Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

Positioning strategy for Jordanian dates products

Jordan Dates Association

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Foreword

This study comes after the significant increase in the areas planted with Date palms in Jordan, and after Jordan listed as date producing country.

The study aims to identify the location and the positioning of Jordanian dates in the global market and targets the market's most in demand for these type of dates, as well as identifying the segments of society most in demand for this type of food.

Are they young people, adults, women, men or children?

The study also aims to identify the most purchasing power markets of this type of dates, and then identify the priorities entering or expansion business on some other markets according to the parameters mentioned above.

Acknowledgements

On my behalf and on behalf of the Jordan Dates Association and its members, we extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and its office in Amman for their support for this important study, which comes at the right time for the date palm sector in Jordan, especially after Jordan entered the list of date-producing countries. Access to the most important and demanded markets in light of the high competition witnessed by the Mejhoul dates sector after the entry of new countries into the list of producing countries and in light of the expansion witnessed by this category locally and abroad.

Likewise, in light of the increased interest in food security globally and the focus on the fact that dates have become important in addressing hunger and poverty as a result of their high nutritional value, especially in areas where their cultivation is widespread, where poverty and hunger rates increase.

The association also extends its thanks to the study team, which provided very important information for the dates sector in Jordan, stressing our high appreciation for the role of FAO in agricultural development, combating hunger and poverty, and achieving food security.

Anwar Haddad

Abbreviations and acronyms

ACC Agricultural Credit Corporation

ADFSC Abu Dhabi Farmers Service Centre

CBI Fresh Fruits & Vegetables Jordan project

CMC Competence Management Consulting

EBRD European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

FAO Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

GCC Gulf Corporation Council

GIZ Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit

GNI Gross National Income

HACCP Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point

IFAD International Fund for Agricultural Development

ITC International Trade Centre

JEA Jordan Exporters' Association

JEBA Jordan Europe Business Association

JEDCO Jordan Enterprise Development Corporation

JFDA Jordan Food and Drug Administration

JFU Jordan Farmers Union

JIC Jordan Investment Commission

JODA Jordan Dates Association

MENA Middle East and North Africa

MITS Ministry of Industry and Trade

MOA Ministry of Agriculture

NARC National Agricultural Research Centre

OIC Organization of the Islamic Cooperation

ROI Return on Investment

STP Segmentation, Targeting and Positioning

USP Unique Selling Proposition

Executive summary

This study set out to establish a market positioning strategy for the Jordanian date products through conducting market, competition and trade analysis, identifying Jordan's competitive advantage and unique selling propositions (USPs) in the date's sector, performing demographic, geographic and behavioural segmentation of the date's sector in Jordan, and establishing targeting, and positioning strategy for the Jordanian date's sector.

The technical approach followed in this study was an outcome-oriented and integrated framework approach tailored to suit the required specific objectives, and was based on synthesis, analysis, and interpretation of information gathered regarding the target market from various sources. The study started with a detailed desk research, market and competition analysis, followed by a comprehensive identification of the competitive edge and unique selling propositions (USPs) and their linkages to the target markets. Upon completion of the USPs' identification, a complete segmentation and targeting analysis was performed taking into consideration the demographic, geographic and behavioural segments' descriptors. The study was concluded by establishing a positioning strategy for the Jordanian dates' sector along with complete details on investment points and cost-benefit analysis of each recommendation related to the positioning strategy.

This study concluded that the combined untapped import potential is estimated to be worth more USD 235 million. This represents opportunities for dates producing countries such as Jordan, who can benefit from zero tariffs under the Greater Arab Free Trade Area agreement. In fact, the emerging markets have increased the potential size and worth of current major international trade. The study also identifies the Industry trends as religiously like Ramadan, healthy food and healthy snacks, vegan, busy lifestyle - Energy food, and convenience food. In terms of competition analysis, the study found out that the main competitor countries for the Mejhoul dates production are: Israel, Palestine, the United States of America, South Africa and Namibia(we call it later as Mejhoul main producing countries), and concluded that the Jordanian dates are considered unique in several selling propositions, which can be highlighted as follows: i) The <u>Unique climatic condition</u> in the Jordan Valley for Mejhoul date production, ii) Jordan is producing <u>Mejhoul dates which is king of dates</u>, due to their global availability, iii) Mejhoul nutrition, iv) <u>labour cost in Jordan is considered low</u>, v) Jordanian companies are <u>flexible</u> in providing different design and sizes for the packages, vi) Knowhow of Mejhoul production and experience of Jordanian farmer to produce high quality and demand oriented quality, and vii) <u>Geographical location of Jordan</u> which positioned in the Middle East. Moreover, this study identified the main and potential segments for the Jordanian dates. Jordanian firms should focus on the Islamic markets in the (Islamic and Arabic countries in the MENA region and the ethnic – Islamic market in the European Union). These markets are considered as competitive for the Jordanian Mejhoul dates, whereas other Mejhoul producing countries are focusing more on the non-Islamic countries and markets. Considering targeting, these targeted customers consume dates as raw dates and are interested in premium quality Mejhoul dates, therefore; the product packaging is retail packs for end customer (business to customer).

The study finally determined the most important factors that should formalize Jordan date's positioning strategy as follows: first quality dimensions (freshness, appearance, size and packaging), second health, third Origin, and lastly Variety. Additionally, a list of recommended actions in relation to the final positioning strategy were identified with a detailed cost/benefit for each investment points was conducted. Two different growth assumptions were simulated and according to the detailed cost/benefit analysis, the return on investment (ROI) for implementing the positioning strategy and the related recommendations will be 169 percent, 334 percent, respectively. This is considered very profitable and worth the investment.

1. Introduction

Businesses may not be able to satisfy all their customers, every time for every sector. It may prove difficult to meet the exact desires of each individual customer. Consumers globally do not have identical preferences, so hardly does one offering completely satisfy everyone. Therefore, many companies may usually adopt a strategy that is known as target marketing and positioning. This strategy involves dividing the market into profitable segments and developing competitive products or services to these segments.

A target marketing and positioning strategy is focused on the customers' needs and wants. Hence, a prerequisite for the development of this customer-focus strategy is the specification of the target markets that the enterprises will attempt to serve.

The dates sector is an important business sector for Jordan because of its potential to contribute to Jordan's economic growth, to increase livelihoods for farmers and workers including women and to adhere to water efficient practices. It is very important that Jordan position this sector competitively among global direct and non-direct competitors.

The Jordanian dates' sector is represented by two types of dates; "Barhi" and "Mejhoul". The "Mejhoul" dates have experienced a quantum leap in the worldwide demand of dates, due to its taste and texture that is easily digested by the global consumer, along with "Al Barhi" class which enjoys the advantage that its production season begins after the production season of the other types of date ends. These two varieties of dates are distinguished by the fact that most of their sugar's content is mainly glucose and fructose sugars and not the monosaccharides (i.e., sucrose) which have a negative effect on blood sugar levels. The "Mejhoul " dates also contain high levels of potassium, phosphorus, vitamins A and B, antioxidants and phenols, as well as high levels of magnesium and manganese.

The Barhi is a very soft date that is oval in shape, and extremely sweet. It's also a rich source of fibre, iron, potassium, B-vitamins, flavonoids and antioxidants. This little-known date is starting to make a name for itself. Each year, more Barhi dates are sold than the year before.
Its success can be attributed to a unique trait that most dates do not have, the Barhi is edible in three different stages of development, where most dates are only edible in one. The Barhi dates are mainly sold at the Rutab stage of ripeness, where their skins are thin and crackling, giving way to a smooth, creamy interior that tastes like brown sugar and caramel. The bad news is that Barhi dates have a short season and shelf life and are.

Mejhoul is an expensive variety, produced in only a few countries as mentioned above, Currently, Jordan supplies 14 percent only, but it is expected that production in Jordan and the Palestinian territories will grow quickly as new plantations reach maturity[1]. Jordan's share gives

1 Exporting dates to European Union, CBI, April, 2019

a very good indication of the dates sub-sector enjoying comparative advantage and highly competitive edge in the global market.

It is expected that the share of Jordanian production of these dates in the global market during the next three years will increase as a result of the entry of new areas in production, in addition to the continued momentum of expansion of cultivation and production of varieties of "Mejhoul" and "Barhi", and the high return of dates from the productivity of cubic meter of water several times compared to other fruits and vegetables. The date palm subsector is considered one of the highest subsectors which have the potential to employ trained and skilled labour throughout the year and not only in the seasons. The current number of estimated job opportunities in the date palm subsector is nearly 5 000 jobs, in which women constitute more than 35 percent of the total jobs in this subsector.

This sector also can use modern techniques and mechanization of production and post-production processes. There are several farms that have been certified by the GLOBAL GAP, HACCP, ISO 22 000 and other international quality certificates. There is continuous development and modernization by farmers in production and post-harvest techniques.

According to latest export development projects performed to help the Jordanian manufacturing sectors to export their products to the European Union, and depending on a preliminary competitiveness analysis conducted by experts, food processing sector – dates subsector is found to be potentially competitive and has high chances to export their products to potential buyers and markets. However, as highlighted above, Barhi dates are too delicate to be commercially shipped and thus they are more likely to be shipped to neighbouring countries such as Lebanon, Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq. On the other hand, Mejhoul dates are considered to be one of the most expensive types of dates; they're known to be more consumer-preferred.

In 2017, Jordan exported USD 12 816 thousand of dates[2]. This is considered very low when comparing this amount with similar countries' exports of dates although Jordan is known for its very high-quality types of dates (Mejhoul). These numbers show that Jordan has a high opportunity to increase its date's capacity to exports and get much higher export market share.

One of the main stakeholders of the dates subsector in Jordan is the Jordan Dates Association (JODA), which was established in 2005 as a non-profit non-governmental organization (NGO) to help in reaching an organized sector by supporting the sector in producing high quality dates and achieving a significant share of the international market. JODA is currently working on a project that aims to build a new strategy that reforms their goals to tackle the sector's challenges and further support Jordanian date palm producers in reaching global markets. This new strategy covers several objectives including but not limited to building a national strategy to produce higher quality and market Jordanian dates as to increase the volume and value of exports by preserving the current markets and opening new international markets in order to achieve sustainability and increase the added value of the Jordanian dates. In addition, it promotes research and development by setting an integrated research and extension program aimed at implementing applied research to address the production problems experienced by

[2] www.trademap.org

palm farmers and transferring the results of research, innovations and modern techniques to farmers. Optimizing the natural resources, especially water, and raising the efficiency of using them to increase the productivity in terms of value and quantity and the production of dates in a sustainable manner.

This study aims to understand the dates sector existing market situation and analysing its competitive offering compared to the world offering; this will be achieved through conducting market research and understand the Jordanian dates competitive edge and define its unique selling proposition (USP) among international competitors offering. This will assist in directing the sector producers towards penetrating the international market competitively. In order to define that, a three-step process will be followed:

First step - segmentation: Segmenting the market to groups of customers that has common need and has demand on dates based on clearly defined segmentation factors. This will make it better to focus on the market segments that has demand in order to understand its needs and expectation, in addition, defining the competition offering.

Second step - targeting: Selecting out of the defined market segments in step one that has high demand to Jordanian dates' offering, and could appreciate Jordan dates offering, a further in-depth research to be conducted to understand the consumers within these target groups to understand their buying behaviour and needs. Furthermore, to research the competition offering to these target segments and look for gaps in the market demand.

Third step - positioning: Based on step one and two, a sweet spot will be identified in the global market for Jordanian dates' offering based on competitive factors appreciated by the targeted consumer groups to buy, and to have more competitive offering.

The result of this study will support Jordanian producers in understanding and matching between their products' USPs and their attractive target markets. This provides the dates companies with a great opportunity to set their priorities and start arranging to target specific attractive markets with the most suitable dates products, and this will ultimately result in opening new doors for expanding their export markets and eventually flourishing their revenue and business.

This study will add value as a direction to the sector strategy in accessing the international market competitively, and even to the local market growth developed by JODA.

2. Objectives of study

The overall objective of this study is to develop a market positioning report for the Jordanian date products. This will be achieved through working on the following specific objectives:

- Performing market and competition analysis, trade analysis, and export market position.
- Identifying Jordan's competitive advantage and USPs in the date's sector.
- Conducting demographic, geographic and behavioural segmentation of the date's sector in Jordan.

- Establishing targeting, and positioning strategy for the Jordanian date's sector.

The main deliverable of this project is a comprehensive report detailing the positioning of the Jordanian date products. The report will include an STP analysis, target market identification and USPs determination.

3. Methodology

The technical approach and methodology applied in this analysis is an outcome-oriented and integrated framework approach tailored to suit the required specific objectives. This study is based on synthesis, analysis, and interpretation of information gathered regarding the target market from various sources.

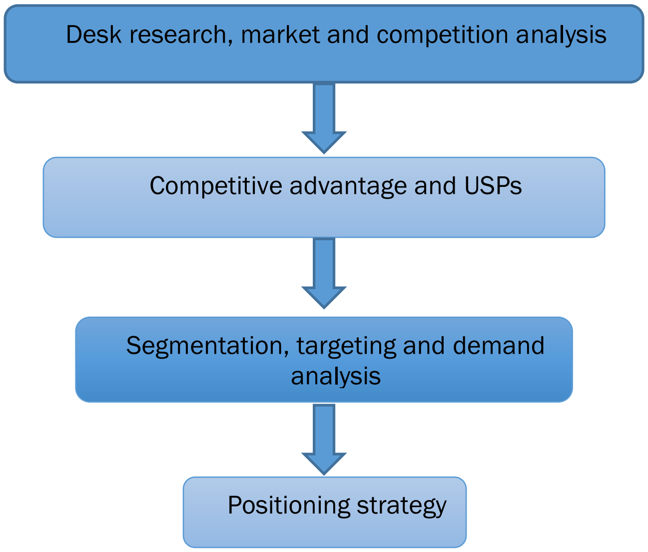


Figure 1 Methodology Flowchart for establishing a positioning strategy for the Jordanian Date

1. **Conduct a detailed desk research, market and competition analysis.**

Desk research has been made of the global economic conditions and other economic indicators and factors to assess their respective impact on the market historically in order to investigate the market analysis including leading date's growing countries, the global trade flow, trade analysis, industry trends, direct competitors, and competition analysis including global export market versus Jordan's export market and the world's imports and Jordan's exports comparisons in terms of value, quantity, and unit price.

2. **Identify the competitive edge and unique selling propositions (USPs) and to link them to the target markets.**

The identified USPs differentiate the Jordanian date products from their competitors, such as the lowest cost, the highest quality or the first-ever product of its kind. A USP is furnished as "what Jordanian dates producers have that competitors do not."

3. **Perform complete segmentation and targeting analysis.**

This analysis focuses on specific that have more importance according to the supply/demand analysis. Segmentation is focused into three main categories; demographic (i.e., religion, income rate, and age), geographic and behavioural. Analysis will also outline the main Industry trends and targeted markets consumer behaviour.

4. **Establish positioning strategy.**

Depending on the segmentation and targeting analysis and the identified USPs, a positioning strategy is established in order to determine the recommendations to the targeted segments and markets according to the USP of the Jordanian date products and to outline what a date company should do to market its product or service to its customer. Details on investment points and cost-benefit analysis of each recommendation will be provided. Throughout the different phases the analysis, ideas and recommendation were discussed with the related stakeholder(s) listed in Annex 1.

Market analysis

Studying the world exchange of dates between countries is considered important since it gives a wider image on the current situation of the demand and the main countries that consume dates. The world's import and export are considered the first step in identifying the segmentation for any product.

3.1. Leading date growing countries

Studying the leading countries in growing dates, JODA can conclude that the trade of dates is led by Egypt; following is Islamic Republic of Iran and Saudi Arabia. These three countries have the needed weather conditions to grow good quality dates; they contribute to the world's export volume of dates by almost 19.5 percent.

Egypt is the world leader in date production and cultivation. Each year, this country produces approximately 1 084 529 metric tonnes of dates. This represents a little over 17 percent of global date production but only 3 percent of world exports. Egypt has increased date cultivation by more than 100 percent since 1993 and currently has an estimated 15 582 000 date palm trees. Just over half, 53 percent, of exported Egyptian dates are imported by Morocco; this is followed by Indonesia (24 percent) and Malaysia (15 percent). The total export value is around USD 41.8 million.

Following Egypt, Islamic Republic of Iran produces 947 809 metric tonnes annually. Despite this large production rate, it only accounts for approximately 7.7 percent of total world exports. The majority of Islamic Republic of Iran's date exports go to Asian countries. The biggest importers are India (16 percent) and Malaysia (11 percent). Russia follows by importing 9.9 percent of Islamic Republic of Iran's exported dates.

The third largest producer of dates is Saudi Arabia. This country has the perfect conditions for date growth and cultivation, producing 836 983 metric tonnes per year. Nearly 388 000 acres across the country are dedicated to date palms and its fruit production. This country exports approximately 8.8 percent of the world's dates, which totals around USD 94.3 million. The primary importers of these exports are Jordan (19 percent), Yemen (17 percent), and Kuwait (15 percent).

A list of these and other top date producing countries and their annual outputs of the fruit can be found in Annex 2.

3.2. Trade analysis

The growth of emerging markets for the dates (e.g., India, Morocco, United Arab Emirates, and France) has promoted international trade in several ways. The emerging markets have increased the potential size and worth of current major international trade. Table 1 shows the world's imports of dates which valued USD 1 741 420 Thousand in 2018, as can be seen in 2018, India is considered the main importer with a value of USD 256 648 Thousand, followed by Morocco, United Arab Emirates , France and United States of America.

Table 1 World Imports of HS Code 080410 Fresh or dried dates in US Dollar thousand[3]

Importers*/ Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
India	199 447	188 707	211 148	241 745	256 648
Morocco	105 367	109 788	96 170	115 543	171 229
United Arab Emirates	112 127	114 729	118 832	152 825	107 195
France	78 164	73 473	77 616	89 215	100 172
United States of America	46 348	60 292	49 707	49 703	98 909
Germany	41 021	46 449	49 583	60 852	68 259
Indonesia	37 170	29 728	32 929	53 628	63 760
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	52 063	52 881	56 094	58 233	63 403
Canada	33 791	36 185	38 256	45 609	49 641
Turkey	19 003	20 176	36 475	51 309	47 738
Malaysia	55 761	45 977	42 197	54 441	47 099
Netherlands	23 434	25 031	31 482	36 094	46 174
Italy	27 709	29 227	29 100	31 583	33 493
Spain	26 211	21 578	26 775	31 040	32 459
Bangladesh		17 999	21 884	28 174	31 200
Kuwait	15 269	14 943	16 316	20 762	29 232
Russian Federation	25 837	19 030	22 119	28 823	28 452
Iraq	69	14 514	15 091	18 604	28 120
Qatar	11 103	15 838			26 361
Oman	11 727	12 981	11 296	7 159	23 211
Yemen	18 625	18 767	11 900	11 610	22 750
Jordan	31 232	20 841	21 103	21 724	19 509

Dates – which comes in hundreds of varieties – also play a significant role in the economy of many of the countries along the Fertile Crescent. In 2016, the global trade in dates, either fresh or dried, reached USD 1.4 billion, a five-fold increase since 2001. Moreover, in 2012-2016, the trade in dates increased at an average rate of 14percent. In fact, in 2016 the

[3] www.trademape.org

combined exports of dates from the MENA region totalled USD 1.12 billion, accounting for 77 percent of the global exports.

Tunisia is the world's biggest exporter of dates in value. In 2016, it exported around USD 227 million worth of dates or 16 percent of global exports. Islamic Republic of Iran (USD 209 million), the United Arab Emirates (USD 160 million) and Saudi Arabia (USD 142 million) are other large exporters with exports of dates. However, in terms of volume, Iraq is the biggest exporter of dates, with more than 321 000 tonnes. The United Arab Emirates is ranked second with around 276 000 tonnes, while Islamic Republic of Iran is ranked third, exporting 209 000 tonnes.

The world's biggest importer of dates is India. In 2016, it imported USD 211 million worth of the fruit. The United Arab Emirates and Morocco are also key markets, with imports valued at USD 119 million and USD 96 million respectively. However, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Egypt is the largest producer of dates in the world with around 17 percent of global production. Despite its large production, Egypt accounts for less than 3 percent world exports of dates. At 15 percent, Islamic Republic of Iran is the second-biggest producer of dates and Saudi Arabia is ranked third, accounting for 14 percent of production.

According to ITC's Export Potential Map, the markets with greatest potential for date exports in the MENA region are the United Arab Emirates and Morocco. The combined untapped import potential is estimated to be worth more USD 235 million. This represents opportunities for dates producing countries such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia, who can benefit from zero tariffs under the Greater Arab Free Trade Area agreement.

3.3. Industry trends

Dates are to be found in the Islamic countries, where they form part of the diet and are accordingly to be seen at many feasts, particularly during Ramadan, and European Union sizeable Islamic population can always be expected to affect date consumption during this time. Ramadan is the ninth month on the Islamic calendar and Muslims observe it as a month of fasting, prayer and reflection with a heavy emphasis on family, community and charity.

