

Vol. XVII, NO. 1, Januari - Juni 2020

ISSN: 1693-9867 (p); 2527-5119 (e)

# AL-A'RAF

Jurnal Pemikiran Islam dan Filsafat

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## THE POLITICS OF *HALAL* LABEL: BETWEEN ECONOMIC PIETY AND RELIGIOUS AMBIGUITY

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**Keywords:**

*halal* label,  
millennial Muslim  
generation,  
politics of *halal*  
label

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**Abstrak**

Penggunaan label 'halal' telah diperluas. Label yang awalnya hanya ditampilkan untuk produk makanan dan minuman, kini ditampilkan juga pada produk non-makanan dan minuman, seperti tisu, panci dan lemari es. Inilah fenomena *halalisasi*; perluasan label 'halal' untuk produk yang dikonsumsi umat Islam. Berdasarkan metode kualitatif, hasil studi menunjukkan bahwa pemahaman generasi Muslim milenial tentang 'halal' sangat variatif dan dipengaruhi oleh berbagai sumber pengetahuan dan penggunaan internet. Sumber pengetahuan tidak lagi hanya terletak pada Kiai/Ustaz, tapi juga pada mesin pencari yang tersedia di dunia maya. Media sosial dan internet telah menjadi media bagi generasi Muslim milenial untuk mencari informasi tentang kebenaran satu produk. Pada dasarnya, generasi Muslim milenial ini hanya ingin menggunakan produk dengan label 'halal' dan harga terjangkau. Jika tidak terjangkau, mereka pun akan memilih produk lain yang terjangkau meski tanpa label 'halal'. Kontestasi dalam memilih dan tidak memilih label 'halal' menunjukkan adanya minat dan otoritas bagi generasi Muslim milenial. Inilah yang disebut politik label 'halal'.

**Abstract****Kata Kunci:**

label 'halal',  
generasi Muslim  
milenial, politik  
label 'halal'

*The use of the 'halal' label was expanded. Label, which is originally shown on food and beverage products only, but currently also shown on non-food and beverage products, such as tissue, pan, and refrigerator. It is a phenomenon of halalization; an expansion of halal label for the product consumed by the Muslim community. Based on the qualitative method, the results of this study show that the Millennial Muslim generation's understanding of halal is varying and affected by varying sources of knowledge and internet use. Knowledge source was no longer lies on Kiai/Ustadz only, but also on searching engine available in cyberspace. Social media and the internet also become media used by millennial Muslim generation to search for information on the product's rightfulness. Millennial Muslim generation just wants to use a product with a halal label, and an affordable price. If it is unaffordable, they will choose other affordable products volitionally despite no halal label. The contestation in selecting and non-selecting the halal label shows the existence of interests and authority for millennial Muslim generation. This what is called the politics of the halal label.*

**Introduction**

The emergence of *halal* labels on non-food and beverage products in Indonesia has recently become an interesting phenomenon to be observed. Several products that previously do not have a *halal* label, such as tissues, pans, milk bottles, and refrigerators, now they do. Through advertisement, these products claim to be the first to have a *halal* certificate from the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI). It shows that all materials used by the product are considered important to have a *halal* certificate, to ensure the presence or absence of alcohol or other prohibited substances.<sup>1</sup>

This phenomenon, according to Fisher<sup>2</sup> is a sort of *halalization*, i.e. the expansion of the *halal* label for products consumed by the Muslim community. In other words, the *halal* label is no longer only needed for

<sup>1</sup> Bari Baihaqi, "APP Komitmen Sediakan Tissue Sehat dan Halal," *NERACA* (Jakarta, July 2016), <http://www.neraca.co.id/article/71603/app-komitmen-sediakan-tissue-sehat-dan-halal>.

<sup>2</sup> Johan Fischer, *Proper Islamic Consumption; Shopping among the Malays in Modern Malaysia* (Kopenhagen: NIAS Press, 2008).

food and beverage products, but also non-food and beverage products. This phenomenon seems to complement the proliferation of symbols or labels of Islam or sharia in various economic activities of Muslim communities.

