



KEMENTERIAN KESIHATAN MALAYSIA
BAHAGIAN PEMAKANAN



KEY FINDINGS REPORT

NUTRITION DIVISION, MINISTRY OF HEALTH MALAYSIA

**Acceptance and Effectiveness
of Healthier Choice Logo (HCL)
among Industries and Consumers
in Malaysia**



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INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

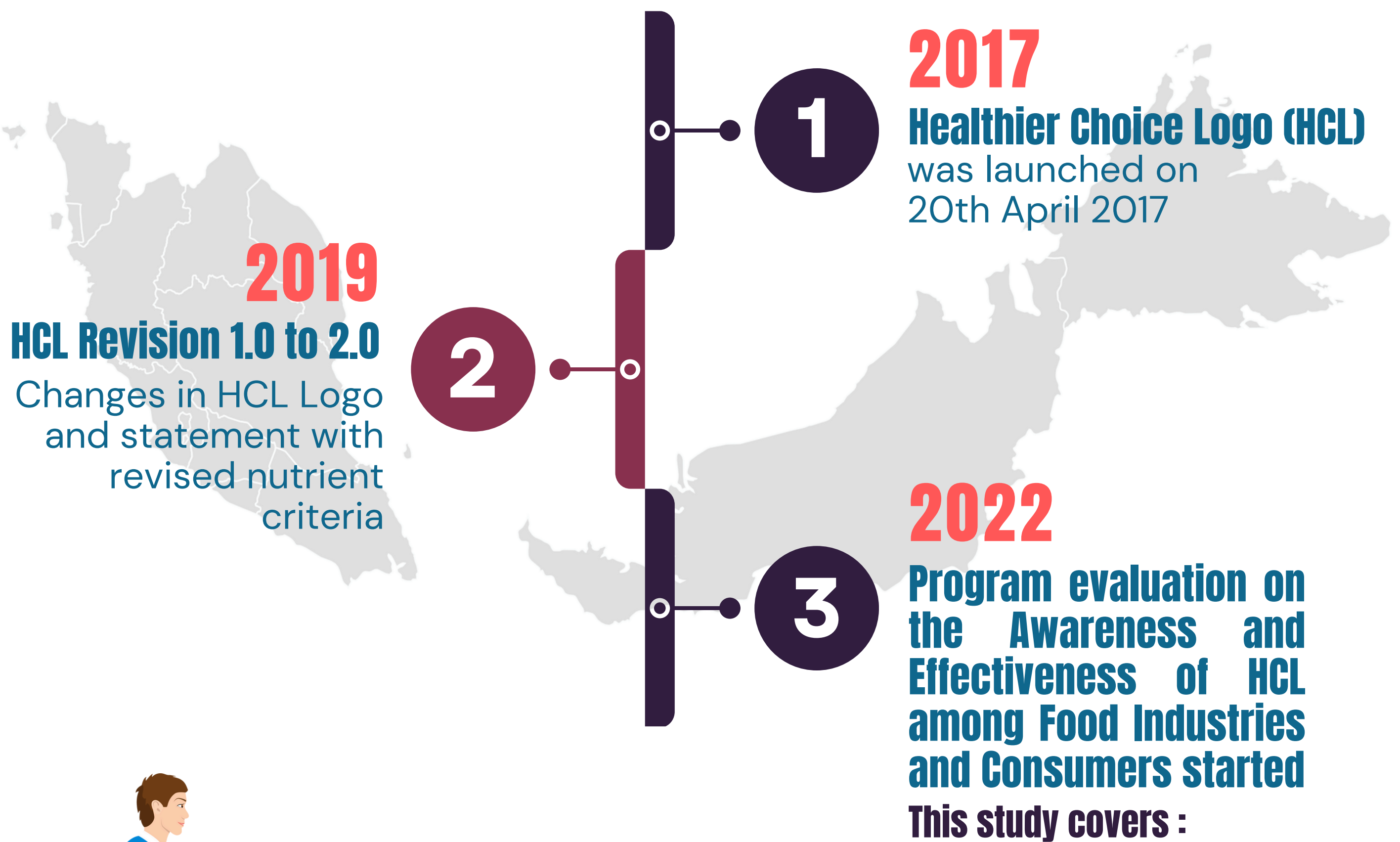
Nutrition Research Priorities (NRP) has been systematically formulated to address the critical gap of nutrition evidence, especially in the Malaysian context. The research activities proposed in the NRP (2021–2025) serves as a key reference in prioritising nutrition research for more effective implementation and evaluation of nutrition programmes in the country. Evaluation on the awareness and effectiveness of HCL has been reported as one of the suggested research topics under the research priority areas within the public health concern.

This study provides valuable information and evidence to national stakeholders and policy makers to design and shape their future nutrition programmes. The findings are useful to optimise time, effort and resources for policy makers on the impact of HCL implementation in meeting the national needs for improving the health and nutritional well-being of Malaysian.