The meal that breaks the fast (Iftar) and it is begun by eating three dates because tradition holds that the prophet Mohammed broke his fast with three dates and water. Because the Ramadan fast lasts for so many hours during the day, the body can develop mild health problems such as headaches, low blood sugar, and lethargy. To avoid such problems, one should carefully monitor their eating habits once fasting for the day has ended. When it coincides with the date season, there is a very marked upsurge in demand.

Traditionally in European Union, dates were predominantly consumed by communities originally from the Middle East and North Africa region – ethnic/Islamic markets. Consumption is still particularly high during Ramadan, as mentioned above.

Dates are an excellent source of fibre, sugar, magnesium, potassium, and have carbohydrates which will aid the body in maintaining health. The carbohydrates found in dates also make the fruit a slower digesting food, much better than fried or fatty foods which digest fast and leave one hungry for more!

Due to their high natural sweetness, date products are often used instead of honey. Date sugar is available as a more wholesome natural sweetener as well as date syrup, which can be used to sweeten desserts or beverages. Dates are also a common addition to energy bars due to their sweetness and high nutritional content.

The busy lifestyles of modern consumers are one of the key factors for growth of portable snack foods which offer both nutrition and convenience, including fruit snacks, snack bars, packs of dried fruits and nuts, and healthy biscuits Producers also boost category's growth by continuing to innovate with healthier products, more portable or mini-sized packaging and different flavours.

Consumers, too, are looking more closely at nutritional value and aim to choose products with the lowest sugar and fat content. Similarly, healthy convenience foods, such as cereals and yogurt supplemented with dried fruits, nuts and seeds, are slowly becoming more common than less healthy convenience foods. Although products in this category are generally more expensive, expansion of the economy and high levels of consumer confidence allowed the category to bloom. One of the major trends observed in the global date palm market is increasing demand for organic dates among consumers, organic segment is dominating in the global market in terms of revenue share.

Eating dates found to offer some protection from colon, prostate, breast, endometrial, lung, and pancreatic cancers. Zea-xanthin protects against age-related macular degeneration, especially in elderly populations. Dates also have the unique distinction of being the only food to contain flavonoid sulphates.[4]

Dates on the Shelf (Germany 2020)

[4] https://helda.helsinki.fi/bitstream/handle/10138/42985/Jain._Health_benefits.pdf?sequence=2

However, more recently, dates have become more popular among other European Union communities as well. This is driven by the trend towards healthier living. In general, dried fruits are increasingly replacing unhealthy snacks such as cookies and chips. dates are one of the new superfoods on the German market and there is a vast amount of information about the fruit's acclaimed health benefits. More and more, consumers eat dates as a healthy snack.

For example, In Germany, dried fruits are often used as a substitute for breakfast and lunch when on-the-go as convenient snacks. Alternatively, dried fruits are used to supplement breakfast cereals, which have grown in popularity because of busy lifestyles of Germans. Germany is one of the main markets for breakfast cereals with approximately 20 percent share of the European Union market, which makes it the second largest market in the region.[5] Consumption of healthy cereal and energy bars supplemented with dried fruits and nuts is increasing as well.

Dates are promoted as a good source of calories and energy, because they have a high carbohydrate content. They also contain dietary fibre and are a source of minerals, such as potassium, calcium, magnesium and phosphorus. They have a low sodium content.

The vegetarian and vegan sectors is one of the fastest growing in India and the European Union market. These diet choices are particularly common among younger generations, 16-24-year-old. However, vegetarian and vegan sectors are growing also because of the general trend towards natural, unprocessed and wholesome products. Many European Union consumers opt for vegetarian and vegan products due to perceived superior healthiness and a lesser number of additives, as well as impact on the animal wellbeing.

A high expatriate population, rising number of working couples and hectic lifestyles are driving demand for packaged food in the world. Growing popularity of modern retailing has strengthened the demand of private label products. As consumers are becoming more price sensitive, retailers including large supermarkets, hypermarkets and even discounters continue to invest in private labels, which have emerged as an important source of revenue with high margins.

3.4. Competition analysis

Building on that, the global market analysis studied, this section aims at providing a competitive analysis of the dates sector in Jordan to provide a complete image of the current position of dates and in order to understand the trade dynamics of dates in Jordan and to set a strategy for the positioning of dates in Jordan. Competition analysis identifies the major competitors that helps create solid business strategies for the sector in Jordan.

5 Centre for the Promotion of Imports (2016). CBI Channels and Segments: Edible Nuts and Dried Fruit in European Union. Available at: https://www.cbi.European Union/sites/default/files/market_information/researches/channels-segments-European Union edible-nuts-dried-fruit-2016.pdf 74 International Nut & Dried Fruit Council (2017). Nuts and Dried Fruits. Statistical Yearbook 2017/2018. Available at: https://www.nutfruit.org/files/tech/1524481168_INC_Statistical_Yearbook_2017-2018.pdf

To understand the world trade of dates, an analysis of the world's exports was conducted, Table 2 shows the world exports of dates in thousand USD. The total export value in the world in 2018 for the dates is USD 1 954 478 thousand, among these the main country that exports the most is Islamic Republic of Iran, Tunisia and so on while Jordan is ranked sixteenth with export value of USD 19 809 thousand in 2018.

Table 2: World Exports of HS Code 080410 Fresh or dried dates in US Dollar thousand

Exporters*	**Exported value in 2014**	**Exported value in 2015**	**Exported value in 2016**	**Exported value in 2017**	**Exported value in 2018**
Islamic Republic of Iran	226 174	232 981	208 548	250 492	338 348
Tunisia	229 118	227 010	226 612	229 990	321 864
Saudi Arabia	129 670	136 264	141 564	182 379	201 393
United Arab Emirates	165 660	171 897	160 215	167 522	197 553
Israel	150 624	138 724	141 535	181 231	160 726
Pakistan	79 976	83 214	102 596	107 488	112 731
Algeria	39 004	34 798	37 502	52 337	108 997
Iraq	6 309	108 306	116 542	146 564	107 872
United States of America	47 339	54 900	58 681	58 297	66 141
Egypt	47 319	33 027	41 167	32 633	49 729
France	33 609	34 461	37 706	41 206	42 289
Netherlands	24 112	26 135	29 055	35 296	38 464
Germany	15 012	16 010	20 656	23 202	27 600
Palestine, State of	9 312	11 799	14 995	19 910	24 693
Mexico	12 178	6 991	8 037	11 997	20 203
Jordan	8 619	8 412	12 996	12 834	19 809
Oman	11 364	11 982	12 650	6 512	15 125
Turkey	7 068	8 477	9 358	7 807	10 895

Figure 3 shows Jordan exports compared to the five top countries in exporting dates of HS Code 080410 Fresh or dried dates to the world. Jordan has a long way to go, yet have the opportunity to increase its sales.

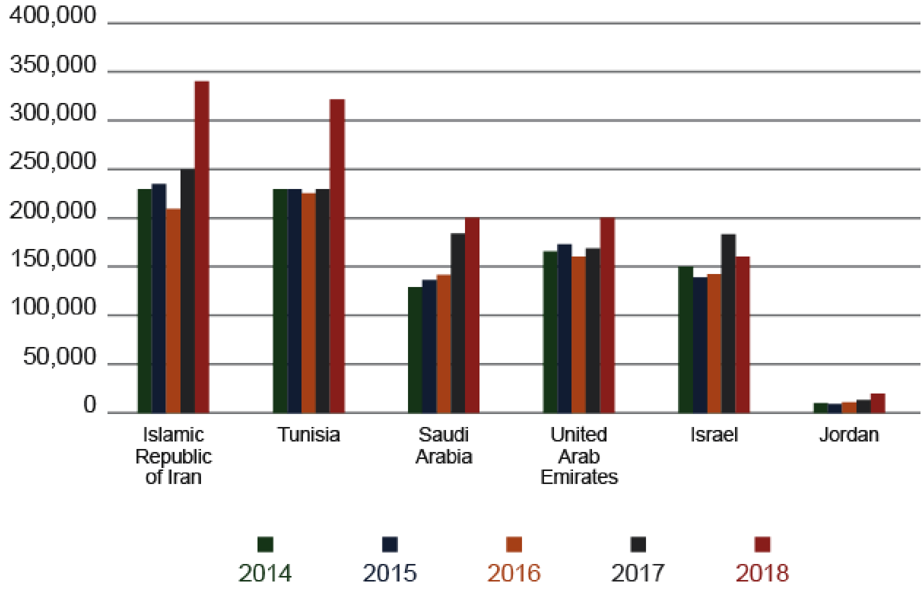


Figure 2: Jordan Exports compared to 5 top export countries in US Dollar thousand

3.4.1. Jordan export market position

Establishing a valuable position for the Jordanian dates is considered one of the most important steps relative to improving the competitiveness of the product, it serves as the guidelines for any dates producers and decision leader to understand the current situation in reference with the international markets.

Mejhoul dates have a higher return on investment value since its selling price is considered one of the highest for all types of dates, also the Jordanian producers tend to prefer Mejhoul over Barhi since the potential of exporting Mejhoul dates is higher due to their longer shelf-lives. As a result, when studying the trade dynamics of dates, it mostly represents the Mejhoul exports and imports rather than Barhi which forms a very small percentage of the exporting volume.

Studying Jordan export market position is built upon several main steps that includes studying the following; Global Export Market Vs Jordan Export Market, World's imports and Jordan's exports value comparison, World's imports and Jordan's exports quantity comparison and World's imports and Jordan's exports unit price comparison. These steps which will play a major role in understanding the current export market position of Jordan in the world and the growth status of the Jordanian dates' products.

Global Export Market Vs Jordan Export Market

A thorough analysis of the world's imports and Jordan's exports of dates was conducted in terms of value and quantities. This analysis took into consideration the data of a 5-year period (years: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018). The data used in this analysis were collected from the International Trade Center. Upon the analysis of the data, different scenarios were projected in order to observe and forecast the potential growth in the next three years (up to 2023).

World's imports and Jordan's exports value comparison

When comparing World's imports and Jordan's exports value, as given in Figure 4, it was observed that:

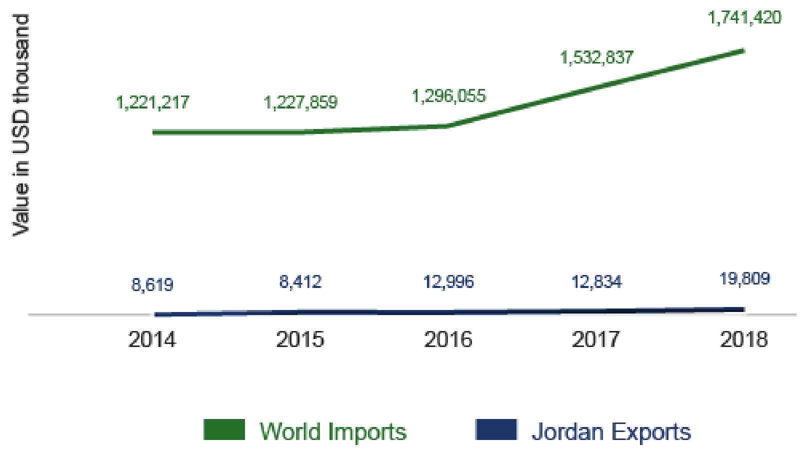


Figure 3: World's imports and Jordan's exports value comparison

- The value of Jordan exports of dates increased by 130 percent during the period 2014 and 2018.
- The average annual growth rate in the value of Jordan's exports of dates is 26 percent.
- The value of the world imports of dates increased by 42 percent during the period 2014 and 2018.
- The average annual growth rate in the value of the world's imports of dates is 9 percent.

World’s imports and Jordan’s exports quantity comparison

When comparing World’s imports quantity and Jordan’s export quantities, as presented in Figure 5, it was observed that:

Figure 4: World's imports quantity vs. Jordan's export quantity of dates

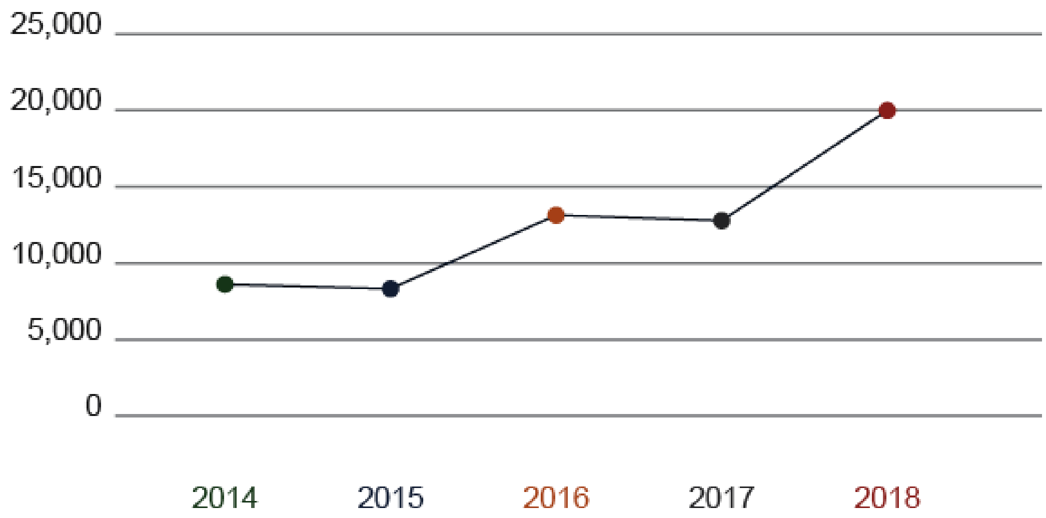
- The quantity of Jordan exports of dates in tonnes increased by 57 percent during the period 2014 and 2018.
- The average annual growth rate in the quantity of Jordan’s exports of dates is 15 percent.
- The value of the world imports of dates increased by 20 percent during the period 2014 and 2018.
- The average annual growth rate in the quantity of the world’s imports of dates is 5 percent.

World’s imports and Jordan’s exports unit price comparison

When comparing World’s imports unit price and Jordan’s export unit price (USD/kg), it was observed that Jordan has a higher price in terms of the unit price, this is explained by the fact that Jordan exports Mejhoul dates which is considered highly priced compared to other types of dates whereas the world’s import unit price is measured on all types of dates as presented in Figure 6.

Figure 5: World's imports and Jordan's exports unit price comparison

Jordan dates exports have increased from 2014 to 2018 as shown in Figure 7. Dates exports were mainly to Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Morocco, Lebanon, and France[6] as shown in Figure 8.



6 ITC calculations based on UN COMTRADE and ITC statistics

Figure 6: Jordan Exports of HS Code 080410 Fresh or dried dates in US Dollar thousand

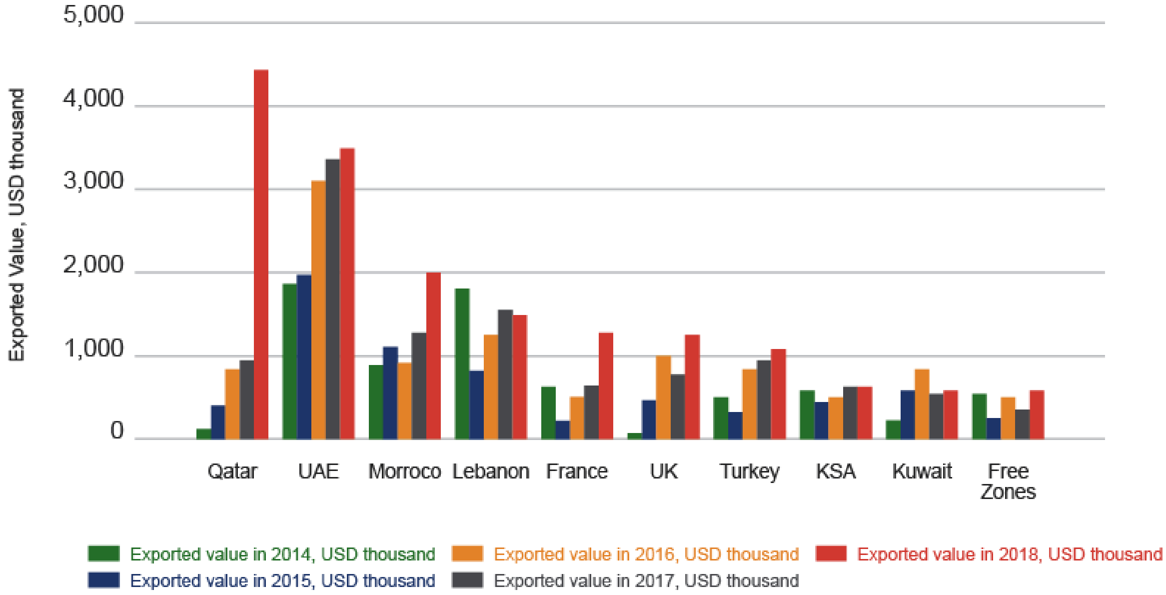


Figure 7: Jordan Exports per country of HS Code 080410 Fresh or dried dates in US Dollar thousand

Based on the above analysis, it's concluded that Jordan's average growth rate in terms of value is 2.77 times faster than the worlds. In addition, it's concluded that Jordan's average growth rate in terms of quantity is 3.03 times faster than the world's and in terms of unit price (USD/kg) 2.14 times faster than the worlds. This indicates that Jordan has a high potential/opportunity to penetrate new markets and increase the current market size since the exports growth rate of Jordan in Mejhoul dates is higher than the world's imports growth rates.

3.5. Direct competitors

The following analyses of the main competitors are found through the desk research conducted using the data provided by the international trade centre[7]. Referring to the fact that Jordan exports Mejhoul dates and Barhi, it is worth noting that when it comes to Mejhoul dates' planting, there are unique climate conditions required to grow high quality Mejhoul dates such as: Long summer days, medium to high temperature, and mild winters without frost and appropriate humidity ratio of 40-50. These conditions help trees achieve optimum growth, flowering, and fruiting. These conditions were only found to be available in two locations which are: Jordan Valley and California, United Stated of America.

Building on the aforementioned fact, the main competitor countries for the Mejhoul dates production were found to be Israel, Palestine, the United States of America, South Africa and

7 ITC calculations based on UN COMTRADE statistics.

Namibia. The main competitors are more thoroughly analysed in the following section, the exported quantities of dates from these competitors in the period of five years (from 2014 to 2018) was studied to provide a better understanding of the export trends.

3.5.1. Israel

Three out of every four Mejhoul dates consumed in the world last year were grown. It annually produces between 65 percent and 75 percent of all Mejhoul dates exported globally, and dates have become a true bonanza for the agriculture sector there. It alone produces approximately 40 000 tonnes of dates annually, a 70 percent increase over the last decade, and the sector is on the rise. Table 3 shows the export volume of fresh or dried fruit in 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018.

Table 3: Export Volume Tonnes of fresh or dried dates from Israel.

Product: 080410 Fresh or dried dates exported	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
World	65 123	44 933	66 965	53 041	41 597

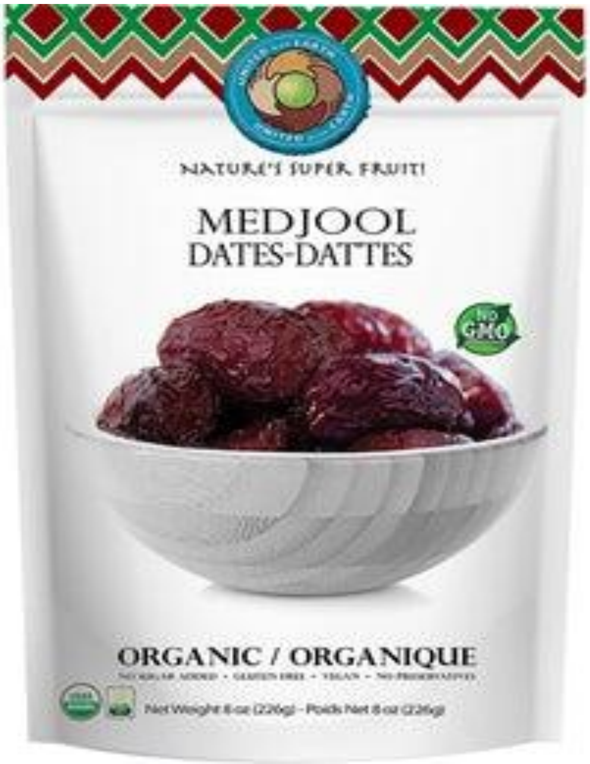
From the data in Table 3, it can be observed that the country is considered one of the main competitors in the exported quantities, however it is noted that the exported quantities in the studied period decreased with 36 percent, to understand this fact a further study was conducted, Table 4 shows the value of imports of Mejhoul dates and the export value for fresh or dried fruit.

Table 4: Export value (thousands USD) of fresh or dried dates from Israel.

