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## ASSESSING MARKETING STRATEGIES OF HALAL CERTIFIED FOOD MANUFACTURERS IN MINDANAO, PHILIPPINES: A QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

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### Abstract:

This study conducted a comprehensive analysis of the marketing strategies employed by halal-certified food manufacturers in select provinces of Mindanao, with a specific focus on evaluating the efficacy and implementation levels of these strategies. Employing a descriptive-correlational research approach, the study surveyed 70 marketing personnel from various manufacturers, alongside 398 Muslim consumers residing in Marawi City. Data analysis utilized weighted mean and independent sample T-test methodologies. Results from the assessment of marketing personnel indicate that the strategies implemented by halal-certified food manufacturers largely adhere to halal standards across product, price, place, promotion, people, and process. However, contrasting perspectives emerged from the evaluation conducted with Muslim consumers. Product, promotion, and people elements were found to be compliant; nevertheless, there were implementation issues and limited effectiveness in the areas of pricing, place, process, and physical evidence. Manufacturers are advised to give priority to improvements in areas that have been identified as less compliant in light of these findings. At the same time, attempts ought to be made to maintain the application of tactics that are thought to be successful in fulfilling halal requirements. Manufacturers can facilitate sustainable growth in the halal-certified food sector by taking this action.

### Keywords:

Marketing Strategies, Halal Certified, Food Manufacturers, Mindanao

## Introduction

Marketing stands as a cornerstone of organizational success, serving as the conduit through which companies engage with consumers and drive profitability (Fejza & Asllani, 2013). Therefore, prioritizing marketing efforts is imperative for ensuring the sustainable growth of an organization.

Within the food sector, a heightened focus on consumer needs is paramount, necessitating a greater emphasis on marketing functions. Food producers must dedicate substantial resources to the development and execution of marketing plans that differentiate their offerings and resonate with target clientele. Through the use of marketing tactics designed to ensure customer pleasure, food businesses can foster long-term client loyalty and enhance their financial performance.

Manufacturers have shown a growing interest in the halal food business in recent years, driven by increased awareness and the exponential growth of the Muslim population worldwide. However, the significance of food consumption is particularly pronounced for Muslim consumers, who adhere to strict halal dietary guidelines (Varinli, Erdem & Avcilar, 2016).

Empirical research underscores the challenges faced by halal producers in navigating effective marketing strategies. Omar's investigation (2013) illuminates marketing as a primary hurdle for companies, attributed to a deficiency in understanding Islamic marketing principles. This assertion is further corroborated by Arif's inquiry (2011), which underscores the pivotal role of effective Islamic marketing strategies in ensuring the food industry's ability to cater to Muslim consumers' needs.

In light of these considerations, this study rigorously assessed the marketing strategies employed by halal-certified food manufacturers across selected provinces in Mindanao. Specifically, it scrutinized the implementation levels and effectiveness of existing marketing strategies. Armed with the insights garnered from this research, manufacturers can pinpoint areas within their strategies requiring refinement. This study not only offers invaluable insights into consumer preferences but also serves as a foundational guide for enhancing marketing strategies, ultimately enabling manufacturers to achieve full compliance with halal business practices.

## Literature Review

### *Overview of Marketing and Islamic Marketing*

The evolution of the concept and definition of marketing has traversed various epochs, each presenting distinct perspectives. But despite this variation, a theme appears that highlights how dynamic the marketing phenomenon is (Tabrani & Marlizar, 2016). Meanwhile, Kotler (2010) provides his modern interpretation of marketing as a social and managerial process by which individuals and groups create and exchange value with others to obtain desired goods and services. In July 2013, the American Marketing Association unveiled its most recent approved definition, defining marketing as "an activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large."

Nevertheless, Tabrani and Marlizar (2016) critique these definitions, noting their exclusive focus on the conventional marketing paradigm. They contend that traditionally, marketing has

been seen as a unique role or process for creating and exchanging goods and services that meet the demands of both companies and customers. As a result, they argue that the broadening of these categories has highlighted a secular, materialistic worldview that prioritizes the accumulation of riches and material aspects of human well-being. This viewpoint emphasizes how important it is for Islamic marketing to be an emerging field.

