

Malaysia Halal Food Product Packaging Strategy in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region

Mohd Azidan Abdul Jabar, Nor Asyikin Hasan Adali, Muhd
Zulkifli Ismail, Wan Muhammad Wan Sulong, Abd Rauf Hassan

Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang,
Selangor, Malaysia

Email: azid@upm.edu.my, asyikin_hasanadali@yahoo.com, zulismail@upm.edu.my,
w_mhd@upm.edu.my, raufh@upm.edu.my

To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v14-i2/20611>

DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v14-i2/20611

Published Date: 12 February 2024

Abstract

Packaging is a major marketing element as it can influence the purchasing decision of the consumer at the point of sale, especially for food products. Therefore, this research aims to explore as well as to discuss the packaging strategy implemented by the halal food industry in Malaysia in marketing food products in the MENA region. This research is a qualitative research which was done by conducting semi structured interviews of 20 halal food product industries in Malaysia that export food products to the MENA region. The technique used to analyse the findings of the qualitative interviews is the thematic content analysis approach. The findings of the research were that the industry gives attention to the language and cultural aspects for the packaging of food products marketed in the MENA region. Several Arabic language usage strategies specifically for labelling, branding and product slogan were applied by the industry. The findings of this research are significant for new industries which have plans to market products to the MENA region.

Keywords: Packaging, Strategy, Arabic Language, Halal Food Industry, Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region, Halal Food Product

Introduction

Packaging is one of the most important operations in the food industry. Almost all food products sold and consumed have one or several forms of packaging. Packaging represents the voice of a product Bukhari et al (2021) or considered to be the hidden salesperson for the industry (Rundh, 2005). In simple terms, packaging is the covering for a product or an item in the form of a pouch, bag, box, cup, tray, tin, bottle, or some other form of container which fulfils one or more of the following functions: storage, protection, maintenance, communication, convenience, utility and performance (Glossary of Packaging Terms, 1988;

Robertson, 2013). The majority of consumers rely upon packaging in the decision-making process (Pålsson & Sandberg, 2021).

The halal food industry is considered to be the most important sector as human beings are unable to survive without food (Hanni, & Aghwan, 2022). The halal food industry is the industry which manufactures food and beverage which comply with Islamic law from the aspects of materials, manufacturing process, packaging as well as marketing (Noor & Wahid, 2015). The halal food industry dominates 60 percent of the entire value of the global food industry (Yaakub, 2020). It is the same scenario at the domestic level; the halal food industry is gaining momentum year after year, and this widens the potential for more companies to increase the manufacturing of their products in the market. Until 2019, a total of 12,843 companies succeeded in obtaining the halal certificate in Malaysia (Kamaruddin & Wahid, 2020). Looking at the sustainability of this halal industry, Malaysia has increased its export activity to the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region. This is due to the MENA region being one of the most widely expanding food and beverage marketing platforms in the world representing 55% of the global market (MATRADE, 2021; Nawi et al., 2023) as well as having high purchasing power.

Food products which are targeted for export to the MENA region are categorised as fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) or popularly known as consumer packaged goods (CPG) (Selvakumar, 2013; Malhotra, 2014). FMCG products are goods which are frequently purchased, have low consumer engagement, low risk and a relatively low cost of purchase (East, 1997; Kotler, 2000; Mann & Kaur, 2013). Hence, the packaging aspect plays a role as the main marketing function due to the nature of the commodity which is extremely competitive (Rambabu & Porika, 2020). The selection of appropriate and accurate language for a product label or packaging is greatly emphasised to ensure that the effectiveness of the message to the consumer is achieved especially at the point of sale (Run & Chin, 2006). In fact, the language on the packaging is one of the most effective ways to leave a lasting mark on the consumer. The study by Ho et al (2019) proves that the language on packaging labels has a significant impact on attention, trust, evaluation of quality, taste perception, and purchase intention.

When it comes to the international trade, the role of language on packaging becomes increasingly crucial. The use of local language along with other symbols on packaging is effective in influencing consumer behavior (Khan et al., 2017). In line with this, Marcella and Davies (2004) found that the use of customer language is a fundamental aspect of reaching customers. However, the aspect of language as a packaging strategy has had very limited discussion in previous research. Mostly, the packaging strategies discussed focused on the aspects of colour Mai et al (2016); Huang & Lu (2015); Spence & Velasco (2018); Ezan et al (2019); Veflen et al (2023), shape (Bettels et al., 2020; Ganai et al., 2019; Saad et al., 2020), size (Liang et al., 2022), and type of writing (Waheed et al., 2018; Celhay et al., 2015; Deliya & Parmar, 2012; Asri et al., 2020).

