

Halal Supply Chains in Multicultural Markets: The Challenges and Opportunities of Cultural Sensitivity and Globalization

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the role of cultural and societal factors in halal supply chains, with a focus on cultural sensitivity in halal marketing and packaging, as well as the impact of globalization on halal practices. The halal industry, traditionally rooted in Islamic practices, is facing new challenges and opportunities as it expands into global markets with diverse consumer bases. By examining how cultural and religious sensitivities influence marketing strategies and product packaging, and how globalization shapes local halal practices, this research aims to provide insights into the evolving dynamics of halal supply chains. A qualitative research methodology, including in-depth interviews with halal industry stakeholders, was employed to explore these issues. The findings reveal that cultural sensitivity and local traditions significantly impact halal marketing, while globalization is driving homogenization in some aspects of halal practices, yet simultaneously encouraging local adaptations in others. The study concludes with recommendations for businesses to balance global standardization with local cultural nuances to ensure market acceptance and sustainability.

Keywords: Globalization, halal industry, halal supply chain, multicultural market, cultural sensitivity

INTRODUCTION

Expansion of Halal Industry

The halal sector has grown at an unprecedented rate in the past few years and has now become an essential overall sector of the global economy. Every species is recognized in the Islam as halal or haram, which means "permitted" or "forbidden" in Arabic. Business owner can implement halal to sell food and beverages as well as cosmetics and pharmaceuticals in tourism and financial services (Abdul et al. 2018). Slated to exceed \$2.3 trillion globally (Thomson Reuters, 2022), the increasing demand for halal-certified products is driven by the world's 1.9 billion Muslims (Pew Research Center, 2021). Moreover, halal is not only limited to Islamic majority countries, it penetrated into non-Islamic countries including Europe, North America, and East Asia with the increasing trends of ethical consumerism and health consciousness (Wilson & Liu, 2010).

In addition, the increasing affluence of Muslims, predominantly in Southeast Asia and the Middle East, with disposable incomes growing faster than the global average, has also contributed to the expansion of the halal industry (Daghistani, 2020). Hence the ubiquitous proliferation of halal certification bodies and the standardization of halal practices have also aided the global spread of this industry (Tieman, 2011). But this

rapid development has not gone without challenges, especially when it comes to retaining halal status in a way that is in line with various cultural and market contexts.

Contextual and Religious Sensitivities in the Marketing of Halal

An important challenge for the halal industry is to manage cultural and religious sensitivities in marketing and packaging token strategies. Not only are halal products a means of adhering to Islamic diet law, but they also reflect a set of ethical, cultural, and religious values that resonate with Muslim consumers (Battour & Ismail, 2016). Halal packaging, for instance, often includes religious symbols, such as the crescent moon or Arabic characters, that signal Islamic-appropriate provisions. But in non-Muslim markets, they may not resonate with consumers and may even cause misunderstanding or rejection (Wilson et al., 2013).

In addition, halal concept is a lot more than food, covering ethical sourcing, animal welfare, and environmental sustainability that are becoming more and more crucial for global consumers (Ali et al., 2018). In order to appeal to Muslims as well as non-Muslims, halal brands now have the chance to market themselves as ethical and sustainable options. Achieving this, however, is not a simple task, as it necessitates a deeper understanding of differences between cultures and preferences in each individual market. For example, what are considered as priorities for Muslim consumers in Malaysia may differ from these factors in a European context with Muslims where ethical sourcing and transparency are more dominant (Tiemann & Ghazali, 2014).

Globalization, Halal and Global Halal Practices

The halal industry has been significantly impacted by globalization, resulting in both challenges and opportunities. At one end, globalization is responsible for making products more widely available, thus enabling Muslim consumers to obtain halal goods in areas where they were previously inaccessible (Fischer, 2015). According to Berguad-Blackler (2007), the globalization of halal has raised questions about the authenticity of halal standards and has been also accusations of halal being turned into a commodity rather than the adherence to appears to them as religious law. A paradox to halal market trends includes the growth of multinational corporations (MNCs) in the halal arena, raising questions about the genuineness of their halal statement, especially when revenue maximization seems to be their main goal in solidifying their market share rather than compliance to religion (Lada et al., 2009).

In addition, globalization has resulted in the homogenization of consumer preferences, as younger generations of Muslims are even more influenced by global trends and lifestyles (Sandıkçı & Ger, 2010). This has led to a tension between traditional halal practices and modern consumer demands, especially in urban areas where Western lifestyles are more common. For example, halal fast food and ready-to-eat demand indicate the impact of globalisation on Muslim eating behaviours (Abdul et al., 2018). Simultaneously, there is an increasing trend among Muslim consumers to seek out organic and locally sourced halal foods, in the context of a broader cultural desire to return to one's roots and resist against global homogenization (Fischer, 2015).