Shamsudin and Rahman's study (2014) further elucidates the dynamic nature of marketing concepts, highlighting their evolution over time. There has been a noticeable movement in the recognition of the significance of Islamic marketing principles by corporations as they realize the value of religion as a vital ingredient in marketing. The trajectory of marketing theory and practice is shaped by this admission, which highlights a deeper understanding within the business environment of the significance of ethical and culturally sensitive marketing techniques.

Notably, Islamic marketing is defined by Najmaei et al. (2017) as the promotion of goods that are consistent with Islamic principles. The Quranic scripture lends support to this definition, especially Surah An-Nisa (4:29), which emphasizes the sanctity of life under divine mercy and forbids believers from unjustly consuming one another's property except through mutually consenting trade: "O you who have believed, do not consume one another's wealth unjustly but only [in lawful] business by mutual consent." And do not murder either other or yourselves. This verse from the Quran, which emphasizes fair commerce, mutual consent, and the preservation of life, forms the basis of Islamic marketing ethics and influences the forms of marketing strategies. "Truly, Allah is to you ever Merciful," it says.

### ***Marketing Mix in an Islamic Perspective***

The four Ps—product, pricing, place, and promotion—have long been recognized by marketing academics as the essential components that shape marketing strategy. However, three more dimensions—people, process, and physical evidence—have been added to this paradigm in response to the changing needs and expectations of more astute consumers (Lovelock, Wirtz & Chew, 2011). The term "marketing mix" refers to this broader viewpoint that includes the seven Ps of marketing. This conceptual improvement represents a greater understanding of the complex interplay between ethereal elements like customer experience, service delivery procedures, and the palpable proof of service excellence, as well as physical elements like prices and items.

Alserhan et al. (2016) underscored that the marketing mix from an Islamic standpoint prioritizes value-maximization, aiming to foster a societal welfare approach. Thus, it becomes crucial for stakeholders within this domain to grasp the intricate dimensions of Islamic marketing and their profound impact on the implementation of marketing strategies. Indeed, empirical evidence suggests that halal exporters who align their marketing strategies with Islamic values, beliefs, norms, and practices stand poised to significantly enhance their export performance within Islamic markets (Tahir & Abdul, 2013). This highlights the strategic importance of integrating Islamic principles into marketing endeavors, not only as a means of promoting ethical conduct but also as a strategic pathway to achieving competitive advantage and sustainable growth in these markets.

The seven components of the marketing mix are presented and discussed from an Islamic perspective.

*Product:* A product, defined as something offered to a market to fulfill a want or need (Kotler, 2010), holds significance in Islamic marketing due to considerations of quality, convenience, and adherence to religious guidelines (Ireland & Rajabzadeh, 2011). Success factors for halal products include avoiding alcohol-containing ingredients, substances from prohibited sources, maintaining cleanliness, and adhering to Sharia standards in production (Saleh & Salsabila, 2018).

*Price:* Altering prices without changing quality or quantity is deemed deceitful in Islamic teachings (Al Serhan & Alobaitha, 2013). Furthermore, Islamic marketing emphasizes customer concerns over profit maximization, emphasizing fair pricing and customer welfare (Abuznaid, 2012).

*Place:* Also known as distribution, ensuring accessibility, cleanliness, and product condition during distribution are crucial for halal compliance (Saleh & Salsabila, 2018). Distribution channels must adhere to Islamic principles to maintain the integrity of halal products (Kotler, 2010).

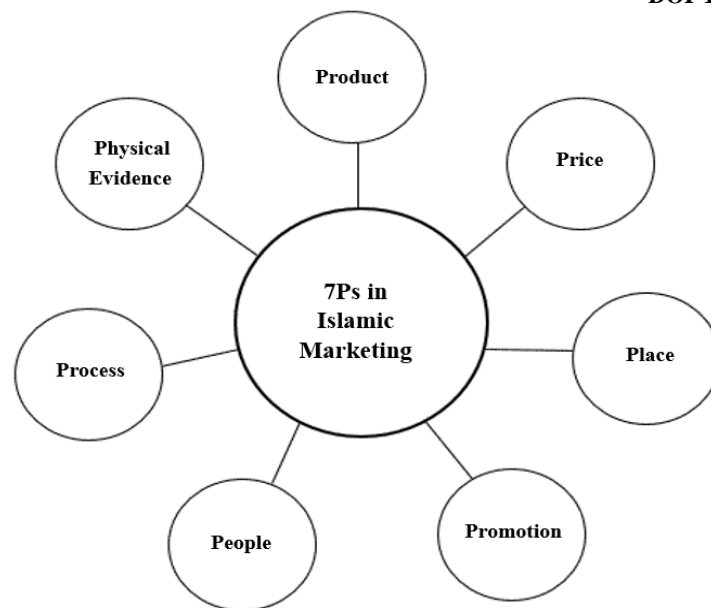
*Promotion:* Promotion activities should uphold honesty, transparency, and reflect the real qualities of the product (Saleh & Salsabila, 2018). Islamic marketing discourages the use of sexual imagery and prioritizes ethical promotion techniques (Abdullah et al., 2015).

