

Children's Perception towards Halal Brand Product Appearance: A Case Study on Mu'min Junior Toothpaste

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ABSTRACT

This study attempts to identify the perception of children towards product appearance on Halal brand that in turn influence them to request for the product from their parents or make the purchase on their own. The truth is, promotions are important, but visual rather than verbal promotional communication is more popular among children. Researchers found that children expect and appreciate innovation in the grocery store, and among children's favored items are the cereal, snacks and dairy products. Apparently, there is a lapsed in literature in regard to children perception toward product appearance, in particular Halal consumable products. In order to evaluate product element effectiveness in enhancing product appearance, Mu'min Junior Toothpaste was selected to assess current local Halal brand product appearance appeal among children.

Key words: Children's Perception, Product Appearance, Halal Brand

INTRODUCTION

How do images communicate? How do people perceive and understand appearance? These are the rhetoric that transcend time and culture. Everyone is not excluded from the bombardment of media and each person is entitled to his or her own perceptions toward the visual communication he or she received. All around the world, social scientists are trying to uncover and understand the workings of visual communications toward consumers. Evidently, just like the adult generation, young people (6-12 years of age) today are approached as highly competent consumers of a visual market consisting not only of products, but also of ideas and values. Advertisements, product appearance, food containers, collector cards, computer games, fashion magazines and TV programs, etc., are sold to young people not only as products, but as whole lifestyle packages. These also concerning the influence these products have on young people in their everyday life illustrate a generational conflict, which is sometimes based on adults' lack of knowledge about how young people value and use these products (Cohen 1972/1987; cf., Buckingham 2000; Seiter 1993; Sparrman 2002). The importance of product appearance as a vehicle for communication and branding is growing in competitive markets for consumable and non-consumable products. Visual elements play a major role, in representing the product for the consumers, especially in low involvement (inexpensive product that requires lesser amount of purchase deliberation), and when consumers are in a hurry to decide which product to purchase just by looking at the product appearance. This scenario also applies to the Halal product industry. As for the Halal industry the Muslim countries represent almost 20% of the world's population. Furthermore, this figure is expected to increase to 30% by 2025. One of the most important concepts in Islam is the concept of *Halal*, which means "permissible." *Halal* covers the aspects of slaughtering, storage, display, preparation, hygiene and sanitation. It covers food as well as non-food category of products. Previous study on halal also always disregards children as its main subject.

METHODS

In order to collect and examine data, a frame work for the study is generated by researcher. The research design acts as a guideline to help the researcher identify the appropriate methods to be used as well as attain the purpose of this study. The research begins with the specific objectives which are necessary to be answered and completed by researcher in the end. By answering them, the objective of

this study can be achieved. Therefore, both descriptive statistic research and projective technique are seen as the suitable and correct methods to be applied.