Therefore, this research was carried out to explore as well as discuss the packaging strategy applied by the industry in Malaysia to the halal food products exported to the MENA region. This research focuses on the aspect of language usage for packaging as this aspect is rarely highlighted in literature. This research also discusses the cultural aspects applied to the packaging. This is because language is intricately connected to the cultural element. The findings of this study are expected to serve as a guide for the Malaysian and international halal food industries, particularly those targeting to market their products in the MENA area.

Literature Review

Packaging Element

There are various elements in the packaging of a food product. These packaging elements can be described according to context and function. Generally, the packaging element has the role of relaying minute signals regarding the attributes of the product and to assist the consumer in collecting information as well as to quickly decide at the point of sale (Richardson et al., 1994; Marckhgott & Kamleitner, 2019).

Based on Saad et al (2020), the packaging element of food products manufactured in Malaysia is divided into five main categories which are material, visual, product information, label and shape. The element of packaging material usually consists of plastic, glass bottle, aluminium tin, paper box, and transparent plastic. The visual element comprises photography, vector, painting and icon. The product information element contains logo, product name and brand name. The element of packaging shape available in the market is in the shape of square, cylinder, circle and triangle. Lastly, the labelling element that has either printed label, sticker label, no visual, and printed.

In addition, referring to Konstantoglou et al (2021), packaging can be divided into four main categories which are the information element, operational element, physical element and visual element. The information element on the product packaging functions to provide information about the company and country of origin of the product manufacturer, about the product (materials), nutritional information, production or remanufacturing techniques, quality standard marks, information showing compliance with the environment, supporting data for the traceability of product, lot number, coding scheme as identification for the product, such as bar code, QR code, and others, marks for flammable or hazardous material, recommendations on how to use, information regarding food storage handling, as well as information relating to the brand elements such as logo, slogan, symbol and others.

Next, the operational element on the product packaging functions to provide physical operational management support such as protecting the product from theft, humidity, and light radiation, making it easier for the product to be placed on shelves, facilitating the transportation and product handling process, and so on. The physical element refers to the physical characteristics of the packaging such as size, volume, shape, and material. Lastly, the visual element refers to colour, photography, image, and graphics on the product packaging. In the context of this research, the information element on the product packaging is the focus of the research.

The Role of Language and Linguistics in Packaging

Language is the most important cultural element for the marketer of international products; however it is often one of the major obstacles and must be handled carefully and efficiently (Hall & Hall, 1987; Run & Chin, 2006). For any packaging, the language aspect generally plays an important role overall. This is because the language on the packaging is one of the most effective ways to leave a lasting mark on the consumer (Schlossberg, 1990; Ho et al., 2019). Studies by Azman (2014); Ho et al (2019); Abdul Sukur (2022); Kohli et al (2007); Kohli et al (2013); Suci et al (2022) found that there are three parts in packaging that become the focus of research when it involves the language function which are brand, slogan and food labelling. The rationale being that those parts are able to determine the behaviour and buying decision among the consumers.

Language is an extrinsic element of product packaging. Extrinsic signals such as language is useful as a medium of evaluation for the consumer regarding the product, brand awareness

and familiarity with the brand (Ho et al., 2019). The brand can be used to associate the origin or a specific culture for a certain product in the mind of the consumer (Celhay et al., 2015). The brand is the consumer perception and interpretation of a group of attributes, benefits and related value. Knowledge of the brand is also related to knowledge and cultural awareness. According to Kovács et al (2022), the brand name and its meaning is retained in the mind as a unit of lexical, phonology and graphic information. However, the way the meaning of the brand appears is different from the orientation of meaning of the word which comes to mind. This is because a brand consists of a 'meaning cluster'.

A slogan is the core component for a brand (Barczewski et al., 2020). A slogan can shape the identity of the brand, create an image and brand perception in the mind of potential consumers about the product or brand. In addition, a slogan is also the differentiating factor for a product among the hundreds of competitors in the market (Dass et al., 2014; Utomo & Suprajitno, 2018). An effective slogan will be able to evoke the emotions of the consumer (Suci et al., 2022). Hence companies are caught in a race to create a slogan which is memorable, liked and meaningful (Cui et al., 2014), a slogan which is short and catchy (Dass et al., 2014), and a slogan that contains elements of a specific culture, language or race (Suci et al., 2022).

The food label is one of the main communication channels between the food industry and the consumer (Sørensen et al., 2012). The food label is under pressure as it has to fulfil legal responsibilities which have increasingly higher standards. Although there is a general assumption that the consumer is able to read and interpret the information printed on the label, this cannot be taken lightly (Rothman et al., 2006). The consumer with low literacy and numeracy skills is more inclined to stop understanding the food label and as such, runs the risk of being misled. Therefore, to minimise this risk, food labels must use the mother tongue of that market.