Product: 080410 Fresh or dried dates exported	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
World	150 624	138 724	141 535	181 231	160 726

From the data in Table 4, we can see that the value of exports increased meanwhile the volume decreased this can be justified by the difference in unit price, it is focusing more on producing higher quality products this is reflected due to the demand of clients' wishes (large soft fruit with a moisture content of about 20 to 26 percent), Mejhoul is a soft and delicate fruit with a thin skin, requiring careful treatment.

The exports annually over USD 150 million to European Union countries. European Union imports a gradually increasing amount of dates, reaching 118 thousand tonnes or EUR 273 million in 2015. France, UK and Germany are the main import markets for dates. An attractive product in terms of export performance to the European Union are dates, both fresh and dried dates are mainly exported to the UK, France and Germany. Companies sell their products mainly as B2B packages and they are more focused on the organic dates.



https://www.sadaf.com/products/organic-medjool-date-56-6862

Figure 9 shows the main importing markets. From this figure, we can recognize that the majority of the production is sold in the European Union (UK, Netherlands, Spain and Turkey) and Russian Federation.

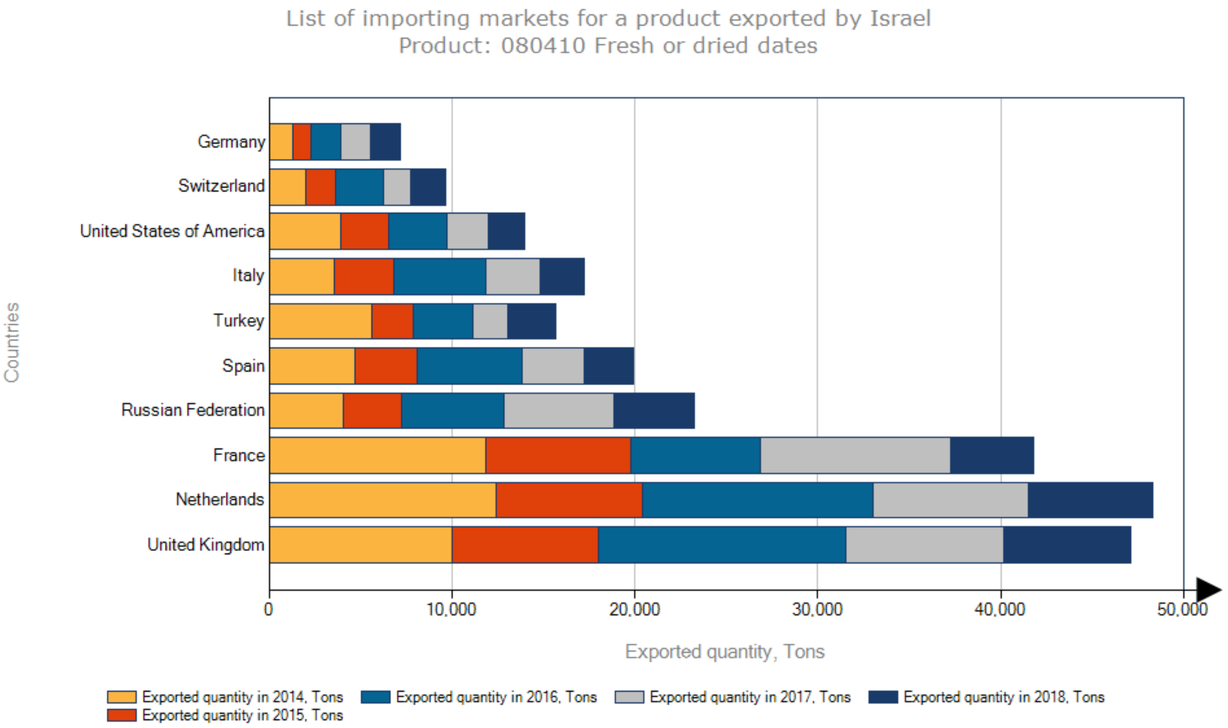


Figure 8: Importing markets for a fresh or dried date's product exported by Israel

3.5.2. Palestine

Palestine exportation accounts for about 70-80 percent of their product and their main markets are located in 22 countries around the world. They export to North America, European Union countries such as Italy, Sweden, France, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Australia, India and South East Asia, and the Middle East.

Palestine's companies export their class a date boxes in a variety of weights and sizes, ranging from boxes of 250 grams to boxes of 5 kilos, and they also do private label for many big costumers.

Table 5 : Export Volume (Tonnes) of fresh or dried dates from Palestine.
https://www.amazon.com/Palm-Garden- PALESTINE-Medjool-dates/dp/B085CMWGG3

Product: 080410 fresh or dried dates exported by Palestine	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
World	1 591	2 873	4 026	3 822	7 095

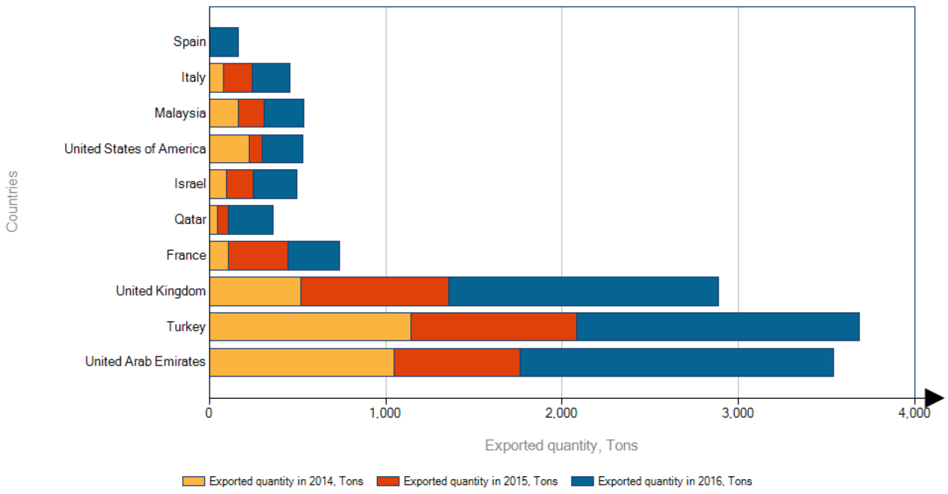


Figure 9 list of importing markets for a fresh or dried dates product exported by Palestine

By analysing the data in Table 5, several facts could be highlighted. The production of the dates increased with 140 percent in five years (from 2012 till 2016), this can be explained with the fact that the Palestinian Mejhoul date industry is relatively new compared to other major date producers, the palm trees that supply the date industry in Palestine are six to seven years old on average, this high rate of increase is justified in the first years but in current period the product yield sees approximately 20 percent growth, this means that while 2018 the harvest yielded around 9 500 tonnes of dates, in 2019 the country harvest around 12 000 tonnes. These growth projections should hold true for at least the next five year[8]. Figure 10 illustrates that the majority of the Palestinian production is exported to the United Arab Emirates, Turkey and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

8 www.freshplaza.com

3.5.3. United States of America

Fresh dates in the United State of America are commonly sold locally through farm stands, farmers' markets, specialty grocery stores, and Middle Eastern markets. They can also be purchased online.

To further add value, dates are often processed. They can be processed by completely drying them, or they can be made into products such as baked goods (bars, cookies, etc.), concentrate, date pieces, paste, pitted dates, syrup, and more. These products and by-products could be listed as follows:

- Pitted pressed dates.
- Date paste.
- Date syrup (also called dibs or rub).
- Date products resulting from intensive processing.

https://datules.lt/en/product/dattelpaste-16-x-1-kg/

https://www.amazon.com/Dvash-Syrup-Squeeze-Bottle-Non-GMO/dp/B07JHCV1CN

Table 6 shows the export value for fresh or dried fruit from the United State of America.

Table 6: export volume for fresh or dried fruit from the United State of America.

Product: 080410 Fresh or dried dates exported by United States of America	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
World	8 492	8 503	8 868	10 013	14 792

Table 6 demonstrates that the percentage of increase in the export volume from the United States increased in the period of five years (from 2015 to 2019) with 74 percent.

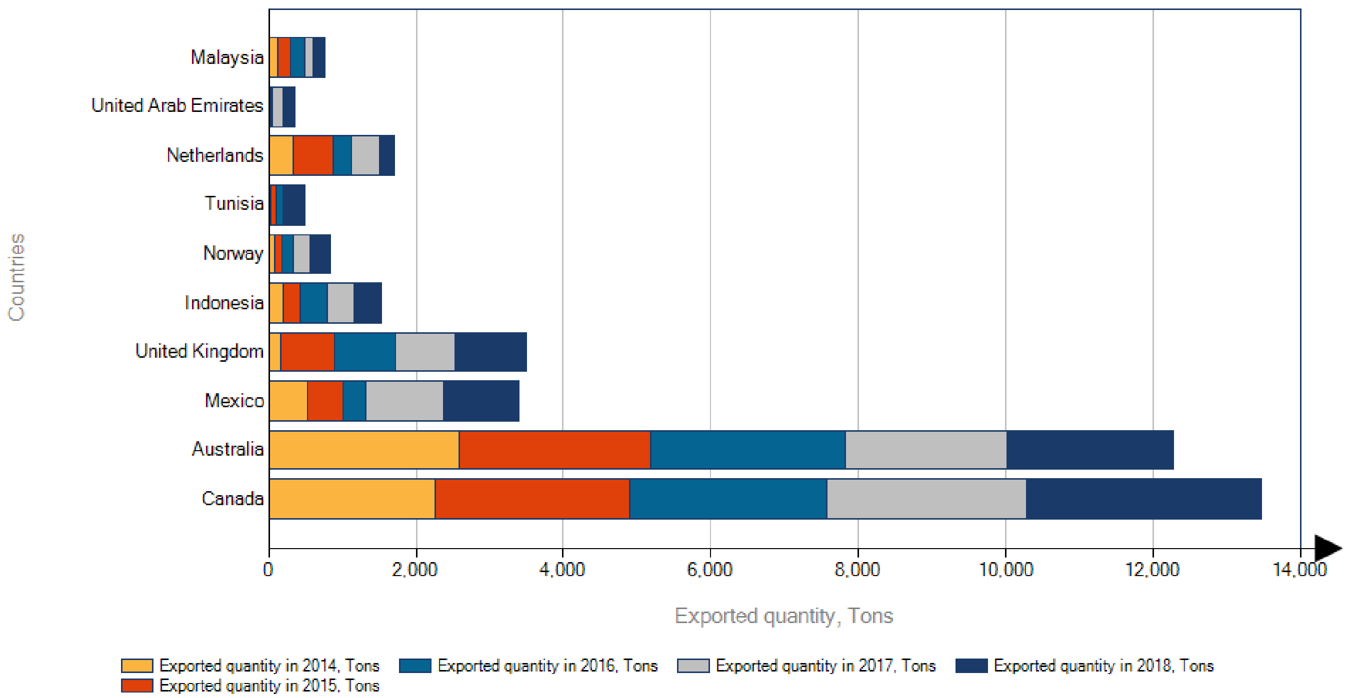


Figure 10: Importing markets for a fresh or dried date's product exported by United States of America

Figure 11 shows the main market for the dates which are exported from United State of America, from this figure we can recognize that the majority of the production is sold in Canada and Australia.

3.5.4. Comparison of Jordan's date's sector to its competitors

Currently in Jordan, the cultivated area of the two varieties of "Mejhoul" and "Al-Barhi" in Jordan is estimated at 35 000 dunams distributed along the Jordan Valley and up to Aqaba in the far south of Jordan. The number of trees is estimated to be approximately 500 000 palm trees, 90 percent of them are "Mejhoul".

After analysing Jordan's competitors in Mejhoul dates production, the current situation of Jordan's export of dates will be studied to understand the position of Jordan against the main competitors. The main importing markets of dates from Jordan in 2017 and 2018 were studied. Figure 12 shows the quantities in tonnes imported by the main importing countries from Jordan. From this, it is recognized that the majority of the production is exported to United Arab Emirates, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia. From Figure 12, it is concluded that the growth rate of the Jordanian market share in these countries is variant, in some countries such as Qatar, Egypt and France, the imported quantities increased between 2017 and 2018, other countries such as United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait the imported quantities decreased between 2017 and 2018. This gives a good indication that Jordanian producers need to develop a better product offering by focusing on the unique selling propositions and work on marketing their products to increase their market share.

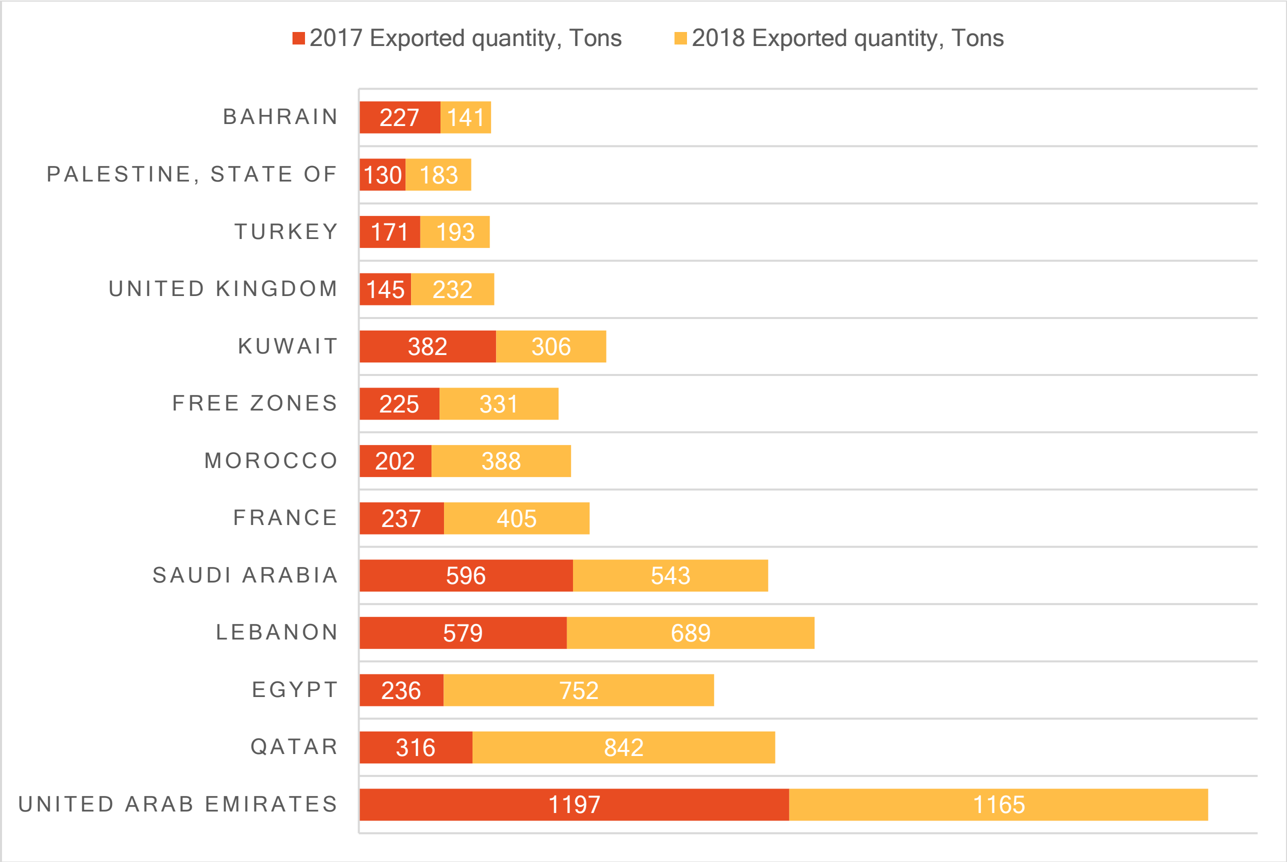


Figure 11 list of importing markets for a fresh or dried dates product exported by Jordan

Figure 13 shows the exported quantities (tonnes) in the world from the three competitors and Jordan in 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018.

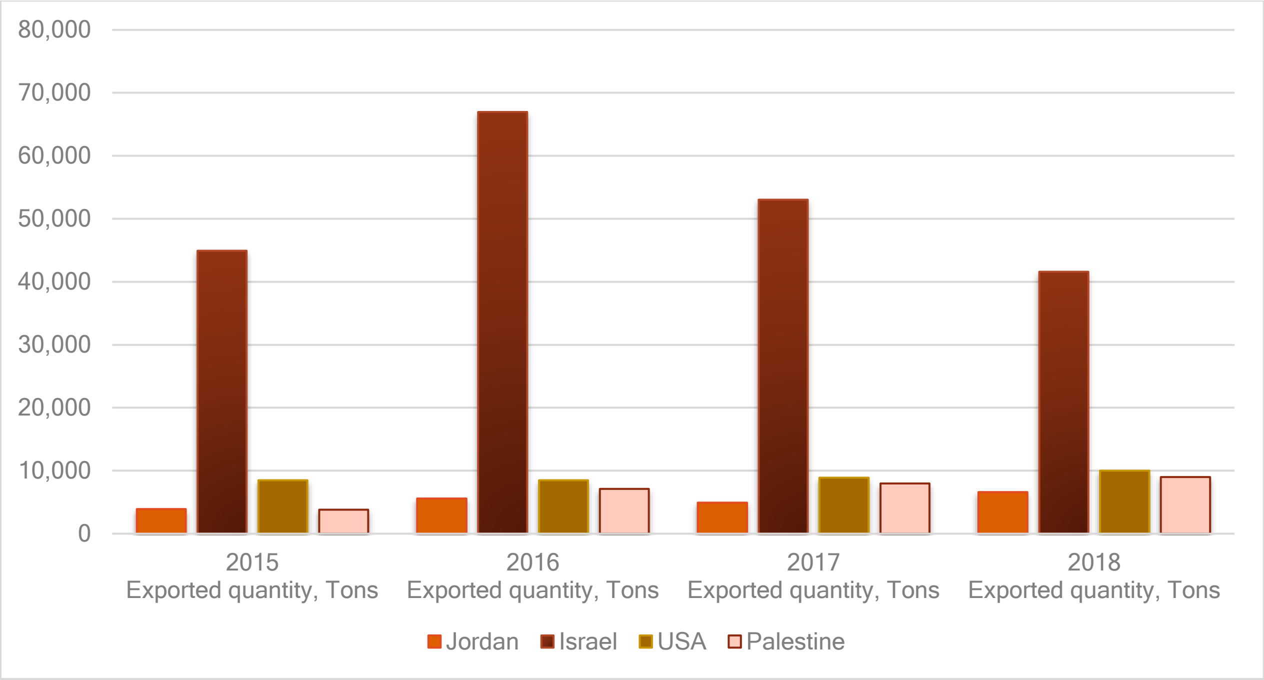


Figure 12 Product: 080410 Fresh or dried dates exported by competitors to the world

It is noticed in Figure 13 that there is a fierce competition in the trading of dates in the world. Therefore; it is concluded that Jordanian producers need to develop a better product offering by focusing on the unique selling propositions and work on marketing their products to increase their market share.

3.6. Jordan dates' competitive advantage - Unique Selling Propositions (USP)

Unique selling proposition is the differentiating characteristic of a product from its competitors, or simply it can be said to be "what you have that competitors don't." Creating a good first impression and demonstrating for the USP will help to focus on having a quality product, also identifying the USP will support in educating customers on purchases, it is considered crucial to capture the customer's interest at the first moment they land on the websites view or any other marketing asset.

Jordanian dates are considered unique in several selling proposition, which can be highlighted as follows:

Jordan is producing Mejhoul dates which is king of dates, due to their global availability, Mejhoul date is considered one of most expensive type of dates. The biggest difference between Mejhoul dates and "regular" dates is that they come from different cultivars of the same plant. Mejhoul dates are picked early in their ripening season, when they are quite soft, this is why they are included in the "soft" category of dates, along with other cultivars, such as

Barhi and Halawy. [9]The other common form of dates, here referred to as “regular”, are Deglet Noor dates, which fall in the semi-dry category of dates.

In terms of nutrition, Mejhoul dates are almost identical to Deglet Noor dates, although the latter tend to have more dietary fibre and less beta-carotene, as well as more lutein, fat, and protein. The largest difference is their consistency; Mejhoul dates are squishy and easier to eat, while Deglet Noor’s often have to be soaked in water before they are edible. The Jordanian dates subsector is considered one of the main subsectors in Jordan which has a good potential to grow and contribute in enhancing the country’s economy. This subsector has many competitive edges which distinguish it from other dates sectors in the international countries, the main competitive edges can be highlighted as following:

- The labour cost in Jordan is considered low in comparison with the above mentioned competitors, this helps in utilizing manual labour in the different stages in the production process and most important in the quality check in the grading and sorting, which gives more accuracy and higher quality rather than the automated system.

- Jordanian companies are flexible in providing different design and sizes for the packages.
- Knowhow of Mejhoul production and experience of Jordanian farmer to produce high quality and demand oriented quality.

- The Unique climatic condition in the Jordan Valley such as long summer days, medium to high temperature, and mild winters without frost, appropriate humidity ratio of 40-50percent, is considered the most unique climate conditions for Mejhoul date production. These conditions help trees for optimum growth, flowering, and fruiting, which results in the producing a premium quality of produced Mejhoul dates with a very unique taste and texture.

