



Islamic Marketing: Promotional campaign in the perspective of Maqasid As-Shariah in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

The concept of marketing in business refers to product, price, place and promotions (4p's). In the era of globalization and technology, the application of Islamic marketing principles in promotional campaign is beginning to be discussed by scholars who seek for the suits that are As-Shariah compliant. The current global market for Islamic products and services is valued of more than USD 2.3 trillion a year. *Halal* food products represent 60% of the market value with the total of USD 680 trillion worldwide. This attracts many researchers to develop an Islamic marketing concept that is compliant to the Shariah law and the way of religion (*ad-deen*). Malaysia has a population of more than 30 million, with about 60% of this are Muslims. This research can help marketers to create appropriate content in marketing a product or service that is compliant to Islamic principles. The approach of using promotional campaign which is aligned with the concept of *Maqasid As-Shariah* needs to be highlighted not only to gain profit but also to serve *here after* obligations. This research aims to improvise the ways promotional campaign are being done from the perspective of *Maqasid As-Shariah* in catering the Muslims market in Malaysia.

Key Words: Islamic Marketing, Maqasid As-Shariah, Promotional Campaign

1. INTRODUCTION

The emerging market of Islamic consumers worldwide has attracted researchers to study the element of *Shariah* compliance as part of marketing strategy used for a product or service. Every business aims to get maximum profit by using any marketing strategies in order to tap into the profitable market. Currently, the global halal marketing is expected to rise more than USD 3 trillion in year 2021 (Rashid, 2016). This creates the attention of business providers to produce products or services that fulfill the demand of Islamic market. Marketing is defined

by Kotler and Armstrong (1999) as one of the social processes or managements that enables an individual or groups to achieve what they desire by creating products or services through values or exchange with the other party. American Marketing Association (AMA) defines marketing as a planning process and execution of conception, price, promotion and idea as well as forming the exchange which could satisfy an individual and organization's objectives. Based on the definition given, many business nowadays create marketing campaign that somehow did not portray the reality of the product or services. For instance, the ethical use of content from promotional campaign which are used by conventional business sometimes intentionally breaks the norms of one's belief and principal (Saeed and Baig, 2013). The extreme use of marketing campaign at times ignores the rights of consumers. These are the grey areas that need to be aligned with the concept of Islamic marketing based on the concept of *Maqasid As-Shariah*

1.1 Problem Statement

Businesses mostly rely on customers for survival and success, however, one of the most difficult tasks that the business people face is trying to attract those customers. It can be very challenging for the organization to maintain volume of sales (Carson, 2008). In contrast, as a consumer, it is becoming so difficult for Muslim to choose and ultimately purchase goods and services that are Shariah compliant. When there are many choices of famous brands in the market and each brand is competing with one another to attract Muslim customers, some manufacturers and marketers might misuse marketing and promotional campaign (Saeed *et al*, 2013). There are many cases reported about businesses that misused their campaign such as the use of fake *halal* logo, religious message to create compassion and other extreme methods such as exploitation of woman, children and old folks (Mustafa and Azlin, 2014). Due to this, there is an urgent need to increase the understanding of business providers, This research mainly aims to create an awareness about the Islamic belief, religion and culture so that business providers are aware on the guidelines that need to be followed in doing promotional campaign (Ahmad, 2013). In addition, this research is also driven by Temporal (2011) who stated that the differences between Islamic marketing and conventional marketing has not been written extensively and the difficulties in finding literatures on these topics indicated that this field has not been widely explored. Thus, this paper attempts to explore the Islamic marketing approach in general with the combination of *Maqasid As-Shariah* concept and to provide an Islamic marketing models as a guideline for future use.

