

MISLEADING NAME IN FOOD LABELLING
AND ITS EFFECT ON MUSLIM CONSUMERS'
UNDERSTANDING IN TAMAN DAHLIA,
JOHOR BAHRU

BY

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degree of Master of Halal Industry Management

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ABSTRACT

The issue of naming *halal* foods with *haram* names has been a major topic in newspapers and social media lately. Even a slight uncertainty of this issue will lead to a number of misunderstandings about religious institutions, and Islam itself. The misunderstanding and confusion of naming food products is increasing at a concerning rate in terms of the contents of the said product being labelled with misleading names. This study aims to highlight the problem regarding the research of misleading names in food labels related to JAKIM's *halal* certification requirements. The methodology used in this study is a qualitative research that covers two types of data which will be collected through survey questionnaires and interviews. In addition, during data collection, documentation analysis as secondary data was used to support information that was researched upon. The data collected was analyzed and tested using the SPSS software. Based on the analysis conducted in this study, it was found that the knowledge and awareness of Islamic consumers regarding misleading names on food labels and JAKIM *halal* certification requirements is unsatisfactory. This study aims to raise awareness towards the authorities responsible for improving the effectiveness of informing Muslim consumers in regards to the vague *halal* status provided by products with misleading names.

ملخص البحث

أصبحت قضية تسمية الأطعمة الحلال بالأسماء المحرمة قضية رئيسة متداولة في الصحف ووسائل الإعلام الاجتماعية في الآونة الأخيرة. وأدنى غموض في هذه القضية سيؤدي إلى سوء الفهم نحو المؤسسات الدينية والإسلام نفسه. وتزداد هذه المشكلة في تسمية المنتجات الغذائية بالأسماء المحيرة عندما تصبح محتوياتها مشكوك فيها بسبب هذه التسمية. لذا، تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى إبراز مشكلة وضع الأسماء المحيرة في المنتجات الغذائية ودراساتها في ضوء متطلبات شهادة حلال الصادرة عن إدارة التنمية الإسلامية الماليزية (JAKIM). تعتمد هذه الدراسة على المنهجية النوعية للبحث الذي يشمل طريقتين من طرق جمع المعلومات، وهما: الاستبيانات والمقابلات. إضافة إلى هذا، يتم تحليل المعلومات المجموعة واختبارها باستخدام برنامج SPSS لتكون البيانات الثانوية التي تدعم المعلومات البحثية. وقد توصلت الدراسة إلى أن مستوى المعرفة والوعي لدى المستهلكين المسلمين نحو قضية الأسماء المحيرة في المنتجات الغذائية ومتطلبات شهادة حلال JAKIM ضعيفة. وعليه، تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى رفع مستوى الوعي لدى المسؤولين عن هذه القضية لتحسين فاعلية إعلام المستهلكين المسلمين بالاهتمام بمشكلة الأسماء المحيرة في المنتجات الغذائية.

APPROVAL PAGE

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*This thesis is dedicated to my parents and husband for laying the foundation of what I
turned out to be in life*

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

GHP	Good Hygiene Practice
GM	Genetically Modified
GMP	Good Manufacturing Practice
HDC	<i>Halal</i> Industry Development Corporation
IIUM	International Islamic University Malaysia
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
JAIN	<i>Jabatan Agama Islam Negeri</i>
JAKIM	Islamic Development Department of Malaysia
MAIJ	<i>Majlis Agama Islam Negeri Johor</i>
PIS	Participant Information Sheet
PPIM	Malaysian Muslim Consumers Association
SPSS	Statistical Package for The Social Sciences

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Malaysia is one of the countries in the world with a major population of Muslims, and thus has a huge potential market for *halal* industry especially for food products and beverages. As a Muslim country, Malaysia has the potential to become not only a major market but also a major producer of *halal* products. Year after year, *halal* industry in Malaysia is growing rapidly, as it holds responsibility in protecting Muslim consumers' rights and needs. As a product characteristic, *halal* not only refers to the nature, origin and the processing method of food designated for Muslim consumers, but also in their labelling, advertisement, and others. Muslims have a clear commandment regarding the obligation of consuming only things that are good and *Halal*: (Allah says)

يَا أَيُّهَا الرُّسُلُ كُلُوا مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَاعْمَلُوا صَالِحًا إِنِّي بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ

“O messengers eat from the good foods and work righteousness. Indeed, I, of what you do, am knowing”. (Al-Mu'minun: 51)

