

# **Innovation in halal packaging and labeling to enhance Indonesian processed food export performance**

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## **Abstract**

This study examines the role of packaging innovation and halal labeling in increasing the selling value of Indonesian traditional processed food products for export markets in the Middle East. As the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, Indonesia has significant potential to strengthen its position in the global halal industry, particularly in the food sector. This article aims to analyze how packaging innovation through modern, functional, and culturally appropriate designs, along with the presence of a trusted halal label, can increase product competitiveness in the international market. The method used is descriptive qualitative, with a literature study approach and analysis of previous research results. The results show that packaging innovation not only functions to protect and preserve products but also serves as a communication medium that conveys product identity and quality. Furthermore, the halal label serves as a symbol of trust that guarantees compliance with sharia principles and international standards, thereby increasing consumer confidence. The synergy between innovative packaging and a trusted halal label creates a significant competitive advantage, enabling Indonesian traditional food products to penetrate the premium halal market segment in the Middle East. This study concludes that effective collaboration between producers, the government, and certification bodies is crucial to optimizing the export potential of the Indonesian halal industry.

**Keywords:** packaging innovation; halal label; traditional processed food; export; Middle East.

## **Introduction**

Indonesia is the country with the largest Muslim population in the world. According to data from the Directorate General of Population and Civil Registration, Indonesia's Muslim population is projected to reach approximately 282.477 million by 2024. This large Muslim population provides Indonesia with a strategic position in developing the halal industry, encompassing the food, beverage, cosmetics, and tourism sectors. This enormous domestic market potential serves as a key asset for Indonesia in increasing the sales

value and competitiveness of halal products internationally. Therefore, the large Muslim population not only fuels domestic demand for halal products but also opens up significant opportunities for Indonesia to become a global production and export hub for halal products. This potential must be continuously developed, given that the global halal industry is currently experiencing rapid growth and has become an ecosystem with significant economic value, both now and in the future (Qolby & Astuti, 2024).

Indonesia is renowned for its rich diversity of traditional cuisine, reflecting the uniqueness of local culture and heritage. Traditional processed food products such as *rendang*, *tempeh* chips, and regional *sambal* offer significant potential for international market penetration, particularly in the Middle East, which has a significant Muslim population. However, these products still face various challenges in competing in the global market, particularly related to packaging and halal certification.

Packaging serves more than just protecting a product; it also serves as a means of conveying its value, quality, and identity to consumers. By innovating packaging design to suit Middle Eastern market preferences, such as the use of Arabic, globally recognized halal symbols, and attractive visuals, Indonesian processed food products can become more appealing and increase their selling value in that market (Hasni, 2018).

On the other hand, the halal label is a crucial factor in purchasing decisions, ensuring that products meet halal and quality of the product (Millatina et al., 2022), this include for product exports to Middle Eastern countries, where consumers place high importance on the halal nature of products, not only in terms of raw materials but also in their production and distribution processes. The halal label signifies something that provides benefits and does not cause harm to the body, mind, or religion. Therefore, the halal label not only indicates that the product is permissible for consumption according to Islamic law but also guarantees health, safety, and well-being for consumers. The presence of the halal label provides a sense of security for the public because the products consumed are guaranteed to be free from substances that are harmful to the body or contrary to religious values. Furthermore, the halal label also serves as an increasingly internationally recognized

quality standard, thereby increasing consumer confidence in the product (Priyadi et al., 2025).

Despite the potential of Indonesian traditional processed food products for export to the Middle East, their competitiveness is limited by suboptimal packaging and inconsistent halal certification. Specifically, how can innovative packaging designs that incorporate functional, aesthetic, and cultural elements, combined with credible halal labeling, enhance the selling value and market appeal of these products? Additionally, what are the opportunities and challenges faced by Indonesian producers, particularly MSMEs, in leveraging these factors to penetrate the premium halal market in the Middle East? This article aims to analyze the role of packaging innovation and halal labeling in increasing the selling value and competitiveness of traditional Indonesian processed food products in the Middle Eastern export market. This study is expected to provide strategic recommendations for processed food industry players and policymakers to strengthen Indonesia's position in the global halal market.

## **Literature review**

### **Packaging innovation: dimensions and empirical findings**

Innovative economic strategies play a crucial role in the food and beverage industry, particularly with halal products that extend beyond conventional offerings to include creative and modern alternatives. For instance, halal snack products featuring contemporary and eye-catching packaging designs have effectively captured the interest of young consumers, both domestically and internationally (Adinugraha et al., 2024). This aligns with packaging innovation, which encompasses several important, complementary dimensions.

