

Religiosity and Purchase Intention toward Korean Cosmetics in Indonesia and Malaysia: The Mediating Effect of Korean Wave and Moderating Effect of Age

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Introduction: Korean Wave (K-wave), a surge in the global visibility of Korean popular culture (Ing & Osman, 2018), has become a force to increase foreign consumers' demand for Korean products such as cosmetics and fashion. Interestingly, K-wave has generated a huge fandom among young consumers in moderate Muslim countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia despite the cultural idiosyncrasy between their beliefs and Korean popular culture (Ebrahimi & Yusoff, 2020). Although several researchers have examined the relationship between Islamic faith and K-wave participation (e.g., Mulya, 2021), they mostly conducted qualitative studies with a limited number of interviewees, mainly young females. Further, although religiosity has two dimensions – intra religiosity (an individual's beliefs or personal religious experience) and inter religiosity (the activity level of organized religious practices) (Worthington et al., 2003), few studies have examined their differential impacts on K-wave participation and purchasing behavior across different age groups. This study attempts to fill these voids by exploring the relationships among inter/intra religiosity, K-wave participation, age, and purchase intention toward K-cosmetics for Muslim female consumers in Indonesia and Malaysia.

Literature Review and Hypotheses: Islam criticizes popular culture as it entices Muslims to worldly pleasure and diverts them from religious devotion and obligations (Otterbeck & Ackfeldt, 2012). However, socio-religious studies on Islam and popular culture have found co-existence and even blending of Islam faith and popular culture (Mulya, 2021).

Consumers with intra religiosity internalize religious doctrines and teachings (Swimberghe et al., 2011). Thus, the higher the intra religiosity of Muslim consumers, the higher the tension between their faith and K-wave participation. However, Muslim K-wave fans who perceive a tension between their faith and K-wave still participate in K-wave using several remedies such as private enjoyment, taking only good things from K-wave, or admiring Muslim K-pop stars (Mulya, 2021). Thus, intra religiosity may not influence K-wave participation. However, this tendency may be weakened as age increases because old consumers are more likely to hold traditional religious values than their young counterparts (Murat, 2017). Thus, *H1a: Intra religiosity will not affect K-*

wave participation. H1b: Age will moderate the relationships between intra religiosity and K-wave participation.

Consumers with inter religiosity involve religious groups and participate in organized religious activities (Swimberghe et al., 2011). These activities would offer socialization with peers in which sharing of everyday lives takes place and become one of the important information sources for K-wave content. Accordingly, the higher the inter religiosity, the higher the chance of K-wave participation. However, such religious activities may have a limited impact on young consumers' K-wave participation compared to old consumers because young consumers have a high level of K-wave interests (Ramadhani & Linadi, 2012). Thus, *H2a: Inter religiosity will have a positive effect on K-wave participation. H2b: Age will moderate the relationships between inter religiosity and K-wave participation.*

K-wave positively influences Muslim consumers' purchase intention toward K-cosmetics (Park, 2015). However, such influence will be higher for young consumers than old ones because young consumers have a higher level of K-wave interests than old ones (Mulya, 2021). Thus, *H3a: K-wave participation will have a positive effect on purchase intention toward K-cosmetics. H3b: Age will moderate the relationships between K-wave participation and purchase intention toward K-cosmetics. H4: K-wave participation will mediate the relationship between inter religiosity and purchase intention toward K-cosmetics.*

Research Methods: Data were collected from 228 Indonesian and 213 Malaysian Muslim female consumers in their 20s to over 50s using a structured questionnaire via a professional online survey firm that ensured diverse demographic representation. The constructs of this study were measured with multi-item scales adapted from previous studies. The questionnaire consisted of inter/intra religiosity, K-wave participation, age, K-cosmetics purchase intention, and two control variables including income and Korea visit history. The model fit and construct validity of the measurement items were confirmed through confirmatory factor analysis.

