

Halal Branding and Trust-Building: Lessons from Nestlé Malaysia's Crisis Management and Community Engagement

Nurzahidah binti Haji Jaapar^{1*}

¹Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, 40450 Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia
nurzah8883@uitm.edu.my

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ABSTRACT

Halal integrity is central to brand trust, especially in Muslim-majority markets where consumers demand authenticity, ethical practices, and strict adherence to Islamic dietary principles. Despite Malaysia's global status as a halal hub, the industry continues to face recurring challenges, including certification disputes, inconsistent standards, and public scandals, which have eroded consumer confidence. These issues raise a key problem for multinational corporations: how to safeguard halal trust during crisis while fostering long-term consumer loyalty. This paper examines Nestlé Malaysia, the Group's global Halal Centre of Excellence, through a qualitative case study. Data were drawn from corporate reports, regulatory releases, and media coverage to analyse two areas: (i) Nestlé's response to the 2023 Halal Food Council of Europe (HFCE) delisting, and (ii) its community engagement initiatives, including Halal@School, the IKIM halal podcast, SME Mentoring, and sustainable agriculture programmes such as the Chilli Club, Paddy Club, and NESCAFÉ Grown Respectfully. Findings reveal that Nestlé's transparent and swift response to the HFCE delisting restored consumer trust, while its long-term community efforts reinforced brand loyalty and positioned the company as a thought leader in halal excellence. The study concludes that halal branding extends beyond certification; it requires a balanced approach combining crisis management with proactive community engagement to sustain consumer confidence and leadership in the halal industry.

INTRODUCTION

Nestlé Malaysia, a subsidiary of Nestlé S.A., Switzerland, has developed a strong halal brand identity over the past century. With more than 500 halal-certified products, including household names such as MILO, Maggi, and NESCAFÉ, Nestlé Malaysia has been recognised as the Group's global Halal Centre of Excellence (Nestlé Malaysia, 2024). This designation underscores Nestlé Malaysia's role in setting and maintaining halal standards across its value chain, making it the largest halal producer in the Group's global network. For the company, halalan tayyiban is more than a regulatory obligation; it is central to its brand promise, anchoring both corporate identity and consumer trust. As halal integrity becomes a defining factor of brand reputation, it provides Nestlé with a distinctive competitive edge in the fast-moving consumer

^{1*} Corresponding author: nurzah8883@uitm.edu.my

goods (FMCG) sector (Harsanto et al., 2024; Kurniawati & Cakravastia, 2023; Alzeer et al., 2018; Izberk-Bilgin & Nakata, 2016).

In Muslim-majority markets such as Malaysia, consumers increasingly demand more than just a halal logo; they expect authenticity, ethical production, and strict adherence to Islamic dietary principles (Halal Times, 2025). A recent survey found that 84% of Malaysian Muslim consumers consider halal certification the most important factor in their purchasing decisions, with many equating halal with safety and quality (HDC Report, 2023). Nestlé's early collaboration with JAKIM during the 1980s and 1990s positioned it as one of the first multinational corporations (MNCs) to align with Malaysia's halal ambitions, embedding halal principles into its long-term strategy (COBS Insights, 2020). This alignment has delivered tangible benefits: Nestlé Malaysia is consistently ranked among the most trusted companies in the country, reflecting consumer confidence across both Muslim and non-Muslim segments (Nestlé Annual Report, 2024). The scale of Nestlé Malaysia's operations underscores the importance of its commitment to halal. Every day, Malaysians consume over 8 million cups of MILO, 2.5 million bowls of Maggi noodles, and 8 million cups of NESCAFÉ coffee (Nestlé Malaysia, 2024). With such extensive market penetration, even a minor lapse in halal assurance could severely undermine brand reputation.

