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Identifying the Determinant Attributes of Halal Cosmetics Product That Influence Its Positioning Strategy in Malaysian Market

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the determinants attributes of halal cosmetics product that influence its positioning strategy in Malaysian market. The results will provide insight on cosmetic firms and other organization of similar structure could identify the determinants attributes of Halal cosmetics product and strengthening their marketing strategies. This study is perhaps one of the first to investigate halal cosmetics and market positioning in Malaysia.

Key words: halal cosmetics, positioning strategy, Malaysian market

Introduction

Background of Study:

Positioning is described as strategy to identify and direct marketing resources among intended market segments (Hassan & Craft, 2005). Positioning strategy refers to the choice of target market segment which describes the customers business will seek to serve and the choice of differential advantage which defines how it will compete with rivals in the segment (Brooksbank, 1994). Positioning is the most powerful concept in modern marketing's entire lexicon; it is the underpinning for all strategy building, the link-pin for matching an organization's offerings to customers' wants and the key to relating the organization's efforts to those of its competitors (Hardy, 1986). For a firm to target effective positions for its products and services, it needs to decide on the market segment (where it will compete) as well as the differential advantage it will emphasise (how it will compete) (Attia & Hooley, 2007). A company discovers different needs in the marketplace, targets those needs that it can satisfy in a superior way and then positions its offering so that the target market recognizes the company’s distinctive offering and image.

Brand is one of the fundamental concepts of marketing. Consumers look at brand name and make a variety of judgement about the products. These could relate to perception of image, price, value and quality among others (Lowengart, 2001). However, when the value offered to customers does not meet their expectations, a company faces a stark choice, change or fail. Mercedes Benz in the US is a case in point. The car marquees has long been one of the world’s most powerful brands in terms of engineering quality, luxury and exclusivity. But by the early 1990s, the range no longer met customers’ perceptions of good value and they were not willing to pay Mercedes Benz prices. Mercedes lost its following in the US to a competitor whose brand appeared to lack credibility in the relevant market segments. But Toyota’s Lexus was quickly recognised as offering better perceived value against the costs of ownership. This superior value was primarily a result of Toyota’s breakthrough developments in its manufacturing processes and resultant cost management capabilities, in conjunction with excellent design and customer care (Knox, 2004). Marketers and market researchers devote much attention to understanding why people buy certain products and brands in marketing research it's often assumed that products and services can be characterized by a set of concrete attributes. Each brand or product is perceived to have a certain level of performance on each of these attributes (Vriens & TerHofstede, 2000).

Brands can be differentiated based on three brand concepts: functional, symbolic or experiential. A brand with a functional concept is the one designed to solve externally generated consumption needs, that is, one that has problem-solving capability. A brand with a symbolic concept is the one designed to associate the consumer with a desired group, role or self-image, that is, one that ties the consumer with a reference group through an ego-enhancing association. A brand with an experiential concept is designed to fulfill these internally generated needs.

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needs for stimulation and/or variety, that is, one that provides cognitive/sensory simulation (B. Ramaseshan, 2007). One of the differential strategies that are gaining the popularity is the use of Halal in their products. Halal is an Arabic word linked to the Islamic faith. Halal in its general sense can be translated as meaning allowed, or permissible. A basic acceptance and understanding of what is Halal, is central to every Muslim’s belief—falling under the umbrella of what is considered to be information that is known by necessity. Muslims are commanded to ‘embrace the Halal and forbid the Haram’ (Qur’an 3:104)—meaning to take part and encourage all that is good (permissible) and to refrain and abstain from all that is bad (impermissible). The opposite of Halal in Arabic is Haram.

Being the world’s second largest population after Christianity with 1.57 billion adherents, Islam comprises 23 per cent of the world population (List of countries by Muslim population, 27 January 2010). In Malaysia, a sizeable proportion (60.4 per cent) of Malaysia’s population, which stands at 27.73 million for the year 2008 are Muslims (approximately 16,748,920). This makes Malaysia number 13 in the world’s most densely Muslim populated countries (2009 World Population Stats – Muslim – majority Countries, November 2009). In order to export Halal products internationally, firms need to employ effective and efficient market strategies based on information obtained from the market, including customers, competitors, and the environment. With such information, firms can further develop their organizational values, norms, practices, and structure in order to be proactive to the volatility of the market, competitiveness, and diverse needs of the global customers. For example, if firms desire to export Halal goods and services for Muslim customers, they will need different strategies and implementation as compared to exporting the goods to non-Muslim customers. Their marketing strategies must be aligned with Islamic values, standards and guidelines, yet previous studies have only attempted to understand strategic marketing decisions based on western ideologies and principles (Nakata, 2005). Although Halal rules are best known as food standards, they also may affect non-food products. Important for Muslims are in particular products that may touch the body in other ways than as food, such as pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, shampoos, or even clothes. Now, the trend to choose Halal cosmetics is getting the attention among Muslims consumers.

