

# Brand Identity on Local Malay Herbal Toiletries' Packaging Designs as Potential Tourism Products

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## ABSTRACT

Herbal products are gaining popularity in the worldwide market due to their perceived medicinal values to users. Even in Malaysia, the herbal industry is increasing and the products are in high demand. The Malaysian government is now focusing on the herbal industry as new economic resources as implemented in the Ninth Malaysia Plan. This study attempts to look into the local Malay herbal toiletries' packaging designs. Through visual assessment on Malay toiletry products' packaging designs which are displayed on the market shelves, it has been discovered that a majority of these packaging designs are without any representation of the Malay identity. We argue that packaging designs of the Malay herbal toiletry products can look attractive by having Malay identity on them and consequently improving the tourists' purchasing decision. This research delves into the recommendations of packaging designs by identifying the criteria and expectation needs. In order to improve this situation, we believe that the packaging designs should adopt the Kapferer's Brand Identity Model (Kapferer, 2004) that includes physique, personality, culture, relationship reflection and self-image. It is hoped that this study will improve packaging designs of local Malay herbal toiletry products in the local market shelves by embodying the Malay identity.

**Keyword:** *Malay, Herbal, Toiletries, Packaging Design*

## INTRODUCTION

Herbal medicine is also known as Herbalism or Botanical medicine which is used for medical treatment because of its medicinal value. There are about 500 000 species of herbal plants worldwide. The leaves, flowers, stems, berries and roots of herbal plants are used by herbalists to treat, prevent or relieve various illnesses. Each specific herbal plant has its own therapeutic values to cure a particular illness due to its natural chemical contents.

There are two categories of herbs – wild grown and farm-grown. Wild-grown herbs grow naturally without human interfering with their growth. On the other hand, as for the farm-grown herbs, these are planted and carefully taken care of by farmers. Farm-grown herbs are produced for commercialization and this guarantees their quality. This is because the farmers have specialised knowledge of the plants' growth. In a competitive market today, there are many types of herbal products; giving consumers many options to choose from. They can be found in a variety of forms depending on their uses for treatments. They can be found in tinctures, extracts, capsules, tablets, lozenges and ointment. The medicinal values of these forms of herbal products are as good as the quality of the raw herbs which they are made out of. However, raw herbs such as the fresh and dried varieties can still be found at the local physicians' business centres.

Herbal products are gaining popularity in the worldwide market due to their perceived medicinal values to users. Even in Malaysia, the herbal industry is increasing and the products are in high demand. The Malaysian government is now focusing on the herbal industry as new economic resources as implemented. The local market is expected to reach RM333.7 million in herbal product sales by 2010 ("Herbal Produce Sales to Hit RM333m.", 2006). According to the Agriculture and Agro-Based Industries's former Deputy Minister Datuk Nah Siew Keong, the herbal product industry is considered to be the most dynamic sector, with an annual growth estimated at 10% a year and worth in excess of RM8 billion annually compared to RM4 billion in year 2000 ("Time to Look at Herbal Potential", 2006). The Malaysian government has encouraged local entrepreneurs to tap on the potential of the herbal industry which is constantly in high demand. It is believed that with the rise of the herbal industry in the Malaysian market, the industry will stake a sizeable claim on the economy. It will create balance in the development between urban and rural areas as well as eradicate poverty and restructure communities ("Local herbal market to hit RM8 billion by 2010", 2006, p. 10).

The local herbal industry has developed various products like cosmetic products, medicines, bio-pesticides, toiletries and perfumes. The business will develop into one of the most profitable sectors in the world and the Economist Intelligent Unit has projected a growth of 10% in international herbal medicine sales ("Time to Look at Herbal Potential", 2006). With the potential of this industry, several specialised government bodies have been set up and to be responsible in the growth of the industry such as the Ministry of Health – Traditional and Complimentary Medicine, USAINS Holding Sdn. Bhd., the Agriculture and Agro-Based Industries Ministry, Forest Research Institute of Malaysia and others.

According to the annual report statistics 2009 by the National Pharmaceutical Control Bureau, the Ministry of Health Malaysia, there are already 1040 traditional medicine products registered (*Biro Pengawalan Farmaseutikal Kebangsaan*, 2010, p. 15). It reveals that the local entrepreneurs are slowly getting involved in this particular business venture.

