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THE TRADITIONAL MARKETING MIX ELEMENTS: A LITERATURE REVIEW FROM ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Islamic perspective on marketing is increasingly gaining momentum in today's international economy. Firm that desires to serve Halal market or Muslim consumer needs to pay particular attention to the provisions of Islamic rules and regulations in planning and developing marketing mix elements. This paper fundamentally presents an Islamic perspective for understanding, and implementing the various elements that constitute marketing decision areas (4Ps). The paper is essentially based on content analysis through the review of extant relevant Islamic literature as it examines the meaning of marketing and marketing mix elements from the perspective of Holy Quran, Hadith and opinions of different scholars in Islamic marketing and Business literature. It was concluded that the philosophy of Islamic marketing is based on the belief of value maximization which is built on fairness and integrity for the extensive well-being of humanity. It was also noted that decision making process in the areas of marketing mix elements are guided by the principles of lawfulness, purity, existence, deliverability, and honesty. Finally, Islamic marketers should ensure that their marketing programme and strategies are consistent with Allah's main purpose of creation (i.e. worshipping Him and serving as His vicegerents on earth).

Keywords: Islamic Marketing, Traditional Marketing Mix, Islamic Perspective, Muslim Markets

1.0 Introduction

The three basic components in any economic system are production, marketing and consumption and out of these three important economic components, marketing activity serves as intermediary between the points of production and consumption in every economic system. Supporting this position Mustapha (2007) asserted that marketing plays a pivotal role in economic development of most nations because it equates demand side with supply side and acts as a means of promoting optimum economic growth and development in every nation. Marketing activity is so important that everyone engages in it every day to satisfy his/her economic needs and wants; thus, marketing activity is a crucial human endeavor that every human being consciously or unconsciously partake in to meet their socio-cultural and economic requirements.

Every business firm that desires to satisfy its customers must pay particular attention to the changing socio-cultural and economic needs of customers in the market place. This is because, consumers are fast becoming sensitive to consumption of products that are in tandem with their socio-cultural dictate and economic ability. An important aspect of socio-cultural elements that marketers must take into consideration is religion. Religion according to Hussin, Hamdar, Orfali & Hejase, (2012) has a great influence in shaping every society as

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it contributes strongly to the individual's various economic decisions including buying decision. Thus, marketing firms should clearly take religion into consideration when formulating marketing programme and strategy for their products especially now that a high number of Muslims all over the world are increasingly aware of the need to consume products that are Shariah compliant (i.e. allowed by Islamic Law). In Quran 51:56, Almighty Allah (SWT) commanded Muslims to worship Him and this worship according to Jabnoun (2008) is not restricted to the five pillars of Islam, but also includes among many other aspects of life: eating, sleeping, studying, searching into the universe, scientific investigation, doing business, attaining knowledge, and participating in sport activities. It also includes earning money to nourish and sustain one's family. All human endeavours and activities, as long as the intention is the attainment of the pleasure of Allah, are part of worship (Al-Buraey, 1990; Jabnoun, 2008).

More so, Saeed, Zafar and Syeda-Masooda (2001) maintained that Islamic perspective on commerce is increasingly gaining momentum and importance in today's global economy because Islam is a practical religion with clear daily procedures to follow and this shapes the attitudes and behaviours of its adherents. Pomeranz (2004) further admonished that companies seeking to engage in business with Muslim consumers need to know these underlying beliefs that drive the Muslim consumers' behaviour. Multi-national corporations (MNCs) should be multi-cultural as well and not simply impose their own culture; they need to adapt their operations to make their Muslim customers, employees, and suppliers comfortable with their practices (Pomeranz, 2004). These companies can constructively use the power of religion through accommodating and harnessing Muslim values more effectively when conducting their businesses in the Muslim market place (Rice 1999).

In this connection therefore, the relationship among Islam, marketing and consumption in the views of Adnan (2013) and Sandıkcı (2011) is becoming more and more important every day that any firms that aspire to succeed must not toy with because this relationship has resulted in more than 2.3 trillion USD annual halal marketing value. In parallel with this development, new marketing trends are created for firms that perform their sales and productions in accordance with Islamic rules and regulations. Firms operate in many areas from food to cosmetics and from hospitality to banking by competing among themselves to deliver products and services to Muslim consumers who consider religious sensibilities as a strong determinant of the type of product to consume (Salih, Emel& Mehmet, 2014). The importance of halal marketing value is further illustrated by Alserhan (2010) when he pointed out that *Halal* market is estimated to grow at 15 percent annually making it the fastest growing market in the world. In addition, CIA (2009) reported in its world fact book that the Muslim market is composed of approximately 21.01 percent or 1.43 billion of the entire world population. Given these potentials of Islamic marketing, it is therefore essential for business firms to have a rethink on the modern marketing trends for the purposes of tapping from abundant opportunities that halal market or Islamic marketing portends.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Literature

2.1.1 Meaning of Islamic Marketing

Islam as a religion addresses every aspects of human life according to the will of Allah (SWT). So the definition of marketing in Islam should not be restricted to buying, selling and making profit or finding human needs and filling them under any forms of business but must be seen totally as way of serving (Ibadah) our creator, Almighty Allah (SWT). In Islam, all deeds, businesses, and trade oriented human activities are considered as act of worshipping our supreme creator. Islam is the way of life governed by the teachings of Quran and the practices of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Thus, to define marketing from Islamic perspective one needs to take these two sources of Islamic laws into consideration.