Research Question and Research Objectives

Research Question:

How do cultural and societal factors shape the halal supply chains such as those relevant in marketing, packaging, and globalisation effects on local halal consumption?

Research Objectives:

1. Examine the cultural and religious sensitivities involved in the marketing and packaging of halal-certified products.
2. To study the influence of globalization on the halal practices and consumer preferences in a local context.
3. Identify the challenges, as well as opportunities for businesses, on how to navigate diverse cultural and societal differences across the halal supply chain.

4. To give recommendations for halal supply chain stakeholders to increase cultural sensitivity and adapt to global market developments.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Marketing and Packaging Sensitivity to Halal Culture

This is particularly relevant in the context of halal marketing strategy and packaging because cultural and religious sensitivities play a key role. When halal-certified products reach global markets, cultural adaptation becomes more critical than ever. According to Awan et al. (2020), packaging holds a major part in transmission of halal message and creating consumer confidence. When launching halal products outside Muslim-majority regions, cultural variables such as perceptions of cleanliness, ethics and the impression of religions authenticity must be carefully considered (Osman et., 2024 & Senathirajah et., 2024).

Where halal is well known, such as in Muslim-majority countries, traditional halal symbols and logos will be understood, but in smaller markets halal may require explaining through packaging. Research by Kamal et al. (2021) notes that consumer perceptions of halal products are shaped by cultural and religious factors, with packaging signalling product credibility and authenticity.

Impact of Globalization on Halal Practices

The importance of halal in the world has turned into a key covering and a universal guide in addition to being one of the essential components of contemporary food production united to globalization, given that the method of consumption is being standardized and the preferences of consumers are increasingly variable (Ibrahim et., 2024 & Sarbani et., 2024)). To support globalization, international halal certification organizations have emerged to unify halal standards from country to country. However, as globalization spreads, this standardization has often resulted in the ihram of local halal practices in an effort to adhere to world standards (Idris et., 2024 & Toloie et., 2024).

However, globalization has also contributed to the dissemination of knowledge and practices beneficial to local cultural adaptation or customization. Studies by Fadhilah et al. However, Ali et al. (2021) mention that local traditions and religious subtleties shape consumer expectations despite globalization of halal practices in non-Muslim-majority countries.

Research Methodology

Various public and academic sectors have covered the origins of HSC with a qualitative search-methodology on cultural and social aspects. This was intended to provide an in-depth qualitative exploration capturing the subjective experiences of industry stakeholders which is also necessary for the complex interplay of cultural and societal influences present in the halal space.

The paper employs a qualitative research methodology, utilizing NVivo software to analyze data collected from semi-structured interviews with stakeholders in the halal supply chain. NVivo played a crucial role in organizing, coding, and interpreting the data, enabling the researchers to identify key themes related to cultural sensitivity, globalization, and consumer behavior in the halal industry. The data was collected through interviews with 15 stakeholders, including halal product manufacturers, certification bodies, marketing and packaging experts, and consumers. These interviews were transcribed and imported into NVivo, where the software facilitated the coding process by identifying recurring patterns and themes across the transcripts. NVivo's visualization tools, such as word clouds and thematic maps, helped the researchers visualize the frequency and relationships between different themes, ensuring a robust and well-supported analysis.

Using NVivo, the researchers identified four major themes that emerged from the data. The first theme, Halal Marketing and Packaging Cultural Sensitivity, highlighted the importance of cultural and religious sensitivities in packaging design, particularly in non-Muslim-majority regions. NVivo revealed that 80% of stakeholders emphasized the need to balance halal certification with culturally neutral symbols and explanatory text to appeal

to both Muslim and non-Muslim consumers. The second theme, Global Orientation and Local Halal Practices, focused on the tension between global standardization and local halal practices. NVivo showed that 60% of respondents discussed how globalization has led to the standardization of halal certification, but local customs remain crucial for maintaining authenticity and consumer trust. The third theme, Distribution of E-commerce and Halal Products, underscored the role of e-commerce in distributing halal products, especially in regions with limited access to halal goods. NVivo identified that 53% of respondents highlighted the importance of online platforms and social media in reaching younger Muslim consumers, while also emphasizing the need for clear labelling and culturally sensitive product descriptions to build trust. The fourth theme, Export Barriers, addressed the challenges of expanding halal products into new markets, particularly in regions with smaller Muslim populations. NVivo revealed that high certification costs and consumer misunderstandings are significant barriers, but educating consumers about halal principles can facilitate market entry.

Data collection

Data was obtained from semi-structured interviews with 15 stakeholders in the halal supply chain, including halal product manufacturers, packaging designers, marketers and certification bodies. Selection of participants was tailored by virtue of their status witnessed directly regarding halal integrated in marketing, packaging, or certification process. The interviews were conducted for three months (May-July 2024,) each interview lasted 45 to 60 minutes. The interviews have been conducted by face-to-face and also by online video conference.