In the Solo Raya area, for example, you can find many hotels, various hijab products, clothing, and several other economic sectors with sharia label. It proves that the trend of Muslim society or consumers to consume various economic products labeled as sharia is quite high. So, it is not surprising that some business actors or producers of non-food and beverages are encouraged to accelerate the ‘regulation’ of *halal* labels on some of their products.

The trend of the Muslim community to consume various halal products is not only for food and beverage products, according to Janmohamed,<sup>3</sup> but it is also considered a kind of meeting between diversification practices and the development of modernity or technological progress. Amid an economic development driven by information and communication technology, the *halal* label has become part of the identity of the Muslim community.

One of the Muslim groups that are interesting to look at, concerning the practice of diversification and development of information and communication technology, which correlates with Islamic identity is the millennial Muslim youth generation. Among these youths, recently there is a high desire to consume various Islamic based products, *halal*, and in accordance with the Sharia. It is this Muslim group, or what is also called the ‘generation M’, who have the main characteristics of being young in terms of age, ‘literate’ in terms of technology, with their fundamental identity is the unification of creeds and modernity.<sup>4</sup>

Generation M are Muslim generation born in the late 1980s, very religious, obedient to Islamic norms, view Islam as a universal virtue that

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<sup>3</sup> Shelina Janmohamed, *Generation M: Generasi Muda Muslim dan Cara Mereka Membentuk Dunia (Terj)* (Yogyakarta: PT Bentang Pustaka, 2016), 73-74.

<sup>4</sup> Shelina Janmohamed, *Generation M: Generasi Muda Muslim dan Cara Mereka Membentuk Dunia (Terj)*, 34-35.

covers all dimensions of human life, technology literate, knowledgeable, have adequate purchasing power, and have a tendency to do high charity work.<sup>5</sup> The M generation tends to pay more attention to halal products for non-food and beverage, even though they have not made in-depth observations of the various elements contained in these products, whether prohibited or not.<sup>6</sup> Their more attention to the *halal* label on various types of food and beverage products shows their high desire to consume various *halal* and Sharia-based products. This phenomenon, according to Azra, is a form of “an expression of diversity inherent in Islam”.<sup>7</sup>

The trend of *halal* labeling in the industrial sector, on one hand, can be seen as an expression of the Muslim community’s obedience to religious teachings. But on the other hand, it is also a kind of business strategy to attract Muslim consumers. Fealy said that the marketing of a product that relates itself with the word Islam, Sharia or *halal* is called “Islamic commodification”.<sup>8</sup> Meanwhile, Salvatore and Eickelman name it with the term “public Islam”,<sup>9</sup> an expression or symbol of religiosity friendly to modern values and globalization. Although there is no single term in referring to this phenomenon, these various symbolic expressions can be said to be a form of ‘*halal* awareness’, or awareness of the importance of living in accordance with Islamic law, which will have an impact on self-obedience in finding Sharia-based services in various aspects, including in accessing various products with *halal* assurance.

Then how is the response, knowledge, and awareness of the young millennial Muslim generation regarding the halal label in various non-food and beverage products? How do they articulate their needs and interests

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<sup>5</sup> Yuswohady Dkk, *#GenerationMuslim* (Yogyakarta: PT Bentang Pustaka, 2017), 18.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with Okta Nurul Hidayati on March 2018

<sup>7</sup> Azyumardi Azra, “Kelas Menengah Muslim Indonesia; Sebuah Pengantar,” in *Politik Kelas Menengah Muslim Indonesia* (Jakarta: Pusaka LP3ES, 2017), 29.

<sup>8</sup> Greg Faily, “Consuming Islam: Commodified Religion and Aspirational Pietism in Contemporary Indonesia,” in *Expressing Islam; Religious Life and Politics in Indonesia*, ed. Greg Faily and Sally White (Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2008), 16-17.

<sup>9</sup> Armando Salvatore and Dale F. Eickelman, eds., *Public Islam and the Common Good* (Leiden: Brill Leiden the Neterlands, 2004).

toward the truth of the product? Here is the urgency of this study. From this the term “politics of *halal* label” appears, in which the behavior of non-state actors that is the younger generation of millennial Muslims, shows an interest and authority in taking an action.