*People:* Employees involved in marketing halal products should be knowledgeable about Islamic principles (Saleh & Salsabila, 2018). Protecting customer decision-making freedom and ensuring commitment to excellent service are key considerations (Abuznaid, 2012).

*Process:* Delivering products and services with a focus on customer satisfaction and comfort is vital in Islamic marketing (Saleh & Salsabila, 2018). Processes should avoid coercion and ensure transparency in product explanations (Abdullah et al., 2015).

*Physical Evidence:* Physical evidence, including product packaging and service environment, should reassure customers of the product's authenticity and quality (Saleh & Salsabila, 2018). It serves as a tangible representation of the company's commitment to halal standards (Abuznaid, 2012).

In accordance with this discussion, a framework illustrating the 7Ps in Islamic marketing, including product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence, is presented in Figure 1 on the following page. This framework draws upon research by Abuznaid (2012), Hashim and Hamzah (2013), Saleh and Salsabila (2018), and Tabrani and Marlizar (2016).



**Figure 1: 7Ps in Islamic Marketing**

### ***Halal Concept and Halal Food***

The term "halal" originates from Arabic, denoting what is lawful or permitted, in contrast to "haram," which signifies what is forbidden or illegal. These terms find application across various contexts, including food products, meat, cosmetics, personal care items, medications, food ingredients, and objects in contact with food (Islamic Council of Victoria, 2019). While many items are clearly categorized as halal or haram, certain products fall into a gray area and are deemed "mashbooh," meaning doubtful or questionable, necessitating further clarification (Islamic Council of Victoria, 2019).

Contrary to popular belief, the concept of halal extends beyond food to encompass all aspects of a Muslim's life, irrespective of gender (Esfahani & Shahnazari, 2013). Baharuddin et al. (2015) underscore that no entity can unilaterally declare a food item as halal without adherence to Islamic Law. Halal and non-halal considerations encompass broader aspects of Muslim life, including social justice, environmental sustainability, animal welfare, and safety standards, with the term "toyyiban," meaning "clean and wholesome," embodying ideals of food safety, quality, and hygiene among Muslims.

As elucidated by Khan and Haleem (2016), Islamic dietary laws permit the consumption and trade of all foods under normal circumstances, except those expressly forbidden in the Quran and Hadith (records of Prophet Muhammad's (SAW) sayings and practices). Foods falling under the category of prohibited items are referred to as haram foods.

### ***Halal Certification***

According to Daud et al. (2011), halal certification represents a groundbreaking concept in marketing, serving as a benchmark for manufacturers' quality standards. It has emerged as a pivotal marketing tool, signifying not only product quality but also a commitment to religious obligations, particularly for Muslims. The significance of halal certification cannot be overstated in the success of halal food manufacturers. Intriguingly, research by Shafie et al. (2010) highlights the prevalence of halal certification in the food industry, underscoring its role

in acknowledging and accommodating Muslim dietary restrictions, sensitivities, and religious practices.

Talib et al.'s (2015) study reveals that industries adhering to halal requirements produce superior-quality food products compared to those following conventional standards. Moreover, as noted by Khan and Haleem (2016), halal certification offers benefits to consumers and confers a competitive edge upon food producers. The researchers emphasize that halal certification can serve as a strategic tool for product differentiation, driving sales and enhancing a company's appeal, especially among halal consumers.

## **Methods**

### ***Design and Locale***

This study adopts a quantitative research design and was conducted in selected provinces of Mindanao, Philippines, where a majority of halal-certified food manufacturers are situated. These provinces comprise Davao del Sur, Misamis Oriental, South Cotabato, Zamboanga del Sur, Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur, and Lanao del Norte. In terms of the target population, the study focused on Muslim consumers residing in Marawi City, also known as the Islamic City of Marawi.