Sample

The sample consists of individuals with first-hand knowledge of the halal industry, either as part of the halal value chain. The participants included:

- 5 manufacturers of halal products (food, cosmetics, and pharmaceuticals)
- 3 halal certification body
- 4 experts in marketing and packaging
- 3 consumers (singular: Muslim majority and non-Muslim majority region)

Data Analysis

The data were analysed thematically, a qualitative approach that identifies and interprets patterns or themes in the data. The data were analysed thematically with the support of NVivo software, which enabled breaking down information into several key themes pertinent to the topic of cultural sensitivity in marketing and packaging, and the effect of globalization on halal practices.

Semi-Structured Questionnaire for the Cultural and Societal Influences on Halal Supply Chains

The semi-structured questionnaire (provided below) was adapted to collect qualitative data from stakeholders along the halal supply chain including manufacturers, marketers, packaging professionals, halal certification agencies, and consumers. This is to investigate the cultural, community, and societal factors that can affect how halal products are marketed and packaged and how globalization can help or hinder in halal practices.

Section 1: Demographic Information

1. Name:
2. Organization/Position:
3. Country of Operation:
4. Industry Type (e.g., food, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, etc.):

-
5. Years of Experience in the Halal Industry:
 6. Type of Stakeholder (Manufacturer, Marketer, Packaging Expert, Consumer, Certifying Body, Other):

Section 2: Cultural Sensitivity in Halal Marketing and Packaging

1. What cultural or religious factors do you consider when designing the packaging for halal-certified products?
 - Follow-up: Can you provide specific examples of how these factors influence design choices?
2. In your opinion, how important is it to incorporate cultural symbols (e.g., halal logos, religious imagery) in packaging for halal products, particularly in non-Muslim-majority countries?
 - Follow-up: What symbols or images are most effective in conveying halal certification and why?
3. How do you address potential cultural misunderstandings or misconceptions about halal products in your marketing strategies?
 - Follow-up: Have you encountered challenges in conveying the halal message to consumers in multicultural or non-Muslim-majority regions?
4. How do you balance between adhering to traditional halal practices and adapting to consumer preferences in different regions?
 - Follow-up: Can you provide examples of how regional consumer preferences have shaped your marketing or packaging strategies?
5. Do you think there are any challenges when introducing halal products into markets where consumers may have limited understanding of what halal means?
 - Follow-up: What steps do you take to educate these consumers about halal certification and its significance?

Section 3: Impact of Globalization on Halal Practices

1. How has globalization influenced the demand for halal products in your region?
 - Follow-up: Have you observed any changes in consumer preferences due to global trends or increased multiculturalism?
2. Has the standardization of halal certification across different countries impacted the production processes and practices in your organization?
 - Follow-up: Do you think these global standards are universally applicable, or do they need to be adapted to local cultural and religious practices?
3. In what ways has globalization influenced the supply chain management of halal products, such as sourcing, production, and distribution?
 - Follow-up: Are there any specific challenges that arise from sourcing halal-certified ingredients or managing the halal certification process across different regions?
4. Do you believe that globalization has led to the homogenization of halal practices, or do you think that local customs and traditions still play an essential role in halal product production and certification?

- Follow-up: Can you provide any examples where local halal practices were preserved despite globalization pressures?
5. How do you see the role of e-commerce and online platforms in the distribution of halal products, especially in countries where halal-certified goods are less available in physical stores?
- Follow-up: Do these platforms provide any unique challenges or opportunities for marketers in terms of cultural sensitivity?

Section 4: Challenges and Opportunities in Halal Supply Chains

1. What are the main challenges your organization faces when expanding halal products into new geographic regions, particularly those with cultural differences from your home country?
 - Follow-up: How do you overcome these challenges?
2. What opportunities do you see for expanding halal products into emerging markets such as Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, or Southeast Asia?
 - Follow-up: How do you plan to tailor your marketing or supply chain strategy for these regions?
3. How do you ensure that your halal certification meets local requirements without compromising global halal standards?
 - Follow-up: Are there specific examples where you had to modify certification processes to adapt to local cultural or religious contexts?
4. What role do cultural and religious education and training play in your approach to halal certification and product development?
 - Follow-up: Have you encountered any instances where cultural misunderstanding led to a significant issue in the supply chain?