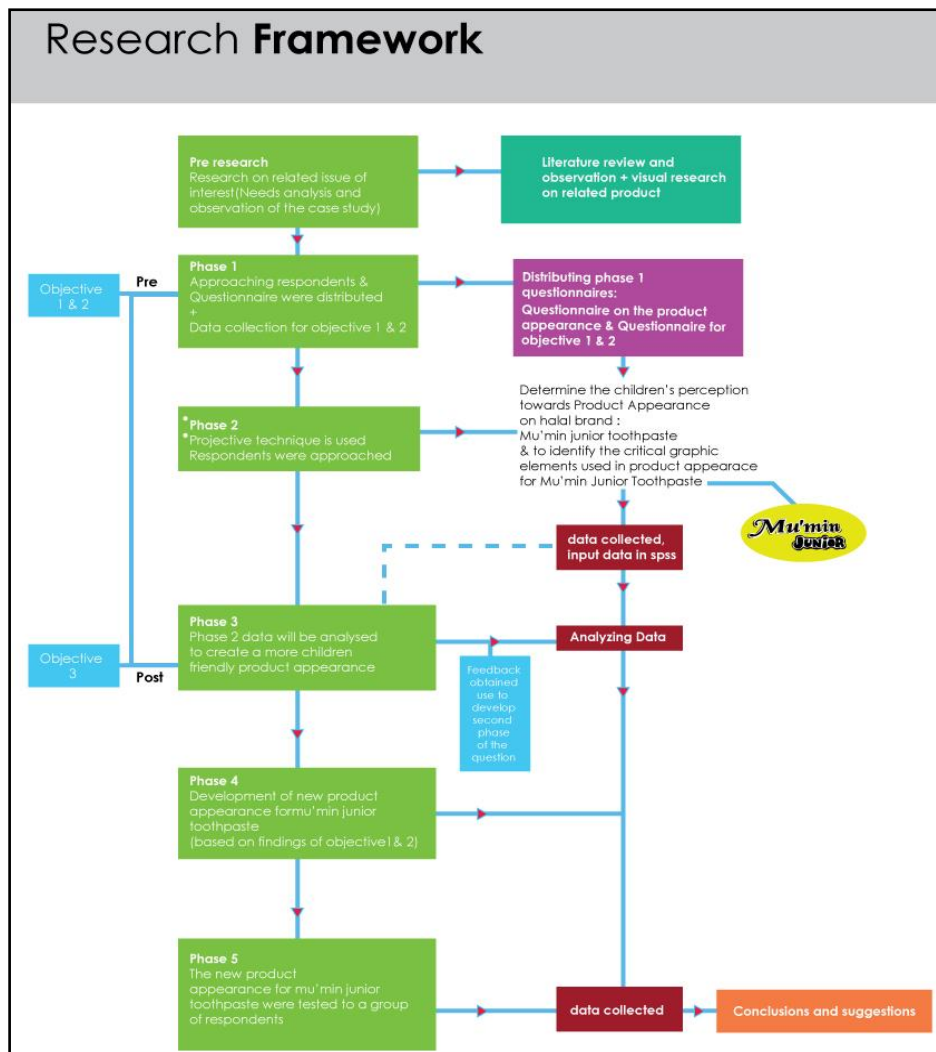


FIGURE 1: Research Design Framework

Questionnaire

Questionnaire method was employed to children between the ages of seven to eleven years old. Sample for this study was conveniently selected from a school in Selangor and Perak. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. One, to contribute data for objective 1 and 2 another to answer objective 2. Findings of both objectives will contribute towards answering objective 3. Descriptive statistics was used to answer all the study objectives, specifically objective 1 and 2.

Descriptive Method

Descriptive statistic was used to identify the critical elements in creating a friendlier Mu'min junior product appearance. Descriptive statistics are used to describe the basic features of the data in a study. It provided simple summaries about the sample and the measures. Together with simple graphics analysis, they form the basis of virtually every quantitative analysis of the study data. Descriptive statistics simply describes what is or what the data shows. This method was employed in needs analysis, i.e. phase 1 and phase 2 of the questionnaire.

A semantic differential scale

For the questions in the phase one survey of children's perception towards product appearance on Mu'min junior toothpaste the score of 1 to 6 are allocated to the six point scale, thus quantifying the various degrees of opinion expressed. In this research the scale is anchored using strongly agree to strongly disagree statements.

Focus group – Projective technique (Drawings by the respondents)

In order for this research to happen, selected schools were called and asked whether they can participate for the research. The second phase of the questionnaires have to sections to be fulfil on is questions on product appearance. The second section will gather respondent in a group of their selected age and requires the respondents to draw images or characters that are suitable for Mu'min junior toothpaste. After all the data collection from phase one and two, a suitable more friendlier product appearance was created for Mu'min junior toothpaste. For phase two (the drawing section) respondents (focus group) are randomly selected from the age of 7 to 11, for every age group 10 respondents are selected.

Data for this study were collected 22nd February 2011 to 7th March 2011. A total of 150 sets of questionnaires were administered to respondents. Primary school students were selected because of their age group criteria suits for this research.

| Location | Schools | Sets of questionnaires |
|----------------------|--|------------------------|
| Shah Alam, Selangor | Sekolah Rendah Kebangsaan seksyen 7 | 50 |
| SubangJaya, Selangor | Sekolah Kebangsaan Dato' Onn Jaafar (Sekolah Wawasan USJ 15) | 50 |
| Slim River, Perak | Sekolah Rendah Kebangsaan Balun, Slim River | 50 |
| Total | | 150 |

FIGURE 2: Sampled respondents

RESULTS

Base on the data collection of phase 1 questionnaires, it can be concluded that children (respondents) are not favourable on the characters with the mean score of 3.0, labeling (3.1 and 2.9), color of the packaging (2.7), of the current product appearance on Mu'min junior toothpaste. The respondents also are not so keen on mint flavoured toothpaste (2.3) and they are not very clear and understand on the info graphic (2.7) stated on label.