Translating the food label on the food product packaging for the purposes of marketing cannot be taken lightly at all. This is because it can not only affect the presentation of a food product, but it is also in fact the main source of information for the consumer (Azman, 2014). Selecting the appropriate language for the label or product packaging is important to convey an effective message to the consumer. Companies which translate the information into the local language are often found to be viewed as being more serious in conducting business in the relevant country (Hollensen, 1998; Run & Chin, 2006). Research has found that consumers react positively and better towards product packaging which is printed in their own ethnic language.

In the context of halal food product, the use of appropriate language has an important role in conveying the idea 'halal' as determined in the Quran to gain consumer trust. The idea 'halal' shows a phrase that contains elements of purity, excitement, safety, sophistication, and truth. Accordingly, the function of language on the halal food product packaging is to bring a message that contains those elements either through words, phrase, sentence or even visually (Ariffin & Fadzlullah, 2019).

To conclude, the language and linguistic aspect is an important part of the packaging of halal food products. The role of language becomes more significant and cannot be viewed lightly when involving global markets. In the context of the research that refers to the market in the MENA region, early predictions are that the industry emphasises the use of Arabic language on the packaging to make it easier for the consumer to access and absorb the information relating to the product.

Research Methodology

This research is a qualitative research that focuses on the experience of representatives of the food industry, mainly those involved in matters relating to export to the MENA region. Semi structured interviews were conducted on 20 representatives of the halal food product manufacturer industry from all over Malaysia that export products to the MENA region. Interviews were conducted for 10 – 20 minutes for each session. The interviews were done face to face so that the participants of the research would be able to state their views and experience effectively, and at the same time provide detailed information to the interviewer (Mangan et al., 2004). The purposive sampling method was used in this research. As for sample size, qualitative research emphasises the depth and richness of the information measured, not the number of research participants (Guetterman, 2015). Hence, the selection criteria for the research participants became a priority. In the context of this research, the main criterion in selecting a research participant is that the individual must be directly or indirectly involved in the matters of marketing food products to the MENA region. The interview protocol was self-developed by the researcher based on related literature. The collation of research data was performed for 5 months, beginning in March 2022 and ending in July 2022. The research areas involved covered Selangor, Kuala Lumpur, Melaka, Kedah and Johor. The main reason for selecting these research areas is that most of the large scale food industries that export to the MENA region are located in those areas. All the interviews conducted were with permission, reviewed and recorded in audio and then transcribed.

Data Analysis

Data analysis and interpretation is the most critical part in qualitative research. The researcher adopted the recommendation by Creswell (2003) to implement the data analysis process as a whole. First, data was compiled by preparing for transcription by listening to every recording of the interviews conducted with the research participants. In the second step, the researcher read the transcription of every interview and listened again to the recording to ensure that the data was properly recorded during the transcription process. In the third step, data coding commenced using specific techniques. In this research, the researcher applied the Thematic Content Analysis (TCA) technique. The Thematic Content Analysis (TCA) is a research technique to understand the content of data in text form by categorising it systematically through coding and identifying the pattern or theme (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). It is used to extract the theme that appears from the interview data. Data structuring is done in stages based on the concept of first order (interview data), second order (theme formation) and aggregate dimension/theme. For qualitative research, this step is the most essential part in analysing data (Lewis, 2015). The following Schedule 1 shows one of the examples of the process of structuring data in this research by extracting the category and theme through excerpts of the interviews with the research participants.

Schedule 1 Data structuring process using TCA

Raw Data	Theme Formation	Theme
"...we do export to Saudi Arabia, they definitely want to use Arabic as their labelling definitely requires that language." (Industry 12) ["Only on the labelling, what they want included in their language, they will let you know." (Industry 3)]	Arabic Language on the label	Labelling
"Product name we use our name." (Industry 3) "Brand is the same for export. The writing of the brand uses local language." (Industry 18)	Retains product name/brand	Brand
"It is compulsory. We have standards, everything that is sent to MENA it is always English Arabic." (Industry 16)	Uses English and Arabic languages	Dual Language

Based on the data structuring procedure in Schedule 1, the researcher performed an analysis by extracting the important themes relating to the strategy for food product packaging for the market in the MENA region from the perspective of the industry, specifically from the angle of language usage and application of cultural elements.

Demography of Research Participants and Companies

A total of 20 company representatives were interviewed which included 15 men and 5 women to obtain feedback from the industry perspective regarding the halal food product packaging strategy used for the market in the MENA region. The participants of this research comprised 3 Managing Directors, 9 Sales Managers, 3 Export Sales Managers, a Halal Manager, an Operations Assistant Manager, a Shipping Officer, a Marketing Executive, and an assistant manager. In terms of location, 9 companies were in Selangor, 2 in Kuala Lumpur, 1 in Melaka, 4 in Kedah, and 4 in Johor. Detailed information regarding the companies can be referred to in the following Schedule 2.