Government bodies such as the National Treasury Bhd. is required to help out in developing the local herbal industry, market the products at the international level and encourage local entrepreneurs to get involved in the herbal industry. Since there is also potential in herbal farming, farmers are also encouraged to be involved in the sector and there are facilities prepared by the government such as the motivation guidelines on herbal plantations. According to the Agriculture and Agro-Based Industries' former Ministry Parliamentary Secretary Dato' Rohani Abdul Karim, there are already 1500 hectares of farming land used for herbal plantation ("Herbal Produce Sales to Hit RM333m.", 2006). There are also talks and exhibitions organised by the government to expose and educate both entrepreneurs and farmers on the benefits of the potential herb cultivation. Another good news is that more than 700 000 visitors attended the Agriculture Exhibition - Horticulture and Agro-Tourism Malaysia 2006 (MAHA 2006) last November in Serdang ("*Khabar: MAHA mampu lonjak industri herba negara*", 2006, p. 10). It shows people realize the opportunity of herbal cultivation marketing which is in high demand and profitable.

## **Packaging Design**

Packaging design is the most important tool of getting a product across the targeted consumers. It communicates visually and convinces the consumers to purchase. Through packaging design, a product is able to convince consumers that it has a good image background, is established and trustworthy. With good packaging the product is able to stand out on the shelves over its competing rivals in the market. Many companies invest substantial amounts of money in packaging design to be able to stand out among other prominent and established brands.

Packaging is the most familiar daily example of graphic design which can be seen easily by everyone either at home, in the office and at the supermarket. Packaging has become an important sales tool in the competitive market.

Many professionals have defined the meaning of packaging. In the Oxford dictionary it defines packaging as a design or manufacture of material for packing goods (Oxford, 1994). But the two widely quoted definitions are:

1. Packaging is the art, science and technology of preparing goods for transport and sales.
2. Packaging maybe defined as the means of ensuring the safe delivery of a product the ultimate consumer in sound condition at the minimum overall cost (Briston & Neill, 1972).

From the above definitions of packaging, it is explained that packaging is actually a material which is used to wrap or protect goods during storage, distribution, sales and use.

The best experience when consumers purchase products are from the attractive packages. Packaging is a medium which has the ability to communicate directly with consumers. They generate trust and confidence to the targeted consumers on their content.

The basic role of packaging is to protect and preserve the content. There are factors to consider before a packaging is designed for a product. It involves the consideration of compression during delivery or in storage, impact damage, puncturing, vibration, effect of temperature, effect of light and macro-organism. Products will be able to last long and sustain in perfect condition when the manufacturers take these factors seriously.

Generally, packaging must be designed in a way that will appeal to buyers – shape and label. The shapes are usually designed according to the function of the product. A shape of a product can be creatively designed by designers. However, consideration - ease of opening the product such as breaking the seal and the convenience of having the product on display or use is also considered by the designer. It is to ensure that the products will be able to position suitably well during display on shelves and function perfectly during usage.

Consumers can also get relevant information from the package's label. A label refers to any information, images and wordings in a layout form on a packaging. It must convey the right messages to give a greater impact to the consumers by understanding the terms of the product's usage. Labels carry essential information such as description of the contents through the use of images, typography, colours and size.

## **Branding**

Branding is one of marketing's most important elements. Brands are not just about logos or names. In business, brands are important as they are a reputation or identity of the company, a product or a service. They live in the mind of people.

A brand gives the company unique identity which will differentiate the company's product with its competitor. A brand tells its' consumers about the specialties of the company's products or services in the market. It is a promise, a big idea and expectation that reside in each of the customer's mind about the company, product or service (Wheeler, 2003). In order to compete in the competitive market, companies attempt to build brands with marketing-related activities such as advertising, public relationship and promotion to tell the public about their existence. The appealing packaging design builds awareness to consumers on their presence in the market. In other words, packaging is akin to a silent salesman.

Brand identity is the visual and verbal expression of a brand. Identity supports, expresses, communicates, synthesizes and visualizes the brand (Wheeler, 2003). A strong identity is shaped around the unique alignment between what the company offers and the identified consumer group's needs, aspirations and preferences. Brand identity feelings are primarily unconscious. It has been estimated to

be as much as 95% below conscious awareness. These feelings and judgments operate very quickly—much more quickly than conscious evaluation (Stewart, 2004).

For products, well-executed brands through packaging gain respect and loyalty from their targeted consumers as they establish the relationship between the company and consumers. Strong brands also have longer life span in the competitive market.

## RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Elements of packaging design are used in this research for the analysis purposes. Hence, research questions pertaining to Kapferer Brand Identity model (Kapferer, 2004) include physique, personality, culture, relationship, reflection and self-image are referred to in the following figure 1;

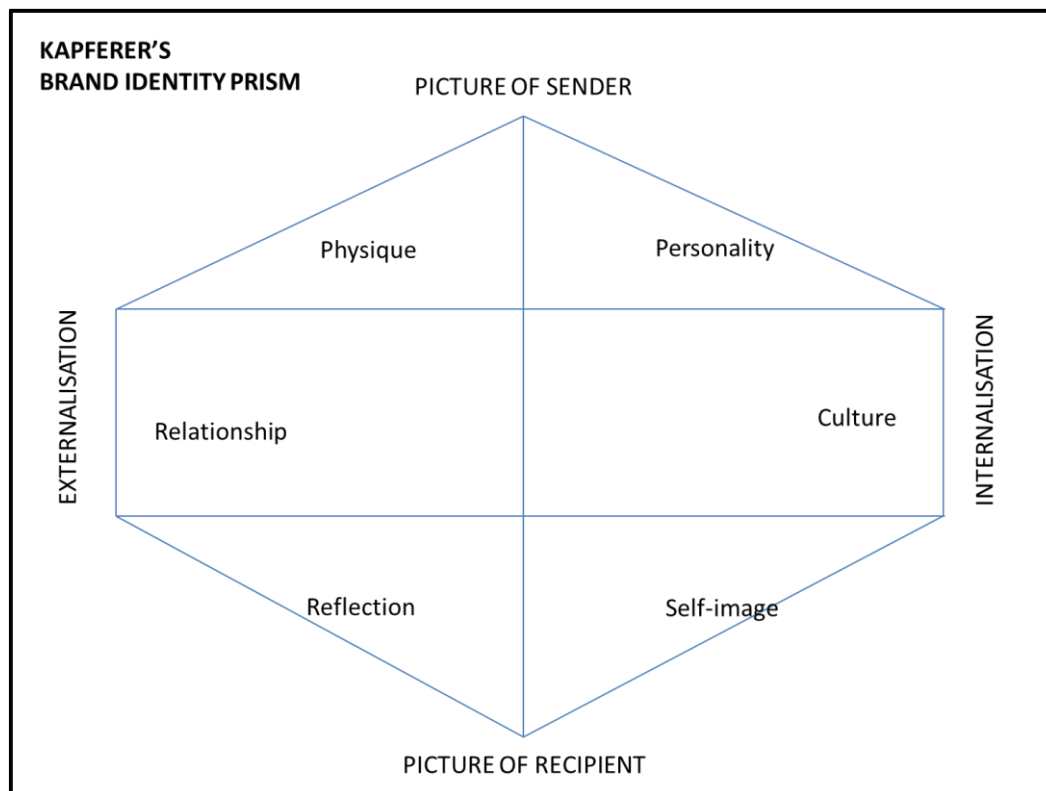


Figure 1 Kapferer's Brand Identity Prism / Model

1. What is the product's suitable **PHYSIQUE**?
2. What is the product **PERSONALITY**?
3. Which culture does the packaging **REPRESENT**?
4. What is the **RELATIONSHIP** between consumers?
5. What is the **REFLECTION** of the product?
6. What is the **SELF-IMAGE** of the product?

**Physique** is a set of the brand's physical features, which are evoked in people's minds when the brand name is mentioned, i.e. brand name, colours, images and typography.

**Personality** consists of attractive emotional qualities that make the purchaser feel pleasant about, i.e. identical personal behavioural and emotional characteristic.

**Culture** represents the origin of the product.

**Relationship** is the relation connecting or binding with the consumer.

**Reflection** is the brand making a realistic remark of the actual target group of the product image.

**Self-image** is how the target audience want to be seen on the product.

## METHODOLOGY

In pursuing the result on branding the Malay herbal toiletry products through packaging design, several methods of data collection are to be undertaken.

The first phase is to observe the Malay herbal toiletry products' presentation on the local market shelves. Potential centres selling Malay herbal toiletry products are chosen for the study, which are located in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor. The task is to observe the availability of the toiletry products on the shelf markets. Several products are selected and closely examined for further observation on the proposed design implementation on the toiletry packaging later in the third phase.

Under the second phase, a qualitative study is conducted on the three selected Malay herbal toiletry product brands which can be potentially sold as tourism products to understand the concept of design application on their packaging designs. These selected brands are analysed according to Kapferer's Brand Identity Model (2004), which includes the six aspects; physique, personality, culture, relationship, reflection and self-image.

In the third phase, with the information gathered, the significant design is presaged and tested for the implementation of new packaging designs relative to the study. For the purpose of discussion, the development of a new packaging designs is proposed.

## FINDINGS

Case study is being done on packaging designs of three local Malay herbal toiletry product brands focusing on facial soap. The brands selected are *Natasya*, *Tanamera* and *Jamu Ratu*. The data for further implementation on the Malay herbal toiletry packaging designs is also gathered by making observations by looking into the Kapferer's Brand Identity model in order to assess the selected packaging designs from the market shelves.