| | Item | Mean |
|-------------------|---|------|
| Halal | 1. Mu'min's junior toothpaste is a halal product | 5.1 |
| | 2. I bought Mu'min's junior toothpaste because it has a prominent halal logo | 5.0 |
| | 3. I will buy Mu'min's Junior toothpaste because it has a prominent halal logo | 4.6 |
| Image | 4. I like Mu'min's junior toothpaste packaging because it has cartoon characters on it | 3.8 |
| | 5. I like Mu'min's junior toothpaste packaging that has the image of the flavours on it | 3.9 |
| Colour | 6. I like Mu'min's junior toothpaste packaging that uses bright and fun color | 4.4 |
| | 7. The color of Mu'min's junior toothpaste packaging attracts my attention in deciding which toothpaste to purchase | 2.7 |
| Packaging | 8. I like the color of Mu'min's junior toothpaste packaging that relates to the flavours of the toothpaste | 4.2 |
| Toothpaste | 9. I like Mu'min's junior toothpaste with colored paste | 4.2 |

| | | |
|---------------------|--|--|
| colour | according to the flavours 10. Mu'min's junior toothpaste choices of colors are suitable for each flavours | 2.6 |
| Flavor | 11. I like Mu'min's junior toothpaste because of its fruity flavoured paste 12. I like minty flavoured Mu'min's junior toothpaste | 4.6 2.3 |
| Label | 13. Mu'min's junior toothpaste label design is cheerful 14. The label on Mu'min's junior toothpaste packaging is clear and easy to understand 15. I like Mu'min's junior toothpaste because of its fruity images | 3.1 2.9 4.4 |
| Character | 16. I like the characters on Mu'min's junior toothpaste packaging and labelling | 3.0 |
| Info graphic | 17. I like the info graphic on dental care on Mu'min's junior toothpaste packaging | 2.7 |

TABLE 1: Mean Score for Children Perceptions towards Product Appearance on Mu'min Junior Toothpaste (N=90)

Referring from the findings of phase 1 phase 2 questionnaires has been developed in order to contribute to objective 3. Only some parts of findings of phase 1 are taken, that is on characters and image, labeling, color, flavours of toothpaste and the shape of the tube. On the rate the image section, it is clearly seen that children (respondents) are not favourable of image 1, 2, 4 and 5.

The images below was rate between the scale of 1 – 6







| Images | Mean Score | Images | Mean Score | Images | Mean Score |
|---|------------|--|------------|--|------------|
|  | 2.8 |  | 4.2 |  | 2.6 |
|  | 3.7 |  Si Comel Ceria | 3.3 |  | 4.3 |

TABLE 2: Current images and characters for Mu'min Junior Toothpaste

Findings on fruits that suits the colour gives feedbacks from respondents that red the fruit is strawberry (67.8%), purple indicates grape (81.1%), orange (76.7%) for orange colour and banana (72.2%) for yellow. Findings on object that suits the colour, gives feedbacks from respondents that red represent fire engine (86.7%), purple indicates sweets (84.4%), pencil (51.1%) for orange colour and rubber duck (74.4%) for yellow. Findings on image of an animal that suits the colour, gives feedbacks from respondents that red represent rooster (60%), purple indicates hippo (70%), tiger (64.4%) for orange colour and cat (57.8%) for yellow. Findings on flavours that suits the colour gives feedbacks from respondents that red the flavour of strawberry (70%), purple indicates grape flavour (70%), orange flavour (74.4%) for orange colour and banana flavour (76.7%) for yellow. These are the flavours selected by respondents according to their colour. Base on findings of phase 1 questionnaires it said that children are more favourable to fruity flavours of the toothpaste.

Drawings by the respondents

The drawing section is established by findings from phase 1 questionnaire and base on literature on Children Drawing Development by Viktor Lowenfeld and Betty Edwards. The age group to select respondent for this research were chosen base on the chart. Children at the age from 7 to 11 have already established readable or recognizable drawing skills. The young children begin to compare their work and become more critical of it. While they are more independent of adults, they are more anxious

to conform to their peers (Viktor Lowenfeld, 1985). For the projective technique the children (respondents) from the age of seven to eleven were asked to draw an ideal image or character to represent Mu'min junior toothpaste (figure 3).

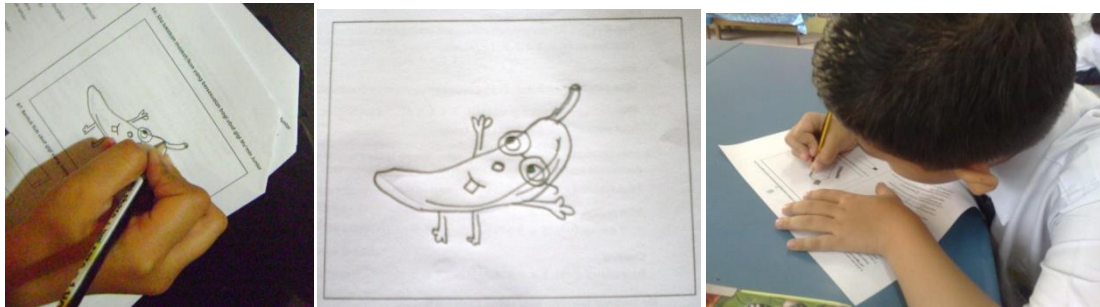


PLATE 1: Drawings from respondents

Out of 50 drawings done by the respondents only 16 drawings are selected to undergo design and development process in creating a children friendlier looking product appearance for Mu'min Junior toothpaste, for the final characters selection only out of 16, only 8 are selected to be develop.