Section 5: Globalization and Cultural Adaptation

1. How do you foresee the role of globalization continuing to shape halal markets in the future?
 - Follow-up: Do you believe globalization will lead to more uniform halal standards or a greater diversity of local halal practices?
2. In your experience, how do you balance the global demand for halal products with the need to respect local religious and cultural sensitivities?
 - Follow-up: What do you see as the future direction of halal product development in a globalized world?
3. What recommendations would you provide to halal supply chain stakeholders who are looking to enter new markets while being culturally sensitive to local practices?
 - Follow-up: Are there specific strategies or frameworks that you have found to be particularly effective in this regard?

DATA ANALYSIS

This part presents the researchers analysis of those responses he had received through semi-structured interviews with the major stakeholders in halal industry. Thematic analysis was employed on the data to

establish relevant themes, trends and insights. The findings are classified into four major themes, representing important aspects of halal supply chain, marketing and consumer behaviour.

Theme 1: Halal Marketing and Packaging Cultural Sensitivity

80% of the stakeholders felt that religious and cultural segments should be taken into consideration while designing packaging for halal products. For instance, Mr. Amirul bin Ahmad (Participant 10), expert on packaging design said that packaging in non-Muslim majority countries, such as Europe and North America, often need a combination between halal certified logo and culture neutral logos. The halal logo can also be seen as a "consumer magnifier" — Liang added that ethical symbols like "cruelty-free," "organic," can also be put in line with halal logo so other also rank with halal and appeal to non-Muslim buyers who may be unfamiliar with halal principles but are conscious of ethical and sustainable foods.

Likewise, Ms Sarah Tan (Participant 9), a halal branding specialist, highlighted the importance of explanatory text on packaging in non-Muslim markets. Sustainable-wise, terms such as "ethically sourced" or "produced in accordance with Islamic principles" can appeal to both Muslim and non-Muslim consumers. This approach is consistent with findings of Wilson et. al. (2013), who contend that halal branding must go beyond faith to capture more converts.

Insight:

- Packaging instructions in non-Muslim-majority areas need to balance halal certification with neutrally cultural symbols and explanatory text so that they attract both Muslims and non-Muslim consumers.
- Halal products are more attractive in the global markets through ethical design and sustainable branding.

Theme II: Global orientation and Local Halal Practices

Many (60%) of the respondents also considered that globalization has contributed the uniformity of halal certification,

Participant 1, a halal food manufacturer, states that the company keeps their traditional Malaysian halal slaughtering methods in place because they also follow global halal standards, and they intend to offer something that the consumer can trust and that they can find in an authentic way. This is consistent with the research by Tieman and Ghazali (2014) who identifies a tension between global levels of standardization and local response and adaptation within halal supply chains.

In contrast, it is possible for global standards to conflict with local religious and cultural practices; as noted by Dr. Hasan Al-Maliki (Participant 8), a global certification expert, these global standards are often meant to enhance cross-border export-ability of products, in addition to facilitating trade. The system accommodates local needs; for instance, in Indonesia, halal certification often incorporates additional stipulations, such as the use of locally sourced ingredients.

Insight:

- Halal certification has become more standardized globally, but localized best practices are needed to maintain its integrity and consumer confidence.
- Balancing global standards with local customs serves to highlight the rapid expansion of halal businesses into different market segments and the importance of niche branding.

Theme 3: Distribution of E-commerce and Halal Products

More than half (53%) of the respondents considered e-commerce platforms to be a key factor in the distribution

of halal products, especially in areas where halal products are not easily available in physical stores. In terms of reaching a young Muslim consumer base, Ms Nurul Izzah binti Ismail (Participant 11), a digital marketing expert, highlighted the Islamic economy's potential to engage with social media and online marketplaces. She said that platforms such as Shopee and Lazada play an important role for halal brands in Southeast Asia as they provide access to areas far from halal products.

Encik Faiz bin Mohd Ali (Participant 13), an urban Muslim consumer, shared that he frequently purchases halal products online due to the convenience and wider selection available. However, he emphasized the importance of clear labelling and culturally sensitive product descriptions to ensure trust and transparency.

Insight:

- E-commerce has created new channels of distribution for halal products, particularly in developing countries and rural regions.
- Consumers trust product information online about halal products only if professionally handled and with the right information available.

Theme 4: Export Barrier

Halal markets faced major hurdles in penetrating new markets, particularly in Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa, respondents said. Mr. Rajesh Kumar (Participant 4), who works as an operations manager at a halal food export company, identified the high cost of halal certification in markets with smaller Muslims population as a significant barrier. He added that there's often confusion about halal principles that makes it difficult to enter the market.

But despite these challenges, respondents also identified opportunities in emerging markets. To emphasize local education, Puan Norazlina binti Mohd Ali (Participant 7), a halal certification consultant, became knowledgeable about halal principles to facilitate acceptance. For instance, numerous halal certifying agencies in Brazil work together with local organizations to promote halal, especially to educate consumers about halal ethical and health benefits.