### ***Participants***

The study involved two groups of respondents. The first group comprised the marketing personnel of halal-certified food manufacturers situated within the seven provinces of Mindanao. This group included individuals holding positions such as head of the marketing department, marketing manager, assistant/associate marketing department head, or senior marketing personnel. Based on the current roster provided by the Islamic Da'wah Council of the Philippines, a reputable halal certification authority, there are a total of seventy-nine (79) halal-certified food manufacturers operating in the seven provinces of Mindanao, specializing in selected categories of halal processed food products. All seventy-nine manufacturers were considered as potential respondents, though only 70 of them ultimately participated in the survey.

The second group of respondents consisted of Muslim consumers residing in Marawi City. These individuals were selected due to their residency in an Islamic city within the country, which suggests a sincere adherence to Islamic beliefs. To ensure the objectivity and reliability of the assessment, only Muslim residents aged at least 18 years were considered eligible respondents. The sample size of 398 respondents was determined using Conchran's formula with a 5% margin of error.

### ***Instruments***

As the study involved two distinct groups of respondents, separate sets of questionnaires were utilized for data collection. The first set of questionnaires was tailored for the marketing personnel of halal-certified food manufacturers, while the second set was designed for Muslim consumers. The formulation of questions in the research instruments drew heavily from the work of Abuznaid (2012), with additional insights gleaned from studies by Hashim and Hamzah (2013), Hejase et al. (2012), Omar (2013), and Saleh and Salsabila (2018).

To ensure the efficacy of the instruments, rigorous validity and reliability tests were conducted. Content validation was performed by experts in the field and professional researchers.



Moreover, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated to assess the internal consistency of the questions, as detailed in Table 1.

**Table 1. Reliability Test**

Questions	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Marketing Strategies (7 Ps)	50	0.904	Good
Challenges and Problems (7 Ps)	32	0.901	Good

### ***Data Collection Procedures***

To ensure the functionality of the questionnaires, the researcher conducted a dry run of the instruments. Following this trial, respondents completed the questionnaires, after which the researcher collected the completed forms. Subsequently, the responses were scrutinized to identify instances of non-response to any question and to assess the overall trend of responses. The findings of this screening process served as the basis for refining the instruments. Expert input from the relevant field and consultation with professional researchers were sought to validate the instruments before finalization.

Permission to conduct the survey was obtained from both groups of respondents. Prior to distributing the questionnaires, comprehensive instructions were provided to ensure clarity and understanding..

### ***Data Analysis***

The data collected were treated and analyzed using percentage, weighted mean and independent sample T-test.

### ***Ethical Considerations***

Throughout the study, the researcher adhered to ethical research guidelines, particularly when collecting data. The respondent are informed of the study's objectives, procedures, and expected benefits prior to answering the questionnaire. They are also informed of their right to withdraw from participation in the research at any time, as well as the confidentiality of their responses.

## **Results**

### ***Level of Implementation of the Marketing Strategies***

The level of implementation of the marketing strategies of the manufacturers was assessed by both the marketing personnel and the Muslim consumers.

**Table 2: Assessment of the Marketing Personnel on the Level of Implementation of the Marketing Strategies**

7Ps	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Product	3.44	Well Implemented
Price	3.23	Implemented
Place	3.06	Implemented
Promotion	3.49	Well Implemented
People	3.21	Implemented
Process	3.22	Implemented
Physical Evidence	2.48	Less Implemented
<b>Over-all Weighted Mean of 7Ps</b>	<b>3.16</b>	<b>Implemented</b>
<i>Legend:</i>	3.26 – 4.00 : Well Implemented	2.51 – 3.25 : Implemented
	1.76 – 2.50 : Less Implemented	1.00 – 1.75 : Not Implemented

Table 2 presents a summary of the assessment conducted by marketing personnel regarding the level of implementation of manufacturers' marketing strategies across the 7Ps framework. The overall weighted mean for the implementation of marketing strategies across the 7Ps resulted to 3.16. Among the 7Ps, promotion achieved the highest weighted mean of 3.49, followed closely by product with a weighted mean of 3.44, indicating that both aspects are well-implemented. The remaining four Ps, in descending order of implementation, are as follows: price with a weighted mean of 3.23, process with a weighted mean of 3.22, people with a weighted mean of 3.21, and place with a weighted mean of 3.06.