KEY FINDINGS

OF THE STUDY



- Nutrition Research Priority Area 2: National Food and Nutrition Situation – B.3: Evaluating on the existing National Nutrition Program for private sectors

THIS SURVEY COVERED 4 MAIN SCOPES:



Reformulation



Effectiveness



Acceptance



Research

FOOD INDUSTRIES

Number of respondents

100

TYPE OF COMPANY

27% Large Industry

25% Small Industry

24% Medium Industry

24% Micro Enterprise

CONSUMERS

Number of respondents

402

AGE GROUP

15-60
years old

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

(N=166)
RM 0 - RM 4,849

41%

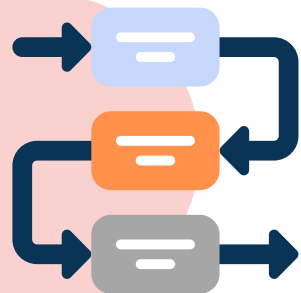
23%

36%

(N=143)
RM RM 4,850 - RM 10, 959(N=93)
>RM 10, 960

02

STUDY PROCESS



01

Method

Convenient sampling method



02

Online Self-Administrated Questionnaire

Evaluated by 14 experts in nutrition labeling and FOP labeling



03

Tools

Through online platforms and social media such as emails, Facebook, Web sites and Instagram



04

Ethical Approval

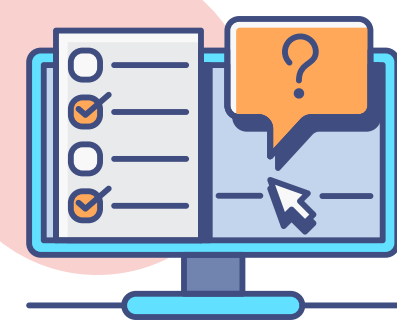
Study protocol approved by MOH Research and Ethics Committee (MREC), MOH



05

Data Collection

From 24 May to 20 June 2023



06

Data Analysis

Analysed using statistic Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 26.0



07

Cross-sectional Study Design

Population based study



ACCEPTANCE

AMONG INDUSTRIES

03

FINDINGS ON FOOD INDUSTRY'S ACCEPTANCE TOWARDS THE PROCESSES AND REQUIREMENTS INVOLVED IN HCL IMPLEMENTATION

58%

The duration for the application to get approved and the payment needed to do food analysis before the application were acceptable

57%

The respondents agreed that HCL nutrient criteria should be developed by independent experts who are non-industry related, but still consider opinions from the industry

54%

The survey found that half of the respondents agreed that the online application was helpful and user-friendly

51%

Half of the respondents agreed that HCL had covered most of the market's major food and beverage categories

50%

However, there was a need to expand a new product category under HCL, which includes several products such as extruded snacks, health and wellness products, meat essence, herbal products, confectionaries, convenience frozen meals, fats and oil, soup, sauces, plant-based products and processed meat

26%

A quarter of the respondents agreed that HCL should be made compulsory for certain food categories, including sugar-sweetened beverages, widely consumed staple foods like cereal and dairy products, baked goods, processed foods, canned foods, convenience foods such as instant noodles, and fats and oil



HEALTHIER CHOICE LOGO



04 WHAT INDUSTRIES THINK OF HCL?

79%

of respondents believed that related government policies, such as sugar-sweetened beverage taxation and marketing policy should make the HCL programme their main reference

72%

of respondents said that HCL should make positive nutrients a mandatory criterion

78%

of respondents said that there is a need to expand new product category

05 INDUSTRIES' OPINIONS ON THE REVISION PERIOD FOR HCL NUTRIENT CRITERIA (N=100)

30%

One third of respondents believed the revision period should be fixed at 2 years

30%

One third of respondents believed it should be extended to 3 years

25%

A quarter of respondents suggested a revision period of 5 years

LIKELINESS OF REFORMULATION IF INCENTIVES WERE PROVIDED (N=100)

76%

This study shows that the respondents are highly likely to reformulate their products if financial and fiscal incentives were provided

