

ENHANCING MALAYSIA’S HALAL BRAND IDENTITY: INSIGHTS AND STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL HALAL HUB

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ABSTRACT

Halal branding has become an essential strategy for businesses to cater to the needs of Muslim consumers and tap into a rapidly growing market. Malaysia has positioned itself as a global halal hub, attracting Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) food manufacturers and becoming a trusted source of halal products and services. However, developing a distinct Malaysia’s halal brand identity remains a challenge. This article explores the importance of developing a strong halal brand identity for the sustainability of Malaysia as a global halal hub. The study conducted in-depth interviews with eight identified respondents who were either chief executive officers, presidents of participating companies, or partners and directors of various government agencies at local and international branches. The study discusses successful halal brand identity campaigns undertaken by major global and regional brands, focusing on promoting halal values, ethical practices, and the benefits of halal products. To develop a strong halal brand identity, comprehensive marketing and communication strategies are recommended, utilising the effects theory to craft effective digital marketing strategies that resonate with Muslim consumers and promote ethical consumption.

Keywords: Malaysia, global halal hub, halal brand identity, effects theory, marketing and communication strategies

INTRODUCTION

With more than two billion Muslims worldwide and a fast-growing number of halal consumers from non-Muslim populations worldwide, the halal brand is quickly moving away from being about religion and towards a lifestyle (Halal Development Corporation 2023a). The importance of the halal market is apparent as the global halal market was valued at USD7.2 trillion in 2020 and is projected to reach USD11.2 trillion by 2028 (Nadzirah et al. 2020). The halal market is an emerging growth sector in the global economy, creating a strong presence in developed countries (Austrade 2023).

Halal products are perceived as high quality, safe, and healthy, which can give them a competitive edge in the market (Santiago 2022). Malaysia's halal industry is one of the country's most robust industries and is expected to contribute 8.1% to the country's total gross domestic product (Santiago 2022). Malaysia has world-class infrastructure, a skilled and productive workforce, and easy access to halal-sourced ingredients, which are among the country's selling points (MITI 2021). Therefore, it is not surprising that Malaysia, for the last eight consecutive years, has taken the overall lead in the Global Islamic Economy Indicator (GIEI) and is leading in areas such as halal food, Islamic finance, pharmaceutical products and cosmetics, and Muslim-friendly travel sector rankings. The Malaysian government is targeting RM56 billion in export revenue for the halal industry by 2025. It has created a robust ecosystem to support businesses involved in this sector (MITI 2021), including partnerships with local institutions and foreign developers (Santiago 2022). The arrangement details include improving halal's efficacy, dealing with the certification process, and supporting halal-oriented businesses.

Halal brand awareness is vital because it can influence consumer behaviour and purchasing decisions, help businesses establish their brand identity and differentiate themselves from competitors, lead to a positive attitude towards halal products and services, build trust among Muslim consumers, expand market reach, and promote ethical consumption. As necessary as these factors are towards purchase decisions, more research must be undertaken to understand what factors contribute to consumer awareness, halal Malaysia brand equity, and relevant strategies to improve cognition.

Since consumers' awareness has shifted from mere religious compliance to lifestyle preference (Halal Development Corporation 2023b), further study is needed to understand how the awareness could translate into purchase decisions. This study fills the void by using the hierarchy-of-effects theory from the cognitive stage (awareness and knowledge), moving to the affective stage (liking,

preference, conviction) to the behavioural stage (purchase decision) to examine the awareness of the Halal Malaysia Brand. This article discusses the background of halal meaning, halal branding, its market value and halal branding challenges. Research methods, respondents and methods of gathering data are also discussed. This is followed by a discussion on Malaysia's success and challenges as a global halal hub, how to develop a strong halal brand identity and related marketing and communication strategies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section discusses past studies that highlight a comprehensive understanding of the halal branding landscape in Malaysia and a justification of why halal branding and its market dynamics are important in Malaysia. It also discusses Malaysia's roles as a global halal hub, the concept of "halal" in Malaysia, halal branding principles, market valuation, and associated challenges. The literature reviews also discuss Malaysia's strategic initiatives in the halal industry and how the hierarchy-of-effects theory applies to the research.

Halal Meaning, Halal Branding and Halal Market Value

Halal refers to products and services that are permissible under Islamic law. Halal products are prepared and produced per Islamic principles, ensuring they are free from prohibited substances. Halal brands comply with Islamic dietary laws and are certified by recognised halal certification authorities. Khan and Haleem (2016) claim the word halal (حلال) originates from the Arabic language, meaning allowable, acceptable, permitted, and permissible. Halal encompasses various items and services appropriate for Muslims, not limited to food and drinks. These include pharmaceuticals, beauty products, leather crafts, fragrances, banking, entertainment, tourism, and logistics (Norafni Farlina and Syahidawati 2013).

