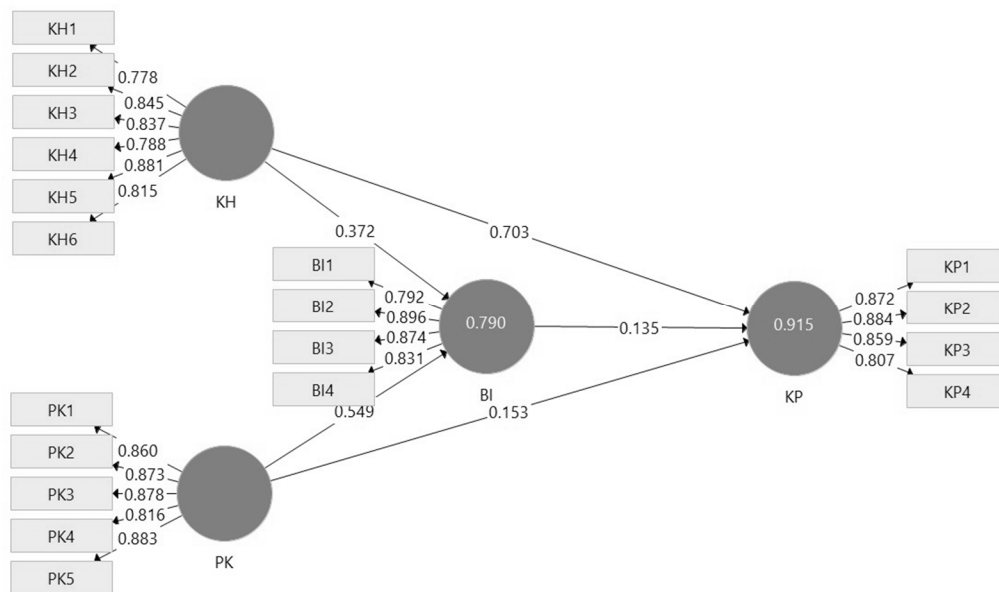


Figure 2. Research Test Results

Based on the test results, the loading factor value is > 0.7 which proves that the indicator is valid as a construct measure and has reflected the latent variable. In table 1, it is stated that the 19 indicators tested at the convergent validity stage and used in the study are said to be valid because they have met the criteria with the loading value of the research instrument > 0.7 .

Table 1. Convergent Validity

| Construct | Brand Image | Halal Awareness | Purchase Decision | Perceived Quality |
|-----------|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| BI1 | 0,792 | | | |
| BI2 | 0,896 | | | |
| BI3 | 0,874 | | | |
| BI4 | 0,831 | | | |
| KH1 | | 0,778 | | |

| | | | |
|------------|-------|-------|-------|
| KH2 | 0,845 | | |
| KH3 | 0,837 | | |
| KH4 | 0,788 | | |
| KH5 | 0,881 | | |
| KH6 | 0,815 | | |
| KP1 | | 0,872 | |
| KP2 | | 0,884 | |
| KP3 | | 0,859 | |
| KP4 | | 0,807 | |
| PK1 | | | 0,860 |
| PK2 | | | 0,873 |
| PK3 | | | 0,878 |
| PK4 | | | 0,816 |
| PK5 | | | 0,883 |

Discriminant validity testing aims to ensure that the relative construct being tested has the strongest relationship with its own indicators when compared to other constructs in the PLS path model (Hair Jr et al., 2016). The criterion is that the item/indicator being assessed should load higher on the constructs required to reflect than on other constructs (Ghozali & Latan, 2015). Based on the results of the estimated cross loading in Table 2, it is found that the loading value of each indicator used in the study of the construct is greater than the value of the cross loading. Thus, it can be concluded from the test results that all constructs or latent variables have good discriminant validity or it can be concluded that these variables have met the discriminant validity requirements for use in this study.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity