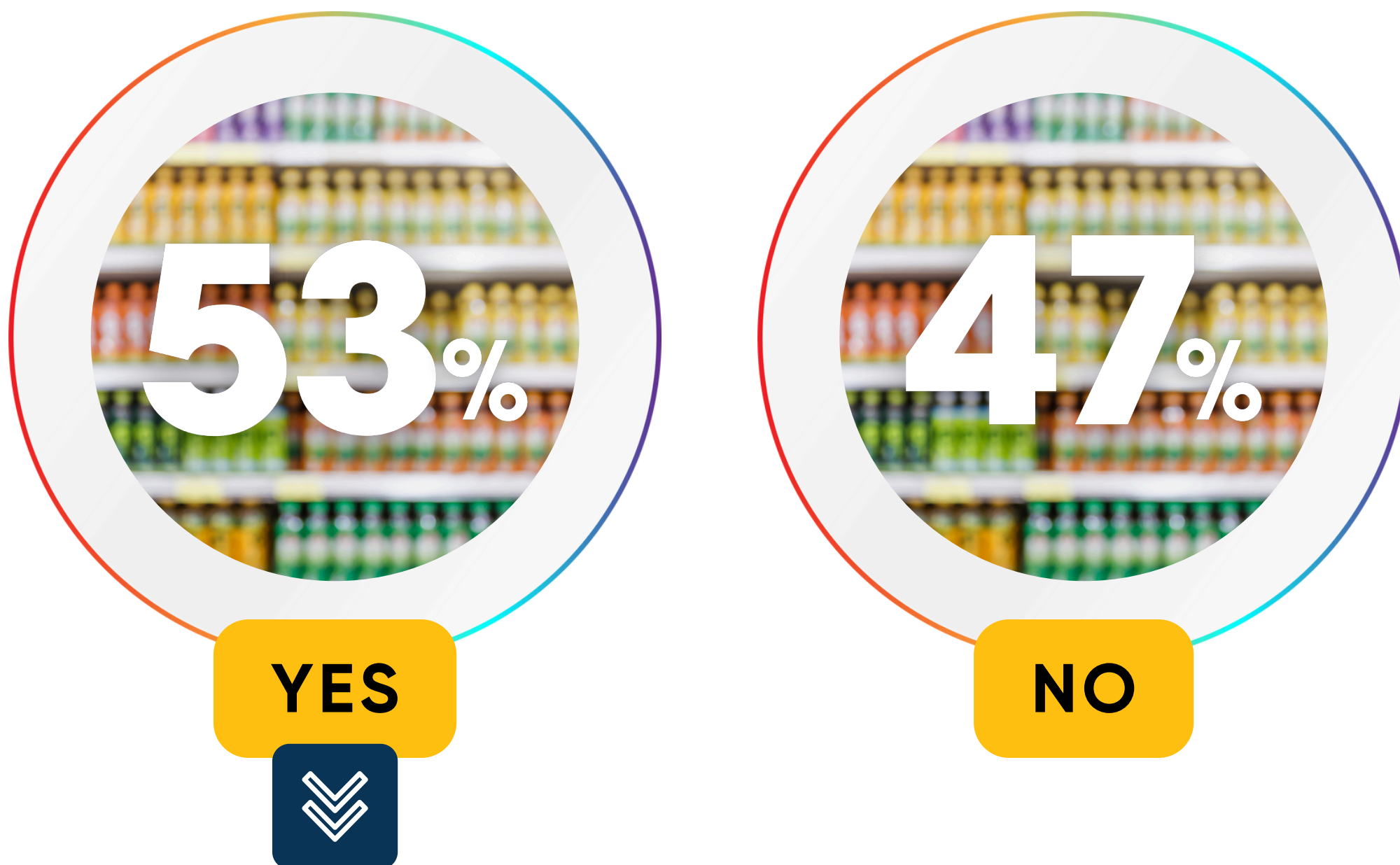


EFFECTIVENESS

AMONG INDUSTRIES

06

COMPANIES WITH PRODUCTS THAT HAVE OBTAINED HCL



- ▶ 50% products has already existed in the market and has complied with the HCL criteria
- ▶ 29.5% are new products that were developed according to the HCL criteria
- ▶ 19.2% are existing non-complying products that were reformulated



From 53 companies that have done reformulation



07

TOP 5 FACTORS MOTIVATING COMPANIES TO REFORMULATE PRODUCTS AND APPLY FOR HCL (N=47)



To improve brand/
bussiness image

89%

89%

To produce
healthier products



Company feels
that it is the right
thing to do

87%

83%

To improve
public health



To respond to
government's call

75%

The ingredient
content most
reformulated was
TOTAL SUGAR

57.4%

HEALTHIER CHOICE LOGO



08

**TOP 3 PRODUCTS CATEGORIES
BEEN REFORMULATED**



BEVERAGES

62.3%

CEREALS

30.2%



DAIRY PRODUCTS

20.8%



HEALTHIER CHOICE LOGO



09

FACTORS THAT MIGHT ENCOURAGE PRODUCT REFORMULATION (N=100)

89%



More awareness on national nutrition targets or standard in line with national health agenda

87%



More awareness on public health priority

84%



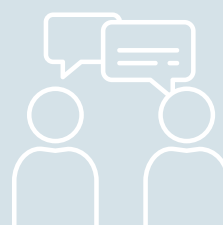
More awareness regarding nutrition labelling and existing logo

84%



Supported by consumer testing

74%



Improving internal communication

73%



More technical knowledge

10

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES FOR PRODUCT REFORMULATION AMONG FOOD INDUSTRIES (N=100)