There are several cases or issues where products sold to Muslim consumers were confusing on its *halal* status. Even though it was an isolated case, it shows the lack of sensitivity on the rights of Muslims consumers by the food manufacturers. Therefore, Muslim consumers through several associations has voiced out the problems at hand demanding the authority to take necessary actions to avoid unethical producers to manipulate the consumers in ensuring profit is maximized. Even though JAKIM has come out with the initiatives of introducing *halal* logo and standards for food and products, still there are unscrupulous producers imitate the *halal* logo to deceive Muslim

consumers. It is with that issue; this research is conducted to identify how consumer's knowledge about misleading name in food labelling and affects to their decisions in buying *halal* food or products.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In terms of misleading in labelling, there are two problems identified in this case. First, food products that contain *halal* ingredients but with misleading name. For instance, the ingredients of the product are *halal* but was labelled with misleading name such as *Hot Dog*, *Bak Kut Teh*, *Ham Burger*, *Charsiew*, *Sakae*, *Bacon*, *Root Beer* and certain dishes in Malaysia like *Badak Berendam*, *Tahi Itik*, and many more names which are using not appropriate name and misleading in Islam. Second problem is food products that contain *haram* ingredients but labelled with confusing good name such as *halal Bak Kut Teh*. Because bak means pig. These misleading labels are not only against the law, but also confuse Muslim consumers and give them false information about *halal* status of the food products. Furthermore, in Malaysia, Muslim consumers are at various levels of education. In this case, the misleading name in food labelling can affect Muslim consumers' understanding especially those laymen with low background of education or low level of awareness.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The objective of study could be met by finding the answer to these questions:

1. What is the Islamic views on using misleading name and name related to *haram*?
2. What is the Muslim Consumer's understanding on misleading name in food labelling issues based on JAKIM *halal* certificate condition?

3. What does JAKIM and the Fatwa Council's stand on the using of misleading name on *halal* food product?
4. What is JAKIM's justification on putting the condition of products which use names or synonymous names with non-*halal* products or confusing labels will not comply with the standards of JAKIM *Halal* Certificate?

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To study the Islamic views on using misleading name and name related to *haram*.
2. To identify the Muslim consumer's understanding on JAKIM *halal* certificate condition of food labelling.
3. To elucidate the responds from JAKIM and Fatwa Councils about the misleading name in food labelling issue.
4. To elucidate JAKIM's justification on the condition for applying JAKIM *halal* Certification.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This research focused on the *halal* awareness and understanding on misleading name in food labelling among Muslim's Consumers from different background of knowledges in selected areas in Taman Dahlia, Johor Bahru. Furthermore, any recommendation and ideas will be gathered from the expertise in this case which is Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM), Fatwa Council of Wilayah Persekutuan and Non-government agencies, Malaysian Muslim Consumers Association (PPIM) at Jalan Tun Ismail, Kuala Lumpur. The choice of location would also allow the researcher to compare the various levels of knowledge and understanding of Muslim's consumers on the misleading name in food labelling. The target of this research is to come out with

fact and issues in awareness on *halal* especially in the issue of misleading name in food labelling with the expertise's cooperation. The total of 100 respondents in this research are varied in terms of their level of education, field of study and so on.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study directly benefits all the Muslim's Consumers. The research findings shall be helpful to Muslim's Consumers for their knowledge and awareness on choosing any *halal* food especially those which do not displaying any *halal* logos and confusing name in food labelling. This is because, the *halal* issues are crucial for the sake of all Muslim. The expertise especially JAKIM, Fatwa Councils of Wilayah Persekutuan and PPIM also can collaborate to improvise many programs related to *halal* awareness amongst the Muslim's Consumers.

The *halal* awareness program shall help to increase the level of knowledge and understanding among Muslim's consumers. The results can be seen on the future which the Muslims generation shall be able to educate themselves to differentiate the *halal* and *haram* on choosing the *halal* food, especially in food which are confusing the Muslim's consumers.

1.7 STRUCTURE OF THESIS

CHAPTER 1: This chapter contains comprehensive details of every chapter and acts as an introductory part. In this chapter, research background, problem statement, research questions and research objectives are clearly revealed with their significance. In addition, through setting scope, study topic and area are specified to conduct a realistic and detailed study about the level of Muslim consumers' knowledge and

awareness on misleading name in food labelling and its effect on Muslim consumer's understanding.