- Geographical location of Jordan which positioned in the Middle East, a recognized geographical region of south-western Asia, Jordan is a connector for the Middle East, linking it to the Levant, GCC and North Africa via inland transportation routes. This location allows an easy access to different countries.

9 https://www.epicurious.com/

4. Segmentation and targeting

Segmentation, Targeting and Positioning (STP) is a common strategic approach in Modern Marketing to define strategic growth direction in marketing planning. It is one of the most applied marketing models in practice. Segmentation, targeting, and positioning together comprise a three-stage process. First determine which types of customers are in the market that has demand to our offering, second, we select which of the target segments are best off trying to serve and, finally, third implement segmentation by optimizing products/services for that target segments and communicating with competitive offering.

First Step: Market segmentation:

Market segmentation is the first step in determining whom the marketing should target. Segmentation helps to know which groups exist to identify which groups to target.

The primary objective of using market segmentation is to better understand consumers which allows to:

- Gain a competitive advantage.
- Break into a new market.
- Improve product development.
- Boost return on investment.
- Optimize customer experiences.
- Improve business focus.

Segmentation is essential for personalization which is essential today as consumers are constantly seeking new brands that offer personalized.

As illustrated in Figure 15, market segmentation creates subsets of a market based on demographics, needs, priorities, common interests, and other psychographic or behavioural criteria used to better understand the target audience. Traditional market segments are identified using these characteristics;

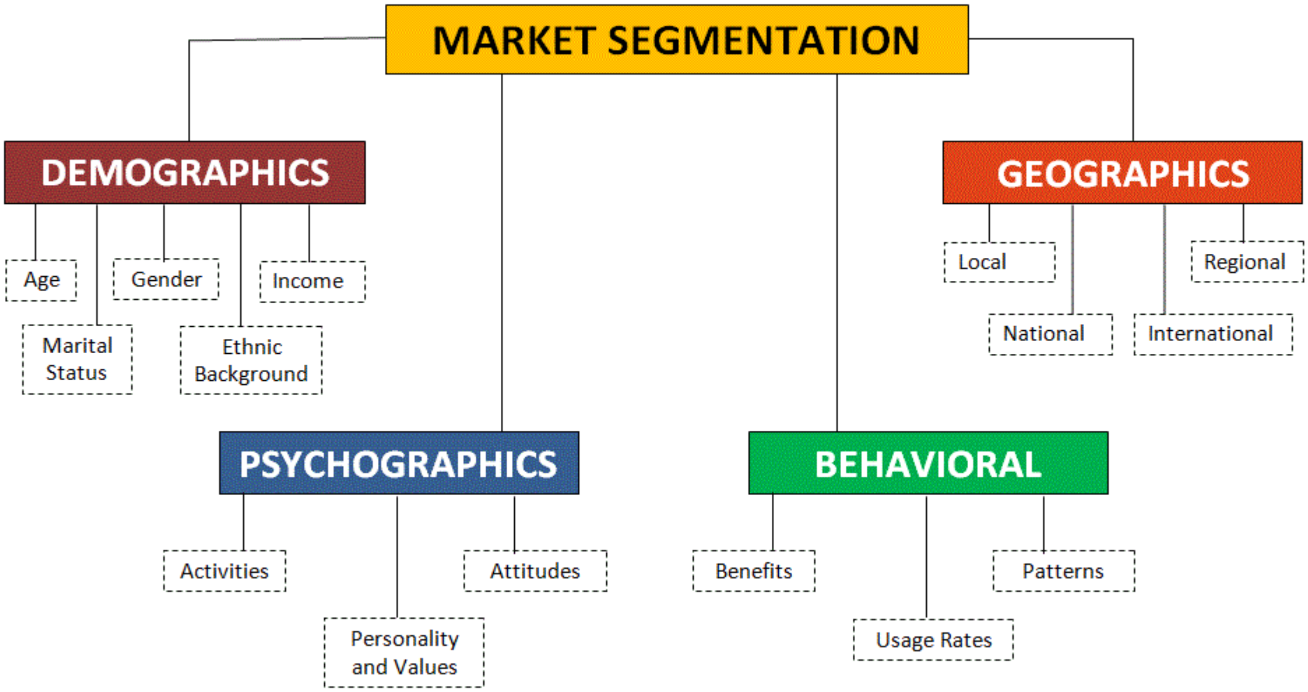


Figure 13 Market Segmentation basis

Demographic segmentation

Demographic segmentation sorts a market by demographic elements such as age, education, income, family size, race, gender, occupation, nationality, and more. Demographic segmentation is one of the simplest and most commonly used forms of segmentation because the products and services we buy, how we use those products, and how much we are willing to spend on them is most often based on demographic factors.

Behavioural segmentation

Behavioural segmentation divides markets by behaviours and decision-making patterns such as purchase, consumption, lifestyle, and usage. For instance, younger buyers may tend to purchase energy bars, while older consumer groups may lean towards dried dates. Segmenting markets based off purchase behaviours enables marketers to develop a more targeted approach.

Geographic segmentation

Geographic segmentation creates different target customer groups based on geographical boundaries. Because potential customers have needs, preferences, and interests that differ according to their geographies, understanding the climates and geographic regions of customer groups can help determine where to sell and advertise, as well as where to expand your business.

Psychographic segmentation

Psychographic segmentation takes into account the psychological aspects of consumer behaviour by dividing markets according to lifestyle, personality traits, values, opinions, and interests of consumers. Large markets like the fitness market use psychographic segmentation when they sort their customers into categories of people who care about healthy living and exercise.

Based on the market analysis performed we found that the main segmentation factors we should be focusing on are as follows:

Table 7 main segmentation factors in this study

Segmentation factor	Sub factor(s)
1- Demographics	a. Religion b. Income c. Age groups
2- Behavioural	Reasons of consumption
3- Geographic's	Regions

Each of the segmentation factors and sub factors will be explained in the following sections:

4.1. Demographic segmentation

Demographic segmentation occurs according to age, race, religion, gender, family size, occupation, generation, nationality, income, and education. Demographics can be segmented in to several markets to help an organization target its consumers more accurately. With this type of segmentation, an organization can categorize the needs of consumers. In studying the demographic segmentation two main factors were considered, which are important to understand the segment demand in the world, these factors are religious and income rate. Figure 16 illustrates the main demographic segmentation pillars.

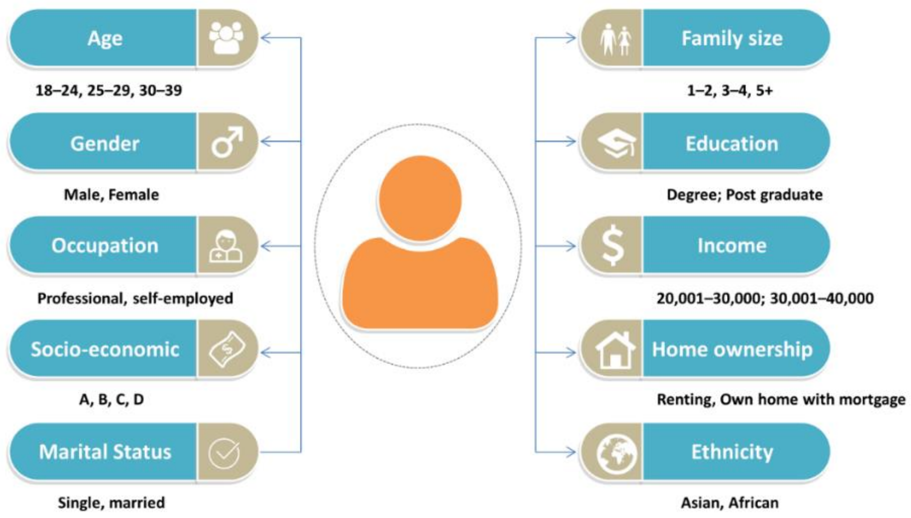


Figure 14: Demographic segmentation

4.1.1. Religion

As the second largest religious following, Muslims are people who believe in and live by the teachings of Islam. There are over two billion Muslims around the world. Table 8 shows the Muslim population by Country by population 2020.

Table 8 Muslim Population by Country by Population 2020[10]

#	REGION	ISLAMIC POPULATION	PERCENT OF WORLDWID MUSLIM POPULATION
1	Asia	954 874 283	51.87%
2	MENA	535 989 745	29.12%
3	Africa	293 262 270	15.93%
4	European Union	254 823 21	1.38%
5	Russian Federation	200 000 00	1.09%
6	East European Union	370 449 6	0.20%
7	United States of America	345 000 0	0.19%
8	Central and North America	216 586 5	0.12%
9	Canada	114 821 3	0.06%
10	Australia	650 000	0.04%
11	Others	158 94	0.00%
	Total	184 074 308 7	

From the market analysis and trade flow it can be concluded that the main importing countries of dates are countries with high percentage of Muslims population in relative to other countries

10 https://worldpopulationreview.com

in the world, since the date palm was mentioned more than any other fruit-bearing plant in the Qur'an—22 times—is a symbol often associated with Muslims, even as the religion has spread around the globe and it is part of Muslim upbringing.

According to the Pew Research Centre in 2010, there were 50 Muslim-majority countries, (see Annex 5). Around 62 percent of the world's Muslims live in the Asia-Pacific region (from Turkey to Indonesia), with over 1 billion adherents. The largest Muslim population in a country is in Indonesia, a nation home to 12.7 percent of the world's Muslims, followed by Pakistan (11.0 percent), and India (10.9 percent). About 20 percent of Muslims live in Arab countries. In the Middle East, the non-Arab countries of Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkey are the largest Muslim-majority countries; in Africa, Egypt and Nigeria have the most populous Muslim communities**.**

Islamic community in European Union[11]

Muslims are a relatively small minority in European Union, making up roughly 5percent of the population (around 26 Million in 2016). (Consumption: 6 kg per person per year) However, in some countries, such as France and Sweden, the Muslims' share of the population is higher. In addition, in the coming decades, the Muslim share of the continent's population is expected to grow – and could more than double, according to Pew Research Centre projections.

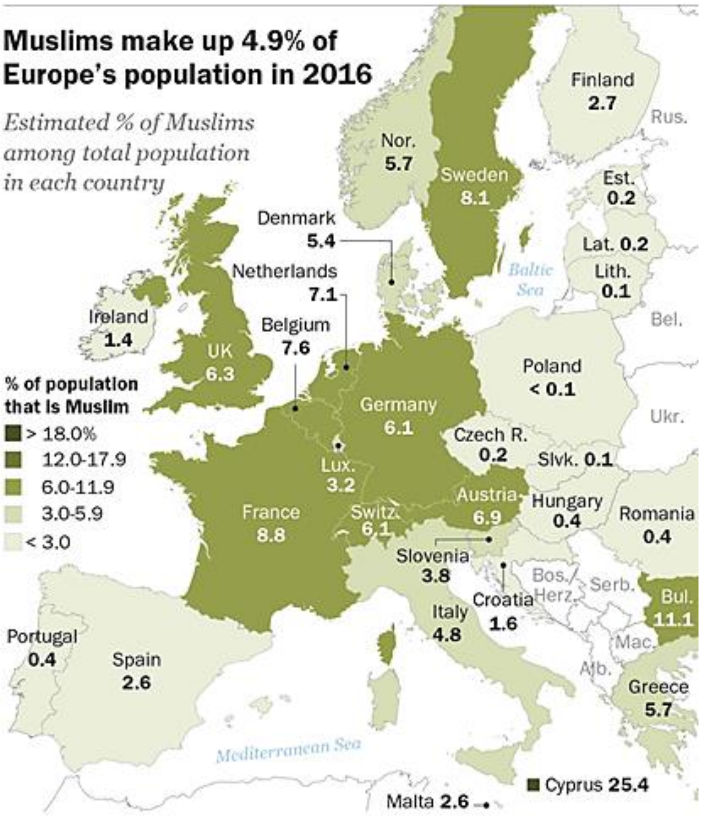


Figure 15 Islamic community in European Union

As shown in Figure 17, Global ethnic foods market is projected to grow at a (Compound Annual Growth Rate) CAGR of 11.8percent during the forecast period. With the growing immigration rates, due to employment opportunities, higher education, and tourism, the demand for ethnic food has been increasing.

The ethnic food manufacturers are focusing on the convenience factor, quality of food, cuisine variants, and packaging formats of the products. Therefore, with the increasing consumption of nutritious food and rising capital investment in producing healthy, ethnic-based food, the market studied is expected to gain traction over the forecast period. The market studied continues to diversify, as

[11] https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/11/29/5-facts-about-the-muslim-population-in-European Union/

consumers continue to experiment with new global cuisines. Some of the niche ethnic food categories include the Muslims from African and Indonesian cuisines that have been growing over the recent past.

These demographic shifts have already led to political and social upheavals in many European Union countries, especially in the wake of the recent arrival of millions of asylum seekers, many of whom are Muslims. In recent national elections in France and Germany, for instance, immigration — and particularly Muslim immigration — were top issues.

4.1.2. Income rate

Income targeting measure the buying power of each segment. Knowing the income range of the consumers, as indicated in Figure 18, will allow finding data to support how people spend money on both the higher and lower end of the spectrum. Many companies use this data to sell different types/classes of the same product, based on income level.

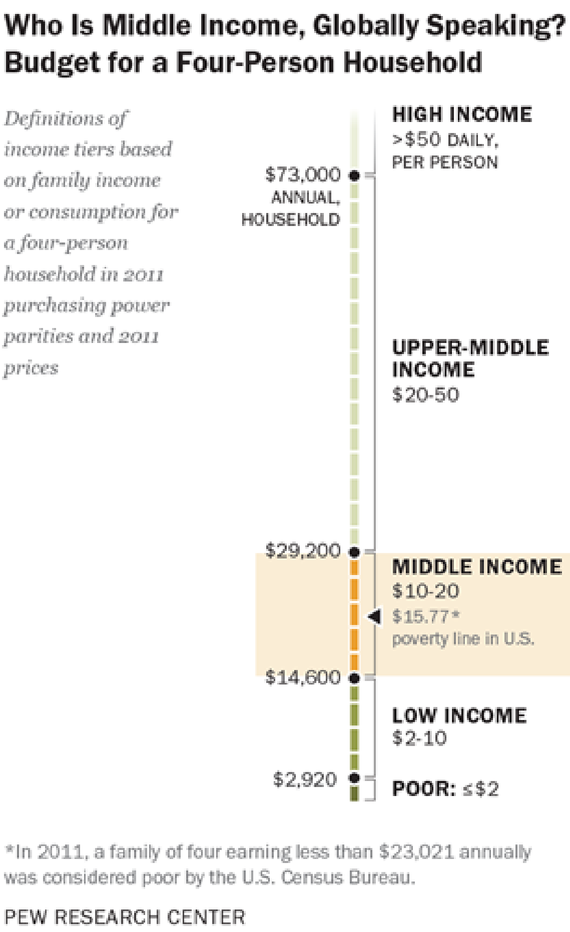


Figure 16 definition of income rage

The World Bank classifies economies for analytical purposes into four income groups: low, lower-middle, upper-middle, and high income. For this purpose, it uses gross national income (GNI) per capita data in USD, converted from local currency using the World Bank Atlas method, which is applied to smooth exchange rate fluctuations.

Estimates of GNI are obtained from economists in World Bank country units who rely primarily on official data published by the countries; the size of the population is estimated by World Bank demographers from a variety of sources, including the UN's biennial World Population Prospects.

For instance, as mentioned earlier, dates have many classes based on size, taste and limited production, each class has its own price, which put Mejhoul on the top of these classes.
Mejhoul price relatively higher than other types of dates, according to Abu Dhabi Food Control Authority (ADFCA)[12], shape, size and taste determine the quality and price of dates. High demand for some varieties with limited availability in the market, low production of some

[12] https://gulfnews.com/uae

varieties, methods and mechanisms used in post-harvest operations such as drying and packaging etc., also play a role in price.

Mejhoul date palm, needs special climate to grow. The specificity of the areas for planting leads to smaller crops or limited production, which leads to high market price in relative to the regular types of dates.

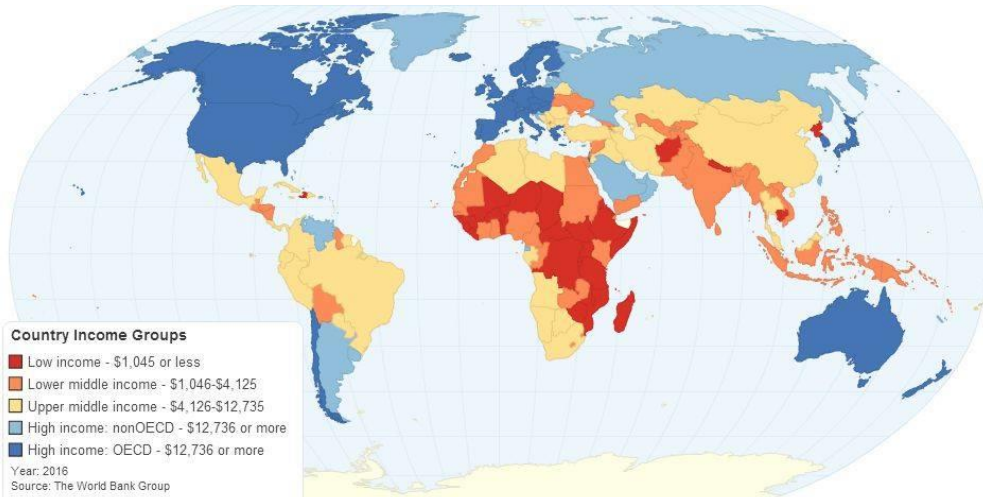


Figure 17 country income groups 2018[13]

Accordingly, another type of segment is to look for the countries with a middle to high income rate average. Figure 19 shows the income groups in the world.

For example, class 1 Mejhoul Date 500 g package exported from Jordan, is displayed in Berlin – Germany inside one of the street markets with a price of 6.99 European Union (14 European Union a kilogram – USD 15.36) which considered high in relative to other type of dates displayed in Berlin with an example shown in Figure 20.

In the GCC, and according to Abu Dhabi Farmers Service Centre (ADFSC)[14], premium Mejhoul is the most expensive date in United Arab Emirates with Dh 120 a kilogram (USD 32.6).

Figure 18 Jordan Mejhoul dates - Street market Germany 2020

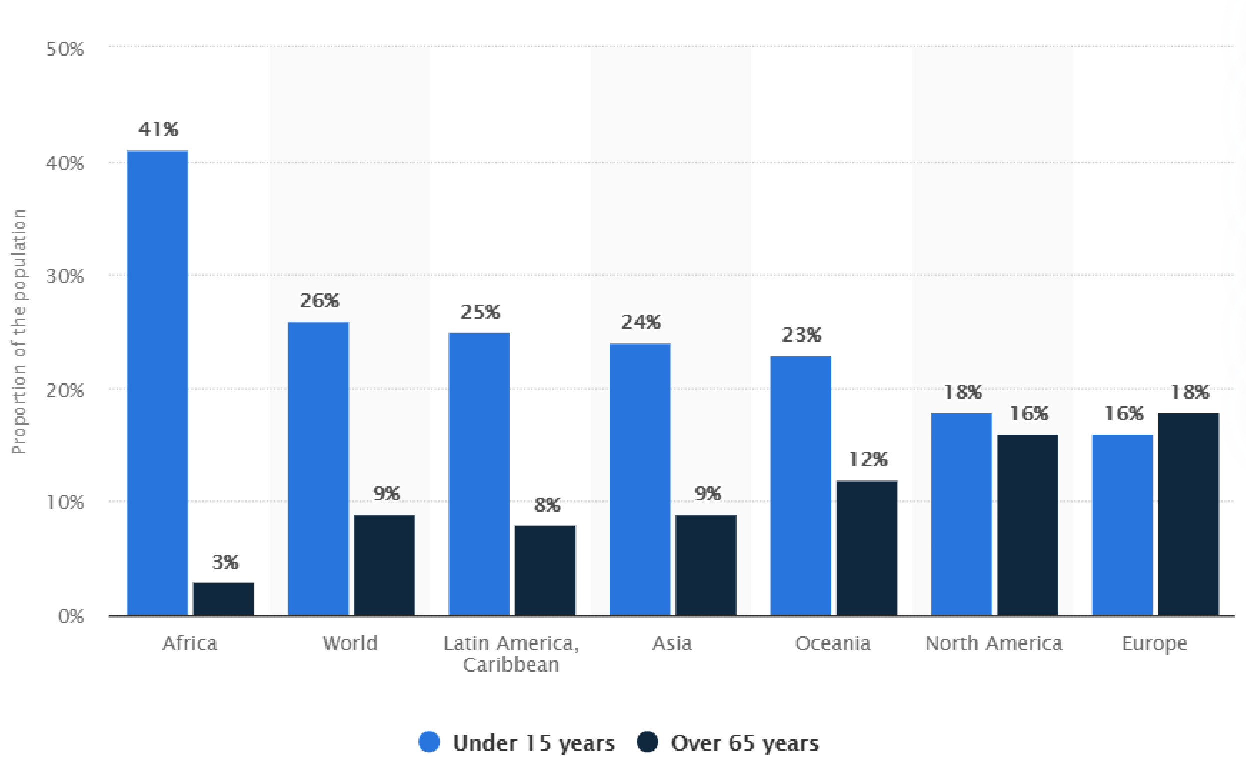
[13] Worldbank.org

[14] https://gulfnews.com/uae

4.1.1. Age groups

This statistic[15] shows the proportion of selected age groups of the world population in 2019, by region. Globally, about 26 percent of the world is under 15 years of age and some nine percent is over 65 years of age as of mid-2019, as Figure 21 indicates.