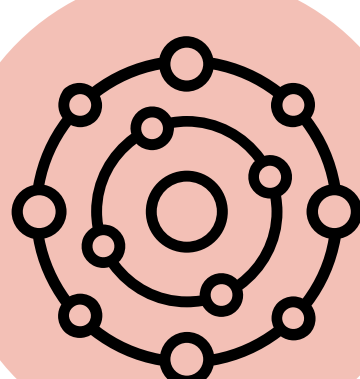
Consumer acceptability

76%



Difficulty maintaining texture or colour

74%



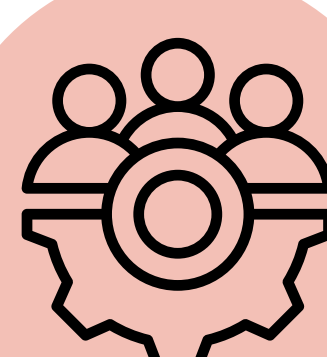
Product suitability to be reformulated

67%



Budget limitation

65%



Limited technical resources or expertise

58%

HEALTHIER CHOICE LOGO





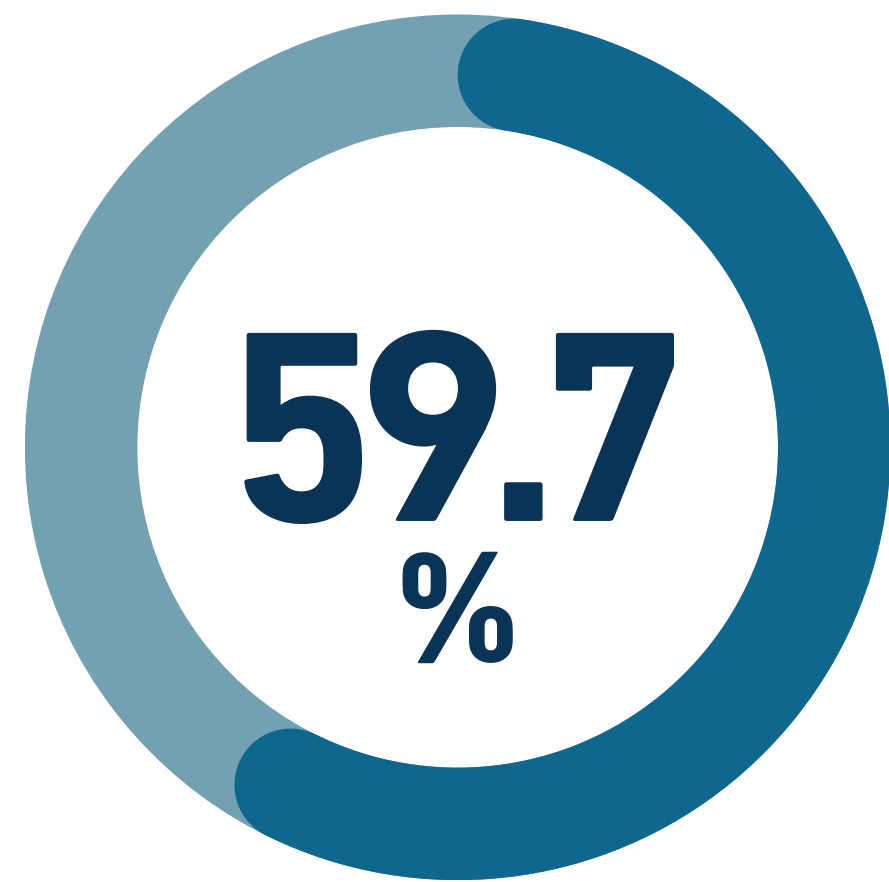
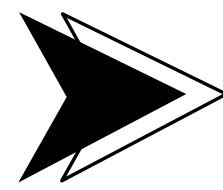
ACCEPTANCE & EFFECTIVENESS

AMONG CONSUMER

11

WHAT OUR CONSUMERS THINK ON HCL?

More than half of the respondent



are **AWARE** about Malaysian Heaalthier Choice Logo (HCL)



CONSUMERS



80%

of consumers agreed that HCL is reliable

85%

Consumer believe that the food product with this logo has better nutritional content

76%

Consumer prefer to purchase food product with this logo

71%

The designated colour of this logo is easily detected on food packaging

65%

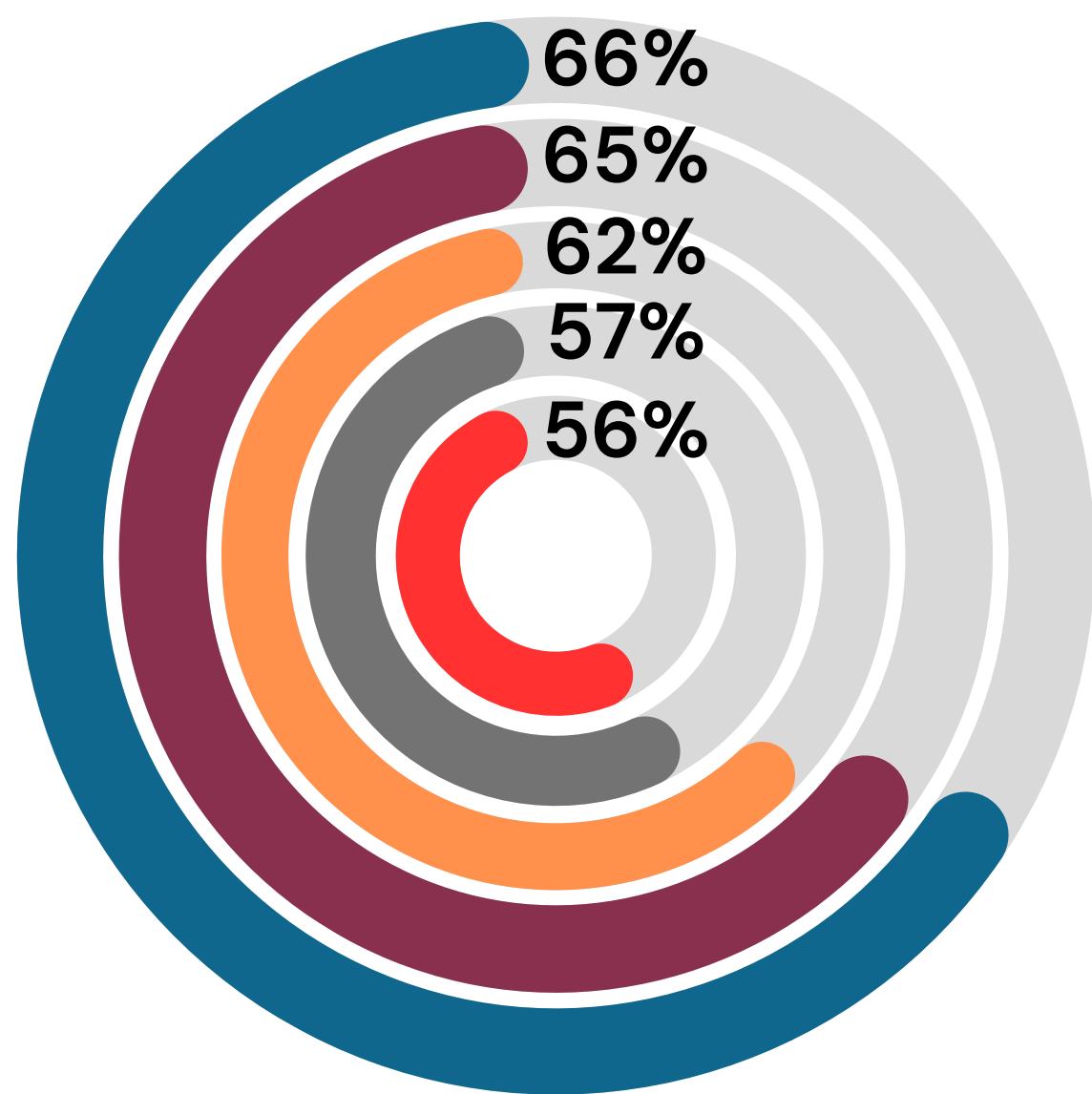
This logo can be found on any food or beverage product that is sold on the market