Thus, halal compliance is not only essential but also serves as a pillar of brand differentiation and consumer loyalty. Yet, despite Malaysia's status as a leading global halal hub, the industry continues to face persistent challenges, including certification disputes, inconsistent international standards, and public scandals that have eroded consumer confidence (Adham et al., 2022; Ellahi et al., 2025). These vulnerabilities underscore a key gap in halal brand management: even well-established firms remain at risk if crises are not managed effectively. The absence of clear frameworks that integrate crisis management into halal branding strategies raises the central question guiding this study: How can multinational corporations in Malaysia balance reactive measures during halal crises with proactive community engagement to sustain long-term consumer trust and leadership? This paper addresses that question through a case study of Nestlé Malaysia. It reviews the literature on halal branding and trust, outlines the methodology, and presents findings from two perspectives: (i) Nestlé's crisis response to the 2023 Halal Food Council of Europe (HFCE) delisting, and (ii) its long-term community engagement programmes. The paper concludes by reflecting on best practices for building resilient halal brand trust and positioning firms as leaders in the global halal industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Halal Branding and Consumer Trust

Halal branding involves positioning products and services as compliant with Islamic dietary and ethical laws, thereby appealing to Muslim consumers' religious values and to non-Muslims who associate the halal label with quality and integrity (Naiyara et al., 2024; Aziz & Chok, 2013). Trust in this context encompasses consumer confidence that a company's offerings are genuinely halal, free from prohibited substances, produced under strict hygienic conditions, and that the company is transparent and sincere about its halal claims (Nurhafihz, 2025). Ismail (2025) indicates that halal certification by reputable authorities significantly enhances consumer trust and purchase intention, as it provides independent assurance of compliance (Alam & Sayuti, 2011; Tieman, 2020). For instance, a recent industry analysis noted that collaborating with reputable certifiers and prominently displaying recognised halal logos can signal authenticity and foster confidence among consumers (halaltimes.com).

Conversely, inconsistencies or controversies in halal compliance can quickly weaken trust. Since halal products typically carry a "badge" of religious and ethical quality, any violation can be viewed as a betrayal of consumer faith (Yuna et al., 2025; Awan et al., 2015). These dynamics emphasise the importance of brand authenticity and stringent supply chain management for halal-focused companies. Malaysia's halal certification, bearing the JAKIM logo, is regarded as a global gold standard, often recognised and trusted beyond its borders (halaltimes.com). Nestlé Malaysia's long-standing relationship with JAKIM provided

the company with an early advantage in establishing a strong halal brand image. From the beginning, Nestlé was not just a participant but an active contributor to Malaysia's broader halalisation movement.

According to Aziz and Ahmad (2018), close collaboration between the public and private sectors has supported standard-setting and the development of industry capabilities. Corporate disclosures further demonstrate that Nestlé Malaysia has engaged with regulators and facilitated training for industry participants and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in halal best practices (Nestlé Malaysia, 2016). Tieman's (2020) concept of a corporate halal reputation aptly reflects how Nestlé's institutionalised practices and community-oriented initiatives turn into enduring assets that foster trust, loyalty, and legitimacy within Muslim markets. The synergy between the public and private sectors has strengthened Malaysia's position as a leading global halal hub (Fischer, 2015) and has concurrently enhanced Nestlé's reputation as a pioneer in halal compliance. Practically, Nestlé Malaysia reports exports to over 50 countries and asserts that all products manufactured, imported, and distributed are certified by JAKIM or other recognised Islamic authorities, serving as an endorsement that boosts perceptions of quality and safety (Nestlé Malaysia, 2016; Nestlé Malaysia, n.d.).

Table 1. Nestlé Malaysia Halal Export & Global Presence

Indicator	Value / Coverage	Sources
Number of halal-certified Nestlé products (Malaysia)	>500 products	Nestlé Malaysia (2024)
Countries receiving Nestlé Malaysia's halal exports	>50 countries (e.g., Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, the Middle East, ASEAN)	Nestlé Malaysia (2024)
Halal-certified Global Nestlé factories	~150 of 400 factories worldwide	Halal Times (2023)
Nestlé Malaysia's role in the Nestlé Group	Largest halal producer & Global Halal Centre of Excellence	Nestlé Malaysia (2024)
Daily consumption of Nestlé Malaysia products	>8 million cups MILO, >8 million cups NESCAFÉ, >2.5 million bowls Maggi noodles	Nestlé Malaysia (2024)
Impact of halal branding	Trusted by millions of consumers globally through JAKIM certification	Nestlé Malaysia; The Edge Malaysia (2024)

Sources: Nestlé Malaysia (2024); The Edge Malaysia (2024); Halal Times (2023).