Halal branding is an essential strategy for businesses to cater to the needs of Muslim consumers and tap into a rapidly growing market. Halal branding involves obtaining certifications, building a trustworthy brand image, and aligning marketing strategies to target the global Muslim market. Halal branding is crucial for businesses to differentiate themselves in the market, establish credibility, and cater to growing consumer base's religious and ethical needs. Halal branding helps build trust among Muslim consumers by ensuring that their products and services comply with their religious beliefs. This trust can lead to increased brand loyalty and a solid customer base. Obtaining halal certification from a recognised authority is critical in halal branding. It assures consumers that the products and

services comply with Islamic principles and meet the necessary quality and safety standards. Halal branding promotes ethical consumption as halal products often adhere to higher standards of quality, safety, and social responsibility (Hafiz 2023).

Halal branding goes beyond religious requirements and incorporates ethical practices like sustainability, animal welfare, and fair labour standards. Widespread concern about food safety and food security has led to more non-Muslims favouring halal goods due to strict halal (cleanliness) and *toyyiban* (wholesome) requirements (Rana 2015). The halal concept goes beyond meeting religious requirements or beliefs but also ensuring ethical practices, environmental protection, and animal welfare. The halal concept introduced more than 1,444 years ago aligns with the critical sustainability, environmental, and governance trends. The sustainability trend resonates well with halal branding and appeals to a broader audience, including non-Muslims prioritising ethical consumption (Hafiz 2023). Halal consciousness, halal certification, and awareness of halal brands have a positive impact on Muslims and non-Muslims' intentions to buy halal food as halal product standardisation and process standardisation help in manufacturing halal products and improving their safety inspection (Mabkhot 2023).

The halal market is rapidly growing, with significant growth projected in the coming years. According to the Halal Food Global Market Report 2023 published by Research and Markets (2023), the global halal food market size grew from USD1,300.75 billion in 2022 to USD1,501.5 billion in 2023 at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 15.4%. The global halal food and beverage market was valued at USD774.93 billion in 2021 and is expected to witness a CAGR of 3.6% from 2022 to 2030 (Grandview Research 2023). The halal industry has expanded beyond the food sector to include pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, health products, toiletries, medical devices, and service sector components, such as logistics, marketing, print and electronic media, packaging, branding, and financing. The halal market is segmented by type and application, focusing on sales, revenue, and forecast. The significant driver behind the growth of the halal food market is the increasing Muslim population worldwide (Grandview Research 2023) and a shift in demand globally from both Muslims and non-Muslims towards ethical consumption. The halal market presents significant economic opportunities for businesses and countries, contributing to job creation, export revenue, and economic growth (Market Research Insight Center 2023). The halal market is emerging as one of the most profitable and influential market arenas in today's world food business.

Halal Branding Challenges

The prospect of exponential growth comes with significant challenges. As much as marketers want to get a hand on those market shares, challenges remain to overcome. The halal market faces challenges such as limited awareness about halal branding, limited references and literature, competition and market saturation, perception and misconceptions, limited resources for promotion, and cultural and regional differences. Figure 1 outlines the four most common challenges that need new thinking to solve.



Figure 1: Four challenges of halal branding.

One of the most fundamental challenges to expanding halal branding is achieving brand consciousness while entering a packed marketplace dominated by Western or conventional brands (Hosain 2021). To overcome this challenge, businesses can focus on building a trustworthy brand image, obtaining halal certifications, and aligning their branding and marketing strategies to target the global Muslim market. Educating consumers about what halal means is a challenge for marketers. To overcome this challenge, businesses can focus on providing accurate information and transparent communication about their halal products, using social media and other digital platforms to reach a broader audience, and partnering with halal certification authorities to promote their halal brands (Hafiz 2023).

They align halal branding and marketing strategies with ethical values, promote their halal brands as environmentally friendly and socially responsible, and partner with organisations that promote ethical consumption. This strategy aligns with

ethical practices such as sustainability, animal welfare, and fair labour standards. Cultural and regional differences can make it challenging for businesses to effectively tailor their strategies and messages to reach and engage consumers from different backgrounds. To overcome this challenge, businesses can focus on conducting market research to understand Muslim consumers' unique needs and values in different regions, developing targeted marketing campaigns that resonate with local audiences, and partnering with local businesses and organisations to build trust and credibility in the local market. In summary, businesses face challenges in halal branding, including achieving brand consciousness, educating consumers about halal, incorporating ethical practices, and addressing cultural and regional differences. Overcoming these challenges requires targeted education and communication efforts, differentiation strategies, and effective marketing tactics to build trust and capture consumers' attention in the halal market.