Schedule 2 Company profile

Industry	Product category	Country of export	Export quantity	Estimated sales (per month)	Use of Arabic language (Packaging)
1	Coffee	Saudi Arabia	5 %	RM400,000	/
2	Beverages based on coffee, tea and cocoa	Kuwait, Dubai, UAE, Saudi Arabia	5 %	RM400,000	/
3	Fruit juice & cordial	Qatar	5 %	confidential	/
4	Fresh meat	UAE	40 %	confidential	/
5	Spices, food preparation	Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar,	20 %	Not sure	X
6	Chocolate	Dubai	<1 %	RM450,000	/
7	Chocolate	Saudi Arabia	15 %	confidential	/

8	Cooking oil, butter, vegetable/animal fat	Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, UAE, Yemen	60 %	RM 100 million	/
9	Granola	UAE	Not sure	<i>confidential</i>	/
10	Food preparation	Saudi Arabia	10 %	RM500,000	/
11	Carbonated drinks, milk, tea, juice, dairy products	Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman, Egypt, Libya	60 %	Not sure	/
12	Coffee	UAE	1 container	RM200,000	/
13	Snacks, sweets	Saudi Arabia	<5 %	<i>confidential</i>	/
14	Snacks, instant noodles	Africa, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Qatar, Jordan, Iraq, Algeria, Oman	50 %	RM 1 million	/
15	Instant noodles, coffee, cereal, canned beverages	UAE, Egypt, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, Jordan	18 %	RM 200 million	/
16	Palm oil based products	Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt, North Africa, Libya, Morocco, Algeria, Sudan, Bahrain, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, UAE, Iraq	80 %	RM 80 million	/
17	Coffee, tea	Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Egypt	20 %	Not sure	/

18	Processed chicken and meat	Oman	Not sure	<i>confidential</i>	/
19	Durian based products	UAE	5-10 %	<i>confidential</i>	/
20	Snacks	Middle East	Not sure	<i>confidential</i>	/

Schedule 2 above shows the categories of food products produced by the halal food industry in Malaysia, the countries in the MENA region which are the targets for export, estimated quantity and the export value for every month as well as the company that uses Arabic language on the packaging of the exported food products.

Packaging Strategy

Based on the interview data of the 20 people representing the industry in Malaysia, there are several strategies for packaging of halal food products which were implemented for the market in the MENA region. These strategies are discussed according to the themes that emerged and were identified from the interviews:

i. Product Labelling

In this research, the use of Arabic language on the product labelling is an important strategy taken into consideration by the food industry when marketing products in the MENA region. Labelling functions to provide a complete guide to the consumer. The information provided include information regarding product preparation, nutrition, ingredients, manufacturing, expiry date and so on (Bukhari et al., 2022). Below are among the examples of feedback obtained from the industry

“...we do export to Saudi Arabia, they definitely want to use the Arabic language as it is their labelling so they definitely want to use that language.” (Industry 12)

“Only on the labelling, what they want included in their language, they will let you know.” (Industry 3)

“But, specifically for the Middle East we have to adapt to their demand, their label. So, must be in the Arabic language.” (Industry 15)

“Not to say we translate everything, but ingredient, nutrition information that finale part we translate into Arabic. We also translate ingredient into Arabic.” (Industry 11)

In addition, there are those in the industry that use two languages which are Arabic and English on the labelling or information on the product packaging. This is referred to by the following feedback

“It is compulsory. We have standards, everything that is sent to MENA it is always English Arabic.” (Industry 16)

ii. Product Brand

The brand name is considered to be one of the most valuable assets a company owns. A famous brand name not only helps the consumer recognise the product, but it can also, in fact, convince the consumer and has an important role when a purchasing decision is made (Bukhari et al., 2021). In light of that, several strategies applied by the industry for product brand have been identified. First, most of the industry had taken the step of retaining the

brand name, but the brand is written in the Arabic language. Several of the following feedback explain this matter

“The product name we use our name.” (Industry 3)

“Brand is the same for export. The writing of the brand uses the local language (Arabic language).” (Industry 18)

“Usually, we use a standard brand for everywhere, only the language changes.” (Industry 16)

Second, there are those in the industry that translate the brand name into Arabic as per the following feedback

“Usually, we only translate the brand name into the Arabic language.” (Industry 14)

Third, the industry uses the brand name which has Islamic elements. Following are the feedback

“It is because we produce Muslim products. Our company has an Islamic concept, suitable for them. The brand has influence.” (Industry 2)

Fourth, the industry chooses a brand name in the English language, but in terms of it being written it uses the Arabic language. The following is based on the feedback received:

“In the Middle East they prefer English naming. So, even brand name.. we have a few brand they do not prefer to have an Arab name... They have to write English in Arabic, but they do not want the name in the Arabic language.” Industry 16)

Fifth, the industry determines the brand name according to the requirements of the product distributor in the MENA region.