First, technical/functional aspects such as barrier properties, active packaging, and shelf-life extension technologies, which significantly contribute to product stability during distribution. Second, informational and digital aspects, including the use of QR codes, digital printing, and Internet of Packaging systems, enable consumers to obtain detailed product information. Third, aesthetic and cultural aspects, including visual design, language use, and cultural motifs, strengthen product alignment with Middle Eastern consumer tastes (Jabar et al., 2024). Fourth, sustainability through the selection of environmentally friendly materials (biodegradable or

recyclable), is increasingly becoming a key consideration among global consumers. Previous research has shown that when technical functionality is combined with traditional aesthetics, it can enhance perceptions of authenticity, quality, and the incentive to purchase traditional processed food products.

### **Halal certification and labeling: credibility, institutions, and consumer trust**

Halal certification is conceptualized as an institutionalized credential attribute that provides assurance that a product meets both religious norms and food safety. Several recent studies have concluded that certification from reputable institutions, such as national halal institutions in various countries, has strong cross-border recognition and can act as a trust signal for Muslim consumers. For example, research in Indonesia shows that halal certification significantly increases purchase intention and brand loyalty among food millennials, strengthening brand image and consumer trust (Arifin, Juliana, Bunga, & Fachrurazi, 2023). The literature also notes the existence of variations in influence (heterogeneity): the strength of the impact of certification depends on the credibility of the certification body as perceived by consumers, the visibility and clarity of the halal label on the packaging, and the level of consumer knowledge/ awareness of the scope and meaning of halal certification.

### **The interaction between packaging innovation and halal labeling**

One important finding in the literature is the synergistic effect between packaging innovation and halal labeling: attractive and culturally appropriate packaging innovation can strengthen the persuasive impact of halal labeling, and a credible halal label adds to the weight of packaging communication. For example, research on Wardah products shows that halal labeling, brand image, and packaging design simultaneously and significantly influence consumer purchasing decisions more than each influence alone (Firmansyah & Shiratina, 2024). This indicates that the combination of the two elements may have an interactive or multiplicative relationship, not just a sum effect, in increasing the perception of product value and readiness for export.

## **Research methods**

This study employed a qualitative descriptive method with a literature review approach to provide an in-depth understanding of the role of packaging innovation and halal labeling in enhancing the selling value of traditional Indonesian processed food products exported to the Middle East. Data were collected through purposive sampling from various relevant literature sources, including scientific journal articles, research reports, official publications from halal certification bodies such as the Indonesian Ulama Council (*Majelis Ulama Indonesia*, MUI), Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM), and Emirates Authority for Standardization and Metrology (ESMA), as well as secondary data related to Indonesian export trade.

The study focused on exploring key aspects related to packaging innovation and halal labeling. These aspects include functional elements (such as product durability, active packaging technology, and modified atmosphere), informational features (including QR codes, traceability, and digital printing), aesthetic and cultural considerations (designs tailored to Middle Eastern consumer preferences, use of Arabic, and cultural symbols), and sustainability practices (utilization of biodegradable or recyclable materials). Additionally, the study examined the clarity of halal certification, the reputation of certification bodies both nationally and internationally, label readability on packaging, and consumer perceptions of halal label credibility, alongside factors influencing the selling value such as perceived quality, consumer loyalty, willingness to pay a premium price, increased sales turnover, and access to export markets.

Data analysis was conducted using a descriptive qualitative approach, involving the systematic process of grouping, interpreting, and synthesizing information from the collected sources. To enrich the analysis, this study drew upon the Diffusion of Innovation theory, Signaling Theory, and the Consumer Perception Framework to contextualize the relationship between packaging innovation, halal labeling, and the enhanced selling value of products. The resulting analysis was used to identify patterns, highlight research gaps, and propose strategic recommendations to boost the competitiveness of traditional Indonesian processed food products in the Middle Eastern market.

## **Results and discussion**

### **Innovation in packaging for traditional processed food products**

Packaging encompasses all types of products used to contain, protect, handle, ship, and present goods, from raw materials to finished products, from producers to consumers. Packaging serves more than just a physical container, but also plays a crucial role in maintaining product quality and safety throughout the production process until it reaches consumers. Packaging protects products from damage, contamination, and quality degradation caused by environmental factors such as air, light, and humidity (Hong L et al., 2021). Furthermore, packaging facilitates distribution and storage with designs that support efficient handling and shipping. Packaging also serves as a means of communication between producers and consumers by presenting important information such as brand names, ingredients, expiration dates, and halal labels, which can enhance product trust and market value (Ahmed et al., 2017).