Insight:

- Expanding into emerging markets presents consumer misunderstandings and high certification costs as challenges.
- Educating tourism stakeholders in non-Islamic country and introducing halal working partnerships

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Marketing and Packaging that is Sensitive to Halal Culture:

In Muslim-majority markets, stakeholders noted that authenticity is a must, and Muslims seek out halal-certified labels, recognizable logos, and symbols on marketing and packaging. In non-Muslim-majority regions such as Europe and Latin America, however, packaging had to be more than just the halal certification logo. Marketers mentioned the use of culturally relevant imagery and language as a means of familiarizing consumers with the religious significance of halal, as well as the ethical values tied to halal practices.

For example, one packaging designer explained that for halal cosmetic products in Europe, packaging needed to emphasize ethical sourcing and cruelty-free nature in addition to halal certification as those attributes were in line with European consumers' values. Halal food manufacturers based in the UK argued that the labelling needed to be made clearer and that ethical/religious justifications were needed to convince non-Muslim consumers that the halal process was trustworthy.

Globalization and Its Influence on the Halal Practices:

Globalisation was also found to have both positive and negative influence on local halal practices. In a positive aspect, globalization have contributed the spread of halal practices to new areas. Multicultural cities in the UK, the US, and South Korea recorded a high demand for halal food and cosmetic brands in the same way, which continues to encourage halal certification brands. Other local halal practices appeared to be at risk of becoming homogenized through the standardization of halal by international certification bodies.

In some areas, local halal customs were maintained and even strengthened by globalization. An interview with halal food producers in Malaysia and Indonesia, for example, highlighted how globalization has helped the halal industry to reach wider markets without compromising local halal slaughtering practices and traditions. In the same way, with the emergence of globalization, there are more opportunities to cooperate between halal certification bodies between countries so that local halal standards can be integrated into global practices.

Challenges and Opportunities:

Key challenges reflected from the findings in the study include complex and diverging halal standards among different regions, and balancing demand created by the larger halal market with sensitivities arising due to local culture. However, there are spaces for businesses to orbit around their commitment to local halal practices and culture while ensuring the same standards that companies strive globally for.

The study provides great insights into the determinants of halal supply chains in terms of dietary and health aspects in the light of the cultural context. Indeed, careful consideration of local customs will be vital to ensuring acceptance of halal products among consumers, especially in non-Muslim-majority areas, where the marketing and packaging of halal products must take on a culturally sensitive approach. At the same time, globalization is fuelling the adoption of halal practices and also the standardization of some elements of halal certification. The results indicate that companies need to find a balance between aligning with international halal specifications honouring local religious and cultural practices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Thus, on the basis of interview-derived results and thematic analysis, the following recommendations are proposed for halal industry stakeholders to manage the challenges and opportunities identified from the current study. These include bolstering their cultural appreciation, strengthening their market expansion plans, and harnessing the power of technology to keep them on a growth trajectory.

Customizing the packaging and marketing to local culture

Symbols on packaging should include those with cultural significance and educational elements that would help in Muslim coverage in non-Muslim-majority regions. By taking halal apart, it can help bridge the differences between Muslim and non-Muslim consumers, making halal products seem very more mainstream and available to non-Muslim mainstream consumers.

Supporting Evidence:

Non-Muslim consumers may also be attracted to halal certification marks on product packaging, but it is important to balance with a more culturally-neutral symbol, such as "cruelty-free" or "organic," so as not to alienate them - Mr. Amirul bin Ahmad (Participant 10), packaging design expert. Explanatory text like "ethically sourced" or "produced in accordance with Islamic principles" can help demystify halal practices for an audience that may be unfamiliar with the details, he said. A halal blogging expert halal marketing Sarah Tan (Participant 9), mentioned the importance of storytelling halal marketing. Brands could enter the halal category by using packaging to speak to the ethical and religious significance of halal, which varies by region and is informed by different cultural values, she advised.

Academic Support:

Wilson et al. (2013) claim that halal branding needs to go beyond the religious scope in order to be interesting to the global audience.

They suggest adopting culturally sensitive marketing strategies to make halal products more attractive in non-Muslim regions.

Implementation:

- Conduct market research to explore the cultural beliefs or values of key audiences.
- Simply work with native designers and advertisers to establish product packaging that customers around those regions relate to.
- Educate consumers about halal principles using multilingual labeling and descriptive text.

Work with Local Stakeholders

Businesses are encouraged to collaborate with local halal certification organizations and relevant stakeholders to promote adherence to international halal standards while integrating regional cultural practices. Such an alliance can lend itself to preserving the authenticity of halal offerings whilst being more attuned to things local to the locality.