1.2 Objective of the Study

This paper attempts to answer the questions of what are the underlying issues in marketing within Muslims populated countries such as Malaysia. This paper also explores the differences between Islamic marketing and conventional marketing in terms of definitions, objectives, and

its concepts in general. In order to accomplish the objectives, previous studies, articles and books are reviewed. The intention is to provide a comprehensive overview on the differences which would lead to developing models that can guide marketers to design Islamic promotional campaign while targeting the Muslim market, as well as securing the confidence of Muslim customers in purchasing halal goods, products or services. In addition, due to lack of extensive research on Islamic marketing, this paper also aims to provide an insight of *Maqasid As-Shariah* concept that can be adapted in promotional campaign.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Islamic Marketing (Promotional Campaign)

Adopting Islamic marketing strategy allows a firm to expand its core competencies in Muslim dominated market (Abdullah and Ahmad, 2010). However, having different knowledge among Muslims and cultural differences in language and tradition, makes it important for companies to choose their strategy wisely in creating good promotional campaign contents (Adnan, 2013). Acceptance towards product and services may be significantly affected if business providers use marketing campaign that is insensitive from the aspects of social, belief and cultural environment of one nation, which could lead to lower performance of business particularly overseas brand (Bohari *et al.*, 2013). In Malaysia, there are regulations that need to be adhered by any business provider while conducting promotional campaign., Certain campaigns bring straight forward messages, but there are also campaigns especially from oversea brands that use the same standard promotional message across all countries., This is the constraint that could affect the ethical use of advertising. In contrast, marketing strategy from the Islamic perspective is focused on value-maximization in order to encourage societal welfare approach, while the objectives of conventional marketing practice are based on profit maximization (Saeed *et al.*, 2001, Alserhan *et al.*, 2016). The best definition for Islamic Marketing, thus far is that “Islamic Marketing is the study of marketing phenomena in relation to Islamic principles and practices or within the context of Muslim societies” (Jafari, 2012). Within this context, Islamic marketing is religion-based marketing (Alserhan, 2011) in which your marketing activities are guided within the framework of *Islamic Shariah.*, Islamic Marketing could also mean the practices carried out by companies, Muslims or otherwise, for Muslim consumers.

Islam encompasses every aspects of our lives, including our acts of doing business with others. This includes marketing. The urge in giving the best to society through business practices require rules and regulations that are set by *Shariah* law, especially in promoting products or services to consumers. It is crucial to adhere to the principles of religion, belief and culture of the society whilst aligning with the content that marketers need to show to the

consumers. As a result, it is crucial for the players in this field to understand the different aspects of Islamic marketing and its impact on the implementation of marketing strategy to the society they served (Hassan and Bojei, 2011). In fact, oversea business exporters that have designed their marketing strategies based on the Islamic values, beliefs, norms and practices are deemed to have higher potential in enhancing their export performance in Islamic markets (Tahir and Abdul, 2013). There are some guidelines that can be applied by marketers in order to fulfill the obligation of As-Shariah while conducting business. As an example, it is forbidden to make earnings through all kinds of unclean, dangerous, hazardous products which can harm the users directly or indirectly. Production, sales and all kinds of activities related to marketing *haram* product such as alcohol, gambling and drugs are outrightly forbidden due to the products unclean nature.

2.2 Issues in Promotional Campaign

Ethical marketing such as making honest claims and satisfying the needs of potential and existing customers is a must. Such ethical acts may boost the credibility and trust of customers, develop brand loyalty, increase consumers' retention, and encourage consumers to spread words about the products or services offered (Hussnain, 2011). Unethical marketing, on the other hand, can send wrong messages about products and services, ruin the brand's reputation, and possibly lead to legal problems. In Malaysia, many business owners and sales personnel have erroneously engaged in unethical marketing practices just because they never knew what these practices are in the first place. The study made by (Hunt *et al*, 2006) shows that 56% of consumers did not realize that they are forced to purchase a product or services that they never need, promotional campaigns are the reasons they unintentionally purchase them. There are numerous reports that accused business providers to use unethical marketing strategies whilst promoting product and services. Some of the issues are making false, exaggerated or unverified claims that their products are number one in the market through overwhelmed promotional campaign which forced consumers to blindly believe in it without having a chance to compare the products with others. Some marketers use false statements, god like claim, exaggerated benefit and making intensive testimonial in order to convince consumer to choose their product or services. Other than that, distortion of facts that is misleading or confusing the consumers is another issue. They claim that their products or services are sugar free, fat free, no animal testing are the message they use to convince the consumers. Some campaign try to conceal the dark side or side effects of using the product or services, the use of mercury in cosmetic, artificial sugar in drinks, counterfeit product that claims original and other instant benefit or rewards (Landler, 1991). Using women as sex symbols, children and old folks is one of the common unethical marketing strategies in promotional campaign. The rampant use of this strategy among big brands is quite alarming. For example, half-naked beautiful models are used to attract consumers' attention in purchasing product or services