Global Halal Hub and the Malaysian Journey

The Malaysian halal industry has experienced tremendous growth and has become a phenomenon in the market. Malaysia is currently the leading supplier of a wide range of halal-certified products and services, including food, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, finance, and tourism. According to the 2022 State of the Global Islamic Economy Report, the Malaysian Islamic finance sector has shown continued growth, with a 9% increase in Islamic finance assets and a 20% growth in the value of Islamic funds (DinarStandard 2022). Malaysia's halal exports maintained their upward trend, with a total halal export value of RM59.46 billion in 2022, equivalent to a 63.8% rise over the previous year. As a result, Malaysia's halal export performance in 2022 exceeded the country's projection for 2025 under the 12th Malaysia Plan, putting the country three years ahead of the target. The government is responsible for driving tremendous growth in Malaysia's halal industry regarding legislation, halal certification, industrial development, expansion, and accreditation.

Malaysia is ranked first out of 81 countries in the GIEI 2022, making it the best country in the world to address the multi-trillion-dollar global halal economy (DinarStandard 2022). Malaysia has retained the top position for eight consecutive years in the overall GIEI rankings and took the lead in Islamic finance, halal food, travel, and media and recreation. Malaysia also ranked second and ninth for pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and modest fashion. The government's aspiration to pursue halal as its critical economic agenda has been evident since 1974 through the issuance of a halal authorisation letter for shariah-compliant products by the Research Centre, Islamic Affairs Division of the Prime Minister's Office. The government introduced the halal logo and certification in 1994. In

2002, the government directed all halal certification activities and monitoring and enforcing halal compliance within Malaysia to be fully implemented by the Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM) through the Division of Food and Islamic Consumer Products. The halal certification has increased Malaysia's halal product and service demand because it assures quality and wholesomeness, placing Malaysia strategically positioned as a significant player in the global halal industry. Malaysia became the first nation to have a documented and detailed halal certification system by introducing the Halal Food Standard, MS1500.

In 2006, Malaysia's Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry (MITI) established the world's first government-backed halal industry development corporation known as Halal Development Corporation (HDC). HDC is an agency responsible as the central coordinator that leads the development of Malaysia's integrated and comprehensive halal ecosystem and infrastructure. HDC has transformed Malaysia into a world leader in the halal industry by creating opportunities, investments, trade, employment, information sharing, and transfer technology within the halal ecosystem. The two prominent agencies, namely JAKIM and HDC, together with the Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE), are MITI's strategic partners for the progress and development of Malaysia's halal industry.

HDC has three strategic thrusts to grow and position Malaysia as a global hub for the halal industry. The first thrust, halal integrity, encompasses standards, certification, training, food testing, research, and human capital development. The second thrust, capacity building, involves the development of Malaysia's domestic capacity in producing and trading halal goods and services. The third thrust, branding and promotion, signifies HDC's efforts to promote "Halal Malaysia" as the national brand and worldwide halal hub.

The Halal Industry Master Plan (HIMP) was introduced by HDC in 2008 to establish halal as a new foundation for economic growth. The comprehensive and intricate master plan comprises various strategic halal initiatives outlined for 2008 to 2020. The 13-year masterplan is divided into three implementation phases, ensuring the progressive and integrated development of the halal industry in Malaysia on both national and international levels. The first phase lasted from 2008 to 2010 and was meant to establish Malaysia as a global leader in halal integrity. Therefore, the halal certification process was improved during this time, and the Global Halal Support Centre (GHSC) was established in 2012. GHSC was set up to promote Malaysia as a world reference centre in halal knowledge and halal-related services. Since its inception, the GHSC has drawn over 250 international delegates from 33 nations, proving Malaysia as a benchmark for other countries seeking to establish solid halal standards because of its extensive experience and robust halal framework.

The second phase continued from 2011 to 2015. It focused on establishing Malaysia as the preferred location for halal-related businesses by developing our global knowledge base and brand recognition. Finally, the third phase of the master plan lasted from 2016 to 2020, marking the expansion of Malaysian companies' footprint into the international market. World Halal Week 2016 is one of many initiatives to place Malaysia firmly on the world halal map. World Halal Week is an essential platform for thought leadership, business matching, marketing and promotion, and trade and investment within the halal sphere. It includes the Malaysia International Halal Showcase (MIHAS), World Halal Conference, and International Halal Certification Bodies Convention.

Malaysia inaugurated its first halal international trade exhibition, MIHAS, in 2004 to promote the global sourcing and sale of high-quality halal goods and services, including Islamic dress, as part of the country's aspirations to become the world's halal hub by 2020. The first MIHAS attracted 17,274 visitors from 42 countries and filled 505 booth spaces, with 330 companies from 19 nations participating. Since then, it has evolved into a yearly event on the calendar. Thirteen years later, MIHAS has become the world's largest halal event, with over 576 firms from 33 countries participating, resulting in RM709 million in sales.