Supporting Evidence:

Dr. Hasan Al-Maliki (Participant 8), an expert in international certification, stated that although halal standards are universal and designed to help trade between countries, they must be calibrated to reflect local customs. So, in Indonesia, halal certification involves additional criteria like the use of local ingredients to secure consumer trust. Participant 7 as Puan Norazlina binti Mohd Ali, Halal Certification Consultant; stated that, local education on the halal principles were crucial as it will increase the acceptance among the non-Muslim majority.

Academic Support:

They refer to this as a balancing of global standards against local practices in the halal supply chain in order to maintain its integrity (Tieman & Ghazali, 2014). They say that businesses should work with local stakeholders to navigate cultural and religious sensitivities.

Implementation:

- Partner with the regional halal certifying bodies.
- Work with local communities to increase awareness of the benefits of halal.
- Localize local customs and practices in halal production processes to ensure authenticity and consumer acceptance in global markets.

Leverage E-commerce for Expansion

The kind of products offered by these e-commerce platforms can vary (local consumer goods, fresh food, etc). Through e-commerce, halal brands are able to reach consumers in remote locations or in areas with insufficient halal goods.

Supporting Evidence:

Ms. Nurul Izzah binti Islam (Participant 11), a digital marketing consultant, emphasized the role of social media

and online marketplaces in connecting with younger generations of Muslim consumers. Halal brands in Southeast Asia, especially, have identified platforms such as Shopee and Lazada as indispensable, reaching remote areas with minimal availability of halal products, she highlighted. Encik Faiz bin Mohd Ali (Participant 13, Urban Muslim Consumer): "I buy a lot of halal products online because they're easy to access and there's more variety". But he also stressed the need to clearly label ingredients and market the products in a culture-sensitive way to guarantee trust and transparency.

Academic Support:

Abdul et al. (2020) e-commerce platform plays an efficient distribution channel of halal products in developing countries (p.16). They also encourage companies that are not already utilizing digital channels to do so in order to increase consumer accessibility and expand their target market.

Implementation:

- Build e-commerce sites that are easy to navigate with descriptions of products that are clinical but regionally appropriate.
- Familiarize yourself with social media marketing to target a younger audience and boost sales of halal products.
- Work with local logistics services to make sure halal products are delivered on time and without a hitch.

Future Implication in the Holistic Sector

However, the recommendations presented above have wider-scale implications for the halal industry particularly in light of globalization and cultural diversity. The people of the world to allow halal businesses to adapt their packaging as well as presentation according to local preference and work with local participants but expand their reach using e-Commerce methods to be able to penetrate wider market penetration combining the principles of halal business practices.

Academic Support:

According to Fischer (2011), whether halal brands will succeed in world markets or not will depend on their ability to address different cultural diversity and respond to local contexts. Consumer higher education and trust gain through culturally relativity.

Implementation:

- Global strategies with local adaptations to cultural and religious concerns
- Enhance consumer awareness about the benefits of halal products through educational campaigns.
- Leverage data analytics to track consumer preferences and adjust your marketing strategies accordingly.

CONCLUSION

With the growing necessity for these businesses to comply with halal certification requirements, the halal industry has developed into an important player in the world economy, catering to the needs of both Muslim and non-Muslim customers. The relationship between cultural sensitivity, globalization and consumer behaviour has been investigated in relation to halal supply chains, marketing and distribution. This study has identified important halal industry challenges and opportunities using information gathered through interviews with critical stakeholders ranging from halal manufacturers to certifiers, marketers, and consumers. These findings highlight the significance of cultural adaptation and collaborative networking, as well as consumer education, in sustaining the growth and success of halal enterprises in a global environment.

Key Findings

The analysis revealed several key themes that are central to the halal industry's evolution:

Cultural Sensitivity in Marketing and Packaging:

The research revealed the importance of cultural and religious sensitivities when designing packaging and marketing strategies for halal products, especially in non-Muslim-majority markets. Participants including Mr. Amirul bin Ahmad (Participant 10) and Ms. Sarah Tan (Participant 9) noted that halal food products should have culturally neutral symbols and written English explanations to further facilitate their consumption by non-Muslims. This is in line with Wilson et al. (2013), who contend that halal branding should go beyond religious limits and aim for a universal audience.

Local Practices in the Age of Globalization:

However, the fast (globalization and) globalization, which has made halal certification much easier and more standardized, has also led the study to call for conserving local halal practices that offer assurance to consumers that halal dietary practices are legitimate and authentic. In Muslim-majority regions, local customs such as traditional slaughtering methods are still paramount among consumer perception (Dr. Hasan Al-Maliki, Participant 8; Encik Ahmad bin Ismail, Participant 1). This tension between standards and local practices is in line with the findings of Tieman and Ghazali (2014) who showed the need for balance in the halal supply chain.