CHAPTER 2: This chapter conducts literature reviews which are ground contents and ideas of this research. The main fundamentals of this research which are the history of *halal* certification and logo, fraudulent *halal* logo and *halal* monitoring and law enforcement are being studied. Plus, consumers' rights and responsibilities are being discussed as possible factor to contribute towards effective *halal* monitoring and law enforcement.

CHAPTER 3: In this chapter, research methodology is discussed. Problem statements will be mentioned followed by goals and objectives of this research to clarify the direction of the design. This chapter states the overall design of data collection and analysis. Data collection is divided into two major segments which are primary data and secondary data. In the case of analysis segment, this chapter describes the procedure of collected primary and secondary sources, and analysis instrument which are descriptive analysis.

CHAPTER 4: This chapter focuses on the qualitative analysis to provide analyzed primary and secondary sources under research design and direction. Majorly, descriptive analysis methods are adopted to extract the findings from the collected data. Additionally, SPSS software version 25 is applied to ensure accuracy and reliability of the data analysis.

CHAPTER 5: This final chapter of the research provides the compilation of the whole research. Under the title and objective of the research, suggestions and findings are discussed for any possible gap exist within research topic.

1.8 CONCLUSION

Based on the background and objectives that it undertakes; the study will be significant to contribute towards understanding the consumers' knowledge and awareness on misleading name in food labelling. In fact, Muslim consumers nowadays are very sensitive towards *halal* issues especially involving the daily food consumption. In addition to the *halal* logo, the naming and ingredients of the food should be taken into consideration in the selection of daily foods. Then, the level of awareness on the misleading name in food labelling also need to be consistent with that. This study examined to what levels consumers knowledge towards misleading name of food labelling as well as the condition of JAKIM *halal* certification.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a review of related literatures and a summary of the major findings from previous studies conducted on *halal* awareness and *halal* education and any related issues of misleading name in food labelling. This chapter also analyses relevant previous studies on food labelling, JAKIM *Halal* Certificate Requirement, *Al-Tasyabbuh* and certain *fiqh* issues that related to this research.

2.2 CONCEPTUALIZING OF HALAL AND HARAM

Halal can be described as something permissible, acceptable or lawful by Islamic Laws. It refers to any product including foods, cosmetics, logistic, medicines, clothes and many more but it must follow the rules set by Shariah. According to Wahab (2004), *halal*, when used in relation to food in any form whatsoever in the course of trade or business or as part of a trade description, is applied to lawful products or foods or drinks. *Halal* can also take any other expression indicating or likely to be understood as permissible by Islamic religion to consume certain things or utilize them. Such expression shall have an indication that neither thing consists of or contains any part or matter of an animal that a Muslim is prohibited by Shariah to consume (Raufu & Naqiyuddin, 2014).

If it is an animal, like chicken, cow, buffalo, duck, bird and other, it should be slaughtered in accordance with Shariah Law to make sure it is permissible in Islam. If

it is food related items, it means that it has not been prepared, processed or manufactured using instruments or ingredients that are not impure according to Shariah Law. Moreover, it has not during preparation, processing or storage been in contact with or close proximity to any things that are considered to be impure according to Shariah Law.

Haram can be considered as unlawful and prohibited by Islamic Law. Thus, in Islam, all foods are considered *halal* except the following, which are *haram* like swine or pork, alcoholic and intoxicant drinks, poisons because all of these can be detrimental to health and harmful. Also, animals improperly slaughtered or dead before slaughtering, and animals killed in the name other than Allah's name except for those animals who lives in the sea like fish. (Khin, Bugha, & Syarbaji, 1992)

2.2.1 *Halal and Haram from Islamic Perspective*

Allah has created all that is in the earth originally is permissible for the purpose of human survival and sustenance in life as indicated in many verses of the Holy Quran where He says:

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَالْفُلُكَ يَتَّجِرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِأَمْرِهِ وَيُمْسِكُ السَّمَاءَ أَنْ تَقَعَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرُءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ

Meaning: Do you not see that Allah has subjected to you whatever is on the earth and the ships which run through the sea by His command? And He restrains the sky from falling upon the earth, unless by His permission. Indeed Allah, to the people, is Kind and Merciful. (Al-Hajj :65)

Based on the verse above, it means that Allah ease you to use anything in this world for your convenience like gold, oil, silver and everything but to get all of these, people need to use their brain and get it in the right way. (Yunus, 1988)

It means that whatever coming down from the sky and coming out from the earth is considered as permissible but need to think and make a differentiate between *halal* and *haram*. (Khin et al., 1992).