In European Union, the gap is much closer, with 16 percent of the population being under 15 years old and 18 percent being over 65 years of age. Many regions have experienced vastly decreased population growth rates with the exception of a few countries like those in the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa. However, about 50 percent of the world's population lives in countries with low fertility, where women have less than 2.1 children. Countries in European



Union, like Latvia and Lithuania have experienced a population decline of 1.08 percent in 2017. In European Union, the majority of the population was previously working-aged adults with few dependents, but this trend is expected to reverse soon and it is predicted that by 2050, the older population will outnumber the young in many developed countries.

Figure 19 Proportion of selected age groups of world population in 2019, by region

Based on the above segmentation, four segments have been reached in order to focus on, during this stage as shown in Figure 22.

[15] https://www.statista.com/statistics/265759/world-population-by-age-and-region/

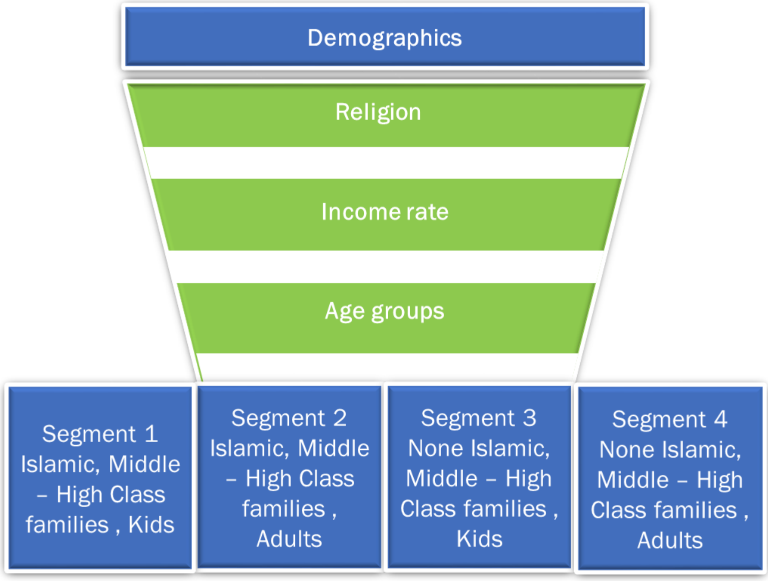


Figure 20 Segments analysis results based on Demographics (Religion, Income, and Age)

4.2. Behavioural segmentation

Behavioural segmentation divides customers into groups based on the way they respond to, use or know a product. Behavioural segments can group consumers in terms of occasions, benefits, user status, usage rate, and loyalty status. Occasions such as the holy month of Ramadan has been highlighted with its beneficial impact. User rate, usage rate and loyalty status are not related as anyone have got access to this fruit.

Increasing demand for healthy ingredients and growing demand healthy snacks, desserts and bakery are the major factors expected to drive the target market. In addition, increasing number of manufacturers who are choosing date-based syrups and purees as one of the key ingredients in their products and also dried dates for enhancing nutritional content of confectionery and bakery products are some of the other factors expected to drive demand of the date palm. Furthermore, growing fitness trend and increasing standards for health is among the other factor expected to drive growth of the target market.

Table 9: Consumption of dried fruits in Germany in 2016[16]

Type	Total, mln tonnes	Per capita, kg/year
Dates	11 060	0.90 kg
Dried apricots	5 967	0.15 kg
Dried figs	12 920	0.63 kg
Dried grapes	66 096	1.08 kg
Prunes	9 776	0.48 kg

16 International Nut & Dried Fruit Council (2017). Nuts and Dried Fruits. Statistical Yearbook 2017/2018. Available at: https://www.nutfruit.org/files/tech/1524481168_INC_Statistical_Yearbook_2017-2018.pdf

In Table 9, it can be seen that dates are one of the most commonly consumed dried fruits in Germany along with the dried grapes with estimated per capita consumption of 0.9 kg /year.

Figure 23 shows consumer behaviour and Experience in the European Union. Dates are a popular food item, not just in the Muslim countries but all over the world. They have amazing nutritional properties which considered also as a functional and smart food and just a few dates can keep the body energized for hours; one of the many reasons people buy them. Their popularity reaches its peak in Ramadan where Muslims worldwide buy kilos worth of dates for their homes. It is the preferred food item of choice to break the fast.

What are consumers asking for?	The response we expect to see in stores... Assortment	Experience
Faster, easier, healthier	/ Larger convenience range / New easier-to-cook varieties / More ready prepared (cut, peeled, etc.) / Fortified vegetables / Re-discovery of Frozen	/ Modular convenience, 'putting your meal together' / Suggestions about 'what to eat' / Quick and easy shopping / More information on health / Encouragements to live a healthier life
Emotional connection	/ Better tasting varieties / Brands that convey trust in their superior quality	/ 'Theatrical' presentations / Increased interaction: advice, food tastings, cooking classes, etc. / More in-store gastronomy and production
Fruit and veg with a good conscience	/ More local products / More seasonal products / Environmentally friendly packaging	/ Greater transparency in the supply chain / Increased centrality of local and seasonal fruit and vegetables / More information on sustainability of products and efforts to achieve this

Figure 21 – Consumer behaviour and Experience in the European Union

Table 10 shows the consumption rate per kg per capita for the following countries:

Table 10 average dates consumption Kg/ year per capita 2019 [17]

Country	Average dates consumption Kg/ year per Capita 2019	Region
Oman	60	Arabic - OIC
Iraq	45	Arabic - OIC
Saudi Arabia	34.8	Arabic - OIC
United Arab Emirates	17.7	Arabic - OIC
Libya	15.5	Arabic - OIC
Algeria	14.6	Arabic - OIC
Egypt	13.8	Arabic - OIC
Morocco	12	Arabic - OIC
Sudan	8.9	Arabic - OIC
Tunisia	5.5	Arabic - OIC
Yemen	2.5	Arabic - OIC
Jordan	1.5 - 2	Arabic - OIC
Palestine	0.7	Arabic - OIC
Russian Federation	0.1	European Union
UK	0.5	European Union
Germany	0.9	European Union
Malta	0.4	European Union
France	0.2	European Union
United States of America	0.3 - 1	America
Islamic Republic of Iran	9.8	OIC
Pakistan	3.6	OIC
Far East countries	0.5 – 1	Far East

By analysing Table 10, it is clearly noticed that Arabic countries in the MENA region have the highest average rate of dates' consumption per Kg/year per capita.

Based on the behavioural segmentation, 4 segments have been reached in order to focus on during this stage as shown in Figure 24.

17 Khalifa international award for date palm and agriculture innovation – book of 2019

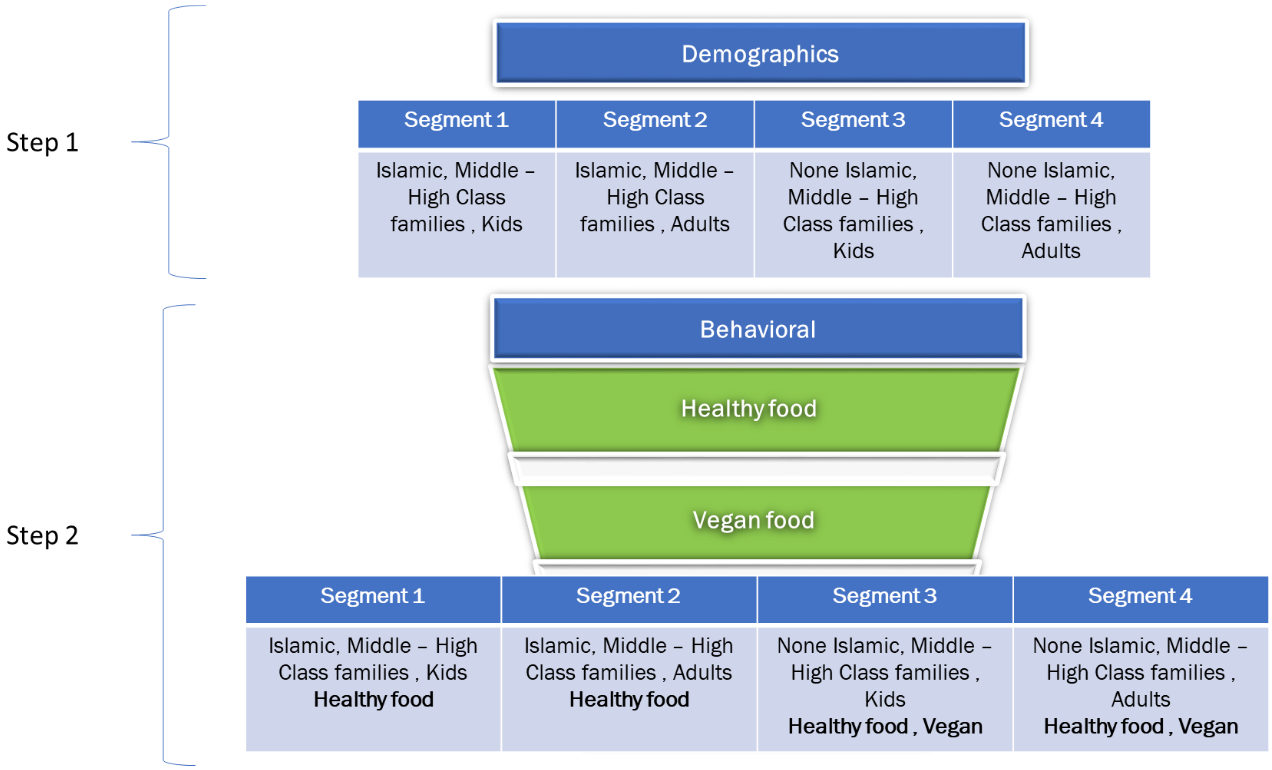


Figure 22 Segments analysis results based on behavioural (Healthy food and Vegan Food)

Based on the behavioural segmentation, and the market trend analysis, healthy food and vegan food were added to the segments which reached out of the demographic segmentation.

4.3. Geographic segmentation

Geographic segmentation involves a business dividing its market on the basis of geography. There are several ways that a market can be geographically segmented. One can divide the market by geographical areas, such as by city, country, state or international region.

From the global market analysis, (see annexes 1,2,3 and below summery of Table 11), it is concluded that 90 percent of the world's date's imports are by the countries with the highest Islamic population, OIC Organization of the Islamic Cooperation, India and the European Union, the market shares of the world of HS Code 080410 Fresh or dried dates are further illustrated, the OIC share is 50 percent of the world's imports of dates and India market share is 29 percent the European Union market share is 11 percent of the world's import of dates. Other countries such as United States of America, Canada and the remaining countries in the world are considered as minor importers with around 10 percent of the global market share.

Table 11 market shares of the world of HS Code 080410 Fresh or dried dates[18]

Importers	2018 – tonnes (imported 2018)	2018 global Market share in Value %
Total world import	142 373 6	100%
Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Aggregation	705 452	50%
India	414 619	29%
European Union (European Union 28) Aggregation	156 594	11%
Indonesia	399 09	3.7%
Russian Federation	192 97	1.6%
Others	878 65	4.7%

In Arabic and Islamic Cooperation (OIC), most of the population are muslims, with a total of 1.8 billion muslims in the OIC members[19], this can explain the high consumption of dates in these countries. Table 12 shows that 50 percent of the dates import all over the world is from these countries in total of 705 452 00 tonnes in 2018 when the world total imported quantities in the same year was 1 423 763 tonnes.

United Arab Emirates is considered the main importer with a quantity of 150 098 tonnes, followed by Morocco, Yemen, Indonesia, Turkey and Afghanistan.

Table 12: 080410 Fresh or dried dates imported Qty`0152222222222222222222222222+++++++++++ by the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC)[20]

Importers	2016 Imported quantity, Tonnes	2017 Imported quantity, Tonnes	2018 Imported quantity, Tonnes
World	1 184 591	1 241 095	1 423 736
Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Aggregation	581 079	562 342	705 452

For further details - Annex 4 shows detailed palm dates imports breakdown for each country from the OIC.

[18] www.trademap.com
[19] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_the_member_states_of_the_Organisation_of_Islamic_Cooperation
[20] www.trademape.org

MENA

Most of the MENA countries are part of the OIC, the demographics of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region show a highly populated. As of 2018, the population was nearly 578 million. Islam is the largest religion in the MENA region with a total of 536 million (92 percent).[21]

Table 13 shows the highest 10 countries in the MENA region that import dates in 2018.

Table 13 the highest 10 countries in the MENA region that import dates in 2018

Importers	2018 Imported quantity, Tonnes
United Arab Emirates	150 098
Morocco	97 436
Yemen	44 005
Turkey	39 310
Iraq	21 926
Kuwait	18 730
Oman	17 581
Syrian Arab Republic	12 813
Lebanon	10 596
Qatar	9 962

Indonesia

Indonesia has emerged as the seventh top importer of dried dates in 2018 with a total imported USD 63 760 thousand[22] of dates. Figure 25 shows the main exporters with total imported quantities 2018.

[21] www.wikipidia.com
[22] www.trademap.org

Indonesia is the fourth most populous country on earth after China, India, and the United States, Indonesia has a population estimated at 273 52 million in 2020. In Jakarta (Jakarta Province) lives 10 135 million, Jakarta is not just the most populous city in Indonesia; it is also the most populous in Southeast Asia and the fourteenth most populated city on earth. The official metropolitan area, known as Jabodetabek, is the third largest in the world, and the metropolis's suburbs extend even further. The entire area has a population of over 30 million, which makes it one of the largest conurbations on earth. It's also one of the fastest-growing cities on earth, growing faster than Beijing and Bangkok, with a population density in the city proper of 15 342[23] people per square kilometre (39 740/square mile).

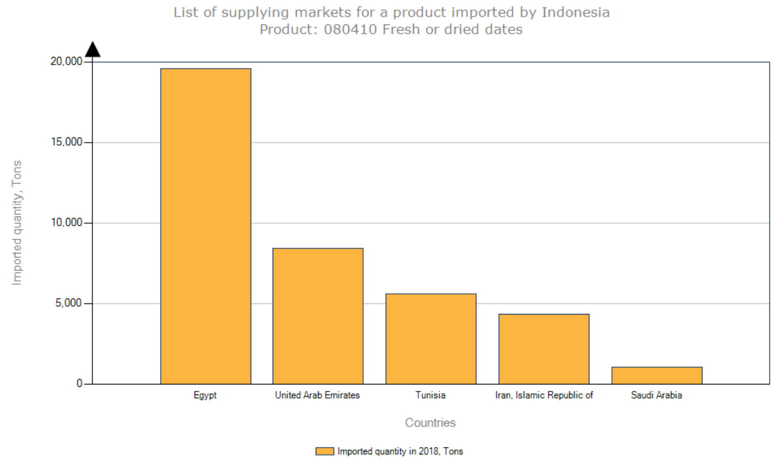


Figure 23 Dates imported quantities in Indonesia in 2018

Indonesia is also the world's most populous Muslim-majority country, as just over 87 percent of Indonesians declared Muslim on the 2010 census, which explains the high demand of dates in this country.

India

India has emerged as the major importer of dried dates in 2018 with a total imported 414 619 tonnes[24] of dates, Pakistan, Iraq and Islamic Republic of Iran are the major exporters for India. Figure 26 shows the share in value in India's dates imports in 2018.[25]

Figure 24 share in Value in India Dates import 2018

Islam is the second-largest religion in India and Islamic Community of India is the official representative community of India, with 14.9 percent of the country's population or approx. 195 million people identifying as adherents of Islam (2018 census) [26]. It makes India the country with the largest

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23 https://worldpopulationreview.com/

24 www.trademap.org

25 www.trademap.org

26 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_in_India

Muslim population outside Muslim-majority countries, which explains the high demand of dates in this country.

European Union

The European Union market offers good opportunities for date's producers. The share of ethnic consumers (related to immigrants/refugees) is increasing. As the world is increasingly turning into a global village, culinary traditions from other continents tend to be more widely accepted by European Union consumers, this development is also stimulated by the steady population growth of ethnic minority groups, which have significantly increased their purchasing power over recent years. Dates, for example, can nowadays be found in almost every European Union supermarket as a dried fruit package. Figure 27 illustrates the ethnic food markets.

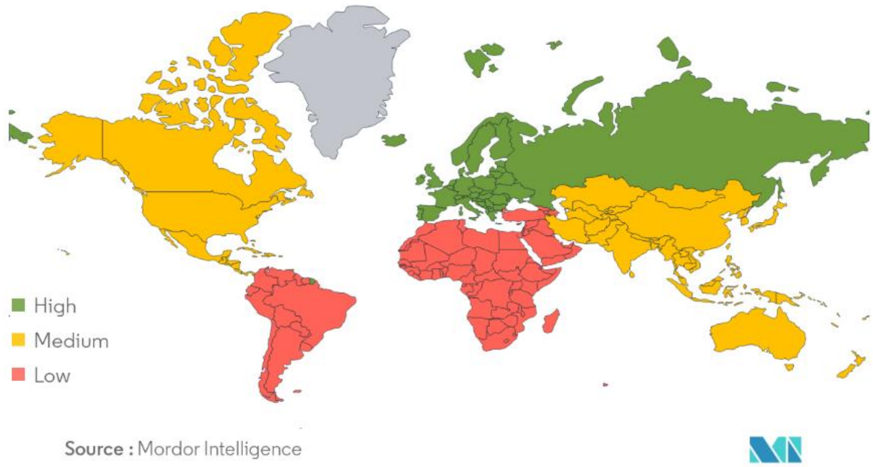

Figure 25the ethnic food markets.

The increasing demand of dates in the European Union can be shown through the influx of Muslims (Ethnic group) into the European Union which results in the high consumption of dates. Not only directly, but also the rest of the European Union population becomes increasingly aware of dates and the various types. Table 4, shows a break down for dates import quanities – which calculated 156 594 tonnes in 2018 by the European Union countries, France is leading the market share in the European Union with a total of 42 134 tonnes (39 percent) .

Further details can be found in annex 4 - dates import by European Union countries – 2018.

Russian Federation

The Muslim community in Russian Federation continues to grow, expected to reach 25 million in 2021. A 2017 study estimated that 20 million Muslims were living in the Russian Federation, about 1.09 percent of the total Russian population.[27] The growth in Muslim population in Russian Federation is because of two main factors: the high birth rate among Muslim families, and through the arrival of people from Central Asia. In 2018, the total imported dates were 19 297 tonnes[28].

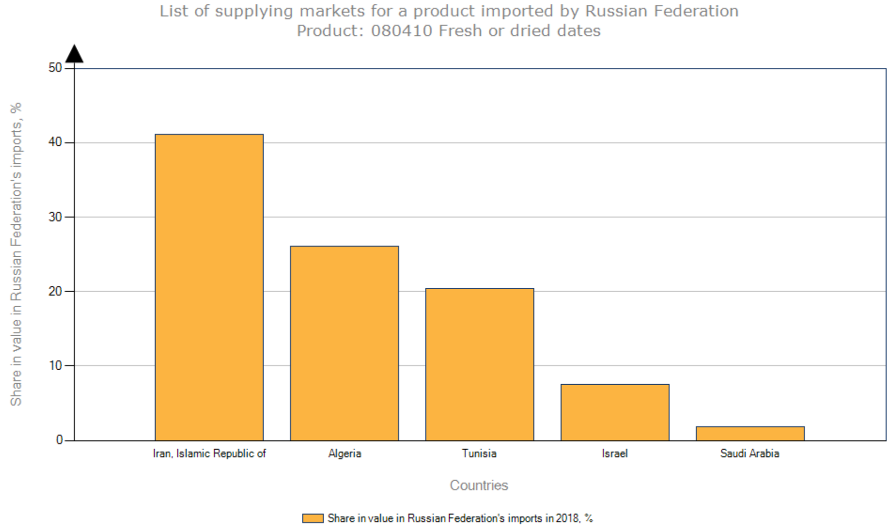

Figure 26 Share in value In Russian Federation imports 2018

Below figure 28 shows the top five countries with the highest market share in the Russian Federation.

According to the previous analysis, 12 segments have been identified based on the demographics, behavioural and geographical segmentation steps, as shown in Figure 29.