Packaging is generally classified based on the raw materials from which it is made, including metal, glass, polymers, paperboard, wood, textiles, coated materials, ceramics, and others. Packaging is a crucial element in various products, such as food, beverages, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, and others. Besides its protective function, packaging also serves as a product identity, conveying information, and serving as a communication medium for manufacturers to provide information about the product's contents.

Food packaging not only serves to protect the product but must also meet applicable legal and regulatory standards to ensure its safety for public consumption. Food safety is a top priority because inappropriate packaging can potentially cause contamination or reduce product quality. Furthermore, packaging needs to be innovatively designed to compete in the market, be easy to use and practical for consumers, and have an attractive design to enhance visual appeal and strengthen the product's brand image. One of the main functions of packaging in the food industry is to protect the product from chemical, mechanical, and microbiological influences, while maintaining freshness and maintaining the product's nutritional value. Packaging is an essential element that is inseparable from the production, preservation, storage, and distribution processes, and is now also an integral part of food presentation.

The design of the packaging stands as a key industry strategy to enhance competitiveness in the business landscape. Beyond establishing a brand image in consumers' minds, it also encourages purchasing decisions (Erlyana, 2020). Furthermore, packaging functions as an identity and communication tool between producers and consumers, delivering essential details via labels, such as brand, ingredients, or halal certifications. Well-crafted packaging can boost distribution efficiency by streamlining tasks like counting, shipping, and storage. In fact, packaging can project a specific product image; for instance, in processed foods, an appealing design can instantly suggest the taste or quality, even without explicit textual descriptions. This aligns with Waijitratum (2016), who noted that graphic design for Indonesian halal product packaging should feature standout images of products, materials, or ingredients, along with clear product descriptions and readable modern typography, reflecting consumer perceptions and identities like urbanism, multiculturalism, and progressive thinking.

The goal of packaging innovation in the marketing of processed products is to enhance visual appeal. Attractive and aesthetically pleasing packaging can make a product stand out on store shelves and attract the attention of potential consumers. Furthermore, packaging innovation also serves to enhance product protection, protecting it from damage, leakage, or changes in quality that could affect its taste and safety. Easy-to-open and easy-to-use packaging can also enhance the consumer experience and facilitate product access (Larasati et al., 2023).

Technological advancements have driven various innovations in the packaging industry, focusing not only on protection but also on sustainability and consumer convenience. Smart packaging with eco-friendly materials, functional designs, and modern preservation technologies is a trend that addresses market needs while preserving the environment. These innovations enable packaging to extend product shelf life, maintain freshness, and provide optimal protection during distribution, thereby increasing product value and consumer trust in the brand (Ropikoh, Widjayanti, Idris, Nuh, & Fanani, 2024).

Rapid technological developments have led to the emergence of various innovations in the packaging industry, making them increasingly diverse and functional. Several packaging innovations exist for processed food products, one of which is active packaging.

Active packaging is a modern packaging innovation that functions not only as a passive barrier but also interacts with the product to maintain its quality. With components such as antimicrobials, antioxidants, and gas regulators, this packaging can extend the freshness and shelf life of products. This technology is very beneficial for local food products to increase competitiveness, meet strict food safety standards, especially in export markets such as the Middle East, and increase sales value and consumer trust. In addition, innovations such as the Internet of Things (IoT) enable packaging to be connected to digital technology so consumers can access product information interactively, while digital printing provides efficiency in producing precise designs at lower costs (Safirin, Samanhudi, Aryanny, & W, 2023).

Other trends, such as biodegradable and recyclable packaging, are types of packaging made from organic materials that can decompose naturally in the environment and offer environmentally friendly solutions, while edible packaging offers consumable packaging. 3D printing technology and the application of nanotechnology are introducing new, more innovative materials, and custom packaging allows manufacturers to create unique identities for their products. Additionally, the incorporation of halal bioactive materials, such as natural pigments and essential oils, represents a significant innovation, enhancing food safety and shelf life while ensuring compliance with halal standards (Hatta F et al., 2023). All of these innovations not only improve product safety and quality but also strengthen competitiveness in the global market by adapting to increasingly dynamic consumer needs.

#### **The role of halal certification in increasing muslim consumer trust and loyalty**

Halal certification is an official document issued by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) certifying that a product meets halal requirements according to Islamic teachings. This certificate is awarded by the MUI at both the central and regional levels, confirming that the food, beverage, drug, and cosmetic products produced have undergone an adequate inspection process. Halal labels are mandatory on product packaging, allowing consumers to choose or avoid certain products based on their halal status. In the food and beverage sector, halal certification is crucial because it provides consumers with assurance regarding the halal status of a product. Therefore, halal certification has a significant impact on

consumer decisions and company reputation (Putri, Wakhid, Salsabila, Nisa, & Hidayati, 2025).