**Table 3: Assessment of the Muslim Consumers on the Level of Implementation of the Marketing Strategies**

7Ps	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Product	2.53	Implemented
Price	2	Less Implemented
Place	2.29	Less Implemented
Promotion	2.59	Implemented
People	2.51	Implemented
Process	2.28	Less Implemented
Physical Evidence	2.13	Less Implemented
<b>Over-all Weighted Mean of 7Ps</b>	<b>2.33</b>	<b>Less Implemented</b>
<i>Legend:</i>	3.26 – 4.00 : Well Implemented	2.51 – 3.25 : Implemented
	1.76 – 2.50 : Less Implemented	1.00 – 1.75 : Not Implemented

The assessment of Muslim consumers yields contrasting results, as depicted in Table 3. The overall weighted mean of the 7Ps is merely 2.33, indicating a lower level of implementation. Notably, none of the elements of the marketing mix are deemed well-implemented. Among the 7Ps, promotion receives the highest weighted mean of 2.59, followed by product with a weighted mean of 2.53. Interestingly, the top two highest-ranking elements align with the assessment of the marketing personnel, albeit with significantly lower mean scores, interpreted only as implemented. Similarly, consumers evaluate people as implemented, with a weighted mean of 2.51, displaying a slight variance from the product assessment. Conversely, all other Ps of the marketing mix—namely, place with a weighted mean of 2.29, process with a weighted mean of 2.28, physical evidence with a weighted mean of 2.13, and price with a weighted mean



of 2.0—are evaluated as less implemented. This outcome suggests that consumers perceive the manufacturers' strategies as either non-compliant or inadequately aligned with halal requirements.

### *Level of Effectiveness of the Marketing Strategies*

To determine the effectiveness of the marketing strategies of the manufacturers, assessments of both the marketing personnel and consumers were considered.

**Table 4: Assessment of the Marketing Personnel on the Level of Effectiveness of the Marketing Strategies**

7Ps	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Product	3.33	Very Effective
Price	3.16	Effective
Place	3.01	Effective
Promotion	3.41	Very Effective
People	3.12	Effective
Process	3.15	Effective
Physical Evidence	2.37	Less Effective
<b>Over-all Weighted Mean of 7Ps</b>	<b>3.08</b>	<b>Effective</b>

*Legend:*      3.26 – 4.00 : Very Effective                      2.51 – 3.25 : Effective  
                      1.76 – 2.50 : Less Effective                      1.00 – 1.75 : Not Effective

Based on the assessment conducted by marketing personnel regarding the effectiveness of marketing strategies, the overall marketing strategy across the 7Ps is rated as effective, with an overall weighted mean of 3.08. Promotion receives the highest weighted mean of 3.41, followed by product with a weighted mean of 3.33. Interestingly, this ranking mirrors the findings of the assessment of marketing personnel on the level of strategy implementation. Both promotion and product achieve overall mean scores interpreted as very effective. Moreover, most indicators within these two elements of the marketing mix are also assessed as very effective, indicating that manufacturers have successfully implemented their promotion and product strategies, achieving their objectives effectively.

The remaining four Ps of the marketing mix—price with a weighted mean of 3.16, process with a weighted mean of 3.15, people with a weighted mean of 3.12, and place with a weighted mean of 3.01—are rated as effective. However, among the 7Ps, only physical evidence is assessed as less effective, with a weighted mean of 2.37. This finding aligns with the assessment of marketing personnel regarding strategy implementation.

As underscored in the study by Varinli et al. (2016), manufacturers must strictly adhere to Islamic laws and principles to satisfy Muslim consumers. Additionally, it is crucial to note that Muslims are cognizant of the regulations outlined in the Al Quran and Sunnah regarding halal compliance in business practices (Abdullah & Ahmad, 2010). Therefore, effective implementation of marketing strategies is imperative for ensuring consumer satisfaction and compliance with Islamic principles.