If compared with previous related studies, as conducted by Muhammad,<sup>10</sup> it can be seen that the high level of producers’ understanding of halal labels, especially on food products, makes the *halal* aspect of a product offered is more secure to consumers. When viewed from a legal aspect, Muslim women see that the *halal* labeling does not always get a certificate from the Institute for Food, Drugs, and Cosmetics Studies-Indonesian Ulama Council (LPPOM-MUI). As a result, there is no maximum protection of *halal* products for Muslim consumers. This is partly due to the lengthy procedures and high costs that have to be paid by producers to obtain a *halal* certificate.<sup>11</sup> So it is necessary to review the aspects of the *halal* label of a food and beverage product from the perspective of consumer protection, as conducted by Kurniawan, Sutrisno, and Martini.<sup>12</sup>

While Hidayat and Siradj viewed from different aspects.<sup>13</sup> They studied the regulations of *halal* products and *halal* certification for the food product industry. According to them, *halal* certification is needed not only by business people to show products needed by consumers but also as a means of building consumers’ loyalty to a product. So that Islamic branding that is carried out, among others, through *halal* labeling can lead consumers to buy and be loyal to a product.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Muhammad, “Label Halal dan Spiritualitas Bisnis: Interpretasi atas Bisnis Home Industry,” *Jurnal Salam* 12, no. 2 (2009), 101-127.

<sup>11</sup> Siti Muslimah, “Label Halal pada Produk Pangan Kemasan dalam Perspektif Perlindungan Konsumen Muslim,” *Jurnal Yustisia* 1, no. 2 (2012), 86-97.

<sup>12</sup> Kurniawan, Budi Sutrisno, and Dwi Martini, “Tanggung Jawab Pelaku Usaha terhadap Pemberian Label Halal pada Produk Makanan dan Minuman,” *Jurnal Penelitian UNRAM* 18, no. 1 (2014), 80-96.

<sup>13</sup> Asep Syarifuddin Hidayat and Mustolih Siradj, “Sertifikasi Halal dan Sertifikasi Non Halal pada Produk Pangan Industri,” *Jurnal Abkam* 15, no. 2 (2015), 199-210.

<sup>14</sup> Muhammad Nasrullah, “Islamic Branding, Religiusitas, dan Keputusan Konsumen terhadap Produk,” *Jurnal Hukum Islam (JHI)* 13, no. 2 (2015), 79-87.



Guarantee of *halal* products, when viewed from the perspective of consumer protection law, shows that the existence of a law regulating the guarantee of *halal* products is a real action of the state to protect consumers both for Muslims and the public,<sup>15</sup> as an aspect of *halal* assurance from the state.<sup>16</sup> The issue of *halal* certification is a reflection of the relationship between religion and state where the halal certification effort was first initiated by the civil movement. It is then supported by the state through the LPPOM MUI. After the presence of a *halal* product guarantee agency, the management of *halal* certification was completely shifted to the state that is the *Halal* Product Guarantee Agency. Unlike in Thailand, the authority to issue *halal* certification is made by the Central Islamic Council of Thailand yet the state supports it by providing funds and scientific study institutions.<sup>17</sup>

In Indonesia, before the enactment of law that regulates the guarantee of *halal* products, the responsibility for *halal* certification is given to two institutions i.e. LPPOM MUI as the party that carries out the certification process, the MUI fatwa commission as the party issuing production rights, and BPOM as the party issuing the label “halal”. After the issuance of the *Halal* Product Guarantee Law, the responsibility for the certification process and the *halal* label is fully given to a new institution that is the *Halal* Product Assurance Organizing Agency (BPJPH) under the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Yusuf Shofie, “Jaminan atas Produk Halal dari Sudut Pandang Hukum Perlindungan Konsumen,” *Jurnal Syariah* (2015): 28–69.

<sup>16</sup> Mahdi Borzooei and Maryam Asgari, “Country of Origin Effect on Consumer Purchase Intention of Halal Brands,” *American Journal of Marketing Research* 1, no. 1 (2015), 1-10.