Even though Halal cosmetics have been well established in Malaysia, it still hasn’t captured the eye of the consumers and gain high market share in the country. This has proven that there is still lack of interest and urges in Muslim in Malaysia on Halal cosmetics. One of the factors is the Halal lifestyle. The slow development of the Halal lifestyle category, in comparison to the food category, can be attributed to two factors. First, albeit important, it did not have the same urgency as food. Second, both Muslims and multinationals learned late that as Halal actually extends beyond food, normal day activities can also be Islamized and classified as Halal, and thus special Islamic-compliant lifestyle-related products began to be developed to meet the needs of this market and to, at the same time, capitalize on the opportunity it provides (Alserhan, 2010). These loopholes have directly impaired sales and consumption of Halal cosmetic among the Muslim citizen. For instance, Unza’s Safi brand was introduced in 1985 includes skin care, colour cosmetics, hair care, shower cream, fragrances, deodorants and toothpaste but still has low market share compared with other established non-certified Halal cosmetic products. Euromonitor reported that, In Malaysia, the total sales skin care products for year 2010, has recorded RM1,346 million. Table 1 show the performances of the skin care brands, in terms of % retail value.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Skin care brands</th>
<th>2009 % Retail value</th>
<th>2010 % Retail value</th>
<th>Company</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>SK II</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>Procter &amp; Gamble</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Shiseido</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Shiseido Co Ltd</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Dermo expertise</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>L’Oreal (M) Sdn Bhd</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Olay</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Procter &amp; Gamble</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Artistry</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>Amway (M) Sdn Bhd</td>
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<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Safi</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>Unza (M) Sdn Bhd</td>
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Source: Euromonitor (2011)

Also table 1 show that the top 5 brands were produced without Halal certification. The only Halal certified brand in the list is Safi, at the 34th position out of 42 brands. Safi only manages to capture 0.5 percent of the total retail value. Other Halal certified brand is classified under “others” category. The above data reveal that for skin care products, the sales for Halal certified products in a Muslim country as Malaysia is very low even though the total sales of skin care products has reached RM1346 million. This signifies that even though the product is certified as Halal and marketed in a Muslim country, it still fail to capture the market due to its poor positioning strategy. Besides, Elaine O’Connell, Senior Show Manager, Beautyworld, Middle East comment that, despite being a Muslim country, use of Halal personal care products is relatively low. The key to marketing seems to be creating awareness among consumers that the products they are using already are not Halal (Dyes, 2010). Some research also shows that approximately 20 percent of Muslim consumers do not look for halal certifications when purchasing a product and that the majority of consumers will buy products that do not have the logo if there are no alternatives (Othman, 2006).
However, there is a unique criterion for Halal product that supposedly would promote Halal brand to have high market share especially in Malaysia as Malaysia is a Muslim country. The Halal brand represents extremely powerful values that are common to 25% of the world in particular and almost all of mankind in general. And yet, so few Halal producers take advantage of this to state what Halal really represents; most seem to think that a Halal logo says it all. The possibilities of promoting products on the strength of their Halal qualities and values have hardly begun to be explored. It is a near certainty that the companies that take fullest advantage of this possibility will be successful brand leaders in the Halal markets of tomorrow (Evans, 2010). The cosmetic industry is consistently changing and new products with distinctive features were introduced through exhibition events at international level that have set as a trend for other cosmetics manufacturer. The beauty and cosmetics industry is expected to increase globally by 8.5 per cent by 2014, according to recent research from Euro Monitor International, representing one of the few markets that continue to grow despite the global crisis (Euromonitor, 2011). For Halal cosmetics manufacturer to cope with these changes they must be able to convince the mind of consumers with their competitive and differential advantages. Thus one of the essential steps is to identify Halal cosmetics product key attributes that can be use in the company’s or brand’s positioning strategy.

