Chapter 6

Islamic Marketing:
A Conceptual Framework for Political, Cultural, and Religious Interrelatedness

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ABSTRACT

The ultimate objective of this chapter is to provide a new conceptualization that encompasses Islam as a religion, Islamic culture, and Islamic politics to provide both academicians and practitioners with a multidimensional understanding of inter-related factors in Islamic marketing. It illustrates how cultural factors and political associations intersect with Islamic teachings and rules to shape the Muslim consumer behaviors and decision-making process; consequently, business and marketing strategies aimed at targeting Muslim consumers are either threatened or reinforced.

INTRODUCTION

Recently, the area of Islamic marketing expanded beyond the classical marketing concepts and practices to overlap with many other business disciplines. The effect of Islamic ethics developing on business practices (Rice, 1999), the emerging of Muslim entrepreneurs, who integrates Islamic values in their for-profit entrepreneurial

projects (Osella & Osella, 2009), and the Islamic culture's impact on organization behavior (Mellahi & Budhwar, 2010) showcase how Islamic marketing does not only address the interaction between consumers and goods in the marketplace, but also integrates and interrelates Islam, as a religion, with multiple business dimensions and domains.

Many products and services are currently labeled as Islamic or *halal. Halal* is an Arabic word that means "permissible" and indicates that the product, or a service, is in compliance with Islamic rules. The notion of halal products attracted significant research efforts (Al-Harran & Low, 2008; Muhammad, Isa, & Kifli, 2009; Riaz & Chaudry, 2003) and contributed to the understanding of Muslim consumers' attitudes (Omar, Muhammad, & Omar, 2008) and behavior (Wilson & Liu, 2011). studied Muslim consumers' behavior in non-Muslim country (UK) within the retail environment and found that Muslim consumers tend to trust local butchers over supermarkets with their halal meat purchases. Furthermore, proposed that the label "halal" could be considered as a brand element that could further develop, via applying branding frameworks, into a competitive advantage. With increasing importance in the market place, the issue of using "halal" logo in Malaysia has even become a regulatory challenge (Shafie & Othman, 2006).

Islamic banking is another area that has been receiving an increasing scholarly attention. Muslim consumers would like to make sure that their financial investments and bank transactions are acceptable religiously (not "Reba"). That's why some banks called themselves "Islamic Banks" as a marketing tool to attract such consumers. Whether they are different from regular banks is a debate beyond our discussion here; which focuses on promoting and communicating using a religion-driven message. The pattern of banking behavior of Bahrainis (Metawa & Almossawi, 1998), the customers' preferences in Jordan, and the consumers' perceptions in Malaysia (Ahmad & Haron, 2002) are few of several studies that focus on Islamic banking and Muslims consumers.

Provocatively, despite of the aforementioned diversified research work, and many other theoretical and empirical studies, the definition of Islamic marketing remains to be ambiguous. The literature, up to this point, did not provide us with what the term "Islamic Marketing" precisely implies (Wilson, 2012). The complexity to reach a coherent understanding of Islamic marketing could correlate to fact that Islam is one of the religions that does not only govern the relationship between a person and God (ALLAH) but also regulates the individual's interactions with the family, society, government, and financial organizations – just to name a few. Therefore, in order to reach a significant clear understating of Islamic marketing, scholars should explore many interrelated, and interconnected, constructs that shape the behavior

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