<sup>17</sup> Muh Zumar Aminuddin, “Sertifikasi Produk Halal: Studi Perbandingan Indonesia dan Thailand,” *Jurnal Shabib* 1, no. 1 (2016), 27-39.

<sup>18</sup> Mutimmatul Faidah, “Sertifikasi Halal di Indonesia; dari Civil Society menuju Relasi Kuasa antara Agama dan Negara,” *Jurnal Islamica: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 11, no. 2 (2017), 449-476.

If viewed from a political-economic perspective, there is pros and cons regarding the *halal* certification authority. MUI has objections if the authority is under the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia.<sup>19</sup> Even, from the perspective of media analysis, the issue of the *halal* label has also become a kind of political identity commodity. Like the results of the study conducted by Wright and Annes who investigated *halal* hamburgers in France, the issue of food with the *halal* label has become a barrier and the identity of French people.<sup>20</sup>

Qualitative and quantitative approaches are used in this study to get a clear picture regarding the response, knowledge, and awareness of the young generation of millennial Muslims to the importance of the *halal* label in non-food and beverage products, as well as how they articulate their needs and interests in the truth of a product, by taking a case study in the Solo Raya area. Solo Raya refers to the former Surakarta residency that includes Karanganyar, Klaten, Sragen, Sukoharjo, Wonogiri, and Surakarta Municipality districts. Meanwhile, informants and respondents in this study consisted of the young generation of millennial Muslims who live in the Solo Raya area.

Qualitatively, the data were obtained using observation and in-depth interviews with informants purposively and snowball to adolescents aged 15-24 years, and the young generation of millennial Muslims aged 16-36 years. Quantitatively, the questionnaire was distributed to 232 young Muslim millennial generations in the Solo Raya area by random sampling. To sharpen the analysis, data were also collected from various supporting sources related to the main issue of this study.

In the industrial world that involves Muslim consumers, the word *halal* is an important indicator to see consumer actions. The presence or absence

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<sup>19</sup> Lies Afroniyati, "Analisis Ekonomi Politik Sertifikasi Halal oleh Majelis Ulama Indonesia," *Jurnal Kebijakan dan Administrasi Publik (JKAP)* 18, no. 1 (2014), 37-52.

<sup>20</sup> Wynne Wright and Alexis Annes, "Halal on the Menu?: Contested Food Politics and French Identity in Fast Food," *Journal of Rural Studies* 32 (2013): 388-399.

of a *halal* label on the packaging of a product will be a consideration for consumers to buy a product or not. It is where the *halal* label becomes the initial contestation space for a consumer to make decisions on a product. The *halal* label is a broader arena of interest, ranging from industrial groups or producers, consumers, to the government. This phenomenon is called the politics of *halal* label.

For the Muslim community, the concept of *halal* is very important. *Halal* refers to something that is lawful, the antonym of the word *haram* (something that is prohibited). Although the status of *halal* is normatively more attached to food and beverage products, the younger generation of millennial Muslims has applied *halal* in all aspects of life as part of the image of an Islamic lifestyle. This phenomenon cannot be separated from the way the millennial Muslim generation defines *halal*, the source of knowledge about *halal*, and the meaning of the *halal* label on non-food and beverage products.

### **Definition and Sources of Knowledge**

*Halal*, referring to Law number 33 of 2014 concerning to the Guarantee of *Halal* Products, is defined as something consistent with Islamic law. But the fact is not the same with the understanding of the young generation of millennial Muslims. Not all of them understand the word *halal* as the normative definition in the Law, or as an explanation in accordance with the norms of *fiqh*. Some informants have an understanding of the word *halal* which is not always directly related to Islamic law. Some understand the word *halal* as a matter related to the negative or positive effects of consumption and production actions such as a strategy to protect the body from the bad effects of consuming certain products<sup>21</sup> or as a strategy to protect the body from substances considered

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<sup>21</sup> Janmohamed, *Generation M: Generasi Muda Muslim dan Cara Mereka Membentuk Dunia (Terj)*, 57-58.