Crisis Management and Halal Integrity

Trust-building involves risk management. In social media, a single halal lapse can lead to a brand crisis; speed, transparency, and prompt remedial action are key (Shahbazi & Bunker, 2024; Upadhyay & Upadhyay, 2023; Naiyara et al., 2024). Recent work emphasises protecting a firm's halal reputation through preparedness and response (Tieman, 2020; Tieman, 2021). Scandals like the Malaysian meat cartel illustrate how trust erodes quickly, necessitating coordinated authority, recalls, re-certification, and reassurance (Ellahi et al., 2025). Effective halal crisis management combines general crisis responsiveness, transparency, corrective action, with religious sensitivity and engagement with halal regulators (Shahbazi & Bunker, 2024; Tieman, 2021; Adham et al., 2022).

A key aspect of halal crises is the role of certification bodies. If a certifier's credibility is questioned or invalidated, companies face a legitimate crisis. Trust in the certification body influences a company's halal reputation. Tieman (2020) suggests that halal authenticity and trustworthiness of the halal certification body are the main drivers of halal reputation. This explains why firms like Nestlé carefully vet certifiers recognised by authorities like JAKIM. Maintaining a network of recognised certifiers across markets helps mitigate risks. When disruptions occur, such as a certifier losing recognition, companies need contingency plans for alternative certifications to ensure compliance.

Mukhtar & Butt (2012) suggest that prompt remediation and transparency can reduce damage to brand trust in consumer reactions to halal issues. Conversely, defensiveness or delay may be seen as negligence or indifference to halal values, which can seriously harm credibility. Therefore, corporate culture and leadership commitment to halal, such as establishing internal halal committees, implementing strong halal assurance systems, and engaging independent Shariah advisors, can greatly influence outcomes during a

crisis. A robust internal halal governance framework enables firms to respond decisively and align their actions with stakeholder expectations of Islamic ethics and responsibility (Hashim & Musa, 2014). In summary, halal branding indicates that earning trust is an ongoing process, one that can be strengthened through exemplary community engagement and easily undermined by poorly handled crises.

Community Engagement and Shared Value

Beyond merely satisfying minimum compliance requirements, halal branding encompasses broader dimensions such as corporate social responsibility (CSR) and community engagement. Initiatives aimed at engaging in and educating the community regarding halal principles can serve to enhance brand reputation and foster trust (Temporal, 2011). In the context of Nestlé, this approach aligns with the company's 'Creating Shared Value' philosophy, which posits that business interests and societal welfare are mutually reinforcing. Programs that promote halal awareness, support local halal entrepreneurs, or enhance halal supply chain processes not only fulfil societal needs but also solidify the company's position as a proponent of halal principles. Previous research on corporate trust suggests that stakeholders are more likely to trust organisations that demonstrate benevolence and integrity through community-oriented initiatives (Mayer et al., 1995). In Muslim markets, initiatives that align with Islamic values, such as education, community well-being, and ethical farming, can cultivate emotional affinity and foster loyalty toward the brand.