Halal certification serves as an official guarantee that a product has undergone a rigorous inspection and audit process in accordance with Islamic law, from raw materials through production to distribution. This document is not only crucial for Muslim consumers to ensure a product's halal status, but also provides added value in the form of increased trust, a positive image, and competitiveness for producers in both domestic and international markets. With halal certification from the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), consumers feel more secure in choosing products, while producers gain legitimacy that strengthens their market position, particularly in exports to countries that place a high premium on halal certification.

Halal certification plays a crucial role in providing a sense of security to consumers, especially in culturally and religiously diverse markets. In a competitive global environment, the halal label is not only seen as fulfilling a religious obligation for Muslim consumers, but also as an internationally recognized standard of quality and hygiene. With halal certification, both Muslim and non-Muslim consumers feel more confident that the products they consume are safe, clean, and meet applicable standards. Hence, halal certification serves as a vital strategy for broadening market reach, enhancing consumer trust, and boosting a product's worldwide credibility. It significantly supports global trade by ensuring compliance with universally accepted Shariah guidelines, reassuring Muslim consumers of a product's halal integrity while unlocking opportunities in extensive international markets (Noviyanti & Hakim, 2025).

The existence of an internationally reputable halal certification body is a key factor in ensuring product credibility in the eyes of global consumers. Institutions such as JAKIM in Malaysia, MUI in Indonesia, and ESMA in the United Arab Emirates implement strict oversight standards, ensuring that products certified by them are deemed to meet both Sharia requirements and international quality standards. The verification process, which includes raw material testing, production facility inspections, and supply chain audits, ensures the product's complete halal status. This not only boosts Muslim consumer confidence but also

strengthens product competitiveness in the global market, as certifications from these bodies are internationally recognized.

Halal certification standards implemented by international institutions are highly credible because they are based on proven and internationally recognized global guidelines. For example, the MS1500:2009 standard used by JAKIM not only regulates the technical aspects of animal slaughter in accordance with Islamic law but also covers the entire production process, including final packaging. The comprehensive implementation of this standard has resulted in JAKIM-certified products being recognized in more than 40 countries, boosting consumer confidence in the global market. This demonstrates that compliance with international certification standards not only guarantees a product's halal status but also serves as a crucial strategy for expanding markets and strengthening product competitiveness internationally.

Consumer trust is strengthened by the transparency of these certification bodies' processes. Consumers can be assured that the products they purchase have undergone a rigorous series of tests, eliminating the possibility of manipulation or violations. This distinguishes halal-certified products from others on the market, especially in countries with less stringent regulatory oversight (Sukardi, Amiah, Elviani, & Anwar, 2024),

Overall, the halal label not only meets the spiritual needs of Muslim consumers but also serves as an effective marketing tool for building trust, increasing loyalty, and expanding market share. In the ever-expanding global halal industry, a credible halal label is key to winning over consumers and creating sustainable product differentiation.

### **Synergy of innovative packaging and halal labels to increase the competitiveness of export products**

In the processed food industry, halal packaging and labeling play an integral role in building a positive product image. Innovative and attractively designed packaging can increase consumer interest while conveying the product's identity and added value. Meanwhile, the halal label serves as a sign of trust, guaranteeing that the product meets sharia standards and is safe for consumption. The combination of communicative packaging and a trusted halal label creates a higher perception of quality, ensuring that the product is not only accepted in the domestic market but also has strong

competitiveness in the global Muslim market, which places high importance on halal certification and quality.

The study by Sukardi et al. (2024) emphasizes that packaging not only serves to protect a product but also plays a crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions of quality. Modern and informative packaging design can attract market attention, especially if it integrates traditional elements that reflect the uniqueness of local products. When these visual elements are combined with a trusted halal label from an official institution, consumer confidence increases because the product is perceived not only as high-quality but also as safe and compliant with Sharia principles. This collaboration between innovative packaging and halal labeling ultimately encourages consumers to choose the product over other alternatives, thus positively impacting the product's competitiveness in both domestic and international markets.

Innovative packaging that incorporates modern technologies like QR codes, minimalist designs, and eco-friendly materials not only enhances visual appeal but also strengthens the brand's image as a professional and sustainable brand. The QR code feature adds value by allowing consumers to access detailed product information, from raw materials to the production process. Meanwhile, the halal label serves as a crucial symbol of trust in the Muslim market, as it guarantees that the product meets Sharia and hygiene standards. The results of research by Amry et al. (2024) in Jambi City demonstrate that the presence of a halal label not only increases consumer loyalty but also expands product distribution to a wider market. Therefore, the combination of innovative packaging and a halal label can create significant added value for producers while increasing product competitiveness in both local and global markets.