52%

Consumer can simply locate a product with the HCL logo in the market

HEALTHIER CHOICE LOGO





(N = 298)

- 66% understand that HCL on food packages are healthier choices within that particular food category
- 65% believe that the presence of HCL on food package help them to make informed decision in buying products within the same food category
- 62% said that they can understand the concept of HCL
- 57% said that HCL can effectively change their buying decision
- 56% said that HCL on food package saved their time while purchasing for products in a market

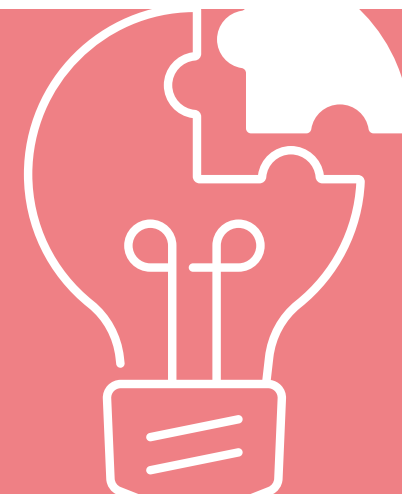
80%

Consumer consider themselves, able to choose healthier food just by merely looking the HCL logo



67%

Consumer can understand the nutritional value of a food product with the HCL without being given food labelling education



63%

Consumer do purchase product with HCL logo

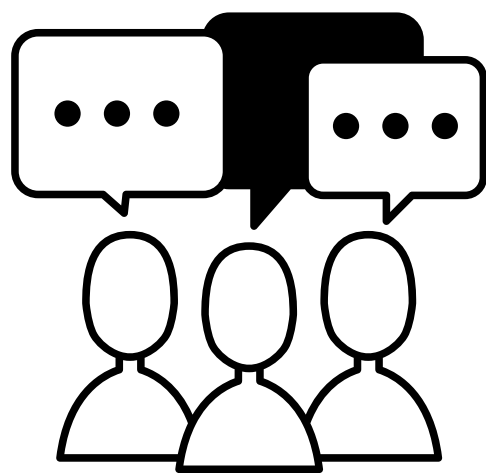


HEALTHIER CHOICE LOGO

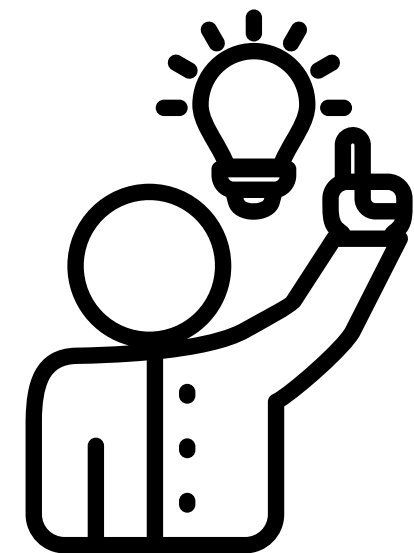


12

UNDERSTANDING AND INTERPRETATION OF CONSUMERS ON HCL (N = 104)



MAKLUMAT PEMAKANAN/NUTRITION INFORMATION			
SAIZ HIDANGAN / SERVING SIZE: 40g			
Jumlah Hidangan / Servings per Pack: 10			
Purata Komposisi /		Setiap / Setiap Hidangan / Per Serving	
Average Composition		Per 100g	
		40g x 200ml Air / Water	
Energi / Energy (kcal/kJ)		358 / 1485	150 / 629
Lemak / Fat (g)		2.4	1.0
Protein (g)		15.0	6.3
Karbohidrat / Carbohydrate (g)		88.0	36.8
Gula / Sugar (g)		30.0	12.5
Serat / Dietary Fiber (g)		4.0	1.7
Natrium / Sodium (mg)		200	83
Kalsium / Calcium (mg)		600	252
Besi / Iron (mg)		1.5	0.6
Plant Sterol Ester (g)		1.4	0.6



86%

Think it's easy to identify a healthier product using HCL

51%

Confused with the terminology/ words used in the HCL

45%

Do not read food label because limited understanding on the HCL

42%

Think it's easy to understand HCL

13

ATTITUDES TO PRODUCT REFORMULATION



Consumers are happy if the product are reformulated to make them healthier, but the taste should remain tasty



Consumers believe that food companies should reformulate their products to make them healthier