Therefore, nothing is forbidden except what is prohibited either by a verse of the Quran or an authentic and explicit Sunnah of the Prophet 32 (S.A.W). To make lawful (*Halal*) or unlawful (*Haram*) is the right of Allah alone. No human being, no matter how pious or powerful, may take it into his hands to change it. The basic reason for the prohibition of things is due to impurity and harmfulness.

As Muslims, we are not supposed to question why or how something is unclean or harmful in what Allah has prohibited, and at the same time we are required to ponder, investigate and discover the wisdom behind the legislations including the *halalness* and the *haramness* of His creations.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُلُوا مِن طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِلَّهِ إِن كُنتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ

Meaning: “O ye who believe! Eat of the good things where with We have provided you, and render thanks to Allah if it is (indeed) He whom ye worship (Al-Baqarah :172)

An in-depth understanding of human beings about what Allah has prohibited demands our gratitude because the prohibitions of those things are for our own benefits. Thus, Allah’s order on prohibited and non-prohibited things must be followed by all Muslims. The fact is that Islamic laws are universally applicable to all races, creeds,

and sexes. Allah has commanded us to do that which He commanded the Messengers, where He says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الرُّسُلُ كُلُوا مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَاعْمَلُوا صَالِحًا ۗ إِنِّي بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ

Meaning: “O ye Messengers! Eat of the good things, and do right. Lo! I am aware of what ye do” (Al-Mu’minun:51)

Allah denounce recriminations against those who purposely consume *haram* food.

إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَالدَّمَ وَحُلْمَ الْخَنزِيرِ وَمَا أُهِلَّ بِهِ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ ۖ فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

Meaning: “He hath forbidden you only carrion, and blood, and swine flesh, and that which hath been immolated to (the name of) any other than Allah. But he who is driven by necessity, neither craving nor transgressing, it is no sin for him. Lo! Allah is Forgiving, Merciful” (Al-Baqarah:173)

In the verse above, there are only four kind of food that are forbidden to eat by Muslims which are, dead meat, blood, flesh of swine, and that on which any other name has been invoked besides Allah. Besides the four-food item, all the other food are considered as *halal*. So that, we have been clearly informed on what kind of foods we should consume and not to consume. The reasons for prohibitions are even substantiated with clarifications through Quranic exegeses by Ulama’ (Raufu & Naqiyuddin, 2014).

2.2.2 Turning *Halal* Into *Haram* and Vice Versa Same as Shirk to Allah.

In one hadith, Allah has mention:

إِنِّي خَلَقْتُ عِبَادِي خُنْفَاءَ كَلَّمُهُمْ، وَإِنَّمَا أَتَتْهُمْ الشَّيَاطِينُ فَاجْتَالَتْهُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِمْ، وَحَرَّمْتُ عَلَيْهِمْ مَا أَحَلَلْتُ لَهُمْ، وَأَمَرْتُهُمْ أَنْ يُشْرِكُوا بِي مَا لَمْ أَنْزِلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا.

Meaning: I (Allah) have created my slaves in a state of gentleness and indeed they have come to Satan's devils, misleading them from their religion and forbidding them what I imposed on them and enjoining them to associate Me with something Which I did not reveal to any of them. (Sahih Muslim: 523)

Imam Al Ghazali has mention in his book, only Allah SWT has the right to forbid and allows something. Therefore, who does this, it's similar to shirk, because in such an attitude there is an element of shirk.(Al Ghazali, 2000) .This related to one legal maxim which is :

ما أدى إلى محرم فهو محرم

Anything that lead to *haram*, then its illegal. (Ghulam,1962)

Islam has forbidden Muslims to change anything that considered as *haram* into *halal* by using any tricks. As Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) says, Allah has condemned the actions of the Jews who allowed the unlawful things by way of trickery. (Zulkifli Mohamad al-Bakri, 2013)

One of hadith said:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: لَا تَرْتَكِبُوا مَا ارْتَكَبَتِ الْيَهُودُ، فَتَسْتَحِلُّوا حَرَامَ اللَّهِ بِأَدْنَى الْحَيْلِ

Meaning: “Do not commit what committed the Jews committed, and then you turn the *haram* into *halal* with the lowest trick”. (Abdul Rahman, 1976)