“That's what I'll call in the category of OEM. Meaning we do it to the brand that they're wanted.” (Industry 13)

To summarise, the research found that there are five main strategies for use of language in the extrinsic element of packaging which is the brand that is applied by the halal food product industry in Malaysia when marketing products to the MENA region.

iii. Product Slogan

A slogan or tagline is the message for the brand of a product to the consumer or potential consumer. The message in the slogan is usually clear and focused by highlighting the advantages of the product brand (Dass et al., 2014, Suci et al., 2022). Based on the interviews of the industry, the strategy applied to the slogan is to translate it according to the context of the consumer in the MENA region. Following are the feedback recorded

“Such as a tagline 'ridiculously tasty', 'pilih pilih rasa gila-gila anda', this is the latest tagline for a new product which will be adapted to the context over there. So, the distributor over there will inform what is best.” (Industry 14)

There are also those in the industry that use the English language for their slogan or tagline. The feedback is as follows

“The tagline we don't translate, was in English.” (Industry 11)

iv. Halal logo/certification

For the halal market such as in the MENA region, the halal logo has a significant role. The halal logo on the product packaging is an important determining factor when purchasing products among the Muslim consumers (Bukhari et al., 2021). Malaysia as a halal hub has a globally recognised halal logo and certification. The industry acknowledges this and has made the halal logo one of the strategies for packaging food products marketed in the MENA region. Following are the feedback obtained from the industry

“They are looking for product from Malaysia. Number one, because Malaysia’s Halal is strong. This is important.” (Industry 17)

“Because we have halal Jakim.” (Industry 4)

“What comes from Malaysia has halal Jakim which gives more confidence to the customer over there.” (Industry 4)

“So, I think we position ourself as Halal food. So, I think of course one of the big population for Halal consumption.” (Industry 15)

v. Packaging design

The design of the packaging is one of the industry strategies to enable to compete in the business world. Besides being able to create a brand image in the mind of the consumer, the design of the packaging can stimulate buying behaviour among the consumers (Erlyana, 2020). Hence, specifically for the market in the MENA region, the industry has implemented several strategies for packaging such as taking into consideration the elements of Islamic culture and the culture of the target consumer. Following are the feedback received

“So we put the design on the label like their culture. So we study their culture. It is true that there are things which are sensitive.” (Industry 4)

“There are discussions because there are things which are sensitive and all that, do not want pictures such as the American flag...they are against America.” (Industry 12)

“Being Malaysian company we are also sensitive towards Islamic requirement. So, whatever that it works in Malaysia, it will work in Middle East.” (Industry 13)

Discussion of Research Findings

This research has shown that the halal food industry in Malaysia use several strategies on the packaging of halal food products which are exported to the MENA region. Emphasis is given to labelling, brand and slogan on the product packaging. The labelling on the packaging is the most dominant part as well as critical as it provides various important information regarding the product to the consumer. For halal food products, the function is even more important as labelling not only is a guide to the consumer for choosing food which is healthy, but in fact to choose food which is halal. Muslim consumers become very aware and careful when it involves the purchase of food products. They read the product ingredients list to ensure that there are no ingredients which are forbidden in Islam before making the decision to purchase.

Therefore, the research found that the majority of the halal food industry in Malaysia translate the product labelling into the Arabic language for those products marketed in the MENA region. Besides that, there are some in the industry that provide dual language translation for labelling which is Arabic and English languages. Both strategies used have the same objective which is to make it easier for the consumer to understand the product information that is to be conveyed. This is in line with the research by Azman (2014) which found that the use of the Arabic language or the language of the target consumer can help the consumer to access and absorb the product information more easily.

Besides that, on the product brand front, there are five main strategies identified which were applied by the halal food industry in Malaysia. The strategies are first, the industry retains the product brand name, but it is written in the Arabic language. Second, translating the brand name into the Arabic language according to the context in the MENA region, third, the industry took the initiative by using a brand with Islamic elements, fourth, there are some in the industry who choose to use the brand name in the English language, but in terms of writing it uses the Arabic language, and fifth the industry determines the brand name according to the requirements of the product distributor in the MENA region. The strategy applied by this industry has foundation in terms of practice as well as theory. All the strategies for the brand are designed by the industry so as to attract the attention of the consumer. The first strategy which is the choice of most in the industry who were interviewed, is based on the view of Schlossberg (1990) which stated that the use of foreign language is an effective way that can attract the attention of the customer to the product. In addition, it is consistent with the findings of the research by Negerstigt & Hilberink-Schulpen (2018) which stated that the use of foreign language on the brand name/slogan/text on the packaging will attract the attention of the consumer and the research by Hornikx and Van Meurs (2017) that believed that foreign language on several extrinsic elements of packaging can attract the attention of the consumer as well as cause an association to the image of the country which produced that relevant product.