such as cosmetic and slimming pills.(Malliaris, 2001),furthermore, diapers companies use babies in their advertising campaign to draw out emotional attention.(Rytel, 2009). Other than that, the use of fear tactic such as limited time offer, or messages that push consumer to spend more than they should are also the common practices used by business to boost their sale within short period of time. They often use this tactic for consumers are easily triggered when it comes to prices and offers, which lead to panic buying behaviour among them (Hazlett 1999).

2.3 Maqasid As-Shariah Approach In Promotional Campaign

Maqasid As-Shariah reflects the holistic view of Islam. Islam is a complete and integrated codes of life which need to be practiced until hereafter and its goals encompass life, individual and society (Dusuki and Abozaid, 2007). In the meantime, the obligation of getting profit from doing business should not be neglected. Maximization of profit is not only calculated based on sales but also from the aspects of spiritual health and inner core of human which the businesses need to take the responsibility in providing just and honest message of products or services that they offer to the market (Chapra, 2000a).Implementing ethical marketing in promotional campaign is a must. These ethical practices may lead to establishment of good ecosystem between consumers and business providers such as educating the consumers to spend wisely (Jean, 2008). *Maqasid As-Shariah* approach in marketing and promotional campaign is rarely discussed by scholars because of the restriction in some methods and beliefs (Buang and Mahmud, 2012). Designing promotional campaign for Muslim consumers may be a lot more easier when the concept of Maqasid As-Shariah is understood in-depth. There are three components of *Maqasid As-Shariah* that marketers can use as guidelines; first is *dharuriyyat*, which refers to things that are included in the basic needs that must be fulfilled by each individual.. There are five important things that comprise under this benefit: the protection of religion (Deen), the protection of the life (Nafs), the protection of the Intellect (Aql), the protection of the posterity (Nasl) and the protection of the wealth (Mal). Second is *hajiyyat* which refers to the benefit of human needs. It is to eliminate the difficulties in life and provide protection of one's wellbeing. For example, Rasulullah SAW prohibited from selling something that is not clear (*gharar*) like fish in the ocean and birds in the air. This is to ensure the buyer's interest in obtaining his right after paying to the seller. The third part is *tahsiniyyat* that is an issue of customary and moral perfection. Islam sees the aspect of wealth as one aspect of a comprehensive system of trust. Property is said to belong to Allah SWT. Humans as the leader (*Khalifah*) of Allah SWT on earth have been entrusted to manage the property in the best manner.

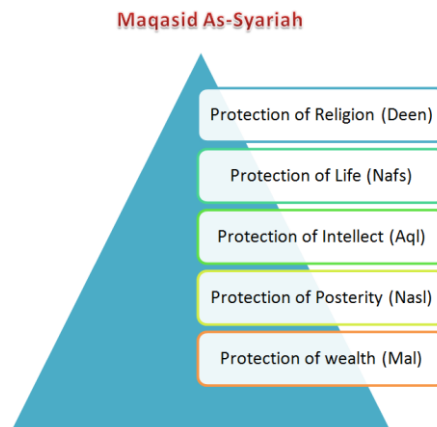


Figure 1: Five elements in *Maqasid As-Shariah*

Protection of religion (*deen*) demands every business to conduct their business strategies with good intention provide the utmost in terms of product and services which serve their belief and religion. Marketers need to be fair and responsible in business as the concept of *dharuriyyat* ensure consumers to be served with the basic needs in life, The application of this principle will bring both profit in this world and reward in afterlife.