For other product such as cosmetics, the concept of Halal is starting to play its role as an important factor to consider when using the product. However, the attention for this product among Muslims is still low. In addition, for Halal cosmetics products, there is no specific study that has been done on how to effectively position the products in the market and appropriate strategy to attract the Muslims consumers. In the open market, these products will have to compete with non certified Halal products which are well established with brand name that is recognised worldwide. Apart from that, it is backed up with years of research, systematic marketing strategy and strong financial resources (Kumar et al., 2006). Benefits and values can provide consumers with a basis for comparison-shopping. In markets with high similarity among brands at the concrete attribute level, such processing and categorizing information gives marketers a way to claim a positioning in consumers’ minds. The more tightly a product or brand is linked to the various elements in consumers' means-end structures, the more likely it has personal relevance, and the more likely it will be preferred and chosen. Many academic and commercial studies have shown that a successful positioning along dominant ladders is related to product preferences and brand choices (Vriens & Ter Hofstede, 2000). Halal is fast becoming a new market force and identifier, and businesses—even those Muslim or Halal business—should change, illustrate the branding marketing of Halal products such as looking at the key 4Ps (Price, Product, Promotion and Place) of marketing including the product naming and packaging, and public relations, promotions and advertising (Cheng, 2008). If the demand for Halal products keeps rising, it is of high concerns then if there will insufficient firms that are not competent to export Halal goods due to lack of knowledge and understanding of Islamic marketing. In that case, Muslim-owned firms need to seize this opportunity and employ effective market strategies so that Muslim market can be captured (Zakaria & Abdul-Talib, 2010). Based on these grounds the current study is conducted to address the following research questions:

1. Does purity of halal cosmetics influence halal cosmetics positioning
2. Does quality of halal cosmetic predict halal cosmetics positioning
3. Does religious compliance of halal cosmetics influence cosmetics positioning
4. Does safety of halal cosmetics predict cosmetics positioning

This study attempts to answer the research questions through the development of a research framework after investigating prior literatures in this context. The next section presents the literature and propositions are then formulated to be tested in this study.

Literature review:

Cosmetics Industry:

Cosmetics have been around for thousand of years. When people hear the word “Cosmetics”, they tend to think makeup or perfume designed for woman. Cosmetics actually comes in many forms, ranging from powders, body makeup, soap, shampoo and toothpaste. It is used for beautifying purposes and cover a wide range of products including cleaning body parts, enhancing features, and changing skin tones and colors such as makeup, perfume, tooth paste, shampoo and deodorant (Kumar et al., 2006). Cosmetics products in Malaysia are regulated under the control of Drugs and Cosmetics Regulations 1984. It is under the jurisdiction of National Pharmaceutical Control Bureau (NPCB), Ministry of Health. It is defined as the national regulation and legal aspects of cosmetics control. The Bureau is responsible for the regulation, licensing and surveillance of all cosmetics products. The regulation has been amended in 2007 to include the amendment of the notification procedure and transpose the Asian ASEAN Cosmetics Directive (ACD) into the guidelines for control of cosmetics in Malaysia (NPCB, 2009). In 2010, sales of color cosmetics in Malaysia rise by 7 percent to reach...
RM435 million compared to RM405 million recorded in 2009. Data also shows that Mascara recorded the highest growth of 11 percent and it is followed by lip gloss (9.5%) and foundation (8.5%). Among the top players in colour cosmetics for 2010 are Loreal (M) Sdn Bhd which control 21.3 percent of the market share while Avon and Estee lauder come in second and third with 17.7 percent and 15.4 percent share respectively (Euromonitor, 2011). In addition, Euromonitor International (2011) reported that brands with lengthy brand presence easily held onto the top spots in the market but local companies also created opportunities for themselves. One successful local brand was Silkygirl which turned to differentiation to establish itself in the intensely-competitive colour cosmetics market. The company targeted its range of products to discerning teenage girls aged from as young as 10 to those aged 25 years old. The brand has associated itself with positive teenage projects such as annual sponsorship of national cheerleading competition “Star Cheer” since year 2007 (Euromonitor, 2011).

Halal Development in Malaysia:

In Malaysia, the certification body responsible for granting Malaysia Halal logo is the islamic Development Department (JAKIM) of the Prime Minister Department. For cosmetics and personal products that require Halal certification, the products shall follow the Malaysian Standard MS 2200:2008 requirement. In every aspect of Halal, Toyyiban aspect is included. Beside ful filling the Syariah law, which is a must for Muslims, the safe factor plays a significant role and contributor in determining the Toyyiban ie quality aspect of the products. In fact, the Halal and Toyyiban can be synonymous with Halal quality. According to MS2200, cosmetics products must be safe and not hazardous to users and consumers. Halal cosmetics products must not have human parts or ingeridants derived from thereof; not contain any animal forbidden to Muslim or are not slaughtered according to Shariah Law, no genetic modified organism (GMO) which are decreed as najs; no contamination from najs during preparation, processing, manufacturing and storage; safe for consumer and comply with legislation in force in Malaysia (HDC, 2008). Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM), as a coordinating body of Halal certification in Malaysia, has introduced the standard Halal Malaysia logo, which is intended to answer the most frequently asked questions and misconception in regards to Halal certification. This logo carries the word Halal in Arabic and the “Malaysia” is written in Roman. The main objective of this logo standardisation is to abolish the use of fake certificates and any other Halal logos, which are not certified by authorising bodies (Mohamad, 2010). A basic acceptance and understanding of what is Halal, is central to every Muslim’s beliefe- falling under the umbrella of what is considered to be information that is known by necessity (Wilson, 2010).