Regarding the slogan or tagline on the product packaging, the research has found that a large part of the industry translated the slogan into the Arabic language based on the context of consumers in the MENA region. There are also those in the industry that use the approach of translating the slogan into the English language. The slogan is translated having considered the context and Arabic culture and is designed such that the consumer will feel closer to the product. This is important as the placement of the slogan which is on the front of the packaging is a purchasing factor at the point of sale for the majority of consumers especially when regarding products in the low involvement category such as food product (Wagner & Charinsarn, 2021).

The Malaysia halal logo issued by JAKIM on the product packaging is recognised by the world. This halal logo is also one of the main strategies for the industry when aiming to market products to the MENA region. This is because the halal logo has two significant implications to the consumer, which is to gain the trust of the consumer in the product in terms of the halal status of the product as well as its quality. In the Islamic market, the majority of consumers prefer to purchase products which have been verified as halal. They take note that the presence of the halal logo on the food product is a sign of quality and safety for the Islamic consumer (Anam et al., 2018). In addition, the halal logo symbol can be one of the signals that represent the country of origin of the product (O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy, 2000). The country of origin of the product often becomes the yardstick when the consumer evaluates a certain product. Malaysia is known as a country that emphasises the quality and the halal

status of a product that can convince the consumer in the MENA region to choose the product manufactured in Malaysia compared to the other products in the market.

Conclusion

To conclude, all the strategies for use of language on the packaging which were identified to be applied by the industry can be used as a guide for new companies that intend to market food products to that region. However, as a more progressive step as well as suggestion for future research, the feedback from the real consumer that is the population in the MENA region must be considered along with the expectations from the industry.

Finally, this research is only focused on several categories of halal food products which were exported. There are various other food products which may have a different language usage strategy. In addition, this research only focused on the halal food sector. Other halal sectors such as halal services, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals and so on were not explored in this research. Hence, future research can be conducted on other sectors to look at the strategies used for marketing in the MENA region. Besides that, the scope of this research is from the perspective of the halal food industry in Malaysia by using the qualitative method. Further research can be expanded to look at industry practice all over Malaysia by using the quantitative research method. Research relating to the use of the Arabic language on packaging must also be studied and explored from various perspectives in the field of language and linguistics. This is because there is very little related research in literature.

Acknowledgement

The authors would like to thank the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia for funding this research under the grant FRGS/1/2020/SSI0/UPM/02/6.

References

- Abdul Sukur, A. S. (2022). Isu bahasa dan budaya dalam penterjemahan label makanan [Issues of language and culture in the translation of food labels]. *PENDETA*, 13(1), 58-69. <https://doi.org/10.37134/pendeta.vol13.1.6.2022>
- Anam, J., Sanuri, B. M. M. S., & Ismail, B. L. O. (2018). Conceptualizing the relation between halal logo, perceived product quality and the role of consumer knowledge. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*.
- Ariffin, A. & Fadzlullah, W. N. F. W. M. (2019). The promotional language of the halal food industry: some preliminary findings. *Glob. J. Al-Thaqafah*, 103-113.
- Asri, A. F., Chik, C. T., Rais, M. H. M., & Othman, N. (2020). SME product packaging: how to attract consumers?. *International Journal of Business Society*, 4(7), 102-109.
- Azman, C. M. (2014). Translation of brand and food label products into Arabic: A preliminary linguistically analysis. *International Journal of Languages and Literatures*, 2(2), 121-135.
- Bettels, J., Haase, J., & Wiedmann, K. P. (2020). Shaping consumer perception: effects of vertical and horizontal packaging alignment. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 37(4), 423-431.
- Bukhari, S. F. H., Woodside, F. M., Hassan, R., Ali, O. M. S. H., Hussain, S., & Waqas, R. (2021). Intrinsic and extrinsic attributes that drive Muslim consumer purchase behavior: A study in the context of Western imported food. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 12(1), 70-94.
- Bukhari, S. F. H., Woodside, F. M., Hassan, R., Hussain, S., & Khurram, S. (2022). Exploring the motives behind the purchase of western imported food products. A phenomenological