According Hussnain to (2011), Islamic marketing is the process of identification and implementation of value maximization strategies for the welfare of the stakeholders in particular and the society in general governed by the guidelines given in the Quran and Sunnah. On their parts, Alom and Haque (2011) see Islamic Marketing as the process and strategy (Hikmah) of fulfilling need through Halal (Tayyibat) products and services with the mutual consent and welfare (Falah) of both parties (i.e. buyers and sellers) for the purpose of

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achieving material and spiritual wellbeing in the present world and the hereafter. In the view of Abuznaid (2012), Islamic marketing is the wisdom of satisfying the needs of customers through the good conduct of delivering Halal, wholesome, pure and lawful products and services with the mutual consent of both seller and buyer for the purpose of achieving material and spiritual wellbeing in the present world and hereafter and making consumers aware of it through the good conduct of marketers and ethical advertising.

In fact, Saeed et al (2001) liken Islamic marketing to the belief of value maximization which is built on fairness and integrity for the extensive well-being of humanity. While, rendering a summary of what Islamic marketing represents, Sula and Kartajaya (2006) observed that there are four important features that must be present before any human activity can be regarded as Islamic marketing activity and the four important features are: spiritualistic, ethical, realistic and humanistic.

2.1.2 The Traditional Four Ps of the Marketing-Mix from Islamic Perspective

Abdullah and Ahmad (2010) opine that Muslim marketers must ensure that all aspects of marketing activities (i.e. marketing mix) such as planning of goods and services, pricing and distribution strategies, as well as promotional techniques adopted are in accordance with the regulations stipulated in the Quran and the Sunnah of Prophet Mohammad (SAW). The reviewed of extant literature on Islamic marketing revealed that there is no agreement on the number of Ps or elements that make marketing mix among the scholars in this area. For instance, Hassan, Chachi and Abdul-Latiff (2008) discussed five Ps of marketing within the context of marketing as prescribed by Islamic ethics. The five Ps are product, price, promotion, place and people. Abuznaid (2012) on his part discussed nine Ps of marketing from the perspective of Islamic marketing. The nine Ps are product, price, place, promotion, process, people, physical evidence, promise and patience. However, this study specifically discussed the first four Ps which are known as the 'Traditional Ps of Marketing Mix'. The reasons for the discussion of the four traditional Ps are: The four are the focus of the current study; they are mostly discussed by all the scholars in this area, and the fact that other Ps can appropriately be fixed to any of these traditional 4 Ps.

i. Product

The processes involved in producing any good in Islam are regarded as a part of worship according to Al-Faruki (1992). The Islamic principle guiding the process of production is visualized quite differently if compared to western philosophy of production processes. Al-Misri (1991) opines that production decision making process in Islam, is guided by the principles of lawfulness, purity, existence, deliverability, and precise determination. The Islamic perspective incorporates moral and transcendental elements within the production decision-making process in product development and this is guided by the principles of Islamic business ethics (Al-Misri, 1991; Hassan et al., 2008). The principles of Islamic marketing prescribe that the product a firm sells must be entirely Halal and this simply implies that the production processes (i.e. inputs to processes and outputs) must be Shariah-compliant. The product and all that have been involved in its creation, delivery, and consumption must be environmentally friendly and totally harmless to the consumers because Islam clearly prohibits causing harm to anything that Allah (SWT) created (all-embracing harmony in the universe). An un-Halal or Haram product will be very difficult to sell to the Muslim consumers because the Muslim consumer's behaviour is mostly dictated by the common understanding of what is permissible and what is prohibited under the Shariah law. Thus, complying with Islamic principles is the quickest way, firms could use to recruit and maintain Muslim consumers as well as promote its image and products (Alserhan, n.d).

According to *them* (Ibn al-Ukhuwwah, 1983; Hassan et al., 2008) Islamic principles prescribe that:

- i. any product should be lawful and not cause any form of dullness of mind
- ii. The product should be asset backed.
- iii. The product must be deliverable since the sale of a product is not valid if it cannot be delivered.
- iv. There is a need to identify extra cost-added features that might materially change the product or impact the buyer's purchase decisions.
- v. Buyers and sellers are to discharge their obligations, financial and otherwise, in good faith, and should be based on principle of justice, fairness and equity.

The principles of Islamic marketing further dictates that the production process should be guided by the criteria of value and the impact of the product upon the whole society. Miller (1996), as cited by Hassan (2008) suggests that the main thrust behind unethical decision-making on the part of businesses to produce sub-optimal products is usually some form of cost conscious strategy (profit maximization). However, Hassan et al., (2008) observed that Islamic marketing encourages a societal and welfare approach decisions rather than decisions based on the profit maximization. The forbidden products in Islam in the view of Abuznaid (2006) include all goods that are religiously regarded as impure, like the selling and handling of spirits, wine, and pigs as well as the selling of primary goods that should be free such as grass and fire. However, it is common in the Muslim world to find people and even governments who put their savings in banks to gain interest and people who sell water and grass. These people, however, are regarded as business oriented rather than religiously minded (Abuznaid, 2006).