Halal Consumers:

The Halal consumer, as regards their consciousness about consumption, four different types can be distinguished: the “natural” Halal consumers in Muslim countries, who are barely aware of the existence of non-Halal products/ food; the “conscious” Halal consumer in non-Muslim countries who is more aware of its consumption as he or she knows that most of the products/ food in the country is Haram; the “western” Halal consumer who focuses on healthy, high quality or pork-free food and therefore chooses Halal and who does not necessarily have to be a Muslim; and lastly, the “ignorant” Halal consumer, who consumes Halal products/ food without knowing it as the industry in the west often completely switches to Halal products/ food production to achieve economies of scale. These groups are certainly not clear-cut, as the boundaries are blurry and some groups can exists within other groups (Waarden & Dalen, 2010). In Europe, political and economic climate also determines the extent to which producers will cater to the needs of Muslim consumers, and also the extent to which the consumers feel confident to demand the kind of products and services they want (The Pak Banker, 2010). According to Wilson (2011), Muslim consumer behaviour is largely a cultural construct, which necessitates that marketers should understand Islam through the varied lenses of Muslim consumers, imperfections and all. In doing so, it will inevitably point towards the grouping of Muslims into smaller homogenous segments. This also separates social sciences marketing insight from Islamic scholastic Sharia’-based postulations. The Halal is already a multi-cultural phenomenon at least in the West and the irony is that it is the non-Muslims who are mostly making Halal food for the Muslim consumers across the world (The Pak Banker, 2010).

Market Positioning Strategy:

Positioning has been defined as the act of designing the image of the firm's offering so that target customers understand and appreciate what the product stands for in relation to its competitors. Each brand within a set of competitive offerings is thought of as occupying a certain position in a customer's "perceptual space." Perceptual mapping refers generally to techniques used to graphically represent this product space (Kohli &
Leuthesser, 1993). A common marketing assumption is that similar products will be similarly liked by the consumer. Building on this notion, it is assumed that, as products become more similar, the consumer's preference for one product over another diminishes. This assumed link between consumer judgments of similarity and preference is the foundation for "me too" imitation strategies. This logic also underlies the formulation and interpretation of "perceptual maps," which are geometric representations of how we believe consumers perceive products relative to other products (LeKoff-Hagius & H.Mason, 1993). Also, positioning strategy refers to the choice of target market segment which describe the customers a business will to serve and the choice of different advantage which define how it will compete with the rivals in the segment. This definition shows that a positioning strategy only applies at the level of a particular product and/ or service operating within a particular market and that it should not be confused with the broader concept of “corporate” strategy or with the more specific concepts of strategy as it relates to each individual element of the marketing mix, such as “Promotional” or “Pricing strategy” (Brooksbank, 1994). The concept of positioning is often used together with the terms segmentation and targeting. Those three elements work together closely when determining which way to offer a product or a service in this markets to which target group. Complicating the segmentation issues in global markets is the need for companies to make strategic positioning decisions in an increasingly competitive and transparent marketplace in order to leverage brand equity and achieve economies of scale. In short, the strategic necessity does not stop at the selection of desirable market segments, but also includes the need to position brands effectively relative to the market segment (Hassan & Craft, 2005).

This is of critical importance to marketers as effective segmentation could provide important information about target segments, allowing better adjustment of the market offering and better positioning, as well as leading to more effective marketing communications because of increased knowledge about consumer motivation (Press & Simms, 2010). Positioning is described by variables and within parameters that are important to the customers. These are also known as determinant attributes, which is the vital point that can attract consumers to purchase a particular product. Common examples are price, supporting services, quality, reliability, and value for money. Often, customers position a product in relation to a brand or product that is especially visible to them (Recklies, 2001).

**Positioning in cosmetics industry:**

According to Michael Porter, to better compete in either domestic or global markets there are two important factors that a company should be concern about. The factors are price and differentiation (Porter, 1980). Below diagrams shows 4 cosmetics companies competing with each other with different positioning strategy.