Malaysia's halal ecosystem provides fertile ground for such engagement. Educational institutions, religious bodies, and industry players often collaborate to raise halal awareness. By contributing to these efforts, for example, Nestlé's partnership with an Islamic university to run school programmes on halal, a company can strengthen its halal brand image as being about more than profit, embodying sincerity and social responsibility. This, in turn, boosts consumer trust and brand equity. Empirical evidence shows that halal-aware consumers reward brands that uphold Islamic values in their operations and outreach (Aziz & Ahmad, 2018). Therefore, the literature suggests that Nestlé Malaysia's community-facing halal programmes are not just CSR, but strategic brand investments that reinforce its market leadership and trustworthiness in the halal domain.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative case study to examine Nestlé Malaysia's halal branding, with a focus on crisis management and community engagement. This approach is suitable for conducting a detailed analysis of current events within their real-world context (Yin, 2018). It centres on two cases: (1) handling the 2023 HFCE delisting, and (2) community initiatives like Halal@School, IKIM Berkat Halalan Toyyiban podcast, Halal SME Mentoring Programme, and sustainable agriculture collaborations. These cases highlight reactive and proactive branding efforts. Data was collected from multiple sources for triangulation and comprehensive insights as stated in Table 2, including:

Table 2: Sources of Nestlé Malaysia's halal branding strategy

Sources	Case studies
Company Documents and Releases	Nestlé Malaysia's official releases, policy statements, annual, and sustainability reports reveal the company's strategies and outcomes. The "Our Halal Promise" webpage and halal policy documents detail internal standards. Media coverage from 2023 is examined for comments on the HFCE issue.
News Articles and Industry Reports	Malaysian news outlets and industry publications, including The New Straits Times and The Edge Malaysia, reviewed external perspectives on Nestlé's Halal@School programme, community events, and its role as a halal export hub. Halal-focused websites, such as Halal Times and Halal Focus, commented on industry trends and Nestlé's contributions.
Regulatory and Organisational Sources	JAKIM and the FMM Halal Committee briefed on HFCE delisting, outlining the crisis timeline and guidelines for affected companies.

The data were analyzed thematically, creating narratives of the HFCE delisting incident and community efforts, and then coded for brand identity, trust, and leadership patterns. Trust indicators included stakeholder engagement, while leadership was shown through unique initiatives. Outcomes like brand recognition are linked to broader literature. The analysis compared crisis management and community engagement to see how they reinforce Nestlé's halal brand, ensuring strategy alignment.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Conceptual Model of Halal Branding Through Crisis Management and Community Engagement

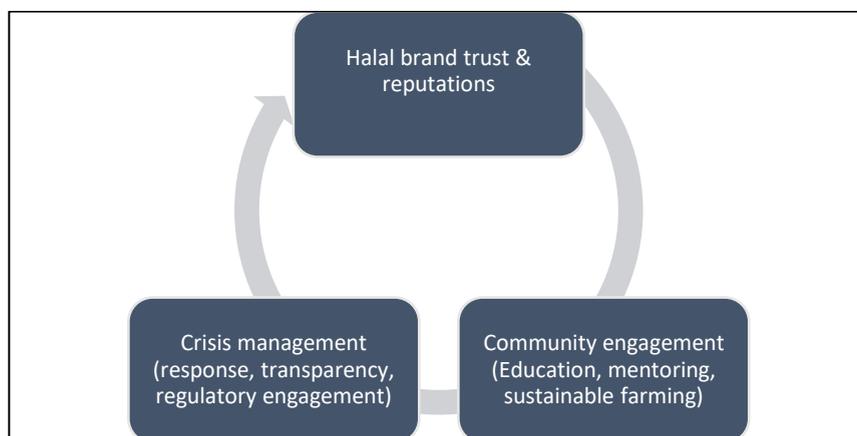


Fig. 1: Conceptual model of halal branding

Source: Author

The model (Figure 1) shows Nestlé Malaysia's halal trust depends on Crisis Management and Community Engagement. Crisis Management protects the brand during crises. In 2023, the HFCE delisting affected over 120 raw materials and six imported products. Nestlé audited its supply chain, worked with JAKIM, and utilised alternative certifiers, ensuring compliance and reassuring consumers. The incident showed Nestlé's ability to turn a risk into resilience, boosting its halal credibility with regulators and consumers.