- study from a Muslim-dominated region, *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 13(2), 481-507.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-05-2020-0139>
- Celhay, F., Boysselle, J., and Cohen, J. (2015). Food Packages and Communication through Typeface Design: The Exoticism of Exotypes. *Food Quality and Preference*, 39, 167-175.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodqual.2014.07.009>
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches*, 2nd ed., Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Cui, A. P., Hu, M. Y., & Griffith, D. A. (2014). What makes a brand manager effective?. *Journal of Business Research*, 67(2), 144-150.
- Dass, M., Kohli, C., Kumar, P. and Thomas, S. (2014). A study of the antecedents of slogan liking. *Journal of Business Research*, 67(12), 2504-2511.
- Deliya, M. M., & Parmar, B. J. (2012). Role of packaging on consumer buying behavior—patan district. *Global Journal of Management and Business Research*, 12(10), 49-67.
- East, R. (1997). *Consumer behaviour: Advances and applications in marketing*. London: Prentice Hall.
- Erlyana, Y. (2020). Semiotic analysis of packaging designs in promina puffs weaning food. In 1st International Conference on Folklore, Language, Education and Exhibition (ICOFLEX 2019) (pp. 133-138). Atlantis Press.
- Ezan, P., Pantin-Sohier, G., & Lancelot-Miltgen, C. (2019). Colour of food as a vector for children's well-being. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 47(6), 659-679.
- Ganai, A., Hamid, N., Dwivedi, S., Kachroo, J. & Manhas, J.S. (2019). Influence of packaging elements of ready to eat food products on buying behaviour. *Journal of Pharmacognosy and Phytochemistry*, 8(2), 189-194.
- Glossary of Packaging Terms*. Stamford, CT: The Packaging Institute International, 1988.
- Guetterman, T. (2015). Descriptions of sampling practices within five approaches to qualitative research in education and the health sciences. *Educational Psychology Papers and Publications*, 16(2), 1-24.
- Hall, E. T., & Hall, M. R. (1987). *Hidden differences: Doing business with the Japanese*. New York: Anchor Press.
- Hanni, S. N. A., & Aghwan, Z. A. (2022). Issues of Halal Products Containing Alcohol with Reference to Regulations in Brunei Darussalam. *Journal of Halal Science and Technology*, 1(1), 74-85.
- Ho, H. C., Chiu, C. L., Jiang, D., Shen, J., & Xu, H. (2019). Influence of language of packaging labels on consumers' buying preferences. *Journal of Food Products Marketing*, 25(4), 435-461.
- Hollensen, S. (1998). *Global Marketing Management*. Chichester: Wiley.
- Hornikx, J., & van Meurs, F. (2017). Foreign languages in advertising as implicit country-of-origin cues: Mechanism, associations, and effectiveness. *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, 29(2), 60-73.
- Hsieh, H. F., & Shannon, S. E. (2005). Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative Health Research*, 15(9), 1277-1288.
- Huang, L. & Lu, J. (2015). Eat with your eyes: package colour influences the expectation of food taste and healthiness moderated by external eating. *Marketing Management*, 25(2), 71-87.
- Kamaruddin, N., & Wahid, H. (2020). Potensi dan Cabaran Pengusaha Perusahaan Kecil dan Sederhana (PKS) dalam Pemasaran Produk Makanan Halal semasa Pandemik Covid-19

- [The Potential and Challenges of Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) in the Marketing of Halal Food Products during the Covid-19 Pandemic]. *Journal of Management and Muamalah*, 10(2), 1-20.
- Khan, H., Lockshin, L., Lee, R., & Corsi, A. (2017). When is it necessary to localise product packaging? *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 34(5), 373-383.
- Kohli, C., Leuthesser, L., & Suri, R. (2007). Got slogan? Guidelines for creating effective slogans. *Business horizons*, 50(5), 415-422.
- Kohli, C., Thomas, S., & Suri, R. (2013). Are you in good hands?: slogan recall: what really matters. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 53(1), 31-42.
- Konstantoglou, A., Folinas, D., & Fotiadis, T. (2021). Comparison of consumers and industry managers concerning food packaging elements. *British Food Journal*, 123(3), 1103-1120.
- Kotler, P. (2000). *Marketing management: The millennium edition*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Kovács, L., Bóta, A., Hajdu, L., & Krész, M. (2022). Brands, networks, communities: How brand names are wired in the mind. *Plos One*, 17(8), e0273192.
- Lewis, S. (2015). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches. *Health promotion practice*, 16(4), 473-475.
- Liang, S., Qin, L., Zhang, M., Chu, Y., Teng, L., & He, L. (2022). Win big with small: the influence of organic food packaging size on purchase intention. *Foods*, 11(16), 2494.
- Mai, R., Symmank, C., & Seeberg-Elverfeldt, B. (2016). Light and pale colors in food packaging: When does this package cue signal superior healthiness or inferior tastiness?. *Journal of Retailing*, 92(4), 426-444.
- Malhotra, S. (2014). A study on marketing fast moving consumer goods (FMCG). *International Journal of Innovative Research & Development*, 3(1), 1-3.
- Mangan, J., Lalwani, C., & Gardner, B. (2004). Combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies in logistics research. *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management*, 34(7), 565-578.
- Mann, B. J. S., & Kaur, M. (2013). Exploring branding strategies of FMCG, services and durables brands: evidence from India. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 22(1), 6-17. <https://doi.org/10.1108/10610421311298650>
- Marcella, R., & Davies, S. (2004). The use of customer language in international marketing communication in the Scottish food and drink industry. *European Journal of Marketing*, 38(11/12), 1382-1395.
- Marckhgott, E., & Kamleitner, B. (2019). Matte matters: When matte packaging increases perceptions of food naturalness. *Marketing Letters*, 30, 167-178.
- MATRADE. (2021, Mei 11). *MATRADE Paves the Way for Malaysian Companies to Expand Exports to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Through Collaboration with Major Retailers and Healthcare Provider*. <https://www.matrade.gov.my/>
- Nawi, M. N. H., Ahmad, M. P. H., Ibrahim, H., & Suki, M. N. (2023). Firms' commitment to Halal standard practices in the food sector: impact of knowledge and attitude. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 14(5), 1260-1275.
- Nederstigt, U., & Hilberink-Schulpen, B. (2018). Advertising in a Foreign Language or the Consumers' Native Language?. *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, 30(1), 2-13.