"O' mankind! eat of what is in the earth lawful and good; and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Surely he is a manifest foe for you." Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 168-169.

In addition, protection of life (*Nafs*) is also one of *Maqasid As-Shariah* concept which encourages business to serve products and services that are not only the best in its class but also halal for Muslim consumers. Muslims believe that the product or services that we consume may influence our behaviour and good inherits. The responsibility for providing individuals with the means to be able to meet these basic needs is a must.

"...I fear the immense responsibility that has been placed on my shoulders, for if even a single goat dies from hunger in the lands I rule, I will be asked about it on the Day of Judgement."

This is the true concept of leadership in Islam and is summed up in the Arabic saying: "*al-Hukmu takleef laisa shareef*" meaning that leadership is a responsibility not an honour.

The principle of protection of intellect (*Aql*), God has ennobled all human beings and by our very nature we enjoy a unique position among His creations. ***"And indeed, We have honoured the Children of Adam"*** (Qur'an 17:70). The one unique thing that differentiates us from animals thus, gives us the position of both as authority and responsibility on earth is the power of reasoning and discernment,. Such a precious God given blessing needs to be protected and this is therefore one of the *Maqasid al-Shari'ah*. Thus, It is an obligation for business provider to preserve the intellect of consumers in giving truth message and educating them through promotional campaign. Repetition of good message through advertisement, campaign

message with good manners and dedication of faith are parts of our responsibilities as the Khalifah on earth. Campaigns which involved pornography, elements of sexuality, double meaning messages, exploitation of woman, children and old folks should be totally avoided because our intellect is not mere physical part of our bodies; rather it is a combination of logic and faith that gives us the ability to reason, to plan, to think abstractly and to learn (Muhamad., 2005).

Protection of posterity (Nasl), progeny, or lineage refers to all future generations collectively. The terms in Arabic for posterity are *al-nasl* and *al-nasa*. Islam recognizes the importance of protecting one's lineage and posterity. In doing business, business providers need to believe that any products or services that they offer in the market will be used by generations that come from different age groups, incomes, gender and other demographic factors. Protection of posterity in terms of serving *halal* is a must because it will affect the development of physical and spiritual of a human (al-Qardhawi., 1993)

"There is no other way to meet Allah SWT with peace and security but with knowledge and good deeds and they can not keep their knowledge and charity except with the health of the body. While body safety is unlikely to be achieved except by eating just what is needed "This is because what is eaten and how to eat will form the heart and soul, able to channel strength and become a way of life or religion (al-Ghazali, 2004: 108-121)

Protection of wealth (Mal) Islam encourages work, production, and earning money and other property by lawful means. ***"It is He who has made the earth manageable for you, so traverse you through its tracts and enjoy of the Sustenance which He furnishes: but unto Him is the Resurrection."*** (Holy Quran 67: 15). The importance of knowing the source of earnings is a must in Islam; this is because a doubtful earning will affect the *halal* value in it. Furthermore, the way we conduct everyday activities such as doing business need to follow the Islamic way of life.

3. METHODOLOGY

The main purpose of this paper was twofold. First, it was designed to identify the nature of conventional marketing versus Islamic marketing view in general with the adaptation of Maqasid As-Shariah that is in line with the Islamic principles. Second, to propose a model that can embed the five elements of Maqasid As-Shariah in strategic marketing practice. The process of developing the model is based on review of literature on Islamic marketing principles, *hadith* and verses from the Holy Quran. In the future, an empirical study can be conducted based on this research in order to obtain the ground data.