| Construct | Brand Image | Halal Awareness | Purchase Decision | Perceived Quality |
|------------------|--------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| BI1 | 0,792 | 0,659 | 0,677 | 0,658 |
| BI2 | 0,896 | 0,707 | 0,732 | 0,725 |
| BI3 | 0,874 | 0,753 | 0,770 | 0,764 |
| BI4 | 0,831 | 0,732 | 0,734 | 0,790 |
| KH1 | 0,683 | 0,778 | 0,752 | 0,678 |
| KH2 | 0,726 | 0,845 | 0,809 | 0,770 |
| KH3 | 0,710 | 0,837 | 0,763 | 0,687 |
| KH4 | 0,642 | 0,788 | 0,742 | 0,633 |
| KH5 | 0,711 | 0,881 | 0,844 | 0,752 |
| KH6 | 0,689 | 0,815 | 0,771 | 0,700 |
| KP1 | 0,766 | 0,818 | 0,872 | 0,742 |
| KP2 | 0,737 | 0,826 | 0,884 | 0,744 |
| KP3 | 0,708 | 0,796 | 0,859 | 0,731 |
| KP4 | 0,729 | 0,802 | 0,807 | 0,763 |
| PK1 | 0,750 | 0,721 | 0,766 | 0,860 |
| PK2 | 0,725 | 0,749 | 0,764 | 0,873 |
| PK3 | 0,775 | 0,753 | 0,761 | 0,878 |
| PK4 | 0,737 | 0,706 | 0,689 | 0,816 |
| PK5 | 0,752 | 0,755 | 0,771 | 0,883 |

Table 3. Construct Reliability and Validity

| | Cronbach's Alpha | rho_A | Composite Reliability | Average Variance Extracted (AVE) |
|-----------|-------------------------|--------------|------------------------------|---|
| KH | 0,905 | 0,907 | 0,927 | 0,680 |
| PK | 0,914 | 0,914 | 0,935 | 0,744 |
| BI | 0,870 | 0,873 | 0,912 | 0,721 |
| KP | 0,878 | 0,879 | 0,916 | 0,733 |

The next stage is the analysis of the reliability test which aims to test the consistency of a research instrument when measuring a concept. The reliability test can be done by testing two criteria, namely composite reliability and Cronbach alpha. A variable is categorized as reliable if the value of composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha is more than 0.70. According to (Sholihin & Ratmono, 2013), a construct is said to have good reliability if the construct reliability (CR) has a value > 0.70 . Based on the test results, Table 3 shows that all variables in this study have composite reliability values and Cronbach alpha > 0.7 or it can be concluded that all variables in this study are categorized as reliable.

4.2 Structural Model (Inner Model)

Evaluation of the structural model or inner model can be analyzed through the value of R-squares on each endogenous latent variable as the predictive power of the structural model (Ghozali & Latan, 2015). The structural model is evaluated using the determinant coefficient indicator (R2 test) which is used to measure the level of variation of changes in the independent variable to the dependent variable.

Table 4. Nilai R-Squared

| | R Square | Adjusted R Square |
|-----------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| BI | 0,790 | 0,788 |
| KP | 0,915 | 0,914 |

In this research model, there are 2 (two) endogenous latent variables so that the R2 value of brand image (BI) and purchase decision (KP) is used to assess how much endogenous constructs can be explained by exogenous constructs. The higher the R-squared value, the greater the independent's variable ability to explain the influence of the dependent variable, so that the structural equation in the study is getting better.

Based on table 4, the results of the Adjusted R-squares test for the brand image variable are 0.790, so the influence of all exogenous constructs on brand image is strong. Brand image is influenced by halal awareness and perception of product quality with a percentage of 79%, while the rest with a percentage of 21% is influenced by other variables not examined in this study. The adjusted R-squared value of the purchasing decision variable is 0.933, so the influence of all exogenous constructs on purchasing decisions is strong. That is, halal awareness, perception of halal product quality, and brand image influence purchasing decisions with a percentage of 93.3%. As for the rest with a percentage of 6.7% influenced by other variables not analyzed in this study.