- Noor, M. A. M., & Wahid, H. (2015). Daya saing industri peneraju hab makanan halal Malaysia [Industrial competitiveness of pioneers of halal food hub in Malaysia]. *Prosiding Persidangan Kebangsaan Ekonomi Malaysia Ke-10*, 131.
- O'Shaughnessy, J., & O'Shaughnessy, N. J. (2000). Treating the nation as a brand: Some neglected issues. *Journal of Macromarketing*, 20(1), 56-64.
- Pålsson, H., & Sandberg, E. (2022). Packaging paradoxes in food supply chains: exploring characteristics, underlying reasons and management strategies. *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management*, 52(11), 25-52.
- Rambabu, L., & Porika, R. (2020). Packaging strategies: knowledge outlook on consumer buying behaviour. *Journal of Industry-University Collaboration*, 2(2), 67-78. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIUC-10-2019-0017>
- Richardson, P. S., Dick, A. S., & Jain, A. K. (1994). Extrinsic and intrinsic cue effects on perceptions of store brand quality. *Journal of Marketing*, 58, 28-36.
- Robertson, G. L. (2013). *Food packaging: principles and practice*. 3rd Ed. CRC press.
- Rothman, R. L., Housam, R., Weiss, H., Davis, D., Gregory, R., Gebretsadik, T., Shintani, A., & Elasy, T. A., (2006). Patient understanding of food labels: The role of literacy and numeracy. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 31(5), 391-8.
- Run, E. C. D., & Chin, S. F. (2006). Language use in packaging: The reaction of Malay and Chinese consumers in Malaysia. *Sunway Academic Journal*, 3, 133-145.
- Rundh, B. (2005). The multi-faceted dimension of packaging: Marketing logistic or marketing tool?. *British Food Journal*, 107(9), 670-684.
- Rybczewska, M., Jirapathomsakul, S., Liu, Y., Chow, W. T., Nguyen, M. T., & Sparks, L. (2020). Slogans, brands and purchase behaviour of students. *Young Consumers*, 21(3), 305-317.
- Saad, Md.K., Idris, M.Z. & Johari, N.R. (2020). Evaluating SMEs food packaging design characteristics. *Journal of Information System and Technology Management*, 5(18): 19-25.
- Safiah Karim. (1992). *Beberapa Persoalan Sociolinguistik Bahasa [Several Language Sociolinguistic Questions]*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Schlossberg, H. (1990). Effective packaging talks. *Marketing News*, 24(16), 6.
- Selvakumar, M., Rani, M. M. J., & Jegatheesan, K. (2013, February). Fast-moving consumer goods: A bright future in India. *Market Survey*, 10-13.
- Sorensen, H. S., Clement, J., & Gabrielsen, G. (2012). Food labels—an exploratory study into label information and what consumers see and understand. *The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research*, 22(1), 101-114.
- Spence, C., & Velasco, C. (2018). On the multiple effects of packaging colour on consumer behaviour and product experience in the 'food and beverage' and 'home and personal care' categories. *Food Quality and Preference*, 68, 226-237.
- Suci, A., Maryanti, S., Hardi, H., & Sudiar, N. (2022). Willingness to pay for traditional ready-to-eat food packaging: examining the interplay between shape, font and slogan. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 34(8), 1614-1633.
- Utomo, G. T., & Suprajitno, S. (2018). Packaging consumption: Stylistic devices and persuasive functions of American and Indonesian advertising slogans. *Kata*, 20(1), 36-44.
- Veflen, N., Velasco, C., & Kraggerud, H. (2023). Signalling taste through packaging: The effects of shape and colour on consumers' perceptions of cheeses. *Food Quality and Preference*, 104, 104742.

- Wagner, U., & Charinsarn, A. R. (2021). What language should be displayed on product packaging? How unconventional lettering influences packaging and product evaluation. *Journal of Internasional Consumer Marketing*, 33(1), 1-18.
- Waheed, S., Khan, M. M., & Ahmad, N. (2018). Product packaging and consumer purchase intentions. *Market Forces*, 13(2), 97-114.
- Yaakub, N. A. (2020). Halal Market Worldwide. In *Halal Governance & Management Malaysia & Asean Countries: Intermediate to Advance*. Nilai: USIM Press.