4. SUGGESTED CONCEPT



Figure 2: Proposed model of strategic Islamic marketing framework

Islamic Marketing can be considered a new field in Marketing. While concepts of inviting non-Muslims towards Islam practice (*da'wah*) and enjoining others to do good and forbid evil (*amr ma'ruf nahi munkar*) are well- accepted in Malaysia. (Hamid, 1991). Ethical practices within business and promotional campaigns can be improved by merging the conventional method with the *Maqasid As-Shariah* concept in order to establish a much holistic outlook of the business they serve. This framework is originated from Kotler and Armstrong, 2012 who suggested that the flow or process in doing marketing and promotional campaign will lead to revenue and profit. Meanwhile, by adapting the concept of *Maqasid As-Shariah*, the framework will be embedded within Islamic values that aim towards the protection of business and consumers. It is suggested that these five elements of *Maqasid As-Shariah* can be applied at each level of marketing process, hence can be used as guidelines for marketers to design their future promotional campaign.

<p>Protection of Religion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holistic view and approach Guidance of life Protection of faith and belief Perseverance in giving the best value in life Responsible to take care of all the needs and provide financial support for all religion 	<p>Protection of Life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Halal</i> concept for goods and services Offer healthy and quality products and services Emphasis on quality No deceit, fraud, uncertainty, danger, risk and hazard that might lead to destruction or loss 	<p>Protection of Intellect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide beneficial message to educate consumers Repeating good message Avoid misleading message, pornography, sexuality explicit message, and exploitation of woman, children and old folks. 	<p>Protection of posterity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sources of material (product/services) must be aligned with the <i>halal</i> concept Product and services not affecting the posterity (safety/health etc.) Offers value of humanity and belief 	<p>Protection of wealth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Source of earning need to follow <i>As Shariah</i> Every source of income should be according to law Avoid doubtful income for the sake of profit No stealing, robbing, manipulation, cheating, bribery, taking property by force and any other illegal means
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5. CONCLUSION

In order to satisfy business needs, Islam recognizes marketing and promotions in business which involve the activities of buying and selling and also promoting their product or services to consumers. However, Islam does not allow business to acquire another person's asset such as money or conduct transactions through stealing, robbing, manipulating, cheating, bribery, taking property by force and any other illegal means. Islamic marketing encourages businesses to provide accurate information and not to hide any essential information that will lead to *gharar* such as deceit, fraud, uncertainty, danger, risk and hazard that might lead to destruction or loss (Yusniza and Azian, 2013). Moreover, Kalthom (2008) emphasized the concept of justice and equity. All of the marketing activities have to be done in a manner that is prescribed in the Quran and Sunnah. Without proper business guidelines specifically in marketing can lead to complication problems and failure of the businesses (Salma, 2011). Basically, all businesses conducts must be in accordance with the teaching of Al Quran and Sunnah. Meanwhile, realistic in marketing means an opportunity for creativity and the ability to create breakthroughs is a must, but not to be neglected the actions taken must be according to *Maqasid As-Shariah* concept. It means that marketers that serve in Muslims majority market must be able to differentiate themselves from any other marketers who partially use or do not use Islamic principles in conducting their businesses. Finally, Islamic marketing emphasizes the element of humanistic which connotes the effort to balance between good earnings and bad earnings. This principle teaches people that every human needs to be treated fairly because we are bestowed with intellect (*Aql*) (Hejase *et al*, 2012). Ahmad (2013) concluded that Islamic marketing is different from conventional marketing since it is based on *tasawwur* that consists of three elements of faith (*iman*), deeds (*amal*) and behaviour (*akhlak*) as the core in every acts of a Muslim. All marketing activities have to be done in a manner that is prescribed in the Quran and Sunnah, while the functions and operating modes of conventional marketing are based on the man-made principles.. Without proper business guidelines specifically in marketing can lead to the complication, trouble and failure of the businesses (Salma, 2011).

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