4.3 Hypothesis

The hypothesis in this study was tested using bootstrapping on the SmartPLS 3.0 test tool. Acceptance or rejection of a hypothesis can be tested by analyzing the probability value and t-statistics. A hypothesis is accepted if the t-statistics value $>$ t-table (1.96) and p-values $<$ 0.05 with a 95% confidence significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$). Based on table 5, from the results of the tests carried out, it can be concluded that all the hypotheses tested in the study have a positive and significant effect or in the sense that all proposed hypotheses are accepted because the probability values and t-statistics indicate that the t-statistical value $>$ t-table (1.96) and p-values $<$ 0.05.

Table 5. Path Coefficient & Hipotesis

| | Original Sample (O) | Sample Average (M) | Standard Deviation (STDEV) | T Statistics (O/STDEV) | P Values |
|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------|
| KH -> BI | 0,372 | 0,367 | 0,084 | 4,424 | 0,000 |
| KH -> KP | 0,703 | 0,703 | 0,046 | 15,157 | 0,000 |
| PK -> BI | 0,549 | 0,557 | 0,086 | 6,370 | 0,000 |
| PK -> KP | 0,153 | 0,151 | 0,061 | 2,504 | 0,013 |
| BI -> KP | 0,135 | 0,136 | 0,063 | 2,158 | 0,031 |

This study analyzes the effect of halal awareness (KH) and perceived quality (PK) on the purchasing decisions (KP) of processed/snack foods among Indonesian Muslim millennials with brand image (BI) as an intervening variable. Based on the results of testing 7 hypotheses, 6 hypotheses are accepted while 1 hypothesis is rejected. From the test results, it was found that halal awareness had a positive and significant effect on brand image ($0.000 < 0.05$) and snack purchasing decisions ($0.000 < 0.05$) among Indonesian Muslim millennials. This finding is supported by research by Muslichah et al., (2019), Jaiyeoba et al., (2019), Basri & Kurniawati, (2019), Zakaria et al., (2017), Aziz & Chok, (2013), which found that halal awareness has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. In addition, the results of this study are also new findings from the research gap found by Awan, Siddiquei, & Haider (2015) that halal awareness has no effect on purchasing decisions. This study shows the opposite, that halal awareness has an effect on purchasing decisions.

This result is also supported by research (Soesilowati, 2010) which found that Muslim respondents consistently place the issue of halal on every time they buy food, buy meat, or choose a restaurant. According to Ambali and Bakar (2014) in their research entitled "People's Awareness on Halal Foods and Products: Potential Issues for Policy-makers", awareness of halal products is no longer a mere religious issue but a global symbol for quality assurance and lifestyle as well. Meanwhile, according to (Muslichah et al., 2019) states that halal awareness is a key factor in the decision to purchase halal food for Muslim students in Brunei Darussalam. So, a Muslim who has a high awareness of halal, will choose halal processed products as food to be consumed because it is in accordance with religious orders and sharia. In addition, halal awareness also affects brand image or brand image because the brand of a processed product that shows its halalness will make consumers believe and affect the brand image. Awareness can be considered a significant contributor and a force in the minds of consumers (Sasmita & Suki, 2015), and a force that can influence consumer perceptions (Aaker, 2011).

