

# Chapter 10

## Demystifying the Islamic Consumer Segments

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### ABSTRACT

*The rise of the Islamic Marketing has attracted the attention of the marketers to bring Islamic perspectives in their marketing actions. There are four major pillars (i.e. Spiritualistic, Ethical, Realistic, and Humanistic), which must be focused while transacting with the Muslim consumers. This chapter synthesizes the literature available in Islamic marketing by contextualizing the need of segmenting the Muslim consumers. The chapter lists the need to segment the Muslim consumers and tries to establish a linkage with the ethical practices in Islam to create a basis for segmentation. The chapter concludes that it would be a massive overgeneralization if Muslims were assumed to be one uniform group. In fact, as noted in the essay, several differences exist within this multicultural community. It is of importance that companies acknowledge these differences, understand the possibility of numerous segments within the Muslim community.*

### INTRODUCTION

The recent rise of interest in the field of Islamic Marketing has been quite unprecedented. Several journals and articles have sprung up that attempt to comprehend marketing ideas based on the framework of the principles of Islam and within the context of the Muslim populace (Jafari, 2012). Islamic Marketing has gained

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prominence in the past few years because of the altering demographic population with the Muslims, the increased purchasing power of the community and the remarkable accomplishments of Muslim entrepreneurs (Sandikci, 2011). Multicultural segments like the community of Muslims can help a brand manager with his/her challenge to ascertain new consumer markets. While mainstream markets are heavily catered to, this faction with its \$200 billion spending propensity in US (\$2 trillion worldwide) can be avenues for growth for companies (Mabe, 2011). Further, with regards to other multicultural groups, Muslims have an inclination to become extremely loyal to the brand and wouldn't hesitate to advertise the brand's values through positive word-of-mouth (Mabe, 2011). For many academics (Wilson & Grant, 2013), Islamic Marketing represents a new and innovative strain of marketing that is a "focal phase torchbearer". It challenges convention but at the same time maintains fit for purpose marketing. The effect of this form of marketing could be thought to be similar to that of 'Green' or 'Digital' Marketing. The discovery of Muslims as a consumer market is akin to those of Hispanics and Asians as relevant market segments in US. All the above-mentioned groups have enjoyed a change in the way the Western world viewed their communities. From poor, "disadvantaged" communities, they are now seen as lifestyle groups who are potential consumers for various products (Sandikci, 2011). But why have businesses refrained from being attentive towards multicultural groups like the Muslims? A host of explanations seek to answer the aforementioned question (Emslie, Bent, & Seaman, 2007). One of the possible justifications could be the negative stereotyped image of the community as a whole. In case of Muslims, this could be the intolerance of Non-Islamic ideas and practices. Another explanation could be the lack of ethic executives in senior marketing roles of various companies. This would clarify the lack of awareness of the firms to target the multicultural segments. A third major reason could be the lack of sufficient marketing data and research materials that explore these communities in detail. Such data might hinder companies from making investments in targeting these ethnic segments.

A common theme addressed across the Islamic Marketing articles is that of the distinct approach a company should conduct its marketing transactions in an Islamic environment. A framework of four major pillars could serve as a guide for the proper execution of marketing and, in general, conducting business transactions with the Muslims (Arham, 2010). They are:

1. **Spiritualistic:** According to this pillar, businesses should guide themselves in conduct and practice by the principles of Islam when targeting the Muslim community.

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