Following the successful implementation of HIMP 1.0 (HIMP 2008–2020), the government recently launched HIMP 2030, which outlines action plans and strategies capitalising on the growing global demand for halal products and services and strengthening Malaysia's leadership role by leveraging Malaysia's world-renowned halal industry ecosystem and accumulated expertise. The HIMP 2030 is Malaysia's blueprint to strengthen its leadership in the global halal industry and promote socioeconomic progress. The plan aims to develop an inclusive halal industry, create local champions, and position Malaysia as a significant player in the halal industry. The HIMP 2030 is implemented through seven strategic thrusts, which aim to develop a comprehensive halal ecosystem, enhance halal certification and accreditation, promote halal trade and investment, strengthen halal industry institutions, develop local champions, enhance halal-friendly policy and regulatory environment, and strengthen halal human capital development. These strategic thrusts aim to propel the growth and development of the Malaysia halal industry, enhance its competitiveness, and position Malaysia as a global leader in the halal market. The Malaysian journey into becoming a global halal hub is summarised in Figure 2.

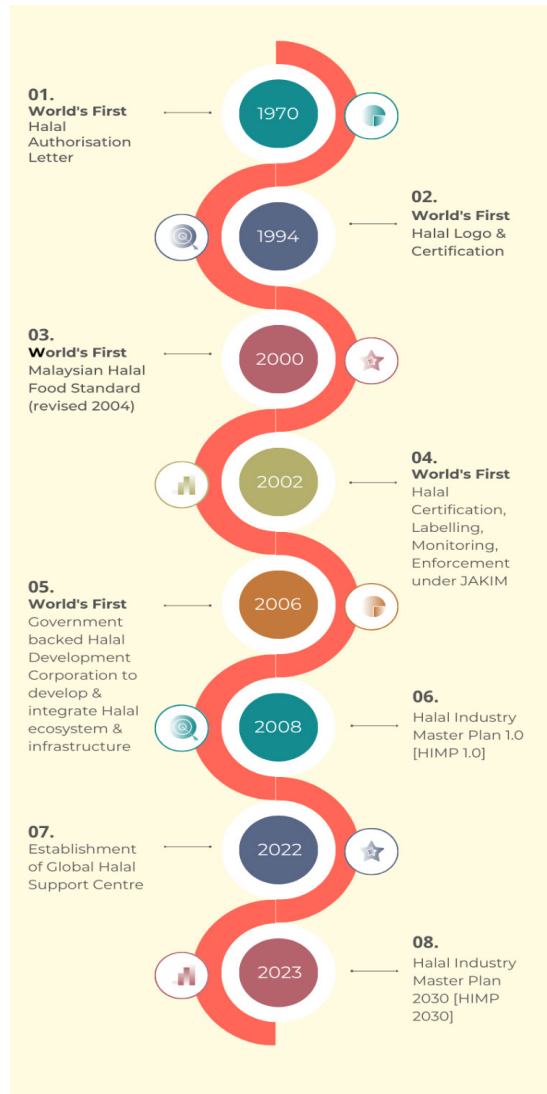


Figure 2: Malaysia's halal journey – milestones.

The Hierarchy-of-Effects Theory and Malaysia's Halal Brand Identity

The hierarchy-of-effects theory models how advertising influences a consumer's decision to purchase or not purchase a product or service (Lavidge and Steiner 1961). The hierarchy represents the progression of learning and decision-making consumer experiences due to advertising. The theory covers a series of stages that advertisers should follow, from gaining customers' awareness to the final purchase

behaviour. The hierarchy-of-effects theory sets up a structured series of advertising message objectives for a particular product to build upon each successive objective until a sale is made. Advertisers aim to guide a potential customer through all six stages of the hierarchy, which include awareness, knowledge, liking, preference, conviction, and purchase. The behaviours associated with the hierarchy-of-effects theory can be boiled down to three stages: cognitive, affective, and conative. The cognitive stage involves gaining knowledge and awareness of the product or service, the affective stage involves developing a liking or preference for the product or service, and the conative stage involves taking action to purchase the product or service. In summary, the hierarchy-of-effects theory is a model of how advertising influences a consumer's decision to purchase or not purchase a product or service, and it covers a series of stages that advertisers should follow to guide a potential customer through all six stages of the hierarchy.

Whilst Malaysia has made its name as a leader in the world's halal hub, there remains an issue – many consumers recognise the JAKIM halal logo better than Malaysia's halal brand. The halal Malaysia logo is more visible than Malaysia's halal brand (Wan Rusni et al. 2016). This lack of consumer awareness about Malaysia's halal brand has threatened Malaysia's ambition to become the Global Halal Hub (Abdul Manaf, Cheng and Nurwahida 2013). The halal logo is a symbol that indicates that the product or business is certified halal by JAKIM, recognised internationally as a progressive Muslim country. The halal brand is a broader concept that goes beyond the halal logo and incorporates ethical practices like sustainability, animal welfare, and fair labour standards. The halal brand is a successful marketing strategy to reach out to the market segment of the Muslim community. It can bind the principles of the religion to construct brands of general appeal to Muslim and non-Muslim customers.