- **Price**
- **Differentiation**

![Diagram showing market positioning strategy by 4 cosmetics companies](source: Kumar et al., 2006)

**Fig. 1:** Market positioning strategy by 4 cosmetics companies

Figure 1 shows that Estee Lauder is at a favourable position. To be in that position, they have to allocate a large amount of budget in Research & Development and innovation projects to produce variety of cosmetics products and it is produced to high end consumers. For Avon, they have are also in a favourable position but with a different approach. The company offers consumers a decent with excellent quality of products, but
maintaining its products in affordable price for low to middle end consumers. As for Revlon and Max Factor, they are slightly confused with their product positioning, therefore both companies fall in the middle of the graph where they face numerous competitors, which probably still searching for some improvements (Kumar et al., 2006). Thus, marketing manager needs to have good knowledge in the strategies of other cosmetics product and so that they enable to identify their position in the market. Each of these cosmetics companies is unique. They offer a distinctive criterion to the industry, selling method, marketing strategy, and product line and distribution channel. For cosmetics that have Halal certification, it is vital that the correct positioning strategy is being used to penetrate the cosmetic industry that has long been dominated by well-established brands which are yet to have Halal certification. The above examples shows that the principles of market segmentation and product differentiation play a big role in determine the appropriate positioning strategy. Failing to do so would cause them to end up facing similar situation as Revlon and Max Factor. The use of Halal in cosmetics product gives an additional advantage in terms of product differentiation to the manufacturer and also a new challenge to balance up between following Islamic teaching and to use it as a business tools to gain profit and wealth.

Existing Models of Market Positioning:

The main existing models being used in the development of the theoretical framework of this study are Brands distinct personality framework perceived by consumer model (Aaker, 1997) and effectiveness of brand positioning strategies from consumers’ perspectives model (Fuchs & Diamantopoulos, 2009). The model by Aaker emphasize on the consumer personality framework towards a particular product brand in market.

![Figure 1: Aaker's Market Positioning Model](source)

In her research, Aaker, uses the “Big Five” human personality structure to developed a theoretical frame work of brand personality dimension and establish a reliable, valid and generalization scale that measures these dimensions. Brand personality is defines as the set of human characteristics associated with a brand. 5 brand personality has been indentifies. The definition of terms used in her research is as follows:-

i) **Sincerity** conveys warmth, acceptance, honesty and caring qualities;

ii) **Excitement** portrays sociability, energy, activity and youthfulness; while responsibility, dependability and security describe

iii) **Competence. Sophistication** describes upper class, glamorous and sexy brands, and

iv) **Ruggedness** depicts brands with western American qualities such as strength and masculinity.

Using Kapferer and Laurent’s CIP (Consumer Involvement Profile) Kim (2009) has identified five cosmetics consumers and their perceptions for cosmetic brands are compared. The five cosmetics consumers are

i. uninterested and casual consumers

ii. cautious and unconfident consumers

iii. Aspiring consumers

iv. Interested and carefree consumers

v. enthusiast consumers

Each of the consumers is different in their perceptions related to personal interest and importance, enjoyment and pleasure associated with the product, sensitivity to making the ‘right’ cosmetic product choices
and confidence in cosmetic buying decisions. Using CIP, this study confirmed that each of these consumer types were significantly different in their product involvement. Another study conducted by Kim (2009) revealed that brand personality dimension might operate in different ways or influence consumers’ preference for different reasons. For example, Sincerity, Excitement and competency tap an innate part of human personality, while sophistication and ruggedness tap a dimension that individual’s desire but do not necessarily have. Brand personality can be associated with a higher level of consumer emotional response, higher levels of consumer trust and loyalty, higher consumer preference and usage, more self-expression and improved product differentiation. For some, the constancy of brands, of how they feel about them, and of how they believe they will be treated yields a pleasing degree of comfort. Consumers may purchase brands reflecting their own personality or brands portraying personalities they want to acquire. Besides, Fuchs and Diamantopoulos (2009) is looking at the positioning strategies that could be use to position a product in the market in the eyes of consumers (see figure 2).

**Features:**

Company highlights the concrete attributes of the brand in order to create a distinctive advantage; concrete attributes are characteristics of the brand advantage; they are objectively measurable, mostly tangible and typically “search features”; they are also specific to the product category.