27 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_in_the_United_States

28 www.trademap.org

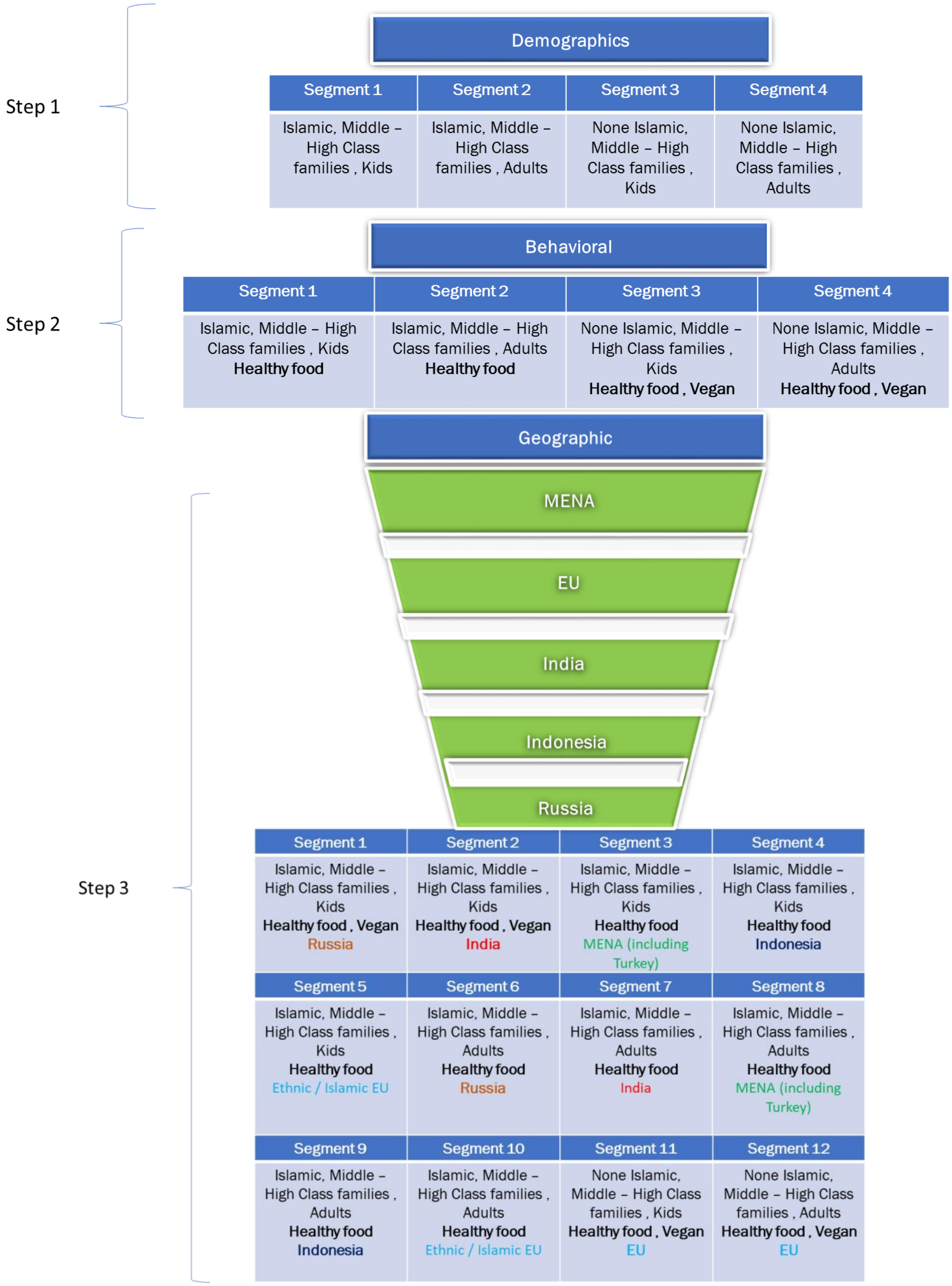

Figure 27 segmentation steps and final reached segments

Targeting is the next step after segmentation analysis that breaks a large market into smaller segments to concentrate on a specific group of customers within that audience. It defines a segment of customers based on their unique characteristics and focuses solely on serving them instead of trying to reach an entire market. It impacts advertising, as well as customer experience, branding, and business operations.

For the Jordanian Date firms, it is better to use the concentrated targeting approach whereby a product is developed and marketed for a very well defined and specific segments of the consumer population. Concentrated targeting is particularly effective for small companies/countries with limited resources because it enables it to achieve a strong market position in the specific market segment it serves without mass production, mass distribution, or mass advertising.

The concentrated targeting approach aims at a narrow, specific consumer group through one specialized marketing plan catering to the needs of that segment, which gives any firm the ability to do a better job than competitors in several areas.

4.1. Segments size estimation

Before assessing the market and segment attractiveness, segment size calculation has to be defined since it is considered as a key factor to determine attractiveness.

Based on the demand and segmentation analysis, 12 segments were defined based on demographics, behavioural and geographical aspects. Table 14 below shows detailed information about each segment and estimation of each segment's size and volume.

The values and numbers outlined below in Table 14 are the results of the thorough desk research conducted and data mining. These results demonstrate that MENA and European Union regions are the segments with the highest numbers and values, thus demonstrating that the efforts should be put into working in that direction. This analysis further outlines the areas of competitively and market attractiveness that could be focused on and concentrated on in the positioning strategy followed in the next chapter.

Furthermore, it could be highlighted from the below analysis that the European Union ethnic-Islamic and non-Islamic segments demonstrate the highest percentages amongst the adults' group and a relatively average percentage within the kids' segmentation. In addition, the MENA region demonstrate the highest percentage amongst the kids' segment and the second highest, after European Union, amongst the adults' segment. Upon the determination of the segments with highest potential, the calculation of the segment size population and segments size per ton were calculated as exemplified in the table below.

Table 14 segment size calculation

		Islamic population[29]	Middle class families %	Kids % 0 - 15 years	Segment size population[30]	Dates consumption Kg/year per capita[31]	Segment size per Ton[32]
S1	Russian Federation	20 000 000	15%[33]	17%[34]	510 000	1.5	765
S2	India	195 000 000	3%[35]	27%[36][35]	1 579 500	1	1 580
S3	MENA (including Turkey)	535 989 745	12%[37]	28%[38]	18 009 255	14	252 130
S4	Indonesia/ Jakarta	10 135 000[39]	45%[40]	25%	1 140 188	0.9	1 026
S5	European Union - Islamic	25 482 321	46%[41]	16%	1 875 499	3	5 626

		Islamic population[29]	Middle class families %	Adults % 16 - 65 years	Segment size population [30]	Dates consumption Kg/year per capita[31]	Segment size per Ton
S6	Russian Federation	20 000 000	4%	61%	488 000	1.5	2745
S7	India	195 000 000	3%	65%	3 802 500	1	3803
S8	MENA (including Turkey)	535 989 745	12%	66%	42 450 388	14	594 305
S9	Indonesia/ Jakarta	10 135 000	45%	62%	2 827 665	0.9	2545
S10	European Union - Islamic	25 482 321	46%	68%	7 970 870	3	23 913

S11	European Union	**non-Islamic population[29]**	**Middle class families %**	**Kids % 0 - 15 years**	**Segment size population[30]**	**Dates consumption Kg/year per capita[31]**	**Segment size per Ton[32]**
		420 352 562	46%	16%	30 937 949	0.6	18 563

S12	European Union	**non-Islamic population** 29	**% Middle class families**	**Adults % 16 - 65 years**	**Segment size population[30]**	**Dates consumption Kg/year**	**Segment size per Ton[32]**

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29 https://worldpopulationreview.com/
30 Calculated by multiplying (population x % of Middle class x % age group)
31 Faostst 2015 (plus growth yearly factor) – Khalifa international award for date palm and agriculture innovation – book of 2019
32 Calculated by multiplying (segment size x consumption rate)
33 https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2019/08/12/14-of-russians-are-considered-middle-class-official-data-a66823
34 https://www.statista.com/statistics/271344/age-distribution-in-russia/
35 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Standard_of_living_in_India
36 https://data.oecd.org/pop/young-population.htm
37 https://www.unicef.org/mena/ar/media/4541/file
38 https://www.unicef.org/mena/ar/media/4541/file
39 https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/indonesia-population/
40 https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/01/30/expanding-middle-class-key-for-indonesia-future
41 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_class

						per capita[31]	
		420 352 562	46%	68%	131 486 281	0.6	65 743

Global market growth

Based on the market analysis, the global consumption of dates is forecasted to grow. Date commodity trade has been rising in recent years, owing to increasing demand from all the five continents of the world.

Rising awareness regarding health and well-being, primary through various social media platforms, has boosted the demand for healthy food products, such as dates. Thus, the global date market is expected to witness significant growth over the forecast period.

4.2. Market attractiveness

The following dimension helps determine the attractiveness of the market by analysing the benefits a firm is likely to achieve by entering and competing within the market. A number of factors are studied within this analysis. These include the size of the market, growth rate, profit potential, and the nature, size and weaknesses of the competition within the industry. This matrix assists firms in making their decisions in a more systematic and informed manner.

Based upon the above analysis of the segment with highest potentials and their calculations, the highest 9 segment sizes were taken into consideration to define which markets to enter first and enter later, while the lowest 3 segments sizes (S1, S2, and S4) were excluded. The highest 9 segment sizes are further illustrated in the table below (table 15), indicating clearly the attractiveness of each market as they are distributed between high, medium and low market attractiveness and competitiveness based on the values and calculations acquired from the above table (table 14). Furthermore, the above calculations and segment sizes not only assisted in illustrating the level of market attractiveness and competitiveness but also in determining which markets should be entered first in order to achieve highest potential value.

Table 15 Market attractiveness vs Jordan Competitiveness

Market attractiveness

Jordan Competitiveness		High	Medium	Low
	High	Enter first S3 - MENA (including Turkey) Kids (0 – 15)	Enter first S5 – European Union – Islamic Kids (0 – 15)	Enter later S11– European Union non Islamic Kids (0 – 15)
	Medium	Enter first S8 - MENA (including Turkey) Adults (16 – 65)	Enter later S10 – European Union – Islamic Adults (16 – 65)	Don’t Enter S6 - Russian Federation Adults (16 – 65)

Low	Enter Later S-12 – European Union non-Islamic Adults (16 – 65)	Don't Enter S7 – India Adults (16 – 65)	Don't Enter S9 - Indonesia/ Jakarta Adults (16 – 65)

It can be observed from table 15 above, that the segment with highest market attractiveness and highest competitiveness is the S3-MENA (including turkey), Kids segment followed by the adults' segment within the MENA region that demonstrates a high attractiveness with medium competitiveness and the European Union kid's Islamic segment that demonstrates medium market attractiveness and high competitiveness. These 3 segments are advised for their markets to be entered first based upon the analysis results followed by those that demonstrate rather high-low, low-high or medium-medium attractiveness and competitiveness to be entered next whereas the rest demonstrating much lower market attractiveness and competitiveness are advised not to be entered.

5. Positioning strategy and recommendations

Market positioning of Jordanian dates is the process of finding the right Market position of the Jordanian dates in the selected target market segments defined during the segmentation and targeting step, and after describing the nature of competition in these target markets.

5.1. Positioning strategy

In order to define the Market positioning it is important to determine the target consumers key factors they consider when buying fresh fruits and vegetables and specifically dates fruits. With this as a base, we can apply perceptual mapping, by determining both what the consumer target segments finds important (selected factors) and how the competitors offering of dates fruits are positioned in the mind of the consumer and therefore find and reach a competitive slot for Jordan market positioning.

11 factors were selected describing fruits and vegetables that influencing consumer food purchase decisions, these factors were selected from an in-depth literature research done by

group of Italian experts[42], and researches done by CBI.European Union and others[43] , list of the 11 factors are presented in Table 16.

Table 16 the 11 factors consumers consider when buying fresh fruits and vegetables

#	Factors	Description
1	Brand (or seller)	Brand allows the consumer to identify and discriminate the dates. The evaluation of the brand associates "research", in relation to the "experience" of the characteristics of dates product, together with information about the producer.
2	Quality	This attribute is often related to greater product safety and wholesomeness that, in FFV, often results in the reduction of pesticide risk. Such certifications: BRC Global Standards, Global Gap, ISO 22 000, the IFS food standard, Safe Quality Food (SQF) program, FSSC 22000, Halal or other industry-developed standards. Quality of FFV generally includes four different aspects: • Visual quality (colour, absence of skin disorders). • Organoleptic quality (taste, texture, flavour). • Nutritional or 'convenience' quality. • Hygienic quality (microbiological safety, residues).
3	Origin	Product origin is an intrinsic cue, linked to the consumer information acquisition of dates or producer identification in addition to product quality assessment. Consumers believe in a higher quality of domestic food, in comparison to foreign products and this could be influenced by cultural and religious connections.
4	Price	Price in connected with value, the consumers would prefer to get best deals comparing price to value proposition.
5	Appearance	The outward appearance of FFV packaging and freshness is one of the attributes that highly influences decisions at the time of purchase.
6	Seasonality	The consumption of seasonal fruit and vegetables is associated with consumer choice behaviour oriented towards an ecological product; one that avoids excessive packaging (such as tin and plastic) and waste, and which is considered to have a higher organoleptic quality and freshness.

[42] Consumer Preference Heterogeneity Evaluation in Fruit and Vegetable Purchasing Decisions Using the Best–Worst Approach, Stefano Massaglia 1 , Danielle Borra 1 , Cristiana Peano 1 , Francesco Sottile 2 and Valentina Maria Merlino 1,* 1 Department of Agricultural, Forest and Food Sciences, University of Turin, Largo Paolo Braccini 2, 10095 Grugliasco, Italy 2 Department of Architecture, University of Palermo, Viale delle Scienze 19, 90128 Palermo, Italy * Correspondence: valentina.merlino@unito.it; Tel.: +39-011-670-8726

[43] https://www.statista.com/statistics/1021014/factors-influencing-food-purchase-us-consumers/

7	Variety	Greater attention to this attribute differs by various types of consumers. The variety of offering for different age groups and different uses.
8	Freshness	Freshness is a very important quality criterion for FV acceptability. Consumer assessment of freshness of fruit and vegetables occurs through the analysis of sensory and visual aspects of the product appearance during purchase, but also during/after consumption.
9	Taste	Fresh Mejhoul dates have a rich, almost caramel-like taste and a soft, chewy texture and Dried dates are wrinkled outside, but sweet, delicious and sticky inside. Dates are very high in fruit sugar (fructose), and as they dry, their sugar content becomes more concentrated.
10	Health Symbol on Package	Because of the growing public concern for health and nutrition issues consumers are appreciating healthy certifications such as organic, 100 percent natural, etc.
11	Convenience of packaging preparations	According to various food and beverages industry reports, packaging convenience is a key purchasing motivator for consumers. It affects their preference towards a particular type or design of packaging and influences their behaviour.

Based on the factors in Table 16, the influencing consumer food purchase decisions related to fruits and vegetables and after the

research we made and out of the opinion of international market experts, Jordanian firms should focus on the Islamic markets in the (Islamic and Arabic countries in the MENA region and the Ethnic – Islamic market in the European Union), these markets are considered as competitive for the Jordanian Mejhoul dates, since that competitors focusing more on the non-Islamic countries and markets.

These targeted customers consume dates as raw dates, these customers are interested in premium quality Mejhoul dates, and therefore the product packaging is retail packs for end customer (business to customer). Accordingly, the most important factors that should formalize Jordan date's positioning strategy are illustrated in figure 30:

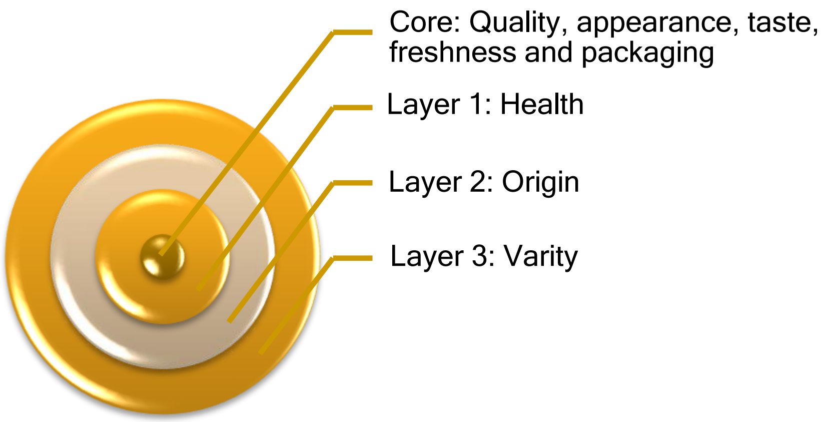


Figure 28 Jordanian Dates positioning factors

Core: Quality, appearance, taste, freshness and packaging.

Quality perceptions can be defined as judgmental signals about multi-faceted attributes that act as proxies for meeting or exceeding consumer expectations[44]. Such perceptions are subjective in nature, therefore, these might differ from the objective nature of quality attributes. With this in mind, the focus of Jordanian dates suppliers should be on the relationships among quality perceptions, consumer attitudes and willingness-to-pay. The quality of the Jordanian Mejhoul dates is very important to be Premium quality, which is the quality of whole dates that are of one variety, that possess a good colour, that are practically uniform in size, that are practically free from defects and that possess a good character.

As clarified earlier, Jordanian firms produce two unique types of dates; “Mejhoul” and “Barhi”. The "Mejhoul" dates have experienced a quantum leap in the worldwide demand of dates, due to its taste and texture that is easily digested by the global consumer, along with "Al Barhi" class which enjoys the advantage that its production season begins after the production season of the other types of date ends.

Most of the firms offer modest to good product packaging in terms of the styles and designs. In terms of the provided sizes for the packages, firms offer different sizes for the packages; 0.5 Kg, 1 Kg, 3 Kg, and 5kg. The firms are also flexible in producing different sizes based on customers’ requirements. Firms use certified food grade packages and clear labelling with the required information about the product including nutrient facts.

Meeting market requirements and the corresponding certifications is a continual challenge for producers and traders in Jordan. In terms of the quality systems and certificates, it varies as some firms have good quality systems and processes that comply with the global gap and HACCP rules, while the others do not have any quality certificates for their products.

[44] (Grunert, 2005;Olsen, 2002;Verdú Jover, Lloréns Montes, & Fuentes Fuentes, 2004;Zeithaml, 1988)

The Jordanian subsector of dates face a challenge in the lack of unified standards to control the type and the quality of the product (classification, quality standards, minimum quality, packing, labelling etc.) in the market and between the farmers.

To maintain the good quality of the dates, the dates must be kept in cold storage area until needed, some firms have their own refrigeration and cold storage area, while others lack of the availability of a storage unit for dates, there is a need to increase the capacity of cold storage for the sector.

Layer 1: Health

According to USDA, dates are a good source of energy, fibre, sugar, and various vitamins and minerals. [45]Essential minerals such as calcium, iron, phosphorus, sodium, potassium, magnesium, sulphur, and zinc can be found in them. Apart from the above-mentioned nutrients, they also contain important vitamins such as thiamine, riboflavin, niacin, vitamin B6, folate, vitamin A, and vitamin K.

One of the best benefits of Mejhoul dates is their high dietary fibre content, according to research published in the journal Critical Review in Food Science and Nutrition. A single serving of dates contains more than 6 grams of dietary fibre, roughly 20-25 percent of the daily recommended intake, depending upon your gender. Dietary fibre is crucial for the proper functioning of the digestive tract. Fibre can help eliminate constipation by stimulating peristaltic motion and regulating bowel movements. This can also help relieve haemorrhoids, bloating, cramping, and general stomach upset. More details about the nutrition benefits of the Mejhoul can be found in Annex 6.

Healthy eating has many other benefits. When eating well sleeping will be better, have more energy and better concentration – and this all adds up to healthier, happier lives! Healthy eating should be an enjoyable social experience. When children and young people eat and drink well, they get all the essential nutrients they need for proper growth and development, and develop a good relationship with food and other social skills.
Firms in Jordan already set clear labelling with the required information about the product including nutrient facts, but focus should be more on healthy symbol on package, due to the growing public concern for health and nutrition issues consumers are appreciating health related symbols.

Thus, dates are promising ingredients for functional foods intended for health benefit. Bioactive date compounds, their characterization and utilization in functional foods and clinical assessment of antimicrobial properties for human health are among the major targets to show date palm fruits as functional foods.

Layer 2: Origin

[45] https://fdc.nal.usda.gov/fdc-app.html#/?query=ndbNumber:9421

In a highly globalized world and hyper-competitive business environment, Country of Origin (COO) has become important factor in product differentiation and gaining competitive advantage, but also valuable information for consumers in product purchasing process. COO can be defined as the country in which corporate headquarters of the company marketing the brand is located, regardless of the place in which the brand in question is produced.

The recommended market segments for Jordanian firms are the Islamic markets in the (Islamic and Arabic countries in the MENA region and the Ethnic – Islamic market in the European Union), and as mentioned earlier, Mejhoul is produced in only a few countries, and for sure, Jordan enjoys a comparative advantage over others in these Islamic markets in this aspect. Thus, Jordan should focus more on branding Jordanian Mejhoul dates.