The effects theory is a concept that suggests that branding can influence people's attitudes and behaviour towards products and services. The effects theory suggests that branding can influence people's attitudes and intentions to purchase products and services. Brand identity is the unique value perception established by integrating brand positioning, culture, and other factors. Developing a unique brand identity that reflects the values and principles of halal is essential to differentiate the brand from competitors and appeal to Muslim and non-Muslim consumers. Incorporating ethical practices like sustainability, animal welfare, and fair labour standards into branding and marketing strategies can appeal to a broader audience, including non-Muslim consumers who prioritise ethical consumption. Brand personality appeal can influence consumer behaviour and purchase intention.

Under the HIMP 2030, 23 initiatives have been identified to anchor the seven strategic thrusts and address the opportunities and challenges in the halal industry. These initiatives, along with others, aim to create a comprehensive and dynamic halal industry ecosystem in Malaysia, enhance the competitiveness of Malaysian halal products and services, attract investments, and strengthen Malaysia's position as a global leader in the halal market. By implementing these initiatives, Malaysia aims to capitalise on the growing global demand for halal products and services and drive the sustainable growth of its halal industry. Of the 23 initiatives, the two initiatives that are most relevant to developing Malaysia's halal brand are:

1. Halal branding and marketing: Promoting the "Halal Malaysia" brand internationally and developing effective marketing strategies to position Malaysian halal products and services in the global market.
2. Halal trade promotion: Implementing comprehensive trade promotion strategies to increase the export of halal products and services, including participation in international trade fairs and exhibitions.

While the theory is clear on how brand identity is an important aspect that influences consumers' purchase decisions, less is known about how Malaysian administrators, partners and companies perceive and plan to translate the two marketing and promotion initiatives into action and eventually achieve the global halal hub status. The issue is crucial in light of the findings that the Malaysian halal logo currently enjoys more visibility than the more critical brand identity, Malaysia's halal brand.

METHODOLOGY

This study is designed to answer the main research questions: How do halal brand identity and positioning assist Malaysia to become a global halal hub? Does Malaysia have its own halal brand identity? What are the recommended strategies to improve halal brand identity? Qualitative research methods using in-depth interviews using semi-structured in-depth interview instruments were carried out with eight identified respondents who were either chief executive officers, presidents of participating companies or partners and directors of various government agencies at local and international branches. The composition of the respondents is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: List of respondents and their profiles

Respondent	Company/organisation	Business nature
R1	The director of a government agency on halal unit products and services promotion	Government promotion agency
R2	Halal hub director	Government agency responsible for the Islamic affairs including halal certification in Malaysia
R3	Chief executive officer	Government halal agency (under MITI)
R4	Director of Tourism Malaysia	Malaysia Tourism Agency – Oversea
R5	MATRADE	Government promotion agency – Oversea
R6	Co-operative affairs manager	New Zealand multinational dairy co-operative
R7	Regulatory and scientific affairs manager	Swiss company based in Malaysia
R8	Chief executive officer/president	Thailand supermarket operator

This interview was conducted to understand the overall perspective on making Malaysia a global halal hub and retaining its position as a global halal leader, the marketing strategies adopted and their role in promoting and positioning Malaysia's position in Malaysian halal products and services in the global market. Higher-ranking officials in the ministries are essential informants who can provide a source of information on the development of the Malaysian halal hub industry. They have first-hand knowledge of strategic choices, vision-setting, and overall organisational direction. Ultimately, the respondents' knowledge and experience can bring valuable insight that contributes significantly to the study. The partners and participating halal brand companies could give a different perspective on the identified issues so that the efficacy and shortcomings of the present initiatives could be strategically and transparently evaluated.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The majority of the respondents fully grasp their roles in leading this endeavour and comprehensively understand Malaysia's inherent strengths and weaknesses. These respondents are also well-versed in Malaysia's potential challenges and opportunities in pursuit of its stated objective, along with its commitment to sustaining its dominance in the USD3.66 trillion global halal market.

Malaysia's Success and Challenges in Becoming a Global Halal Hub

When asked about Malaysia's challenges to achieve the global halal hub status and sustain its leadership in the global halal market worth USD3.66 trillion, most respondents mentioned marketing and promotion, including digital marketing. Coordination issues among the many ministries related to halal and satisfying other international standards such as good manufacturing practice (GMP) for the food industry, hazard analysis and critical control point (HACCP) and the British Retail Consortium (BRC) global standard for food safety, quality and responsibility certification. The lack of uniform halal global guidelines, standards and definitions further hampered the effort to consolidate halal positioning worldwide. Based on the responses, it is clear that much of Malaysia's halal success hinges upon its firm certification and first-mover effect, being the first to come up with halal certification. Products with Malaysian or JAKIM certification are highly accepted by other countries worldwide, reducing entry barriers for its products to enter the international market. Malaysia has created a robust and comprehensive halal ecosystem, encompassing the entire value chain from production to distribution and marketing.

