

SAFE AND HALAL COSMETIC: COMMUNICATING RISKS THROUGH INGREDIENT LABELS OF SKIN WHITENING PRODUCT

Fatin Nur Majdina Nordin

Applied Science with Islamic Studies, Academy of Islamic Studies, Universiti Malaya, 50603 Kuala Lumpur.

Emel: fatinmajdina@um.edu.my

Abstract

The increasing demand for skin whitening products has raised concerns regarding both safety and ethical considerations, particularly in relation to halal compliance. Public health concerns focus on cosmetic safety and the accessibility of risk information. Past studies have revealed that misconceptions, misinformation, and misunderstandings about cosmetic safety and ingredient risks often stem from a lack of clear information and an inadequate understanding of the severity of risks communicated to consumers. The complex composition of cosmetic ingredients, along with the scientific names listed on labels, can be difficult for users to interpret, further contributing to confusion. This paper examines the role of ingredient labeling as a critical tool for effectively communicating these risks, including halal-certified skin whitening products. Halal cosmetics must adhere to religious guidelines and meet safety standards to prevent adverse health effects. A random sampling technique was used to select 104 whitening products from the market, with document analysis employed to examine product labels and laboratory analysis conducted for the presence of mercury. The data were presented using simple descriptive and inferential statistics, organized according to identified themes and categories. The findings revealed the uncertain status of many whitening cosmetics in the market due to the presence of non-compliant and non-registered products, as well as inaccurate labeling information. Registration status was identified as crucial for cosmetic safety, as product registration is bound by regulations. Additionally, labeling claims such as Halal logos (4.8%), GMP certification (2.9%), and MOH approval (1.9%) were found on 20% of whitening products, despite their non-registration status. This study also documented status of whitening agents used in the 104 products. The study concludes that labeling alone is insufficient for effectively communicating cosmetic safety and risks. Additional tools are necessary to evaluate and understand the ingredients listed on product labels. This paper offers insights into how clear and transparent ingredient labeling can bridge the gap between consumer knowledge, safety assurance, and halal compliance, providing regulatory recommendations for manufacturers and consumers.

Keywords: ingredients, harmful substances, regulatory, compliance