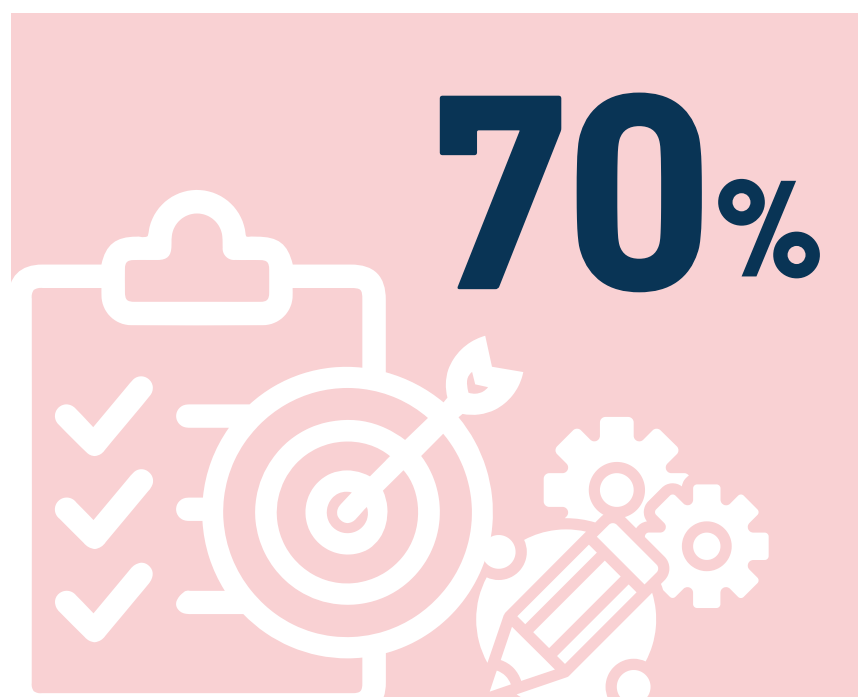
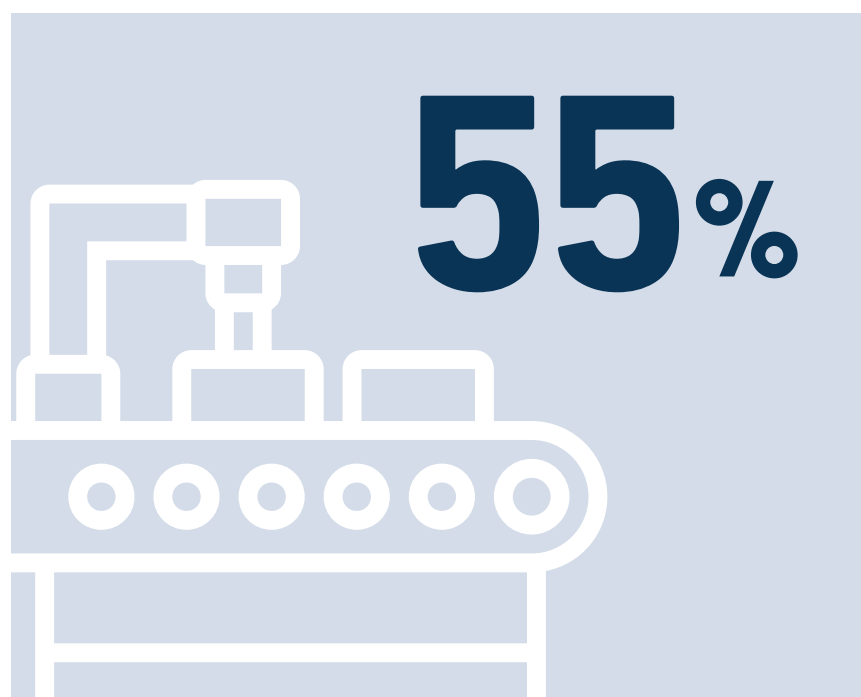