Whilst these efforts strengthen Malaysia's position as a global leader in the halal industry, other countries and organisations are fast closing the gaps with potentially better halal services. At the same time, other certification bodies relating to food particularly are positioning themselves as additional essential endorsements to food safety, quality and responsibility aside from halal certification. These certification bodies use differentiation strategies to separate themselves from halal certification, with the latter being marketed as a halal-certified product permissible or acceptable by Islamic law. By positioning halal products as those that have fulfilled the requirements of Islamic law, the scope of coverage is limited to Muslim users only.

Even though the respondents did not explicitly mention the issue, many brought up the need to expand the meaning of halal beyond religious interpretations. *Toyyiban* (wholesomeness) concept includes the dimension of quality and natural appeal. *Toyyiban* complements the halal principles by emphasising the integration of what is permissible and what is good, wholesome, and beneficial. It encompasses ethical practices, safety, efficacy, and consumer well-being. By incorporating *toyyiban* into their operations, businesses can create a strong halal brand personality that resonates with Muslim consumers and promotes ethical consumption.

The respondents acknowledge that while Malaysia is strong on certification, it still needs to improve in developing its brand identity or having its own halal

products (brands). Consumers around the globe readily accept JAKIM's halal logo, but local small and medium enterprises cannot take advantage of the solid international presence of Malaysia's halal logo. Other countries use Malaysia's halal logo to penetrate the international markets and create their success stories, while Malaysian small and medium enterprises (SMEs) lag. The findings bring about a need to better coordinate and integrate the roles of various government agencies to assist SMEs to establish their halal brand identity and gain a more significant share of the global halal markets. Access to financing, capacity limitations and non-compliance with the agencies' requirements are cited as the significant shortcomings of SMEs in creating their own halal brand identity. HIMP 2030 aims to address the weaknesses of HIMP 1.0 holistically, so more focus on developing this brand identity for SMEs is needed. They are notably developing effective marketing strategies using digital platforms to reach Muslim consumers and promote their halal brand identity.

Developing a Strong Halal Brand Identity

The hierarchy-of-effects suggests that developing a solid brand personality can influence consumer behaviour and purchase intention. To appeal to Muslim consumers, businesses can use brand personality appeal strategies, such as sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness. By aligning the brand personality with halal values, businesses can create a strong brand identity that resonates with the target audience.

Some examples of successful halal brand personality appeal campaigns include Nestlé, McDonald's, Unilever, Ayam Brand, and Emirates. The leading multinational companies, including the local Ayam Brand, initiate these five brand personality appeal campaigns. The specific examples of their initiatives are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Selected successful halal brand personality appeal campaign worldwide

Halal campaign	Brand personality appeal	Campaign description
Nestlé	Emphasised benefits of halal products, such as quality, safety, and ethical practices.	Nestlé's halal campaign: Nestlé's halal campaign in Malaysia focused on promoting the brand's commitment to halal values and ethical practices. The campaign included a series of advertisements that emphasised the benefits of halal products, such as quality, safety, and ethical practices. The campaign resonated with Muslim consumers and helped Nestlé establish a strong halal brand identity in the Malaysian market (Borzooci and Asgari 2013a).

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Table 2: (continued)

Halal campaign	Brand personality appeal	Campaign description
McDonald's	Promoting the brand's commitment to halal values, quality and safety and ethical practices.	McDonald's halal campaign in the Middle East focused on promoting the brand's commitment to halal values and ethical practices. The campaign included a series of advertisements that emphasised the quality and safety of halal products. The campaign resonated with Muslim consumers and helped McDonald's establish a strong halal brand identity in the Middle Eastern market (Borzooei and Asgari 2013b).
Unilever	Promoting the brand's commitment to halal values and emphasising the benefits of halal products, such as quality, safety, and ethical practices.	Unilever's halal campaign in Indonesia focused on promoting the brand's commitment to halal values and ethical practices. The campaign included a series of advertisements that emphasised the benefits of halal products, such as quality, safety, and ethical practices. The campaign resonated with Muslim consumers and helped Unilever establish a strong halal brand identity in the Indonesian market (Jamilah 2014).
Ayam Brand	Promoting the brand's commitment to halal values and ethical practices and emphasised the quality and safety of halal products.	Ayam Brand's halal campaign in Malaysia focused on promoting the brand's commitment to halal values and ethical practices. The campaign included a series of advertisements that emphasised the quality and safety of halal products. The campaign resonated with Muslim consumers and helped Ayam Brand establish a strong halal brand identity in the Malaysian market (Wilson et al. 2013).
Emirates	Promoting the brand's commitment to halal values and ethical practices that emphasised the quality and safety of halal products.	Emirates' halal campaign: Emirates' halal campaign focused on promoting the brand's commitment to halal values and ethical practices. The campaign included a series of advertisements that emphasised the quality and safety of halal products. The campaign resonated with Muslim consumers and helped Emirates establish a strong halal brand identity in the airline industry (Muhamad Izzuddin et al. 2018).
Marrybrown	Promoting the brand's commitment to halal values and ethical practices while emphasising the quality and safety of its products.	Marrybrown is a Malaysian fast-food chain that produces halal-certified food products. The brand has successfully established a strong halal brand identity by emphasising the quality and safety of its products. Marrybrown's marketing campaigns focus on promoting the brand's commitment to halal values and ethical practices, resonating with Muslim consumers who value these aspects (Muhamad Fazil 2015).