dangerous such as pig or other prohibited animals or a condition in which the processes and methods of processing a product do not conflict with religious teachings.<sup>22</sup>

Some informants define *halal* as a product with beneficial power when consumed. *Halal* is understood as food or beverage that does not contain pork and/or other harmful substances for a Muslim.<sup>23</sup> This view emphasizes the existence of good aspects, not dangerous, and does not contain bad things (does not cause harm).<sup>24</sup> The others understand *halal* by emphasizing the basic aspects of Islamic law as the criteria. *Halal* is understood as an Islamic law based on good provisions, as explained in the Alquran. It is something that is not intoxicating, does not come from wild animals, and the method of slaughtering is according to Islamic rules.<sup>25</sup> This understanding is closer to the definition of *halal* which is reflected in the *halal* product assurance regulations that is something based on sharia, especially in the aspect of food. The food aspect is the focus of the attention of millennial Muslim youth regarding *halal* issues.<sup>26</sup>

The emergence of attention to the *halal* label on a product is caused by the belief that through this label a product has been scientifically proven so that it would not cause harm.<sup>27</sup> The *halal* label is important for someone to identify the *halal* of a product. Through this label, a consumer is sure that the product is lawful.<sup>28</sup> The *halal* label has directed consumers' perceptions that *halal* is a label included in a product.

The diversity of understandings of the millennial Muslim youths about *halal* is usually caused by their experiences, especially related to

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<sup>22</sup> Interview with Ayu Kristina, 20 years, July 20, 2018.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Siti Nur Maela, 21 years, March 7, 2018.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Annisa Widiastuti, 20 years, April 10, 2018.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Okta Nurul Hidayati, 20 years, March 10 2018.

<sup>26</sup> Interview with Wahyu Dwi Setiawan, 22 years, April 10, 2018.

<sup>27</sup> Interview with Nur Afni Sedyowati, 20 years, July 20, 2018.

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Ahmad Mujahid, 18 years, July 20, 2018.

the sources of information or knowledge obtained. For those who have pesantren educational backgrounds state that their main references in understanding *halal* and *haram* are obtained through the Alquran and *Kitab Kuning* (classical Islamic text).<sup>29</sup> Meanwhile, others stated that their references are from experiences while being active in religious organizations and formal education institutions, especially through the subject of Islamic education science.<sup>30</sup> Some admitted that their references are friends, teachers,<sup>31</sup> internet (google),<sup>32</sup> and internet-based media.<sup>33</sup>

The data above shows that the internet is an inevitable space as a source of knowledge for millennial Muslim youth. Even quantitatively, it can be seen that the internet has become an important part of their lives. The survey results show that the majority of respondents (70%) are daily active internet users, 21% are not daily active users, and the rest did not answer. However, the high intensity of respondents accessing the internet is not in line with their interests in checking or looking for sources of knowledge about the *halal* label. Only 30% of respondents from active users checked the *halal* label or looked for information about the *halal* of the product. The others access the internet for other purposes.<sup>34</sup>

## Halal, Technology and Social Media

The high intensity of internet use as a source of information and knowledge by millennial Muslim youths is inseparable from the development of information and communication technology in the modern-day. Technology has played an important role in the mindset

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Siti Nur Maela, 21 years, March 7, 2018.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Chandra Mahardika Putri Dewanti, 18 years, July 20, 2018.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Ahmed Mujahid, 18 years, July 20, 2018.

<sup>32</sup> Interview with Annisa Widiastuti, 20 years, April 10, 2018.

<sup>33</sup> Interview with Sri Wahyuni, 18 years, March 7, 2018.