**Table 5: Assessment of the Muslim Consumers on the Level of Effectiveness of the Marketing Strategies**

7Ps	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Product	2.46	Less Effective
Price	1.93	Less Effective
Place	2.21	Less Effective
Promotion	2.51	Effective
People	2.44	Less Effective
Process	2.24	Less Effective
Physical Evidence	2.07	Less Effective
<b>Over-all Weighted Mean of 7Ps</b>	<b>2.27</b>	<b>Less Effective</b>
<i>Legend:</i> 3.26 – 4.00 : Very Effective		
1.76 – 2.50 : Less Effective		
2.51 – 3.25 : Effective		
1.00 – 1.75 : Not Effective		

The assessment conducted by Muslim consumers regarding the effectiveness level reveals contrasting results compared to the evaluation by marketing personnel. The overall weighted mean of 2.27 indicates that the effectiveness is perceived as less effective. Interestingly, only one element of the marketing mix, promotion, is deemed effective with a weighted mean of 2.51. Conversely, all other elements are perceived to be less effective. Notably, price receives the lowest weighted mean of 1.93 among the 7Ps. Consequently, this assessment starkly contrasts with the evaluation by marketing personnel, who deemed the manufacturers' strategies either very effective or effective.

These findings on the effectiveness of marketing strategies, as perceived by consumers, align with the results of Abdullah et al.'s (2013) study.

#### ***Difference on the Assessments of the Marketing Personnel and Muslim Consumers***

The difference between the responses of the marketing personnel and the Muslim consumers on the implementation of the marketing strategies of halal certified food manufacturers are tested using independent sample t-test.

**Table 6: Difference between the Assessments of the Marketing Personnel and the Muslim Consumers on the Level of Implementation of the Marketing Strategies**

7Ps	t-test for Equality of Means						Remarks	
	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
						Lower		Upper
Product	4.434	14	0.001	0.92125	0.20778	0.47561	1.36689	Significant
Price	9.422	14	0	1.2325	0.13081	0.95195	1.51305	Significant
Place	4.67	14	0	0.81875	0.17532	0.44274	1.19476	Significant
Promotion	3.907	14	0.002	0.88625	0.22681	0.39979	1.37271	Significant
People	6.485	10	0	0.70333	0.10845	0.46169	0.94497	Significant
Process	3.382	10	0.007	0.92667	0.274	0.31615	1.53718	Significant
Physical Evidence	1.786	10	0.104	0.69167	0.38724	-0.17116	1.55449	Not Significant

The results of the test presented in Table 6 indicate a significant difference between the assessments of marketing personnel and Muslim consumers regarding the implementation of marketing strategies across product, price, place, promotion, people, and process. This suggests that the evaluations of strategies vary considerably between the two groups. The data clearly

demonstrate that ratings provided by personnel are markedly higher than those provided by consumers across all elements of the marketing mix. This discrepancy may suggest that personnel, being part of the company, tend to be more conservative in their assessments, whereas consumers maintain stricter standards, particularly concerning halal compliance.

However, the assessments of the two groups of respondents do not exhibit a significant difference in terms of physical evidence. The test results align with the ratings provided by different respondents regarding the level of implementation. Specifically, it is revealed that only in the case of physical evidence do the assessments of personnel and consumers coincide, both interpreted as less implemented. Consequently, no significant difference is observed in this aspect.

### **Conclusions**

Based on the assessment conducted by marketing personnel, it can be concluded that the marketing strategies of halal certified food manufacturers in the selected provinces of Mindanao are deemed halal compliant across product, price, place, promotion, people, and process. These elements are evaluated to be implemented and effective, meeting the necessary standards. However, the evaluation provided by Muslim consumers suggests a different perspective. It is concluded that while the marketing strategies are deemed halal compliant in terms of product, promotion, and people, they fall short of meeting halal standards concerning price, place, process, and physical evidence. These elements are perceived to be less implemented and less effective by Muslim consumers.

In summary, the assessments of marketing personnel and Muslim consumers on the marketing strategies of halal certified food manufacturers exhibit significant variation across all elements of the marketing mix, except for physical evidence, where both groups concur in their assessment of less implementation.

### **Recommendations**

Considering the findings of the study, manufacturers should prioritize addressing the halal compliance of strategies that Muslim consumers have assessed as less or not implemented and less or not effective. Efforts should be directed towards improving the implementation of these strategies. Additionally, manufacturers should reevaluate all strategies that both marketing personnel and Muslim consumers have deemed implemented and effective. There is still potential to enhance their implementation and effectiveness, and a critical review of these strategies should be undertaken, followed by necessary improvements to ensure halal compliance.

Manufacturers must also remain attentive to customer evaluations and feedback on their products to identify areas for improvement in their strategies. Moreover, halal authorities should continuously review existing guidelines on halal operations. Strict adherence to these guidelines is essential to ensure the compliance of halal certified manufacturers.

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