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Table 2: (continued)

Halal campaign	Brand personality appeal	Campaign description
Ramly Burger	Emphasising the quality and safety of its products while promoting the brand's commitment to halal values and ethical practices.	Ramly Burger is a Malaysian fast-food chain that produces halal-certified burgers. The brand has successfully established a strong halal brand identity by emphasising the quality and safety of its products. Ramly Burger's marketing campaigns focus on promoting the brand's commitment to halal values and ethical practices, resonating with Muslim consumers who value these aspects (Muhamad Fazil 2013).

Table 2 shows that many successful halal brand personality appeal campaigns involved already-established brands. Suppose the brands are widely known as conventional or mainstream brands. In that case, the respective companies position their brands using appeal strategies such as sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness to appeal to Muslim consumers. With the multinational companies' strong presence in social media and digital marketing, migrating or penetrating the halal market is another accomplishment.

In summary, successful halal brand personality appeal campaigns focus on promoting the brand's commitment to halal values and ethical practices. By emphasising the benefits of halal products, such as quality, safety, and ethical practices, businesses can create a strong halal brand identity that resonates with Muslim consumers and promotes ethical consumption. By connecting halal brand personality appeal to promote ethical consumption, the demarcation line between halal being perceived as a mere fulfilment of religious requirements and lifestyle consumption is becoming blurry. The halal promotion should leverage this new trend and lifestyle preference to create a perception that halal certification is also an endorsement of quality, safety and ethical practices.

Utilising Effects Theory to Develop Halal Brand Identity and Marketing Strategies

Effects theory, also known as media effects theory, is a field of study that explores the impact of mass media on individuals' thoughts, attitudes, and behaviours. It examines how exposure to media messages can shape perceptions, beliefs, and actions. Effects theory encompasses various theories that explain the impact of mass media on individuals' thoughts, attitudes, and behaviours. These theories highlight the role of media in shaping perceptions of reality, influencing public opinion, fulfilling individual needs, facilitating social learning, and shaping social

behaviour. Understanding effects theory can provide insights into the ways media influences individuals and society as a whole.

To sustain Malaysia's leadership in the halal market and push Malaysia as the global halal hub, Malaysia has to take advantage of the changing market trends that view halal certification as an endorsement of quality, safety and ethical practices beyond religious compliance. As highlighted by most respondents in the semi-structured interview, Malaysia lacks its own halal brand identity. The many halal promotion and marketing campaigns undertaken strengthened the visibility of JAKIM's halal logo on the world stage but did not do enough to nurture Malaysia's halal brand identity. Many SMEs struggle to make an international halal market impact as they are still solving financing, capacity and compliance issues. In the long run, the survival or sustainability of halal companies depend much on the halal brand identity. Thus, the government is encouraged to utilise effects theory to craft effective marketing strategies to create a strong halal brand identity that resonates with Muslim consumers and promotes ethical consumption.

The following are the recommended marketing and communication strategies to develop Malaysia's halal brand identity.

Develop a strong brand personality

Effects theory suggests that developing a strong brand personality can influence consumer behaviour and purchase intention. To appeal to Muslim consumers, businesses can use brand personality appeal strategies, such as sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness. By aligning the brand personality with halal values, businesses can create a strong halal brand identity that resonates with the target audience.

Emphasise the benefits of halal products

Effects theory suggests that highlighting the benefits of a product can influence consumer behaviour and purchase intention. Businesses can emphasise the benefits of halal products, such as quality, safety and ethical practices, to appeal to Muslim consumers who value these aspects. By promoting the benefits of halal products, businesses can create a positive perception of their brand and establish a strong halal brand identity. Halal branding often goes beyond religious requirements and incorporates ethical practices such as sustainability, animal welfare and fair labour practices. Businesses can promote their commitment to these ethical practices in their branding and marketing messages to appeal to Muslim consumers who value these practices.