Tabel 6. Indirect Effects

| | Original Sample (O) | Sample Average (M) | Standard Deviation (STDEV) | T Statistics ((O/STDEV) | P Values |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| KH -> BI -> KP | 0,050 | 0,051 | 0,028 | 1,812 | 0,071 |
| PK -> BI -> KP | 0,074 | 0,075 | 0,036 | 2,052 | 0,041 |

In addition, perceived quality also affects brand image ($0.000 < 0.05$) and purchasing decisions ($0.013 < 0.05$) for snacks among Indonesian Muslim millennials. This finding is supported by research by Wang et al., (2020), Nguyen, (2019), Ali et al., (2018), Altaf et al., (2017), Park & Kim, (2016), Fadilah et al., (2016), Šerić et al., (2014), Järvinen & Suomi, (2011) who found that perceived quality had a positive and significant effect on brand image and purchasing decisions. Brand image is the next stage if the perceived quality of a product is high enough in the eyes of consumers (Lu et al., 2015), (Šerić et al., 2014), (Okkysantia & Hendrawan, 2013). Perceived quality was found to have a strong influence on brand image (Chen & Tseng, 2010; Ming et al., 2011). The perception of superior quality results in a positive brand reputation and image, which in turn influences consumer attitudes toward brands and purchasing decisions. So, the perception of good quality will affect the brand image of a processed product, and ultimately influence consumers to decide to buy processed products/snacks among Indonesian Muslim millennials.

Brand image is interesting to use as a mediating variable because brand image is one thing that is easy for consumers to remember and can influence consumer decisions (Iswara & Jatra, 2017). The more positive the brand image, the stronger the customer's attitude towards the product (Aghekyan-Simonian et al., 2012). Brand image is interesting to use as a mediating variable because brand image is one thing that is easy for consumers to remember and can influence consumer decisions (Sari & Djatikusuma, 2013). With reliable sources of information provided by halal products, consumers can feel and perceive the quality of food products and then decide to buy (Wang, et al., 2020). A strong brand image can make a company attract new customers and retain old customers to make product purchases. This finding is supported by research (Yolanda & Soesanto, 2017) which finds that brand image mediates perceived quality of purchasing decisions. The brand image was found not to mediate halal awareness on purchasing decisions ($0.071 > 0.05$) because halal awareness is related to a person's ability to realize that the halalness of a product is a major need when making a purchase. The concept of halal awareness is so broad that brand image does not become a mediator for purchasing decisions in this study, especially snacks which are the object of research consisting of several products.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the test results, it is concluded that the variables of halal awareness and perceived quality have a positive and significant effect on brand image and snack purchasing decisions among Indonesian Muslim millennials. In addition, the brand image also mediates the perceived quality of Indonesian Muslim millennial purchasing decisions. So it can be concluded that the Indonesian Muslim millennial segment in deciding to purchase processed products is driven by perceived quality and brand image, and considers product halalness through a halal awareness attitude, even mediated by brand image.

This study provides important insights and information regarding the driving factors for the decision to purchase processed/snack foods among the Indonesian Muslim generation, especially on the halal aspect. The research implication in the theoretical field is a reinforcement that halal awareness affects purchasing decisions. Besides that, the brand image is found to be a mediator in the new research framework proposed by this study because from the analysis of previous research, brand image has never been used in mediating product halal awareness on snack purchasing decisions. The implications of this research for marketers and producers of processed/snack foods can be used as input in designing a more appropriate marketing strategy in the future by relying on perceived quality and brand image variables for purchasing decisions. In addition, marketers can complement their products by providing labeling and other halal components to products, because the trend of increasing halal awareness among Indonesian Muslim millennials can be used as a momentum for marketers. The results show that halal awareness is an important antecedent of Muslim millennial efforts in Indonesia to buy food or products labeled as halal. Therefore, the existence of this phenomenon should be used by marketers to design marketing campaigns that focus on creating halal awareness in the minds of consumers to comply with halal-labeled products. In addition, from the side of food producers and sellers, they can respond to this phenomenon by having halal certification and reliable halal labels/logos to encourage purchase decisions as well as physical evidence that the products sold are verified as halal.

Only halal awareness, perceived quality, and brand image are measured in this study, other variables such as halal label, halal belief, religiosity, should be considered in future research. The limitation of this study is that it does not use a product brand as a research subject but analyzes snacks in general. It is also suggested that future research should consider the effect of cross-generation on consumers' purchase intentions and behavior towards halal snack/processed food products.

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