Layer 3: Variety

The diversity of consumers' tastes and preferences can lead to a proliferation of differentiated products, even when consumers use only a few product attributes in their choice decisions. Thus, the variety of products offered can represent an important factor when making purchasing decisions. Recent research has shown a greater variety of options that can cater to a wider range of tastes and preferences. That is, with greater product variety, the quality of the product, as perceived by consumers, increases.

When a company develops a strong core product line, the product range allows the company to focus on those product lines while still offering enough variety in size, colour, taste or functionality to appeal to a wide range of potential customers.

For example, dates are recommended for toddlers and small kids. They can even be introduced with the baby food because they contain essential vitamins and minerals needed for proper child growth and provides instant energy for the child so that he or she gets along with the vigorous activities without any problem. Most children chose their favourite product based on taste perceptions, which can be influenced by food packaging. Visual elements influenced children's selection of favourite packaging (i.e., characters, colours) and healthiest product (i.e., images), and persuaded some kids to incorrectly think certain foods contained healthy ingredients. When kids generated their own drawings of a new product, the most frequently included packaging elements in the drawings were product name, price, product image and characters, suggesting those aspects of the food packaging were most significant to them.

As clarified in Section (5.6 Market attractiveness), the most attractive markets are the S3-MENA (including turkey) Kids segment, the adults' segment within the MENA region, and the European Union kid's Islamic segment, which means that two out of these three segments include kids. Accordingly, Jordan should focus on producing special product variety for kids, such as seedless dates, stuffed seedless dates, or chocolate coated seedless dates, in small portion sizes and easy to handle packages. This can be achieved through investing in research, innovation and modern techniques and mechanization of post-production processes.

Price

The last factor, price, is not less important than the other factors. Although Mejhoul dates selling price is considered one of the highest of all other varieties of dates and have a higher return on investment value, Jordan firms should focus on reducing cost of production to maximise the profit margin. Production cost includes all the expenses incurred throughout the whole process starting from the primary activities including preparing the land, farming, processing, distribution and sales, and not ending with all the support activities including human resources, quality, innovation, logistics and marketing activities.

Jordan lacks innovation in the agricultural sector, there is a huge demand for an improvement in technology and infrastructure in several areas, such as; higher productivity, saving water, and thus lowering costs.

In summary, Jordanian producers need to develop a better product offering by focusing on the unique selling propositions and work on marketing their products to increase their market share.

Although Jordan has competitive advantages on various markets and the potential to develop new markets, Jordanian firms face a main challenge in marketing their products, most Jordanian farms don’t have the capability and the resource to market their products locally and globally, especially the smaller farmers who are using simple and primitive equipment and they are unable to market their products properly.

5.1. Positioning statement

Below positioning statement is a clear expression of how Jordanian Mejhoul Date fills a particular customer need in a way that competitors don't.

Based on the suggested positioning strategy which has been concluded from the market and segmentation analysis, the statement developed to ensure people remember Jordan and Mejhoul dates and tell what makes Jordan Mejhoul dates unique, and why it is relevant to its customers.

> ***"For B2B and B2C date's consumers, Jordan provides Mejhoul premium quality dates – The King of dates – with high quality standards and wide range of product variety harvested by the local genuine hands of Jordan Valley and is a center of your healthy future life because it is full of nutrients, fibres and antioxidants that are linked to countless health benefits."***

5.2. Recommendations

The Jordanian dates subsector has a good opportunity in increasing the export volume and to grow the current market share, Table 17 shows general export recommendations for Jordanian companies to increase their market share in the targeted markets.

Table 17 General export recommendations for Jordanian companies

Positioning Factor	Recommendation	Requirements
Core: Quality, appearance, taste, freshness and packaging	The quality of the Jordanian Mejhoul dates is very important to be premium quality, which is the quality of whole dates that are of one variety, that possess a good colour, that are practically uniform in size, that are practically free from defects and that possess a good character.	Train and coach for the farms workers and owners to provide them with the best practice and needed knowledge to improve the production quality as to produce more premium quality dates. Acquire quality certification such as global gap and HACCP

	Packaging has to meet the target market segment convenience as it is a key purchasing motivator for consumers, including new product varieties packaging.	Develop the packaging designs to meet customer preferences. Including eco-friendly packs. Research and development (R&D) for both product and package development to speed up product diversification and development while preserving quality and shelf life. Support SMEs in establishing units for packaging and product development.
	The product appearance and specification should be unified among firms. The Jordanian subsector of dates should unify standards to control the type and the quality of the product (classification, quality standards, minimum quality, packing, labelling etc.) in the market and between the farmers.	Standardize the classification of Mejhoul dates in Jordan, this step is related to producing standard guidelines for all Mejhoul producers including classification, quality, packing, labelling etc.)
	To maintain the good quality of the dates, there is a need to increase the capacity of cold storage for the sector.	Increase the capacity of cold storage for the sector.
Layer 1: Health	Jordanian dates are healthy, and focus should be more on healthy symbol on package.	Focus should be more on healthy symbol on package.
Layer 2: Origin	Mejhoul is produced in only a few countries including Jordan that enjoys a comparative advantage over competitors in the Islamic targeted segments. Jordan should focus more on branding Jordanian Mejhoul dates.	Jordan should focus more on branding Jordanian Mejhoul dates.

Layer 3: Variety	Jordan should focus on producing special product variety for kids, such as seedless dates, stuffed seedless dates, or chocolate coated seedless dates, in small portion sizes and easy to handle packages. This can be achieved through investing in research, innovation and modern techniques and mechanization of post-production processes.	Create product variety for kids through investing in research, innovation and modern techniques and mechanization of post-production processes.
Price	Jordan firms should focus on reducing cost of production to maximise the profit margin. Production cost includes all the expenses incurred throughout the whole process starting from the primary activities including preparing the land, farming, processing, distribution and sales, and not ending with all the support activities including human resources, quality, innovation, logistics and marketing activities. Jordan should concentrate on innovation in the agricultural sector, there is a huge demand for an improvement in technology and infrastructure in several areas, such as; higher productivity, saving water, and thus lowering costs.	Build a national dates' platform through collaboration between the Jordanian dates Association, the Ministry of Agriculture and the National Centre for Agricultural Research to collect all past experience between all dates' producer and the international best practices for Mejhoul dates. This platform will help all producers share knowledge and be aware of the international advanced technology used in this field to reduce resources cost such as water costs and energy costs by using new technologies.
Marketing	Jordanian firms should implement targeted promotional campaign toward the selected market segments.	Promotional campaign to brand Jordanian dates including, trade missions, trail shipment to the targeted markets, and brochures in the language of the targeted markets.
	Jordanian producers need to develop a better product offering by focusing on the unique selling propositions and work on marketing their products to increase their market share.	Promotional campaign to brand Jordanian dates including, trade missions, trail shipment to the targeted markets, and brochures in the

		language of the targeted markets. Build the capacity of Jordanian companies marketing tools, by providing support in establishing high quality websites with E-marketing channels, providing support in designing attractive logo designs. Support Jordanian companies to participate in international exhibitions and collect all gained experience from these exhibitions in the national platform to share with all Jordanian Mejhoul producers.

5.3. Cost-benefit analysis

Jordan dates subsector are about 500 Farms (around 35 000 Dunums), The size of the farm has been defined as a basis for classifying the farms into small, medium, and large-sized farms, farm that has one farming unit (up to 40 dunums) or less were considered to be small-scale farmers. As for the farms with up to three farming units (up to 120 dunums), they are medium in size. Whereas, the large-sized farms are classified as farms with more than three production units. According to this classification figure 31 and 32 shows the distribution of lands and farms in Jordan Valley and Al Azraq respectively.

Jordan Valley

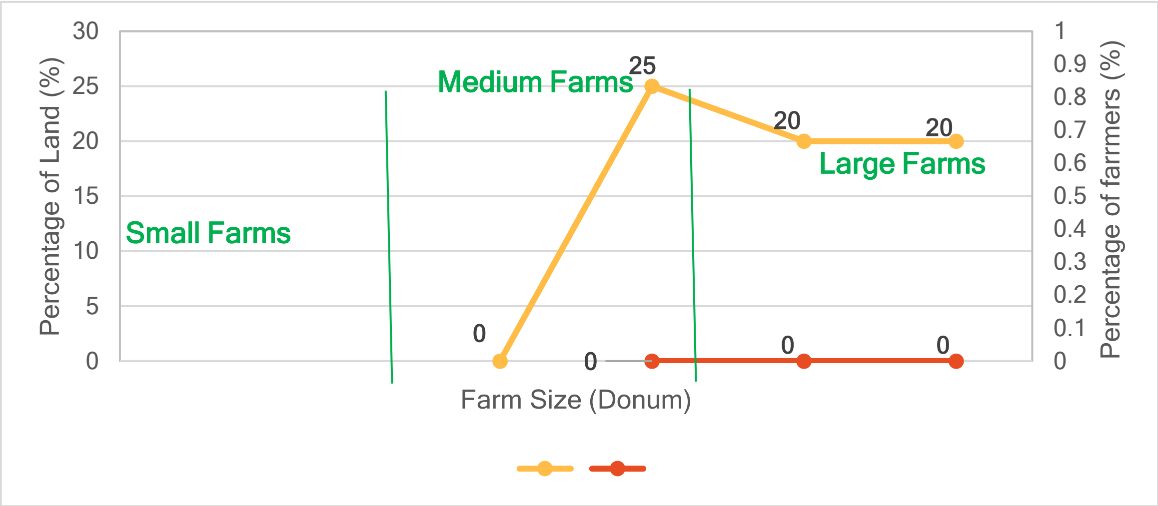


Figure 29 Distribution of date- Palm producers in Jordan according to farm size Jordan valley , 2016

Al Azraq

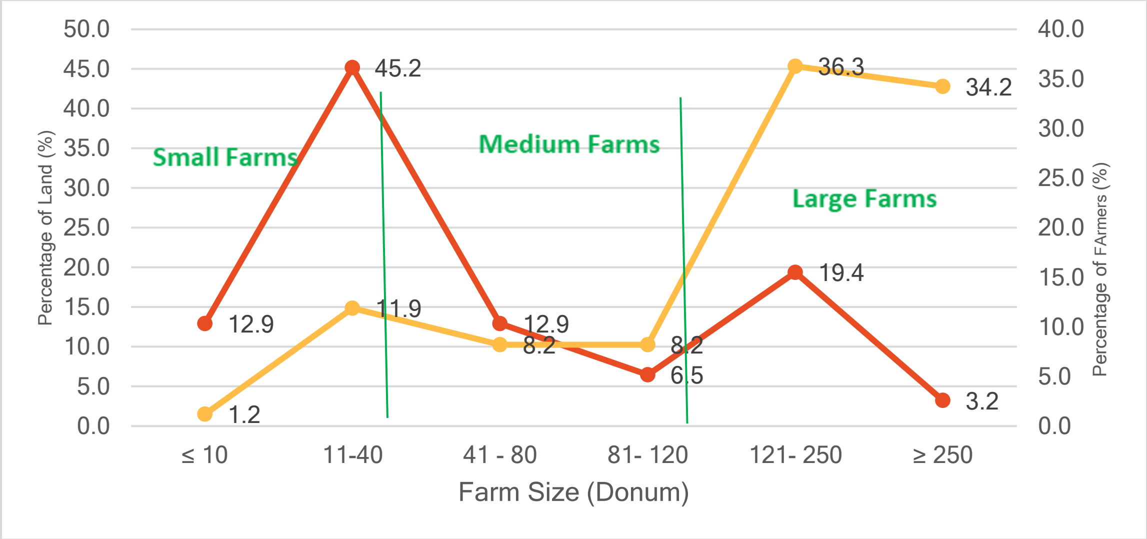
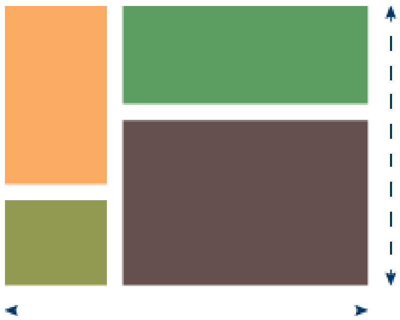


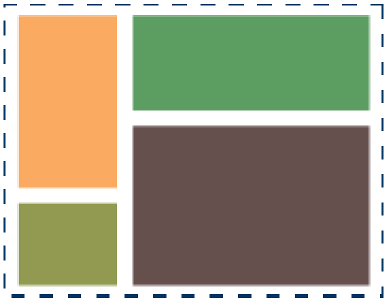
Figure 30 Distribution of date- palm producers in Jordan according to farm size Azraq, 2016

The focus of this study is on the small size farms that are export potential with technical knowledge and modern technology to enhance the efficiency of their production and marketing capabilities.



35,000 Dunums

500,000 Palm Trees
80% Madjool



200 Farms
30-40%
Export Activities

The implementation of the aforementioned recommendations to the benefits of these farmers requires collaboration from the all sector stockholders including the government and the private sector as well as it needs investment. The recommendations were classified between sector level recommendations and firm level recommendations, Tables 18, 19 show a rough estimate of this investment cost based on Sector level and firm level.

Table 18 Investment estimation – sector level

Positioning factor	Requirements	Estimated cost (USD thousands) Total	Related stakeholders [46]
Core: Quality, appearance, taste, freshness and packaging	Standardize the classification of Mejhoul dates in Jordan, this step is related to producing standard guidelines for all Mejhoul producers including classification, quality, packing, labelling etc.)	25 000	• JODA • JSMO • MOA
	Increase the capacity of cold storage for the sector at the Jordan Valley.	200 000	• JODA • MOA • JVA
Layer 1: Health	Focus should be more on healthy symbol on package.	Included in the new packages designs cost	• JODA • JoPack • JFDA
Layer 2: Origin	Jordan should focus more on branding Jordanian Mejhoul dates.	100 000	• JODA • Private sector

[46] Annex 1

			• JEDCO
Price	Build a national dates' platform through collaboration between the Jordanian Dates Association, the Ministry of Agriculture and the National Centre for Agricultural Research to collect all past experience between all dates' producer and the international best practices for Mejhoul dates. This platform will help all producers share knowledge and be aware of the international advanced technology used in this field to reduce resources cost such as water costs and energy costs by using new technologies.	140 000	• JODA • Private sector • MITS • JIC
	Promotional campaign to brand Jordanian dates including, trade missions, trail shipment to the targeted markets, and brochures in the language of the targeted markets.	100 000	• JODA • Private sector • MoA • MITS • JIC
Marketing	Build the capacity of Jordanian companies marketing tools, by providing support in establishing high quality websites with E-marketing channels, providing support in designing attractive logo designs. Support Jordanian companies to participate in international exhibitions and collect all gained experience from these exhibitions in the national platform to share with all Jordanian Mejhoul producers.	150 000	• JODA • Private sector • MoA • MITS • JIC
Total investment		715 000	

Table 19 Investment estimation – firm level

Positioning Factor	Requirements	Estimated cost (USD thousands) per farm	Estimated cost (USD thousands) Total	Related stakeholders [47]
Core: Quality, appearance, taste, freshness and packaging	Train and coach for the 200 farms workers and owners to provide them with the best practice and needed knowledge to improve the production quality as to produce more Premium quality dates.	500	100 000	• JODA • Private sector • JEDCO • JEPA
	Acquire quality certification for these 200 farms such as global gap and HACCP	2 500	250 000[48]	• JODA • Private sector • MoA • MITS
	Develop the packaging designs to meet customer preferences. Including eco-friendly packs.	1 000	50 000[49]	• JODA • Private sector • MoA • MITS • JoPack
Layer 3: Variety	Create product variety for kids through investing in research, innovation and modern techniques and mechanization of post-production processes.	2 000	200 000	• JODA • Private sector • JoPack
Total Investment			600 000	

This investment of about USD 1 315 000, and the sector should seek for support and finds from national and international funding agencies.

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[47] Annex 1

[48] Some firms already have certificates, so the estimated number that need certificates are 100 firms.

[49] Some firms already have good packages, so the estimated number that need packages enhancement are 50 firms.

Implementing the aforementioned recommendations would lead to an increase in the growth rate of the exported value and quantity between 10-20 percent. This will reflect directly onto the sales value of the exported dates.

To visualize the expected changes in the growth rate in terms of value of exported dates from Jordan, two scenarios were developed as presented in Figure 31, based on the assumption that:

- The growth in export value will increase by 10 percent.
- The growth in export value will increase by 20 percent.

For both assumptions and from the scenario and corresponding data projected, annual sales growth to be increased by 5percent means that the sales value is to increase by 25 percent by 2023 above the normal organic growth. Whereas, the sales could increase by 53 percent by 2023 above the normal organic growth if the sales growth was increased by 10 percent annually.

However, not taking these recommendations into consideration, the sales value is expected to maintain its current growth rate of 14 percent and will not expand further as the production of the trees will continue to grow at the same rate.

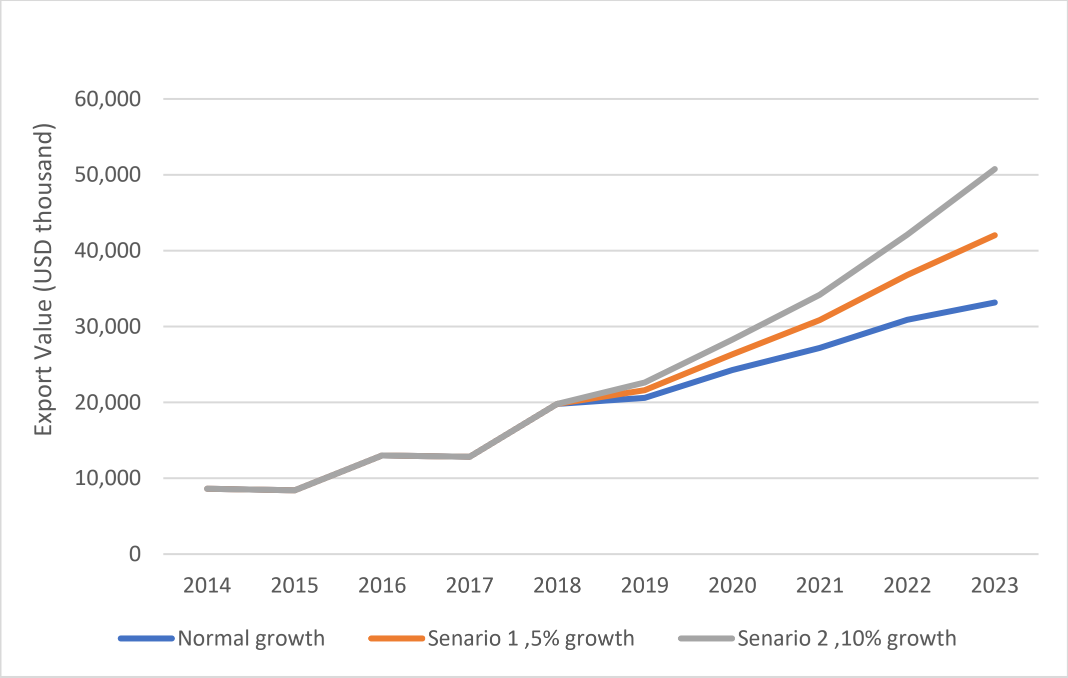

Figure 31Jordan exports projection

This means that investing USD 1 315 thousand, will lead to increase of sales to reach around 42 Million USD, for scenario 1 and around 50 Million USD for scenario 2 in three years, compared to USD 33 million sales due to the normal organic growth without implementing the recommendations. Knowing that the gross profits margin for the Jordanian companies are considered good between (25-30 percent), then with the current profit margin of the 25 percent, the expected increase in profit due to this investment is USD 2.2 million, USD 4.4 million respectively.

The Return on Investment (ROI)[50] for implementing the above-mentioned positioning strategy and the related recommendations will be 169 percent, 334 percent respectively. This is considered very profitable and worth the investment.

With that being clarified, it should be highlighted that this investment of about USD 1 315 thousand, and the sector should seek for support and finds from national and international funding agencies.

[50] Return on investment, or ROI, is the ratio of a profit or loss made in a fiscal year expressed in terms of an investment and shown as a percentage of increase or decrease in the value of the investment during the year in question. The basic formula for ROI is: ROI = Net Profit / Total Investment * 100

Annexes

Annex 1 - Dates sector stockholders

This section will introduce the key players in Jordan's date's value chain. Dates farms do not only work with a range of suppliers and clients, but are also affected by the support and activities of various public and private sector. These relevant players are introduced in the below Table.