Results: The hypothesized relationships were tested for each sample using Process macro (model 58) in SPSS except for H4 (model 4). Intra religiosity did not affect K-wave participation for both consumers (I: $\beta=.08$, $t=.55$; M: $\beta=.24$, $t=1.48$), supporting H1a. Age had no moderating effect on the relationship between intra religiosity and K-wave participation for both consumers (I: $\beta=.03$, $t=.41$; M: $\beta=.07$, $t=.92$), rejecting H1b. As shown in Figure 1, inter religiosity positively affected K-wave participation for Malaysians ($\beta=.36^*$, $t=2.54$), but not for Indonesians ($\beta=-.06$, $t=-.47$), supporting H2a only for Malaysians. As shown in Figure 2, age significantly moderated the relationship between inter religiosity and K-wave participation for Indonesians ($\beta=.10^*$, $t=1.96$), but not for Malaysians ($\beta=-.01$, $t=-.22$), supporting H2b only for Indonesians. K-wave participation positively affected purchase intention for both consumers (I: $\beta=.65^{***}$, $t=4.88$; M: $\beta=.40^{**}$, $t=3.28$), supporting H3a. However, age did not moderate the relationship between K-wave participation and purchase intention for both consumers (I: $\beta=-.09$, $t=-1.57$; M: $\beta=.10$, $t=1.80$), rejecting H3b. The results of Process macro model 4 showed that K-wave participation fully mediated the relationship between inter religiosity and purchase intention for Malaysians ($\beta=.19$, $[-.09 - .30]$), but partially mediated for Indonesians ($\beta=.06$, $[-.00 - .13]$), supporting H4.

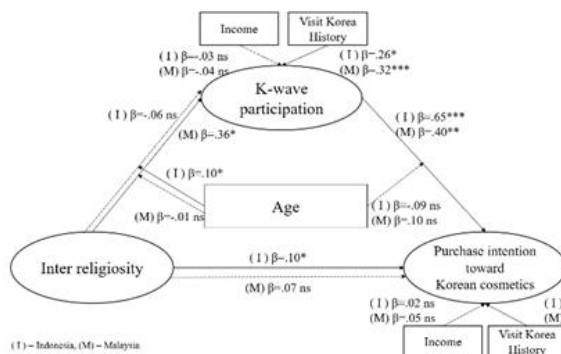


Figure 1 Process macro results (Model 58)

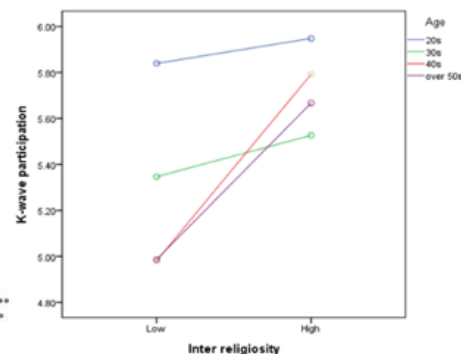


Figure 2 Age interaction effect for Indonesian consumers

Discussion & Implication: Overall, intra religiosity did not influence K-wave participation and purchase intention of both Indonesians and Malaysians, whereas inter religiosity did. For Indonesians, inter religiosity positively influenced K-wave participation only for old consumers and directly influenced purchase intention. For Malaysians, inter religiosity positively affected K-wave participation irrespective of age, but indirectly influenced purchase intention via K-wave participation. Thus, these results indicate that 1) religious gatherings are more important information sources of K-wave for old Indonesians than for young ones; while they are equally crucial for Malaysians regardless of age, and 2) religious gatherings are significant K-cosmetics-information sources for Indonesians, but this is the case only when the gatherings involve K-wave for Malaysians. Theoretical contributions include discovering the distinctive roles of intra and inter religiosity in Muslim consumers' participation in foreign popular culture like K-wave and their purchase intention and uncovering the limited influence of age on the phenomena despite the existence of huge fandom among young consumers. Global marketers consider Muslim consumers' inter religiosity in developing marketing strategies and not every Muslim countries are the same. Further, K-wave is a powerful marketing tool for the cosmetic industry to attract Muslim consumers regardless of age.

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