Table 3: Nestlé Malaysia Action Plan for Halal Crisis Management of HFCE Delisting

Phase	Key Actions / Strategies	Outcome
October 2023 (Prevention/Initial Response)	Regulatory Monitoring: Immediate acknowledgement of JAKIM's withdrawal of HFCE recognition.	To ensure Nestlé's halal policy remains aligned with current regulatory requirements.
Oct–Nov 2023 (Impact Assessment)	Comprehensive Audit: Internal review to identify affected raw materials (120 items), suppliers (30 vendors), and products (6 imported SKUs).	To assess the scale of impact on the supply chain and mitigate risks of non-compliance.
November 2023 (Regulatory Engagement)	Stakeholder Coordination: Direct engagement with JAKIM and participation in FMM Halal Committee sessions for interim guidance.	To obtain regulatory clarity, secure conditional approvals, and maintain transparent communication with authorities.
Late 2023 (Containment & Adjustment)	Operational Realignment: Internal audits and immediate supply chain adjustments to switch to alternative JAKIM-recognised halal certifiers.	To ensure continuity of production and prevent disruption to consumer markets.

Early 2024 (Recovery & Reassurance)	Re-Certification & Communication: Completion of halal re-certification processes; dissemination of assurances to stakeholders and consumers.	To restore full compliance, reinforce consumer confidence, and safeguard the brand's reputation.
October 2023 (Prevention/Initial Response)	Regulatory Monitoring: Immediate acknowledgement of JAKIM's withdrawal of HFCE recognition.	To ensure Nestlé's halal policy remains aligned with current regulatory requirements.

Sources: The Edge Markets (2023), FMM Halal Committee Reports (2023); Bernama (2023).

Crisis Management: A Case Analysis

Table 4: Case analysis of Nestlé's crisis management

Indicators of crisis management	Key Actions / Strategies
Crisis Response	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Regulatory guidance to mitigate disruption 2) Nestlé's readiness action by re-certification, aided by a dedicated halal committee and assurance system 3) Reinforcing consumer trust by reassuring that all products are halal-certified by reputable authorities
Community Engagement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Halal@School Program 2) IKIM "Berkat Halalan Toyyiban" Podcast 3) Halal SME Mentoring Programme 4) Sustainable Agriculture Initiatives (Chilli Club, Paddy Club, NESCAFÉ Grown Respectfully) 5) Brand impact synthesis

Case 1: Halal Crisis Response – The 2023 HFCE Delisting Incident

In late 2023, JAKIM withdrew recognition of the HFCE, effective October 13, 2023. This means HFCE-certified products no longer met Malaysian halal standards, posing a compliance challenge for Nestlé Malaysia, which exports and imports ingredients. If not re-certified, products risk losing halal status, potentially affecting supply and consumer trust.

JAKIM and industry groups issued guidelines to mitigate disruption. HFCE halal certificates issued by Oct 12, 2023, remained valid until expiry. A grace period until April 2024 allowed companies to transition to other halal certifiers. Firms could also request JAKIM's conditional approval to continue production if they submitted plans for new certification. These measures show regulators' awareness and accommodation of responsible companies. Nonetheless, the incident posed a reputational risk: consumers might doubt previous HFCE halal certificates, and misinformation could spread if companies lacked transparency.

Nestlé Malaysia did not issue a specific press release regarding the HFCE issue; however, its actions demonstrate a strict adherence to halal policy and effective stakeholder engagement. The organisation states that it only manufactures, imports, and distributes products certified Halal by JAKIM and recognised authorities. When HFCE was recognised, it would transition to other certifiers if that recognition changed. In practice, Nestlé Malaysia's Halal Affairs team likely conducted product and ingredient audits, coordinated with JAKIM and possibly HDC, and sought re-certification. This preparedness for such issues stems from its comprehensive halal management system, which includes a Halal Committee and Assurance System covering the entire supply chain, thus enabling prompt technical responses.

While consumers may not have fully understood HFCE's status, Nestlé affirmed its commitment to halal compliance, reassuring that all products are halal-certified by reputable authorities. Its 'peace of mind' assurance persisted even during turbulence. The company's proactive halal certification and controls acted as crisis safeguards. The HFCE incident, which could have caused a scandal for a less prepared firm, was effectively contained. This aligns with Tieman (2020), who noted that managing halal reputation risk

requires understanding that halal issues threaten brand integrity and sustainability, prompting strategies such as multi-certification and maintaining close relations with JAKIM.