**Direct benefits:**

Communicate advantages of (the usage of) a brand; the personal value consumers assign to product or service features; closer related to oneself than product attributes; not directly observable; reflect whether a brand works as intended; mostly attribute-based benefits; refer also to problem solutions and functional needs

**Indirect benefits:**

Benefits that satisfy experiential/hedonic needs; psycho-social consequences out of the use of the product that have a hedonic, expressive, or symbolic function; give consumers an indirect advantage of the consumption of a product; perception of a self-or a social-image benefit

**Surrogate:**

Designed to create consumer associations about external aspects of a brand; says something about the brand that allows the consumer to come to individual conclusions; not attributes and benefits; creation of inferred (secondary) associations; refers to intangible aspects of the brand

The result of the research revealed support for the notion that the type of positioning strategy does indeed affect the positioning success of real-world brands. In this context, the dimensions of positioning effectiveness are perceived significantly distinct from each other, depending on the specific brand positioning strategy selected. It also shows that both benefit and surrogate positioning is more effective than feature positioning strategies. Based on this, marketing managers needs to make a comprehensive study before choosing product features as strategy to position its offerings. Direct positioning is more effective than indirect positioning. The

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**Fig. 2:** Fuchs & Diamantopoulos’s Market Positioning Model

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result shows that direct benefit positioning is associated with significantly higher levels of favourability than indirect benefit positioning. Also, Press and Sim (2010) also acknowledge the use of product benefit in doing marketing research. The many advantages of benefit segmentation have lead to the view that it is the most favourable method of analysis of new or emerging markets and were thus deemed appropriate for his study. In addition, prior research in America suggested several possible motivations for cosmetic procedures, implying that different benefits are being sought and thus that this may be an appropriate method of segmentation within this type of market.

Purity Attribute in Halal Cosmetics:

One of the important elements in Islamic teaching is purity and cleanliness. As a Muslims, this aspect needs to seriously been taken care especially when performing solat. A person must have purity and be clean before worshiping god almighty. A person who prays without purity is committing a great sin because he is disrespecting the religion. Almighty Allah says: – Surely Allah loves those who repent and keep themselves clean (Quran an: 2:222). This aspect has also leads Muslims to choose product that is clean and purity on the food that they taken and to other product including cosmetics, which is stated in the Halal and Toyibbon concept. Islamic branding can offer the world new ways to add value to all kinds of products. The concept of Halal food, for instance, seems to capture a craving for purity that goes well beyond a religious franchise (Young, 2007). Apart from that it also offers a big opportunity for Westerners to consume Halal products, as Halal taps into concerns about purity, health and wellness which are universal and it says something about the quality of things that are produced (Nair-Ghaswalla & McClatchy, 2007). The purity attributes, which is a must when producing Halal products are also moving into mainstream markets, partly due to the rise in the number of eco-conscience consumers. Duncan James, consulting director, The Brand Union, Dubai, said: "With a lot Halal products there is a high overlap with organic, purity, cleanliness and a lot of non-Muslims would buy Halal because they consider it cleaner" (Al Bawaba, 2010). The concept of purity can be an important attribute in promoting Halal products to the consumer it reflects the true image of Islam and comply with the Syariah law. In the West, Shariah has become narrowly associated with some of the harsh practices of Shariah law tainted by the extremist practices of radical Islamists. But Shariah values are in sharp contrast to that. Some of the values are honesty, respect, consideration, kindness, peacefulness, authenticity, purity, patience, discipline, transparency, modesty, community, dignity. Underpinning the working of Shariah in daily life is ‘sincerity of intention’ (Young, 2011).

Branding of Halal products offers a big opportunity for the Westerners to consume Halal products, as Halal taps into concerns about purity, health and wellness which are universal and it says something about the quality of things that are produced (Cheng, 2008). In positioning the Halal cosmetics product, the concept of purity can be used to differentiate it from other non Halal certified product. Saaf Pure Skincare founder, Hussain-Gambles who is based in U.K stated that the majority of the company’s clients are non-Muslims and from Europe. It’s important to promote Halal as a symbol of purity and integrity in non-Muslim countries, rather than as a religious brand. This will dispel any stereotypes associated with Halal and Muslims (Bontems, 2009). Based on the above, it is clear that purity is an important part in Islam and in Halal cosmetics products, the image and symbol of purity is the determinant attributes that may influence marketer’s positioning strategy to attract both Muslims and non Muslims consumers.

Safety attribute in Halal cosmetics:

Over the years, some activist groups have targeted cosmetics as possible human health threats, claiming that cosmetic ingredients are not adequately tested for safety and may pose risks to consumers. The groups allege that industry practices related to safety testing are flawed, that there is little government oversight, and that cosmetics contain cancer-causing chemicals and other toxicants (Gilbert Ross, 2006). There have been cases of chemicals that have cause serious problems especially to the sensitive area of the human body. In US, study conducted reveals that every day the average American woman uses personal care and makeup products containing 88 problematic chemicals – chemicals not properly assessed for safety. The average man uses products containing 85 such chemicals. Babies and young children, too, are exposed to potentially harmful chemicals with every bath and diaper change. There is currently no federal regulation on these ingredients (Robbins, 2011). Furthermore, the Cosmetic Ingredient Review (CIR), an industry-funded and self-policing body, who vouches for the safety of cosmetic ingredients, reported that during 30 years since its creation, this panel has only evaluated 11% of the ingredients used in cosmetics (safecosmetics.org, 2010). The balance of 89% ingredients is still potential to cause serious effect to the user. In Malaysia, the Halal status in cosmetics products will ensure that it has gone through a series of verification and inspection within the Halal standard acknowledge by JAKIM to ensure it comply with Syariah law and it is safe to be use. In the process of marketing the Halal cosmetics product, a marketer must uphold the trust Allah (swt) has in him through proper
management of the resources bestowed upon him for the betterment of society and the surrounding environment. There must be sincerity in fulfilling consumers’ needs and ensuring consumer safety, as well as having a sense of brotherhood in dealing with business partners and consumers (Abdullah & Ahmad, 2010). Based on the above it shows that product safety is one of the determinant attribute that manufacturer need to build inside their offerings. By projecting the safety attribute of the cosmetics product together with the Halal status in the eyes consumer, it would create a positive perception that this product is safer than ordinary cosmetics products and marketers can use this approach as an effective marketing strategy.

Religious compliance attribute in Halal cosmetics:

Religion is one of the aspects that unite people to follow a specific value and culture and it has a big impact towards how the entire community reaction towards their surrounding environment. In marketing a product to the consumer, usage of religion is seldom used as a marketing tool to demonstrate that it is complying with a specific value. Moreover, as far as legal ruling is concerned, there are no prohibitions towards utilising religion as a marketing tool nor are there any prohibitions for labelling certain marketing strategies as “Islamic Marketing Strategy”, “Christian Marketing Strategy”, “Hindu Marketing Strategy”, and the like (Arham, 2010). The word “Halal” as in Halal cosmetics clearly shows that the product is complying with the teaching of Islam and it is based on internationally recognised Halal standards. One key area where Malaysia excels is in Halal standard-setting. From the international perspective, Malaysia is recognised for its stringent standards covering the production of Halal goods (Izma, 2011).

The Halal status in cosmetics product, gives assurance to consumers that all aspect, starts from the raw material selection, process, manufacturing till the shipment and storage is complying with Syariah law and the Malaysia’s Halal cosmetics standards MS 2200:2008 and Standards on Halal Logistics MS 2400:2010. Such Halal symbol gives the consumers the psychological comfort that they have bought the religiously correct products; it also minimizes their post-purchase dissonance (Cheng, 2008). However, Halal is no longer just purely religious issue. It is in the realm of business and trade, and it is becoming a global symbol for quality assurance and lifestyle choice. Halal’s burgeoning popularity can be linked to religious fervour; and beliefs that it is cleaner, healthier and tastier (Lada et al., 2009). The Islamic market segment has also become an important area that organization willing to explore. This market, which is growing exponentially, is drawing both: Muslims who want to make religiously acknowledged good deeds and non-Muslims who are motivated by the simplicity, purity, and humanity that Islamic brands are assumed to embody (Alserhan, 2010).

Quality Attribute in Halal Cosmetics:

Quality can be defined as actual superiority or excellence, whereas perceived quality refers to consumers intangible perceptions or judgements of the overall quality or superiority of a product or service — their overall feeling about the brand (Ramaseshan & Tsao, 2007). The quality aspect of the cosmetics product is always been one of the important criteria. For Halal cosmetics, consumer aspect it not to be just a quality product but must be able to full fill the requirement of Halal, In marketing, there are other factors that consumer will associate the product with quality that eventually will lead to customer satisfaction and loyalty. Specific product characteristics such as price, appearance, components and features, advertisements and brand name will influence consumers’ perceptions of quality (Ramaseshan, et al., 2007). This variables will also affect customers’ judgment processes and derive inference on its quality dimensions leading to customer satisfaction (Rajagopal, 2007). A study by Butt (2010), also reveal that Cost, delivery and flexibility capabilities lead to improved financial performance, while quality impacts customer satisfaction and loyalty.