Final Selected drawings from respondents (to be implemented on the label and packaging (Product appearance) of Mu'min Junior Toothpaste) and characters development.

| Respondent's Drawing | Respondent's Drawing Traced using Adobe Illustrator | Developed by designer |
|----------------------|---|-----------------------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| Respondent's Drawing | Respondent's Drawing Traced using Adobe Illustrator | Developed by designer |
| | | |
| | | |

FIGURE 4: Final Character Development 1



FIGURE 5: Final Character Development 1

The Characters Implementation on the Label and Packaging (Product Appearance)



ILLUSTRATION 1: New Propose Product Appearance for Mu'min Junior Toothpaste (Design 1)



Illustration 2: New Propose Product Appearance for Mu'min Junior Toothpaste (Design 2)



Illustration 3: New Propose Product Appearance for Mu'min Junior Toothpaste (Design 3)



Illustration 4: New Propose Product Appearance for Mu'min Junior Toothpaste (Design 4)

Base on the data collection together with the drawings done in focus group, a more children oriented product appearances for Mu'min junior toothpaste were created. The new children oriented designs were tested to a group of respondents (children age 7 to 8). The test was done to see whether the new designs and product appearance are favourable or not favourable to the respondents.

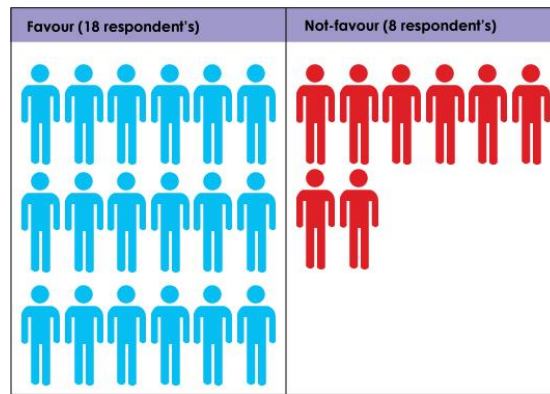


Figure 6: Findings on feedback of new product appearance of Mu'min Junior Toothpaste by Respondents

In order to proof whether the new Product Appearance of Mu'min junior toothpaste is favourable or not favourable a test was conducted. The test was conducted from 22nd to 24th of April 2011. The test is to evaluate the new product appearance of Mu'min Junior toothpaste. The respondents were selected from Sekolah Kebangsaan Balun, Slim River, Perak Darul Ridzuan. The respondents are aged between 7 to 8 years old.



Picture 1: Respondents during the Evaluation Session

A total of 26 respondents were gathered. The respondents then were asked to choose which of the product appearance of Mu'min junior toothpaste that they favor by putting up their hands. Results of the test show that out of 26 respondents, 18 respondents are favorable to the new product appearance of Mu'min junior toothpaste while the other 8 respondents are not favorable of the new appearance.

DISCUSSION

It can be concluded that the new Mu'min junior product appearance are favourable to the targeted respondents rather than the current product appearance of Mu'min junior toothpaste. These also answers to children are likely to assess products and their packaging mainly on visuals that attracted them (Silayoi and Speece, 2004). This research also gives a new perspective on children capability to assess and percept visuals and images.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that children actually are well aware of halal brand base on the finding of phase 1 survey, but their perception towards product appearance on halal brand should be taken an initiative to come up with new or relevant brand image so that the product appearance are more appealing for young consumer (base on phase 1 findings that answers objective 1 that is, to asses children perception towards product appearance on halal brand, Mu'min junior toothpaste). Although most of the past study was not on children, there are other studies that argue that due to children's lower abilities to process information, they are likely to assess products and their packaging mainly on a visual level, in addition to informational elements. Marketers therefore constantly use attractive visual imagery, recognizable characters, colour and design to ensure their product stands out to children (Silayoi and Speece, 2004). This have been done in the research by creating a more appealing product appearance on halal brand that answer objective 3 for this research. It is also can be concluded that children are

capable to produce images and characters accordingly. As for the case study, Mu'min junior toothpaste should undergo a visual and face lift research for their product. They should evaluate on their product so that it is more appealing to its targeted consumer.

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