Beyond trust protection, Nestlé's crisis response strengthened its role in the global halal industry. Addressing the HFCE challenge without affecting consumers enhances credibility and demonstrates why Nestlé Malaysia is a Global Halal Centre of Excellence, not only for producing halal products at scale but also for maintaining halal integrity under pressure. The incident likely provided valuable internal learnings, reinforcing Malaysia's and Nestlé Malaysia's leadership in halal standards and risk management, as evidenced by their exports of halal products to over 50 countries and their support for global halal initiatives. Successfully managing a certification crisis further consolidates this leadership. The HFCE delisting case demonstrates that robust crisis management is crucial for effective halal brand stewardship. Nestlé Malaysia's response, grounded in policy, swift action, and stakeholder engagement, helped maintain consumer trust. It underscores that halal compliance at Nestlé is non-negotiable, reassuring consumers and partners even amid industry uncertainties. This case confirms that transparent, decisive crisis responses preserve brand trust. Nestlé turned a potential threat into an opportunity to reinforce its halal credentials.

Case 2: Community Engagement Initiatives and Their Branding Impact

Nestlé Malaysia emphasizes compliance and engages with the community to raise halal awareness, educate, and promote sustainability. These efforts humanize the brand, build trust locally, and generate a halo effect around Nestlé's halal brand. Key programs include:

(i) Halal@School Program

Launched in 2018 in collaboration with USIM, the programme educates schoolchildren on halal concepts, healthy eating, and ethics, with a target of reaching 5,400 students in 166 schools by 2024. In 2025, Nestlé expanded to Melaka. Activities like workshops, quizzes, and 'Halal Explorace' make learning engaging. Halal@School is inclusive, welcoming all students and promoting Nestlé as a community educator and halal advocate. Nestlé also emphasises its role in demonstrating leadership and guardianship over halal, fostering trust by teaching children about integrity, health, and respect, values aligned with moral and spiritual principles. This positions Nestlé as a social partner for parents, educators, and religious leaders. The initiative strengthens brand loyalty among young people by associating Nestlé with positive values, influencing their future preferences. Its expansion during the pandemic underscores its educational and PR success as part of Nestlé's Creating Shared Value initiative, which focuses on nutrition and health, and enhances trust through messages of halal and wellness.

(ii) IKIM "Berkat Halalan Toyyiban" Podcast

In 2024, Nestlé Malaysia partnered with IKIM to produce the Berkat Halalan Toyyiban radio and podcast series, broadcast weekly on IKIM. The series covers halal topics, ranging from certification to lifestyle tips, featuring experts. The first episode introduced halal practices with Nestlé's Halal Affairs head; later episodes discussed supply chain quality, sustainable farming, and raw material sourcing. This partnership boosts Nestlé's halal credibility via IKIM's Islamic reputation. The tagline, from farm to table, bringing the blessings of halal and toyyiban, reflects Nestlé's value chain approach, promoting transparency and halal principles. Topics like regenerative farming highlight Nestlé's positive initiatives, educating consumers and stakeholders in a non-commercial manner, and subtly showcasing projects such as the Chilli Club and Grown Respectfully coffee. The initiative fosters consumer trust through transparency and expertise, with third-party validation from JAKIM officials helping to reduce scepticism. It also shows Nestlé's commitment to expanding the halal ecosystem beyond profit, fostering goodwill among regulators and SMEs seeking halal knowledge. Disseminating this expertise enhances Nestlé's global halal leadership, continuing Malaysia's tradition of sharing halal knowledge, exemplified by Nestlé. The podcast demonstrates Nestlé's ongoing leadership in this field.