HEALTHIER CHOICE LOGO



14

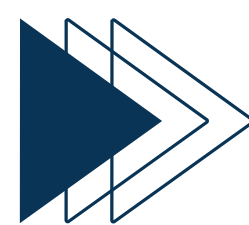
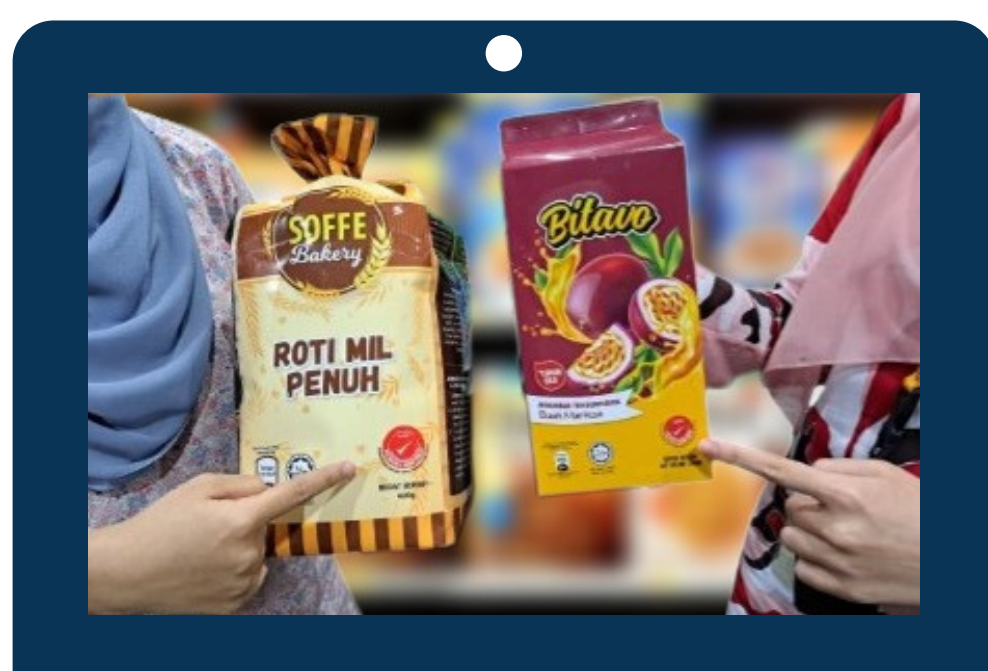
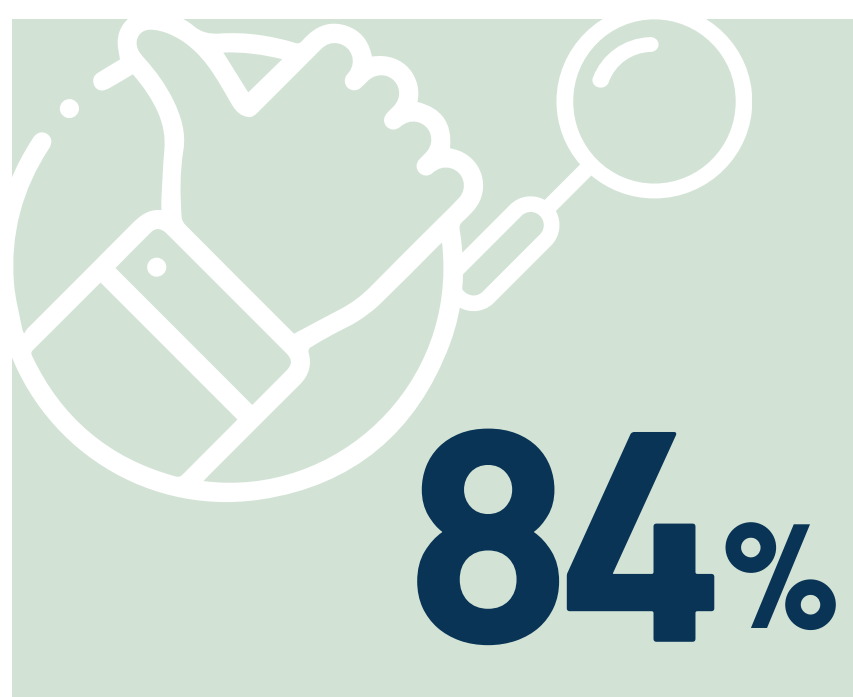
HOW THE CONSUMERS INTERPRET HCL (N=104)



Consumers agreed that they use HCL products to plan their daily energy intake and/or other nutrient intakes

Consumers felt that HCL products had undergone better and healthier food production processes compared to the ones without HCL

Consumers believed Healthier Choice Logo without checking the nutrition table



80%

respondents agreed that HCL provides reliable and trustworthy information



HEALTHIER CHOICE LOGO



STUDY PUBLICATIONS

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Validity and Reliability of the Healthier Choice Logo (HCL) Questionnaires for Consumers and Industries in Malaysia

Nur Izzati Aina Ahmad Zawawi¹, Laila Hawariy Abd Aziz¹, Fatimah Sulong², Siti Sabariah Buhari^{1,3},
*Norazmir Md Nor^{1,3,4}

Mal J Nutr 29(2): 355-366, 2023

Acceptance and effectiveness of the Healthier Choice Logo (HCL) among food industries in Malaysia

Fatimah Sulong¹, Nazli Suhardi Ibrahim¹, Nursyukrina Muhamad Norrahim¹,
Laila Hawariy Abd Aziz², Nur Izzati Aina Ahmad Zawawi² & Norazmir Md Nor^{2,3,*}

¹Nutrition Division, Ministry of Health, Putrajaya, Malaysia; ²Centre for Nutrition and Dietetics Studies, Faculty of Health Sciences, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Selangor, Malaysia; ³Department of Community Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia; ⁴Integrative Pharmacogenomics Institute (iPROMISE), Universiti Teknologi MARA, 42300 Selangor, Malaysia