E-Commerce and Consumers Education:

In emerging markets, e-commerce platforms have played a significant role in bringing new horizons to halal-based products. Nonetheless, Participant 11 and Participant 13 also stressed the need for clear labeling and culturally relevant product information to establish consumer trust. Ali et al. corroborated this finding (2019), highlighting the importance of educating consumers to enhance acceptance of halal products in non-Muslim-majority marketplaces.

Implication for the Halal Industry

The outcomes of this study had numerous significant implications for halal industry players:

From Cultural Adaptation to a Competitive Advantage:

A major competitive advantage for halal businesses is the ability to adjust marketing and packaging strategies to mirror local cultural and religious issues. And by using culturally neutral symbols and explanatory text, businesses can be more inclusive while still respecting the principles of halal. Such strategy is in line with Fischer (2015) that cultural sensitivity is key for successful halal brands in the world.

Coordination Among Certification Bodies:

The research emphasizes the importance of strengthening collaboration between international and local halal certifying bodies to guarantee that established global principles are compatible with localized practices. Such collaboration will contribute to the safeguarding of halal diversity, as well as encourage trades across borders. Local education and partnerships were indicated to be important for increasing acceptance of halal products in non-Muslim majority locations, as noted by Puan Norazlina binti Mohd Ali (Participant 7).

Educate Your Consumers:

Educating Consumers about halal products is a manner to earn the trust and acceptance of halal products, particularly in non-Muslim-majority markets. Through educational programs and digital outreach, halal companies can help clarify popular misconceptions and create a loyal customer base. These results align with Wilson and Liu (2010) as they stressed the importance of transparency in halal branding.

Future Research Directions

Although this study has contributed valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities facing the halal industry, there are a number of areas that merit further research:

Technology on Halal Supply Chains Impact

Further investigations on Halal products' supply, sourcing, market application, security and examples for business opportunities can be done magnetizing halal certification through the blockchain technology as it plays a pivotal role in ensuring the integrity of halal supply chains and can be a game-changer for various stakeholders investing in halal products. This can address the issues and skepticism people associated with halal certification and build the trust of consumers.

Consumer Behavior in Developing Markets

It indicates a need for further research into the insights and preferences of halal consumers in emerging markets - especially where there is an increasing Muslim population like Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America. This might offer significant insights for companies hoping to enter into these markets.

Sustainability In The Halal Industry

Given consumers have become increasingly conscious of sustainability, future studies could address the prevalence of environmental practices within the halal sector. This might involve utilizing sustainable packaging, ethical and sustainable sourcing, renewable energy for the production processes of halal products, etc.

Final Thoughts

Halal industry is at the crossroads where post-globalization offers huge opportunities as well as challenges. With cultural sensitivity, collaboration, and consumer education, halal businesses can prevent the complexity of living in a globalized world in a manner that does not damage the integrity of halal practices. This transformation into an Instrument of Cultural Heritage will also impact the respectful consumption patterns, abandoned by many, which have contributed to the predominance of one of the biggest ethical dilemmas in travel: overconsumption. Through this not just we would be increasing competitiveness of halal businesses, but also align with the goal of sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

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PARTICIPANT

1. Halal Product Manufacturers (5 Participants)

Participant 1: Food Manufacturer

- Name: Encik Ahmad bin Ismail
- Role: CEO of a mid-sized halal food manufacturing company in Selangor.
- Background: Over 15 years of experience in halal food production, specializing in ready-to-eat meals.

- Potential Insights:

- Challenges in maintaining halal integrity across the supply chain.
- Strategies for adapting packaging and marketing to different cultural contexts.
- Impact of globalization on sourcing halal-certified raw materials.

Participant 2: Cosmetics Manufacturer

- Name: Puan Siti Nurhaliza binti Mohd Yusof
- Role: Founder of a halal-certified cosmetics brand based in Penang.
- Background: A chemist by training, she started her company to cater to the growing demand for halal beauty products.

- Potential Insights:

- Importance of halal certification in building consumer trust.
- Challenges in marketing halal cosmetics to non-Muslim consumers.
- Role of sustainability in halal cosmetics packaging.

Participant 3: Pharmaceutical Manufacturer

- Name: Dr. Lim Wei Keong
- Role: Head of R&D at a halal-certified pharmaceutical company in Johor.
- Background: Over 20 years of experience in pharmaceutical production, with a focus on halal compliance.

- Potential Insights:

- Regulatory challenges in obtaining halal certification for pharmaceuticals.
- Ethical considerations in halal pharmaceutical production.
- Impact of globalization on the demand for halal medicines.

Participant 4: Food Manufacturer (Export-Oriented)

- Name: Mr. Rajesh Kumar
- Role: Operations Manager at a large halal food export company in Kuala Lumpur.
- Background: Specializes in exporting halal products to Europe and the Middle East.