(iii) Halal SME Mentoring Programme

Since 2009, Nestlé Malaysia, in collaboration with HDC and SME Corp, has mentored over 300 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the halal food and beverage (F&B) sector, with projections indicating that this number will surpass 800 by the mid-2020s. The program provides training in halal standards, production processes, marketing strategies, and quality control, thereby transferring Nestlé's best practices. It fosters ecosystem leadership and trust, evidenced by awards such as the 2007 Halal Journal Award and the 2014 Halal Excellence Award. This initiative promotes consumer confidence and ensures Nestlé remains current with halal standards. Graduates of the program are eligible to join the supply chain, strengthen Nestlé's halal integrity, and support Malaysia's position as a global halal hub. Nestlé affirms that supporting SMEs contributes to Malaysia maintaining its competitive advantage, thereby securing Nestlé's leadership through mentorship and strategic collaboration.

(iv) Sustainable Agriculture Initiatives (Chilli Club, Paddy Club, NESCAFÉ Grown Respectfully)

Nestlé Malaysia's programs with local farmers, like the Nestlé Chilli Club, Paddy Club, and NESCAFÉ Grown Respectfully, promote sustainable agriculture and community welfare. These initiatives, focusing on ethical, clean, and eco-friendly practices, support farmers with training and resources, helping improve yields and incomes. Although not explicitly labelled halal, they align with Islamic principles of stewardship and *toyyiban*, appealing to consumers who value ethical sourcing. By integrating practices such as intercropping and soil rejuvenation, Nestlé demonstrates its commitment to environmental care and community engagement, thereby enhancing brand trust. The programs empower farmers and foster brand loyalty, as consumers see their products as responsible, high-quality, and supportive of Malaysian farmers, reinforcing the benevolence of Nestlé's halal supply chain.

(v) Brand Impact Synthesis

Community efforts enhance trust and brand affinity by showcasing Nestlé's commitment to its values. Initiatives demonstrate their principles in action through initiatives such as children's education, support for entrepreneurs, farmer partnerships, and transparency, which fosters goodwill and credibility, thereby enhancing trust and brand equity (Aaker, 1991). These efforts also differentiate Nestlé, especially in markets with many halal providers. Its leadership goes beyond selling halal; it invests in youth education, knowledge sharing, industry development, and sustainability, strengthening its leadership and public commitment. Overall, community programs enhance brand trust, demonstrating that halal branding necessitates active engagement, not just compliance. This resilience protects the brand during crises like HFCE, with best practices guiding the broader halal industry.

CONCLUSION

Nestlé Malaysia's experience highlights that a robust halal branding strategy relies on effective crisis management and community involvement. During the 2023 HFCE delisting crisis, Nestlé's swift and principled response, grounded in its commitment to halal standards, preserved stakeholder trust. Its adherence to regulatory requirements and transparent communication safeguarded its brand reputation, illustrating that transparency and responsiveness are essential for building trust. This incident, rather than detracting from the brand, served to reinforce its commitment to halal integrity. Concurrently, Nestlé Malaysia's community initiatives, such as Halal@school and the IKIM podcast, foster stakeholder confidence. Initiatives such as Halal SME Mentoring and sustainable farming extend the brand's influence beyond its products, supporting the halal ecosystem from farm to table. These endeavours exemplify the creation of shared value within an Islamic context, demonstrating that social responsibility and commercial success can coexist. The resulting brand image exudes sincerity, expertise, and benevolence, cultivating loyalty within a faith-conscious market. Nestlé Malaysia's emphasis on crisis preparedness and community engagement bolsters its reputation within the global halal industry. By maintaining Malaysia as a halal hub, Nestlé not only supports national interests but also enhances its international stature. As global competition

in halal markets intensifies, industry leadership now necessitates thought leadership, strategic collaboration, and cultural sensitivity to socioreligious issues.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors agree that this research was conducted in the absence of any self-benefits, commercial or financial conflicts and declare the absence of conflicting interests with the funders.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

The author was solely responsible for the conception, design, data collection, analysis, interpretation, and preparation of the manuscript. She would like to express sincere gratitude to Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) and the Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies (ACIS) for their institutional support, and to Nestlé Malaysia for generously providing data, reports, and insights that enriched the contextual analysis and enhanced the industry relevance of this study.

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