For the manufacturer, innovation is what drives them to excel in the market and continuous effort has been done to improve their offering’s technical quality. According to Attia and Hooley (2007), product technical quality should be thought of as a set of technical/engineering characteristics that are able to satisfy a set of customer requirements. Therefore, both production and manufacturing expertise should cooperate so that the required technical quality will result. A winning product may results from the correct blend of functionality and customer expectations. This approach has long been adopted by , Este’e Lauder, who’s cosmetics product has been recognised to be one of the best in the market. The marketing strategy inspired by the founder, Este’e Lauder, is to provide high-quality service and products as a foundation for a solid and loyal consumer base. The marketing efforts focus primarily on promoting the quality and benefits of each product (Kumar et al., 2006). It is vivid, that for a successful product in the market good quality and well known brand are not enough. The product must occupy an explicit, distinct, and proper place, in the minds of potential and existing consumers, relative to other rival products on the market. Reaching (or not reaching) that desirable position in the minds of consumers is the result of successful (or not successful) positioning (Ostaseviciute & Sliburyte, 2008). Based on this, we can see that quality attributes plays an important role in influencing customer satisfaction and loyalty.
Thus product quality can influence consumer’s perspective towards Halal cosmetics product and act as an effective positioning strategy.

Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses:

Product purity and Halal cosmetics product:

Islamic branding can offer the world new ways to add value to all kinds of products. The concept of Halal food, for instance, seems to capture a craving for purity that goes well beyond a religious franchise (Young, 2007). Branding of Halal products offers a big opportunity for the Westerners to consume Halal products, as Halal taps into concerns about purity, health and wellness which are universal and it says something about the quality of things that are produced (Cheng, 2008). Realizing the importance of purity attributes in Halal cosmetics, H1 is developed to test the relationship of purity and the influence it has in positioning of the product in Malaysian market:

\[ \text{H1. Purity of the product has relationship with Halal cosmetics positioning strategy.} \]

Product quality and Halal cosmetics product:

Specific product characteristics such as price, appearance, components and features, advertisements and brand name will influence consumers’ perceptions of quality (Ramasehan, et al., 2007). This variables will also affect customers’ judgment processes and derive inference on its quality dimensions leading to customer satisfaction (Rajagopal, 2007). To identify whether quality of the product has significant effect towards its positioning strategy, H2 is formulated

\[ \text{H2. Quality of the product has relationship with Halal cosmetics positioning strategy.} \]

Product religious compliance and Halal cosmetics product:

Halal’s burgeoning popularity can be linked to religious fervour; and beliefs that it is cleaner, healthier and tastier (Lada et al., 2009). Such Halal symbol gives the consumers the psychological comfort that they have bought the religiously correct products; it also minimizes their post-purchase dissonance (Cheng, 2008). To test whether product religious compliance has significant effect on positioning of Halal cosmetics product, H3 is developed.

\[ \text{H3. Compliance to religion has relationship with Halal cosmetics positioning strategy.} \]

Product safety and Halal cosmetics product:

There must be sincerity in fulfilling consumers’ needs and ensuring consumer safety, as well as having a sense of brotherhood in dealing with business partners and consumers (Abdullah & Ahmad, 2010). Due to this, Kim and Chung (2011), suggests that retailers develop effective marketing strategies emphasizing ecological beauty or product safety to satisfy the values of potential consumers. H4 is developed to test the relationship of product safety and its influence in positioning of Halal cosmetics product.

\[ \text{H4. Safety of the product has relationship with Halal cosmetics positioning strategy.} \]

Fig. 4: Proposed Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis Proposition
Conclusion:

The global market for Halal products is currently estimated to be at 1.61-1.8 billion consumers - one out of every four human beings. The estimates of the global product value depend on which products and services are being included. For Halal food alone the estimate was $634.6 billion, if one included other goods and services where Halal is important (cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, clothing, financial services, hotel operations, even tour packages). The Malaysian Halal Industry Development Corporation, a rather professional organization in this world, comes to an estimate of $ 2.1 trillion (Waarden & Dalen, 2010).

Halal is a massively under-utilised global brand. The possibilities of promoting products on the strength of their Halal qualities and values have hardly begun to be explored. However, as with any other set of brand values, they have to be more than skin-deep. The top branding gurus all say that to succeed, you have to live the brand, and this is also true for Halal. It represents the deeply-held core values of obedience to the Creator for close to 2 billion people. It is not just a logo. The product has to be good; the branding has to represent this, along with the associated brand values; and the brand values have to permeate through the company, be it big or small. To succeed, the values also have to be the values of the company, of the directors and the employees, right throughout the organisation (Evans, 2010). Halal cosmetic product with feasible positioning strategy would enable to develop and grow aligned with other well established brand in the market worldwide. The cosmetic industry is consistently changing and new products with distinctive features were introduced through exhibition events at international level that have set as a trend for other cosmetics manufacturer. The beauty and cosmetics industry is expected to increase globally by 8.5 per cent by 2014, according to recent research from Euro Monitor International, representing one of the few markets that continue to grow despite the global crisis (Euromonitor, 2011).

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