Use emotional branding

Effects theory suggests that emotional branding can create a solid emotional connection between the brand and the consumer, leading to increased loyalty and purchase intention. Businesses can use emotional branding strategies, such as storytelling, sensory branding, and personalisation, to create a unique and emotionally resonant brand experience for Muslim consumers. By tapping into consumers' emotions, businesses can create a strong halal brand identity that resonates with the target audience.

Know your target audience

Knowing the target audience is essential in developing a strong halal brand personality. Businesses should gain a deep understanding of the target audience, their preferences, values and behaviours. The understanding will help tailor the brand messaging and content to resonate with the target audience.

Use social media and digital marketing

Social media and digital marketing are effective tools for businesses to reach Muslim consumers and promote their halal brand personality. Establish a strong presence on social media platforms among the target audience, such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube, to engage with Muslim consumers, share their halal values, and promote their products and services. Regularly post engaging content, respond to comments and messages and actively engage with followers to build a community around the brand.

Create engaging and informative content

Develop high-quality content that educates and informs the target audience about halal products and services. Examples include blog posts, videos, infographics and social media posts, highlighting the brand's halal aspects, such as certifications, ethical practices and quality standards.

Collaborate with influencers

Partnering with influential individuals or organisations within the halal industry or the Muslim community who have a strong following on social media can help increase brand visibility, credibility and reach among the target audience.

Leverage user-generated content

Encourage customers to share their experiences with the brand and halal products/services on social media. Repost and share user-generated content to showcase positive reviews and testimonials, which can build trust and credibility for the brand.

Run targeted advertising campaigns

Utilise social media advertising platforms to run targeted campaigns that reach the desired audience based on demographics, interests and behaviours. Media advertising can help increase brand awareness, drive website traffic and generate leads.

Participate in community initiatives

Effects theory suggests that participating in community initiatives can help build a positive brand image and strengthen the brand's connection with the target audience. Businesses can participate in community initiatives and events related to the halal industry or the Muslim community to promote their halal brand identity. The initiatives can include sponsoring halal events, supporting charitable causes, or organising educational workshops. Such initiatives can help build a positive brand image and strengthen the brand's connection with the target audience.

Monitor and analyse performance

Regularly monitor and analyse the performance of social media and digital marketing efforts. Use analytics tools to track engagement metrics, audience demographics, and conversion rates. This data can provide insights into the effectiveness of the strategies and help refine future marketing campaigns. By implementing these strategies, businesses can effectively leverage social media and digital marketing to create a strong halal brand identity, engage with the target audience, and establish a reputable presence in the halal industry.

CONCLUSION

Malaysia has successfully positioned itself as a global halal hub from the perspective of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) food manufacturers. The country has established itself as a trusted source of halal products and services by focusing on quality and safety. This reputation has helped Malaysia to attract

funders to invest in the country and promote the halal industry. The Malaysian government has proactively improved halal standards, enhancing commercial and industry development and branding. The country has set up institutions to determine halal's efficacy and deal with its production, trade, and innovation issues. The initiatives have helped Malaysia establish itself as a global halal hub and attract halal businesses worldwide.

Being the first country to set up halal certification standards and processes, Malaysia has enjoyed a reputation as a trusted source of halal products and services through JAKIM's halal logo. The investment in the halal processes and ecosystems comes at the expense of under-development of Malaysia's own halal branding identity. The eight high-ranking respondents, through semi-structured interviews, agreed that Malaysia's halal brand identity is underdeveloped. Going forward, the sustainability of Malaysia being a global halal hub is very much dependent on how Malaysia can develop a strong halal brand appeal identity. This article has discussed some successful halal brand identity campaigns undertaken by the world's and regional major brands. Malaysia's successful halal brand personality appeal campaigns focus on promoting the brand's commitment to halal values and ethical practices and emphasising the benefits of halal products, such as quality, safety and ethical practices. Businesses that resonate with Muslim consumers and promote ethical consumption create a strong halal brand identity.

As highlighted by most respondents in the semi-structured interview, Malaysia lacks its own halal brand identity. The many halal promotion and marketing campaigns strengthened the visibility of JAKIM's halal logo on the world stage but did not do enough to nurture Malaysia's halal brand identity. Many SMEs struggle to make an international halal market impact as they are still solving financing, capacity and compliance issues. In the long run, the survival or sustainability of halal companies depend much on the halal brand's identity. Thus, the government is encouraged to use effects theory to craft compelling digital marketing strategies to create a strong halal brand identity that resonates with Muslim consumers and promotes ethical consumption. The study recommended comprehensive marketing and communication strategies to develop Malaysia's halal brand identity.

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