<sup>34</sup> M. Zainal Anwar, "Respons Generasi Milenial Muslim Terhadap Label Halal Produk Non Makanan dan Minuman: Pengalaman dari Solo raya." Report of Research in 2018 funded by LP2M IAIN Surakarta.

and lifestyle of mankind in the aspect of social, political, economic, and religious life.<sup>35</sup> The lifestyle of Millennial Muslim youths as the generation who are familiar with technological developments have been influenced and even determined by technological developments. Social media has become a part of their daily lives, especially related to the need for self-existence.<sup>36</sup>

Indeed, the internet and social media have become an important part of the lives of millennial Muslim youths. Although they do not always use it to seek information (knowledge) related to the halal of product. Except, if there is a product that goes viral, or indicated as haram, for example.<sup>37</sup> Also, they use the internet as a space to confirm (*cross-check*) the correctness of information received from teachers or friends. The internet is positioned as control of the source of knowledge, apart from human resources, especially regarding the truth of a product.<sup>38</sup> The internet is a place to simply find additional information regarding the truth of a product to be purchased. The internet is a determining factor in their decisions in evaluating a product,<sup>39</sup> especially concerning the *halal* or *haram* status of a product.<sup>40</sup> Google is considered the right media, practical, and even trustier than friends and teachers in providing information about the *halal* status of a product. Besides, the use of Google is caused by the absence of a special application to find information on the halal status of a product.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Anthony Giddens, *Runaway World: How Globalization is Reshaping Our Lives*, 1st ed. (New York: Routledge, 2000).

<sup>36</sup> Carolina Junifer, "Brightspot Market sebagai Representasi Identitas 'Cool' Kaum Muda di Jakarta," *MASYARAKAT: Jurnal Sosiologi* 21, no. 80 (2016): 109–131.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with Siti Nur Maela, 21 years, March 7, 2018.

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Sri Wahyuni, 18 years, March 7, 2018.

<sup>39</sup> Interview with Annisa Widiastuti, 20 years, April 10, 2018.

<sup>40</sup> Interview with Wahyu Dwi Setiawan, 22 years, April 10, 2018.

<sup>41</sup> Interview with Okta Nurul Hidayati, 20 years, March 10, 2018.

The presence of regulations on the lawfulness of products and the increasing number of *halal* labels, especially on non-food and beverage products, basically does not necessarily indicate a similar understanding of the definition of *halal* among millennial Muslim youths. The ‘kyai google’<sup>42</sup> phenomenon is still a trend among millennial Muslim youths today. Google and social media still play a major role in encouraging millennial Muslim youths to seek information or knowledge about the *halal* status of a product. Google has become a kind of “new authority”, as well as a practical tool in finding information/knowledge about the *halal* status of a product. Although the position of teachers, companions, and *Ustad* is still considered important, the knowledge they receive directly from these people will be compared with that on the internet.

However, not all millennial Muslim youths would care about all types of products. For certain types of products, especially for body care such as cosmetics that mostly become the main concern of the women, they just consider the *halal* label attached to the product and the potential harmful effects.<sup>43</sup> For other products such as pans and books, as they do not cause negative effects on the body, usually the *halal* label would not be considered.<sup>44</sup> Besides, to know the lawfulness of goods is considered complicated, the *halal* label issued by BPOM is considered sufficient for consumers to buy a product.

### **Labeling and Consumption of *Halal* Products**

The *halal* label on non-food and beverage products has become one of the factors that motivate buyers especially young Muslim millennials to buy a product. *Halal* labels can make buyers more confident about the

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<sup>42</sup> Nadirshah Hosen, “Online Fatwa in Indonesia: From Fatwa Shopping to Googling a Kiai,” in *Expressing Islam: Religious Life and Politics in Indonesia*, ed. Greg Fealy and Sally White (Singapore: ISEAS dan Yusof Ishak Institute, 2008), 159–173.

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Chandra Mahardika Putri Dewanti, 18 years, July 20, 2018.

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Nur Afni Sedyowati, 20 years, July 20, 2018.

safety of a product.<sup>45</sup> In addition, the *halal* label given by MUI would create trust among consumers. This is the function of MUI as a guarantor for the lawfulness of a product. MUI is considered as the party with the authority to provide legitimacy and become the sole authority in determining the lawfulness of a product through the *halal* label.