The collaboration between packaging and halal labeling creates added value not only in aesthetics and function, but also in ethical and spiritual aspects. Traditional Indonesian processed food products that combine innovative packaging with clear and reliable halal labeling have a greater opportunity to enter export markets, particularly in the Middle East and South Asia. This aligns with the findings of Putri et al. (2025), which highlight that an integrated strategy between packaging design and halal certification can increase consumer trust and strengthen a product's position in the global market. Therefore, the synergy between packaging

innovation and halal labeling is not just a trend, but a strategic necessity for developing a competitive, export-focused processed food industry.

### **Opportunities and challenges of exporting to the Middle East**

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The Middle East is a highly potential market for Indonesian exports, particularly in the processed food, textile, furniture, and halal product sectors. With a population of over 400 million, the majority of whom are Muslim, the region has high demand for products that meet halal standards, are high-quality, and contain cultural values. Furthermore, the relatively stable diplomatic relations between Indonesia and Middle Eastern countries open up opportunities for broader economic cooperation. According to Hasni (2018), exports of Indonesian processed food products to the Middle East have shown a positive trend, especially when the products are halal-certified and packaged to meet local consumer preferences. Countries such as the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar are strategic entry points due to their robust logistics infrastructure and role as regional trade hubs.

Halal certification provides strategic added value for producers because it can strengthen brand reputation, reduce trade barriers, and expedite distribution in export destination countries. This demonstrates that halal certification serves not only as a legal document but also as an effective marketing tool to enhance a company's image in the eyes of global consumers. Products with halal certification tend to receive higher priority in licensing and distribution processes, and are a key requirement for entry into modern distribution networks such as supermarkets and e-commerce platforms. Thus, the halal label not only facilitates market access but also opens up broader opportunities to reach consumers through modern distribution channels that are increasingly evolving in the digital era. Data shows that businesses, particularly MSMEs, experience increased production and turnover after obtaining halal certification, with an average increase of between 15% and 30% in the first two years. This demonstrates that halal certification has a direct positive impact on business growth and strengthens their position in facing competition in both domestic and international markets (Ariandi, 2025).

There are challenges affecting the export of traditional processed foods to the Middle East. One of the main obstacles is a

lack of understanding by business actors regarding export regulations and Middle Eastern market preferences. A study by Amry et al. (2024) revealed that many MSMEs do not yet understand the required quality standards and export documents, including internationally recognized halal certification. Furthermore, other challenges include high logistics costs, competition with products from other countries such as Turkey and Iran, and fluctuating trade policies influenced by political dynamics in the region. Technical aspects such as packaging customization, label language, and taste preferences are also important factors. Products that do not adapt to local tastes or do not include information in Arabic tend to be less popular.

Export strategies to the Middle East must encompass cultural approaches, product innovation, and compliance with stringent halal standards. Overcoming these challenges requires synergy between the government, businesses, and certification bodies. According to research (Hasni, 2018), the Ministry of Trade recommends enhancing the role of Trade Attachés and the Indonesia Trade Promotion Center (ITPC) in providing market information, export training, and facilitating product promotion. Furthermore, digitizing the export process and utilizing halal e-commerce platforms can also expand market access and reduce distribution costs.

Overall, exports to the Middle East offer significant opportunities for Indonesian products, especially if businesses can adapt to market needs and overcome technical and administrative barriers. With the right strategy, the region can become a key trading partner in developing an economy based on halal values and culture.

## **Conclusion**

This research shows that packaging innovation and the presence of a trusted halal label play a crucial role in increasing the selling value and competitiveness of traditional Indonesian processed food products in the Middle Eastern export market. Innovative packaging not only serves as a protective layer for the product but also as a visual communication tool that conveys identity, quality, and cultural values to consumers. Furthermore, the halal label serves as a sign of trust, guaranteeing compliance with Sharia principles and international standards, thereby strengthening Muslim consumers' confidence in the product.

The combination of innovative packaging and a credible halal label has been shown to create a significant competitive advantage, particularly in penetrating the premium halal market in the Middle East. This finding aligns with the research objectives and supports the assumption that the interaction of these two variables positively influences perceived product value and export readiness.

As a suggestion for future research, it is recommended to conduct an empirical study based on quantitative data to directly measure the interaction between packaging innovation and halal label credibility on export performance. Future research could also explore the moderating role of certification body reputation and halal supply chain integrity in strengthening the impact of these two key variables on the export success of Indonesian traditional processed food products.

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