Typology value chain actor	Specific stakeholders	Contact person
A. Governmental organisations	• JIC: Jordan Investment Commission	• Dr. Mohammad Abu Omar
	• JEDCO: Jordan Enterprise Development Corporation	• Mr. Issam Bahloul – industry support directorate
	• JFDA: Jordan Food and Drug Administration	• Mr. Ma'moun Gharaibeh
	• MoA: Ministry of Agriculture	• Dr. Mohammad Al Awaideh-- Director of the Agricultural Risk Fund
	• NARC: National Agricultural Research Centre	• Dr. Nizar Haddad – Director
	• ACC: Agricultural Credit Corporation	• Mr. Ahmad Malouh
B. Private sector organisations	• CMC : competence Management consulting	• Mr. Adnan Ziadat – Director
	• JEA: Jordan Exporters' association	• Mr. Haleem Abu Rahmeh
	• JEBA: Jordan Europe Business Association	• Mr. Ayman Qaffaf
	• JFU: Jordan Farmers Union	• Mr. Odeh Rwashdeh
	• Jordan Exporters and producers association for fruit and vegetables (JEPA)	• Mr. Basim aL Naouri
C. International organisations	• IFAD: International Fund for Agricultural Development	• Ms. Maha Arabiat
	• GIZ: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit	• Mr. Raed Sweis
	• EBRD: European Bank for Reconstruction and Development	• Mr. Khaled Al Saheb

	• CBI: Fresh Fruits & Vegetables Jordan project	• Ms. Melanie Van Haga
	• Khalifa International Award for Date Palm and Agricultural Innovation	

Annex 2: World leading countries growing fresh dates

World Leading Countries Growing Fresh Dates.[51]

Country	Annual production of fresh dates in metric tonnes
Egypt	1 084 529
Islamic Republic of Iran	947 809
Saudi Arabia	836 983
Iraq	675 440
Pakistan	556 608
United Arab Emirates	533 701
Algeria	485 415
Sudan	435 668
South Sudan	432 100
Oman	239 397

Annex 3: Fresh or dried dates 080410 imported quantities to (OIC) 2016, 2017 and 2018

Fresh or dried dates 080410 imported quantities to the organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC) 2016, 2017 and 2018.[52]

Importers	2016	2017	2018
	Imported quantity- tonnes	Imported quantity- tonnes	Imported quantity- tonnes
World	118 459 1	124 109 5	142 373 6
Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Aggregation	581 079	562 342	705 452
United Arab Emirates	213 821	163 752	150 098
Morocco	693 24	700 55	974 36
Yemen	197 02	183 82	440 05
Indonesia	232 29	346 20	399 09
Turkey	267 72	342 14	393 10
Afghanistan	0		385 21
Kazakhstan	229 33	256 05	328 84

[51] www.worldatlas.com

[52] Trademap.org

Bangladesh	387 55	439 32	304 70
Niger	130 89	187 44	288 75
Iraq	135 28	141 50	219 26
Malaysia	182 71	26 247	19 156
Kuwait	112 39	13 791	18 730
Somalia	148 25	14 793	17 728
Oman	105 57	5 702	17 581
Jordan	139 48	14 870	13 631
Syrian Arab Republic	8 500	7 228	12 813
Lebanon	8 864	10 457	10 596
Pakistan	5 599	6 813	10 043
Qatar			9 962
Nigeria, Azerbaijan, Mauritania, Senegal, Bahrain, Turkmenistan, Côte d'Ivoire, Kyrgyzstan, Djibouti, Egypt, Algeria, Palestine, Uzbekistan, Tunisia, Burkina Faso, Maldives, Guinea, Saudi Arabia, Gambia, Brunei , Darussalam, Uganda, Tajikistan, Mozambique , Comoros , Benin , Chad , Cameroon, Mali, Togo, Guyana, Albania, Gabon, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, Suriname , Libya			51 778

Annex 4: Dates import by European Union countries - 2018

Dates import by European Union countries – 2018.[53]

[53] www.trademap.org

European Union (European Union 28) Aggregation	156 594
France	42 134
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	23 898
Germany	22 610
Netherlands	12 120
Italy	10 594
Spain	10 075
Belgium	6 669
Denmark	4 479
Sweden	4 023
Poland	3 630
Austria, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovakia, Greece , Finland , Romania , Lithuania , Portugal , Ireland , Slovenia , Latvia , Cyprus , Croatia, Malta . Estonia, Luxembourg	16 362

Annex 5: Muslims population worldwide

Muslims population worldwide.[54]

Country	Muslim Population	Population 2020	Muslim percent of Total Population	Muslim % of World Population
Indonesia	229 000 000	273 523 615	87.20%	12.70%
Pakistan	200 400 000	220 892 340	96.50%	11.10%
India	195 000 000	138 000 4385	14.20%	10.90%
Bangladesh	153 700 000	164 689 383	90.40%	9.20%
Nigeria	990 000 00	206 139 589	49.60%	5.30%
Egypt	875 000 00	102 334 404	92.35%	4.90%
Iran	825 000 00	839 929 49	99.40%	4.60%
Turkey	798 500 00	843 390 67	99.20%	4.60%
Algeria	412 409 13	438 510 44	99.00%	2.70%
Sudan	395 8577 7	4384 926 0	97.00%	1.90%
Iraq	384 65864	402 224 93	95.70%	1.90%
Morocco	379 309 89	369 105 60	99.00%	2.00%
Ethiopia	356 000 00	114 963 588	33.90%	1.80%
Afghanistan	348 360 14	389 283 46	99.60%	1.80%
Saudi Arabia	318 780 00	348 138 71	97.10%	1.60%
China	281 275 00	143 932 377 6	1.73%	1.60%
Yemen	277 844 98	298 259 64	99.10%	1.50%
Uzbekistan	265 500 00	334 692 03	96.50%	1.70%
Niger	211 019 26	242 066 44	98.30%	1.00%
Russia	200 000 00	145 934 462	13.50%	1.00%

[54] https://worldpopulationreview.com

Tanzania	194 268 14	597 342 18	35.20%	0.80%
Mali	175 083 98	202 508 33	95.00%	0.80%
Syrian Arab Republic	1670 000 0	175 006 58	93.00%	1.00%
Malaysia	163 183 55	323 659 99	61.30%	1.10%
Senegal	151 127 21	167 439 27	96.10%	0.80%
Kazakhstan	131 586 72	187 767 07	70.20%	0.50%
Burkina Faso	121 417 69	209 032 73	61.50%	0.60%
Tunisia	111 900 00	118 186 19	99.80%	0.60%
Somalia	109 780 00	158 932 22	99.80%	0.60%
Guinea	105 631 71	131 327 95	89.10%	0.50%
Jordan	101 655 77	102 031 34	97.20%	0.40%
Azerbaijan	973 507 4	101 391 77	96.90%	0.50%
Chad	918 320 7	164 258 64	58.00%	0.40%
Philippines	791 354 2	109 581 078	8.00%	0.45%
Cameroon	769 228 9	265 458 63	30.00%	0.40%
Tajikistan	762 170 0	953 764 5	96.70%	0.40%
Libya	655 187 1	687 129 2	97.00%	0.40%
Sierra Leone	606 770 6	797 698 3	78.60%	0.30%
France	572 000 0	652 735 11	8.80%	0.30%
Kenya	550 000 0	537 712 96	11.20%	0.20%
Uganda	543 523 4	457 410 07	14.00%	0.30%
Ghana	505 844 4	310 729 40	18.00%	0.20%
Turkmenistan	483 000 0	603 120 0	93.30%	0.30%
Germany	475 000 0	837 839 42	5.70%	0.20%
Kyrgyzstan	467 943 6	652 419 5	80.00%	0.30%
United Arab Emirates	461 508 1	989 040 2	76.00%	0.20%

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	413 000 0	678 860 11	6.30%	0.20%
Malawi	396 851 2	191 299 52	20.00%	0.10%
Mauritania	384 042 9	464 965 8	100.00%	0.20%
Mozambique	383 006 3	312 554 35	17.90%	0.30%
Lebanon	351 974 3	682 544 5	57.70%	0.20%
United States	345 000 0	331 002 651	1.10%	0.20%
Benin	314 131 9	121 232 00	27.70%	0.14%
Cambodia	312 540 1	167 189 65	1.90%	0.00%
Thailand	300 000 0	697 999 78	4.30%	0.20%
Italy	298 7840	604 618 26	4.80%	0.10%
Eritrea	263 0000	354 6421	43.80%	0.10%
Madagascar	256 8361	276 910 18	10.00%	0.00%
South Sudan	246 4683	111 937 25	20.00%	0.00%
Oman	242 7000	510 6626	85.90%	0.20%
Kuwait	217 5684	427 0571	74.60%	0.20%
Sri Lanka	210 5000	214 132 49	9.70%	0.10%
Albania	179 764 5	287 779 7	58.80%	0.10%
Togo	159 301 1	827 8724	20.00%	0.10%
Qatar	156 6786	288 1053	77.50%	0.10%
Israel	151 6482	865 5535	18.00%	0.10%
Nepal	129 2909	291 36808	4.20%	0.10%
Burundi	118 4452	118 90784	10.00%	0.00%
Spain	118 0000	467 54778	2.60%	0.10%
Canada	114 8213	377 42154	3.20%	0.10%
Bahrain	106 3239	17 01575	73.70%	0.00%
South Africa	105 0000	593 08690	1.90%	0.00%
Liberia	961 953	505 7681	20.00%	0.00%

Netherlands	880 000	171 34872	5.10%	0.10%
Belgium	879 377	115 89623	7.60%	0.00%
Central African Republic	861 759	482 9767	15.00%	0.00%
Bulgaria	861 015	694 8445	13.40%	0.00%
Djibouti	857 496	988 000	97.00%	0.10%
Guinea Bissau	826 794	196 8001	45.10%	0.00%
Sweden	800 000	100 99265	8.10%	0.00%
Singapore	781 558	585 0342	14.70%	0.00%
Brazil	767 583	212 559 417	0.36%	0.00%
Austria	712 000	900 6398	8.00%	0.00%
Macedonia	705 608	208 3374	33.30%	0.00%
Ukraine	695 000	437 337 62	1.70%	0.00%
Australia	650 000	254 998 84	2.60%	0.00%
Greece	613 406	104 230 54	5.70%	0.00%
Western Sahara	599 633	597 339	99.40%	0.00%
Rwanda	576 054	129 522 18	4.80%	0.00%
Switzerland	440 000	865 4622	5.20%	0.00%
Argentina	400 000	451 957 74	0.90%	0.90%
Maldives	386 193	540 544	98.40%	0.00%
Brunei	355 045	437 479	78.80%	0.00%
Cyprus	350 000	120 7359	28.20%	0.00%
Denmark	313 713	579 2202	5.40%	0.00%
Hong Kong	295 746	749 6981	4.10%	0.00%
Mayotte	253 439	272 815	97.00%	0.00%
Mauritius	236 020	127 1768	17.30%	0.00%
Serbia	221 460	873 7371	3.10%	0.00%
Gabon	211 903	222 5734	10.00%	0.00%

Japan	185 000	126 476 461	0.10%	0.00%
Zambia	168 877	183 839 55	1.00%	0.00%
Mongolia	150 000	327 8290	5.00%	0.00%
Finland	1500 00	554 0720	2.70%	0.00%
Norway	142 500	542 1241	5.70%	0.00%
Romania	136 500	192 37691	0.65%	0.00%
Swaziland	129 230	116 0164	10.00%	0.00%
Venezuela	125 216	284 359 40	0.40%	0.00%
Montenegro	122 849	628 066	19.10%	0.00%
Zimbabwe	100 000	148 629 24	0.70%	0.00%
Colombia	96337	508 828 91	0.20%	0.00%
Vietnam	961 60	973 385 79	0.10%	0.00%
Angola	90 000	32 866 272	0.30%	0.00%
Suriname	83 400	586 632	13.90%	0.00%
Equatorial Guinea	79 745	140 2985	10.00%	0.00%
Trinidad And Tobago	78 000	139 9488	5.80%	0.00%
Slovenia	73 568	207 8938	3.60%	0.00%
Belarus	72 500	944 9323	0.75%	0.00%
Ireland	70952	49 377 86	1.40%	0.00%
Portugal	65 000	10 196 709	0.40%	0.00%
Croatia	64 057	41 052 67	1.50%	0.00%
Taiwan	60 000	238 167 75	0.30%	0.00%
Fiji	58 355	896 445	6.30%	0.00%
Guyana	55 000	786 552	7.30%	0.00%
Hungary	50 000	966 0351	0.50%	0.00%
New Zealand	41 000	482 2233	0.90%	0.00%
South Korea	35 000	51 269 185	0.10%	0.00%

Honduras	30 000	990 4607	0.30%	0.00%
Panama	25 000	431 476 7	0.70%	0.00%
Luxembourg	18 172	625 978	3.00%	0.00%
Moldova	15 000	403 396 3	0.40%	0.00%
Czech Republic	150 00	107 089 81	0.15%	0.00%
Malta	11 675	441 543	2.60%	0.00%
Cape Verde	11 367	555 987	2.00%	0.00%
Cuba	11 116	113 266 16	0.10%	0.00%
Slovakia	10 866	545 9642	0.15%	0.00%
Namibia	9654	254 090 5	0.40%	0.00%
Botswana	8996	235 1627	0.40%	0.00%
New Caledonia	7000	285 498	2.80%	0.00%
Poland	6796	378 466 11	0.02%	0.00%
Jamaica	5624	296 116 7	0.20%	0.00%
Mexico	5500	128 932 753	0.01%	0.00%
Haiti	5000	114 025 28	0.00%	0.00%
Barbados	4396	287 375	1.50%	0.00%
Chile	4000	191 162 01	0.00%	0.00%
Armenia	3038	296 324 3	0.10%	0.00%
Lithuania	3000	272 228 9	0.10%	0.00%
Lesotho	3000	214 224 9	0.10%	0.00%
North Korea	3000	257 788 16	0.10%	0.00%
French Guiana	2400	298 682	0.90%	0.00%
Andorra	2228	77 265	2.60%	0.00%
Liechtenstein	2050	38 128	5.40%	0.00%
Pulrinational State of Bolivia	2000	116 730 21	0.00%	0.00%
Papua New Guinea	2000	89 470 24	0.00%	0.00%

Latvia	2000	188 619 8	0.15%	0.00%
Guadeloupe	2000	400 124	0.40%	0.00%
El Salvador	2000	648 6205	0.00%	0.00%
Dominican Republic	2000	108 479 10	0.00%	0.00%
Estonia	1508	132 653 5	0.00%	0.00%
Guatemala	1200	179 5568	0.00%	0.00%
Gibraltar	1150	33 691	4.00%	0.00%
Seychelles	1036	98 347	1.10%	0.00%
Puerto Rico	1000	28 608 53	0.00%	0.00%
Timor-Leste	1000	13 184 45	0.10%	0.00%
Paraguay	1000	71 325 38	0.00%	0.00%
Nicaragua	1000	66 245 54	0.00%	0.00%
Lao People's Democratic Republic	1000	72 755 60	0.00%	0.00%
British Virgin Islands		30 231	1.20%	0.00%
Solomon Islands		68 688 4	0.00%	0.00%
Samoa		198 414	0.00%	0.00%
Wallis And Futuna		11 239	0.00%	0.00%
Uruguay		34 737 30	0.00%	0.00%
Belize		397 628	0.20%	0.00%
Isle Of Man		85 033	0.20%	0.00%
Tuvalu		11 792	0.10%	0.00%
Turks And Caicos Islands		38 717	0.00%	0.00%
Tonga		105 695	0.00%	0.00%
Tokelau		1357	0.00%	0.00%
San Marino		33 931	0.00%	0.00%
Anguilla		15 003	0.60%	0.00%
Bhutan		77 1608	0.20%	0.00%

Peru		329 718 54	0.00%	0.00%
Bermuda		62 278	1.00%	0.00%
Palau		180 94	0.00%	0.00%
Marshall Islands		59 190	0.00%	0.00%
Northern Mariana Islands		575 59	0.70%	0.00%
Niue		1626	0.00%	0.00%
Vanuatu		307 145	0.00%	0.00%
Aruba		106 766	0.40%	0.00%
Nauru		108 24	0.00%	0.00%
Montserrat		4992	0.10%	0.00%
Monaco		39 242	0.80%	0.00%
Martinique		375 265	0.20%	0.00%
Macau		649 335	0.10%	0.00%
Iceland		341 243	0.20%	0.00%
Vatican City		801	0.00%	0.00%
Guam		168 775	0.00%	0.00%
Grenada		112 523	0.30%	0.00%
Greenland		56 770	0.00%	0.00%
Kiribati		119 449	0.00%	0.00%
Antigua And Barbuda		97 929	0.30%	0.00%
French Polynesia		280 908	0.00%	0.00%
Falkland Islands		3480	0.00%	0.00%
Faroe Islands		48 863	0.00%	0.00%
Ecuador		176 430 54	0.00%	0.00%
Dominica		71 986	0.20%	0.00%
Costa Rica		50 941 18	0.00%	0.00%
Cook Islands		17 564	0.00%	0.00%

American Samoa		55 191	0.00%	0.00%
Cayman Islands		65 722	0.20%	0.00%

Annex 6 - Mejhoul dates nutrition[55]

Table 20 Nutrition facts dates, Mejhoul

Nutrient	Value
Water [g]	21.32
Energy [kcal]	277
Protein [g]	1.81
Total lipid (fat) [g]	0.15
Carbohydrate, by difference [g]	74.97
Fiber, total dietary [g]	6.7
Sugars, total [g]	66.47
Calcium, Ca [mg]	64
Magnesium, Mg [mg]	54
Phosphorus, P [mg]	62
Potassium, K [mg]	696
Zinc, Zn [mg]	0.44
Thiamin [mg]	0.05
Riboflavin [mg]	0.06
Niacin [mg]	1.61
Vitamin B-6 [mg]	0.25
Folate, DFE [µg]	15
Vitamin A, RAE [µg]	7
Vitamin A, IU [IU]	149

Mejhoul dates are nature's super fruit

- Non-GMO
- Vegan
- Raw
- Non-hydrated or past European Unionized
- Kosher for Passover & year-round use
- High in Potassium
- Sodium free
- Cholesterol free
- Gluten free

Health benefits of Mejhoul dates

People who regularly consume Mejhoul dates may find relief from mal-digestion, elevated blood pressure, and cholesterol, constipation, and other ailments.

Aids in digestion

One of the best benefits of Mejhoul dates is their high dietary fiber content, according to research published in the journal Critical Review in Food Science and Nutrition. [5] A single serving of dates contains more than 6 grams of dietary fiber, roughly 20-25 percent of the daily recommended intake, depending upon your gender. Dietary fiber is crucial for the proper functioning of the digestive tract. Fiber can help eliminate constipation by stimulating peristaltic motion and regulating bowel movements. This can also help relieve hemorrhoids, bloating, cramping, and general stomach upset.

Regulate blood pressure

The notable potassium levels in Mejhoul dates mean that they may have a positive effect on blood pressure. Potassium is a vasodilator, so it is able to relieve tension in blood vessels and arteries, which can ease the strain on the cardiovascular system and reduce your risk of atherosclerosis, heart attacks, and strokes.

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[55] https://www.organicfacts.net/Mejhoul-dates.html

Boost metabolism

B vitamins, such as niacin, pantothenic acid, and folic acid, are very important for regulating the metabolism, including over 300 different metabolic processes that occur within our body every single day. Mejhoul dates contain a healthy amount of this vitamin, as well as copper, found in high levels and can increase iron absorption and contribute to energy generation within the body. In this study, Dr. Praveen Kumar Vayalile of the University of Alabama reveals the immune stimulant properties they also contain.

Improve vision

Mejhoul dates contain beta-carotene, which can be converted into vitamin A, a powerful antioxidant that is particularly effective in eye care. Vitamin A has been associated with lower levels of macular degeneration, slow development of cataracts, and lesser oxidative stress in the retina.

Reduce Cholesterol

High levels of dietary fiber are considered beneficial for people with high cholesterol. According to a study, published in the Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry dates also possess anti atherogenic properties in healthy populations. They have been shown to help aid in digestion, control cholesterol levels, and lower the risk of cardiovascular diseases.

However, dates are high in calories and must be eaten sparingly for those who are not an ideal weight so as not to contribute to obesity (comorbidity of heart disease).

Regulate hormones

Manganese is often an overlooked essential mineral required by the body, even though it has a number of key effects on hormone production and regulation. Mejhoul dates have this mineral in abundance. It is essential, specifically for the production of sex hormones. As part of a healthy diet, the nutrient obtained from dates may help maintain hormone levels.

Promote growth

The protein level in Mejhoul dates is not impressively high, but in combination with calcium, potassium, and magnesium, it is known to boost growth and ensure proper development, particularly in children or when recovering from an injury or extended illness.

Strengthen bones

Mejhoul dates contain notable levels of magnesium, manganese, copper, and calcium, all of which are vital nutrients to maintain bone mineral density in the body. So, incorporating more of these essential minerals into your diet via dates may help strengthen and improve your overall bone health.

Calories in Mejhoul dates

Mejhoul dates are quite calorically dense because there is little water in these fruits. One date, on average, weighs about 1 ounce and contains roughly 66 calories. The average serving size is about 4 dates or roughly 100 grams, totalling an average of 282 calories. While this is quite a high amount of calories for a snack and represents nearly one-eighth of most people's calorie intake for the day, this same serving also provides more than six grams of fiber and a wealth of other nutrients.

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