**Table 1 Local Malay Herbal Toiletries Packaging Designs from *Natasya*, *Tanamera* and *Jamu Ratu***

| No | Aspects in Packaging Design                                      | Assessments  |
|----|--|--|
| 1. | <b>PHYSIQUE</b><br><br>(logo/colour)                             | The tree brand logo/wordmark resembles that of a Malay name.<br><br><i>Natasya</i> 's packaging design colour is bright, easily recognisable on the shelf market whereas <i>Tanamera</i> 's and <i>Jamu Ratu</i> 's packaging design concepts are commonly used by other brands. |
| 2  | <b>PERSONALITY</b><br><br>(Layout – colours/ images/ typography) | <b>Presentation:</b><br><br>a) <i>Natasha</i> – mature and stylish<br>b) <i>Jamu Ratu</i> and <i>Tanamera</i> – mature and modern  |
| 3  | <b>CULTURE</b><br><br>(Patterns/images)                          | <b>Legibility:</b><br><br>The packaging designs do not show the products' country of origin.   |

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|---|---|---|
| 4 | <b>RELATIONSHIP</b><br><br>(Concept of design/tone of voice)    | <b>Presentation:</b><br><br>The products manage to connect with modern female consumers due to the colours and typography styles.   |
| 5 | <b>REFLECTION</b><br><br>(Layout – colours/ images/ typography) | <b>Presentation:</b><br><br>a) <i>Natasya</i> – religious Malay<br>b) <i>Jamu Ratu</i> and <i>Tanamera</i> – contemporary and modern.<br><br>Awareness of skin care to look beautiful |
| 6 | <b>SELF-IMAGE</b><br><br>(Layout – colours/ images/ typography) | <b>Presentation:</b><br><br>Reflecting middle social class career women   |

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In table 1, based on the observations, the three packages' **physiques** can be recognised as Malay herbal toiletries due to the brands' names. However, *Natasya's* packaging colour is more recognisable compared to those from the other two brands which are commonly used by other herbal products.

Each of the packaging designs gives a different **personality**. However, the products' packaging designs are generally able to reflect feminism; targeting mature females. It can be seen from their colours, images and typography on the packaging.

The products do not represent any local **culture** value. It is difficult for the consumers to identify the origin of the Malay herbal toiletries as some products in the market shelves originate from Indonesia.

The **relationship** between the brands and female consumers can be seen on the packaging designs. The usage of the brand names, combination of colour styles and the selection on typography give the feeling of modern feminism.

**Reflection** of the products shows that the consumers are concerned with skin care to look beautiful yet modern. *Natasya* is targeting adult Malay Muslim women whereas *Tanamera* and *Ratu Jamu* focus on modern and contemporary Malay adult women.

All three of these brands' packaging designs represent **self-image** belonging to middle social class carrier women.

## RESULT

Based on the observation done in Table 1, the researchers provided recommendations for the design implementation of one of the local Malay herbal product brands – *Ratu Jamu*.

From the findings, the researchers have worked out the packaging design based on Kapferer's Brand Identity Model (2004) on the absence of one of the aspects. The aspect that has been missing out from the original packaging design is the culture aspect.



Figure 2 Proposed packaging design for *Jamu Ratu* Toiletries

Figure 2 is the proposed packaging design without interfering with the product's original concept idea – modern and contemporary. The researchers inserted the culture value to give the feeling of the origin of the product. The culture value can also be seen on the consistent pattern implementation on each of the packaging design.

The pattern has been extracted from the local Malay *songket*, representing the product country's origin. Thus, the product can be sold as a tourism product which represents the country's Malay culture identity. It will be able to differentiate from other Malay herbal toiletry products on the competitive market shelves.

The patterns which are consistently repeated on the physique of the packaging design can be easily noticeable and are evocative in people's minds when the brand name is mentioned. Even without noticing the brand name, the mind sub-consciously will relate them to our local Malay herbal toiletry products.

## CONCLUSION

The study reveals that the packaging design has the ability to transmit immediate communication to the audience with the right value of design. It creates an impression of being more meaningful by completely implementing the six aspects - physique, personality culture, relationship, reflection and self-image. The proposed sample on the local brand of Malay herbal toiletry, *Ratu Jamu*, by injecting the culture aspect, the local Malay identity can be seen and recognised easily. The new proposed packaging design still maintains the original concept - modern and contemporary even though the Malay identity has been implemented on the packaging design.

Patterns or images of any local motives, from the traditional clothing or wood carving, can be simplified and implemented into the packaging design. By consistently maintaining the packaging designs with the cultural aspect of the local Malay identity, it can create awareness on the products' ownership and origin. It can promote the local Malay herbal toiletries as the potential Malaysian tourism products.

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