From the regulation aspect, this role will shift to a new institution (BPJPH), as a result of the enactment of Law number 33 of 2014 concerning *Halal* Product Guarantee. This shift has the potential to politicize the *halal* label on non-food and beverage products.<sup>46</sup> Thus, the *halal* labeling on non-food and beverage products is not fully needed. It is different from the need for *halal* labels on food and beverage products which is very urgent. Although around 45 percent of respondents stated that using non-food and beverage products with a *halal* label is also believed to be a symbol of piety or adherence to religion, especially for the products that are directly related to the body care, such as cosmetics. But, the majority of respondents (55 percent) said it was not relevant to represent someone's piety.<sup>47</sup>

The existence of *halal* labels on non-food and beverage products has been responded variously by the young generation of millennial Muslims. Those who consider the *halal* label important are caused by the safety and convenience factors of consumers (related to side effects), especially in products that are directly related to the body, such as cosmetics. Even though the price is still a consideration for consumers.<sup>48</sup> So, apart from the *halal* label and price, the convenience or compatibility of the product with physical needs is the dominant factor that influences consumers' decisions to buy goods. Health and safety aspects of the body are the

<sup>45</sup> Interview with Sri Wahyuni, 18 years, March 7, 2018.

<sup>46</sup> Interview with Siti Nur Maela, 21 years, March 7, 2018.

<sup>47</sup> M. Zainal Anwar, "Respons Generasi Milenial Muslim Terhadap Label Halal Produk Non Makanan dan Minuman: Pengalaman dari Solo raya." Report of Research in 2018 funded by LP2M IAIN Surakarta.

<sup>48</sup> Interview with Okta Nurul Hidayati, 20 years, March 10, 2018.



basic considerations of consumers. Even if they are faced with price choices,<sup>49</sup> they would still choose products that are more affordable and then considering the safety factor.<sup>50</sup> Only certain people who do not make price the main consideration. As long as the product has a *halal* label, they will still buy it.<sup>51</sup>

### **The Politics of *Halal* Label**

The *halal* certification on non-food and beverage products has become a new phenomenon among the Muslim community in Indonesia. This phenomenon, according to BPJPH, is considered a form of *halal* awakening. The *halal* label is applied not only for food and beverage products but also for non-food and beverage products.<sup>52</sup> The emergence of this phenomenon is caused by the enactment of Law number 33 of 2014 concerning *Halal* Product Guarantee. From this regulation, the obligation to attach a *halal* label to all products that enter and circulate in Indonesia becomes necessary. Including non-*halal* products are encouraged to include non-*halal* labels to clarify the product status. In other words, the *halal* label has become an Islamic branding strategy, a method to target Muslim consumers, and to strengthen the Islamic market at the global level.<sup>53</sup>

The emergence of law on halal product assurance is also a sign of the emergence of a new era of religious and state relations. The state is present not only for organizing Hajj, Umrah, marriage, and zakat but also in certifying *halal* products. Through BPJPH, the state has a role in terms of *halal* certification for all types of products circulating on the

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<sup>49</sup> Interview with Siti Nur Maela, 21 years, March 7, 2018.

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Sri Wahyuni, 18 years, March 7, 2018.

<sup>51</sup> Interview with Annisa Widiastuti, 20 years, April 10, 2018

<sup>52</sup> Leaflet Badan Penyelenggara Jaminan Produk Halal Kementerian Republik Indonesia

<sup>53</sup> Baker Ahmad Alserhan, "Editorial: On Islamic Branding: Brand as Good Deeds," *Journal of Islamic Marketing* 1, no. 2 (2010), 101-106.

market. This is where the state has come into the basic life of the Muslim community. The phenomenon of expanding the *halal* label, Fischer referred to as *halalization*,<sup>54</sup> is when the *halal* label expands on all products consumed by the Muslim community in Indonesia. This phenomenon is a form of a revival of the new piety movement, in which producers begin to apply and give *halal* labels to the products they produce.

Except as a form of response from producers to the emergence of new regulations, this *halal* labeling is also considered to be able to provide added value to the products produced. From an economic viewpoint, this is an effort made by the producers to attract the attention of consumers to buy or consume the products offered and ignore other similar products that have no added value. While from the viewpoint of the state, it shows the state's involvement in carrying out religious command and at the same time generates economic benefit.