SPECIAL ISSUE

CONSUMERS' UNDERSTANDING AND INTERPRETATION TOWARDS THE MALAYSIAN HEALTHIER CHOICE LOGO

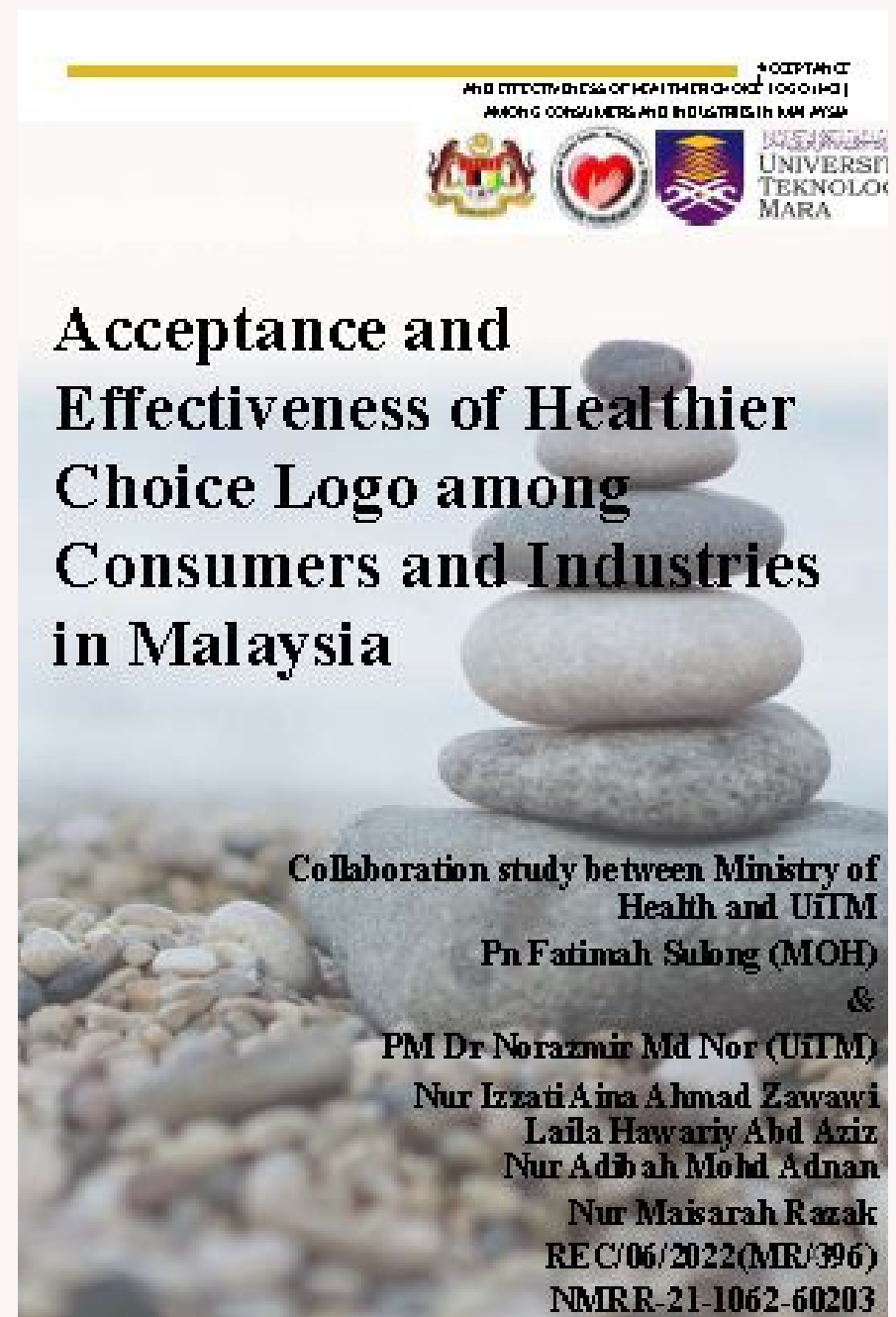
Norrahim NM¹, Sulong F, Ibrahim NS¹, Razak NM², Mohd Adnan NA², Mansyur M³, and Nor NM^{2,4}.

¹Nutrition Division, Ministry of Health Malaysia, Federal Government Administrative Centre, 62590 Putrajaya, Malaysia

²Centre for Nutrition and Dietetics Studies, Faculty of Health Sciences, Universiti Teknologi MARA, 42300 Selangor, Malaysia

³Department of Community Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia

⁴Integrative Pharmacogenomics Institute (iPROMISE), Universiti Teknologi MARA, 42300 Selangor, Malaysia



References:

Ahmad Zawawi, N. I. A., Abd Aziz, L. H., Sulong, F., Buhari, S. S & Md Nor, N. (2022). Validity and Reliability of the Healthier Choice Logo (HCL) Questionnaires for Consumers and Industries in Malaysia. *Malaysian Journal of Medicine and Health Sciences* 18 (8): 263-280.

Norrahim, N. M., Sulong, F., Ibrahim, N. S., Razak, N. M., Adnan, N. A. M., Mansyur, M., & Nor, N. M. (2023). Consumers 'Understanding and Interpretation towards the Malaysian Healthier Choice Logo". *Journal of Health and Translational Medicine (JUMMEC)*, 241-246.

Sulong, F., Ibrahim, N. S., Norrahim, N. M., Abd Aziz, L. H., Ahmad Zawawi, N. I., & Md Nor, N. (2023). Acceptance and Effectiveness of the Healthier Choice Logo (HCL) Among Food Industries in Malaysia. *Malaysian Journal of Nutrition*, 29(2).

CONTRIBUTORS

Nutrition Division, Ministry of Health Malaysia:

Fatimah Sulong
Nursyukrina Muhamad Norrahim
Nur Haleeda Elias

Universiti Teknologi MARA, Puncak Alam Selangor:

Associate Professor Dr Noramir Md Nor (UiTM)
Nur Izzati Aina Ahmad Zawawi
Laila Hawariy Adb Aziz
Nur Adibah Mohd Adnan
Nur Maisara Razak

For any enquiries, please contact:

Healthier Choice Logo Secretariat

Nutrition Division
Ministry of Health Malaysia
Level 1, Block E3, Parcel E
Federal Government Administration
Centre, 62590 Putrajaya

Tel: 03-8892 4498

Email: hcl_kkm@moh.gov.my

<https://hq.moh.gov.my/nutrition/>

<https://myhcl.moh.gov.my>

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Nutrition Division
Ministry of Health Malaysia
Level 1, Block E3, Parcel E
Federal Government Administration Centre
62590 Putrajaya

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