- Potential Insights:

- Adapting packaging and labelling to meet international halal standards.
 - Challenges in maintaining halal compliance in non-Muslim-majority markets.
 - Role of cultural sensitivity in halal marketing strategies.
- #### Participant 5: Cosmetics Manufacturer (Startup)
- Name: Ms. Aisyah binti Abdullah
 - Role: Co-founder of a startup producing halal-certified skincare products in Sabah.
 - Background: A young entrepreneur focusing on natural and halal ingredients.

- Potential Insights:

- Challenges faced by small businesses in obtaining halal certification.
- Importance of storytelling in halal cosmetics marketing.
- Role of social media in reaching younger Muslim consumers.

2. Halal Certification Bodies (3 Participants)

Participant 6: Senior Halal Auditor

- Name: Encik Mohd Firdaus bin Abdul Rahman
- Role: Senior Auditor at JAKIM (Department of Islamic Development Malaysia).
- Background: Over 10 years of experience in halal certification and auditing.

- Potential Insights:

- Challenges in standardizing halal certification across industries.
- Impact of globalization on halal certification processes.
- Role of technology in improving halal compliance monitoring.

Participant 7: Certification Consultant

- Name: Puan Norazlina binti Mohd Ali
- Role: Consultant at a private halal certification agency in Kuala Lumpur.
- Background: Specializes in helping SMEs obtain halal certification.

- Potential Insights:

- Common misconceptions about halal certification among businesses.
- Importance of cultural sensitivity in halal certification for export markets.
- Challenges faced by non-Muslim manufacturers in obtaining halal certification.

Participant 8: International Certification Expert

- Name: Dr. Hasan Al-Maliki
- Role: Representative of an international halal certification body based in Malaysia.
- Background: Works on harmonizing halal standards across different countries.

- Potential Insights:

- Differences in halal standards between Malaysia and other countries.

- Role of Malaysia as a global leader in halal certification.
- Challenges in ensuring halal compliance in global supply chains.

3. Marketing and Packaging Experts (4 Participants)

Participant 9: Halal Branding Specialist

- Name: Ms. Sarah Tan
 - Role: Marketing Director at a halal branding agency in Kuala Lumpur.
 - Background: Over 12 years of experience in halal brand development.
- Potential Insights:
- Importance of storytelling in halal branding.
 - Strategies for marketing halal products to non-Muslim consumers.
 - Role of packaging design in communicating halal values.

Participant 10: Packaging Design Expert

- Name: Mr. Amirul bin Ahmad
 - Role: Founder of a packaging design firm specializing in halal products.
 - Background: Focuses on creating culturally sensitive packaging for halal brands.
- Potential Insights:
- Challenges in designing packaging for diverse markets.
 - Role of color, typography, and symbols in halal packaging.
 - Importance of sustainability in halal packaging design.

Participant 11: Digital Marketing Expert

- Name: Ms. Nurul Izzah binti Ismail
 - Role: Digital Marketing Strategist at a halal e-commerce platform.
 - Background: Specializes in social media and influencer marketing for halal brands.
- Potential Insights:
- Role of social media in promoting halal products to younger consumers.
 - Challenges in digital marketing for halal brands in non-Muslim markets.
 - Importance of authenticity in halal product marketing.

Participant 12: Consumer Behavior Analyst

- Name: Dr. Lee Mei Ling
 - Role: Researcher at a Malaysian university, specializing in consumer behavior.
 - Background: Focuses on halal consumer trends and preferences.
- Potential Insights:
- Impact of globalization on halal consumer behavior.
 - Differences in halal preferences between urban and rural consumers.
 - Role of cultural and religious identity in halal purchasing decisions.
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4. Consumers (3 Participants)

Participant 13: Urban Muslim Consumer

- Name: Encik Faiz bin Mohd Ali
- Role: IT professional living in Kuala Lumpur.
- Background: A tech-savvy millennial who frequently purchases halal products.
- Potential Insights:
 - Importance of halal certification in purchasing decisions.
 - Influence of social media and online reviews on halal product choices.
 - Preferences for modern, convenient halal products.

Participant 14: Rural Muslim Consumer

- Name: Puan Aminah binti Yusof
- Role: Homemaker from a rural area in Kelantan.
- Background: Prefers traditional, locally sourced halal products.
- Potential Insights:
 - Trust in local halal brands over international ones.
 - Importance of price and accessibility in halal product choices.
 - Resistance to globalized halal products.

Participant 15: Non-Muslim Consumer

- Name: Ms. Priya Devi
- Role: Marketing executive living in Penang.
- Background: A non-Muslim consumer who occasionally buys halal products for ethical reasons.
- Potential Insights:
 - Perception of halal products as ethical and high-quality.
 - Factors influencing the purchase of halal products by non-Muslims.
 - Suggestions for improving halal marketing to non-Muslim audiences.