The *halal* label has indeed become one of the factors that influence consumers in determining the decision to choose and buy products although it is not the only factor. There are other factors such as compatibility and comfort in using the products needed, health, and safety assurance for the body, and price.

Making the price as the main consideration for purchasing products shows the ambiguity of the choice of millennial Muslim youths, especially regarding the *halal* label. On the one hand, they wish to use all products labeled as *halal* as a practice of piety, but at the same time they are faced with the reality that not all non-food and beverage products labeled *halal* are low cost. So, even though the product is labeled *halal*, if the price is considered expensive, they are reluctant to buy and choose other products that are considered more affordable. This can be seen in the trend of buying cosmetic products. If they have enough money, they would still buy the products that are labeled *halal* even though they are expensive. On the other hand, if they do not have enough money, they will choose a product that meets their financial ability, even without a *halal* label.

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<sup>54</sup> Fischer, *Proper Islamic Consumption; Shopping Among the Malays in Modern Malaysia*.

This fact shows that the characteristics of millennial Muslim youths with limited income or with unstable financial capability, the *halal* label will be the main consideration as long as it is suitable for their financial condition. However, they also have other considerations if not having sufficient money. It shows that the level of the piety of millennial Muslim youths is still fluctuating, especially in consuming non-food and beverage products. One hand, it shows that the regulations on *halal* product assurance with the target that a product has added value through the installation of a *halal* label can be achieved. But at the same time, it also makes the product price more expensive and unfriendly to the (financial) condition of the youths.

The emergence of the phenomenon of the *halal* label in non-food and beverage products has indeed become a new identity in the industrial sector. There is an extension of the piety that producers promote to Muslim consumers. The *halal* label has become an identity that leads to an expression of piety. Although the *halal* label is understood in various ways, for certain non-food and beverage products, especially related to body care products such as cosmetics, there seems to be a kind of “consensus”, especially among women, regarding the importance of including a *halal* label.

This phenomenon, both directly and indirectly, shows that the young generation of millennial Muslims wants to show their identity through the power to consume non-food and beverage products labeled *halal*. It has become a new model of post-Islamism, in which the younger generation of Muslims wants to express their Islamism without violence. Consuming products labeled *halal* has become part of their way of expressing piety although there were also informants who stated that this phenomenon was another kind of politicization of religion for economic interests.

From the perspective of Islamic market theory,<sup>55</sup> the phenomenon of the *halal* label in non-food and beverage products is a form of an affair

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<sup>55</sup> Daromir Rudnycky, “Market Islam in Indonesia,” *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 15 (2009).

between capitalism and contemporary religious practices. The *halal* label is a factor that differentiates a product from the others. The *halal* label is believed to be an appeal for millennial Muslim youths, as well as to show off their Islamic identity. This era of *halal* awakening is marked with the strong desire of the Muslim community to consume *halal* products including non-food and beverage products and the growth of the Sharia-based accommodation industry.<sup>56</sup> The industrial sector has found a way to strengthen the branding of its products by adding a *halal* label, especially in the Muslim community markets and the young Muslim millennial generation.

## Conclusion

Halal in the perception of millennial Muslim youths is not singular. The diversity of backgrounds, experiences, and sources of information made the difference in their perceptions of the word *halal*. Despite the diverse information used as references, they tend to always compare one source from another. Google or the internet has become an alternative source often used for comparison of their information or knowledge. Shortly speaking, the young generation of millennial Muslims really need and want to access non-food and beverage products with a *halal* label. This is because the *halal* label is considered as part of their expression of piety and identity. Although on a certain level, their piety is inconsistent as to be affected by their volatile financial condition. When they have enough money, they will buy products labeled *halal*, but if their financial conditions are not adequate, they will buy the necessary products even without the *halal* label.

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<sup>56</sup> M. Zainal Anwar, “Ekspresi Keberagaman Muslim dalam Ekonomi: Potret Industri Akomodasi Syariah di Surakarta” (Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengabdian pada Masyarakat IAIN Surakarta, 2017).

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