Alserhan (n.d) cautioned that products and acts that might be seen or interpreted as *Makrooh* (despised) or *Mushtabeh* (doubted) will be immensely difficult to market to Muslim consumers. He further observed that the same is true for companies producing these products or engaging in such acts. The Muslim consumers are ultra-sensitive and are easily swayed against anything that can be classified as un-Islamic – be it a country, a company, a product, a process and so on. For instance Alserhan (n.d) recounted that between the years 1977 and 1991 and prior to signing of the various Arab-Israeli peace agreements, Coca-Cola was banned from trading in the Arab world because the company refused to abide by the Arab League economic boycott of Israel. For decades, this cost Coca-Cola the opportunity to sell its products in Arab countries. By contrast, prior to 1992, Pepsi had abided by the boycott and enjoyed the bounties of the lucrative Coke-less Arab markets in the boycott days. The image of the company was severely hurt that it took Coca-Cola many years after the peace agreements of 1991 to build its brand in the Arab market. Therefore, marketers who desire to serve Muslim consumers should formulate marketing programmes and strategies that are in compliant with Islamic rules and regulations in product development, brand management and packaging.

ii. Pricing

Ahmed and Rahman (2015) opined that Islamic marketing does not view pricing exclusively from business perspective but also from the interest of general society. It should be pointed out that in Islam, taking buyers' concern into account is not less important than taking into account sellers' concerns. In Islam, Allah (SWT) is understood to be the sole and best Pricer. Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) said in a Hadith "Allah is the Pricer; Allah provides the wealth and withholds it, and I hope to meet Allah when there are no complaints that I have been unjust to money or blood". According to Abdullah and Ahmad (2010) the interests of all parties' (buyers, sellers, society, etc.) are protected in Islam and the idea here is that any self-interest should be sacrificed for the other higher or general objectives.

Although, acquisition of profit in business and other trading activities are highly required from Islamic shari'ah perspective, business organisations are enjoined to move beyond the narrow-minded objective of profit maximization (Ahmed & Rahman, 2015). There are a number of evidences from Quran and Hadith legalizing trade and Muslims are also commanded to acquire the profits in order to preserve the capital from losses (Omar, 2010). However, Saeed et al (2001) cautioned that too much reliance on profit-maximisation would create problems of moral hazard. Consequently, companies would create ways to maximize profits that sometimes may harm the society and this is the area where the principles of Islamic marketing becomes necessary. Profit making depends on the adoption of appropriate pricing techniques that are in compliant with Islamic business ethics. Pricing in Islam is expected to be commensurate with the value of a product and Islamic marketing principles expect pricing system to be fair, just, and reasonable to the sellers and buyers. According to Shaw (1996) the principles of Islamic marketing prohibits getting something too easily without hard labour, or receiving a profit without working for it.

Furthermore, the principle of Islamic marketing law does not allow changing a product's price without changing the quality or quantity of the product because this amounts to cheating the easy-going customer for illicit gains (Ibn Taymiyah, 1983). Islam also forbids false propaganda or publicity on the part of marketers regarding the position of demand and supply through the media. It should be pointed out that Islam does not prohibit price controls and manipulations to meet the needs of the market. This position implies that the Islamic marketing ethics allow charging higher prices sometimes as a result of natural scarcity of supply of a given product or setting price ceilings to curb opportunistic tendencies among

merchants (Hussinet al., 2012; Hassan et al., 2008). Almighty Allah warned business owners and traders to be fair and just in the process of measuring of products (produce) and in setting product prices in Qur'an, 83: 1-5. However, the principle of Islamic social justice demands regulation of the market to guarantee that prices remain fair in the market place as this is required in order to curb the desire to monopolize the markets.

Hassan et al. (2008) further cautioned that all unethical lapses or sharp practices in pricing are tantamount to 'injustice' and are sinful in the sight of Allah (SWT) our creator. Hence, all profits earned through such unjustified prices are not only unethical, but they infringe upon the unique status of man/woman and his/her role and responsibilities as viewed under the Islamic framework. Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) was reported to have remarked, "Do not raise prices in competition" (al-Nawawi, 2:270). In order to eliminate this type of injustice, marketers must acknowledge that they have higher moral responsibilities on earth rather than be preoccupied with profit maximization alone (Hassan, 2008).

iii. Promotion

The focus of every marketer is to make product available to the consumers at the right place, at the right time, and at a reasonable price. This requires, inter alia, transmitting information that may help customers determine whether the product will satisfy their needs (Mowen, 1995). Product promotion in Islam is meant to inculcate Islamic values, build the characters of customers and marketers, and uphold truth in the society. Ethical behaviour in advertising and other promotional activities must be based on a strong foundation of Islamic tenets and injunctions. The Qur'anic and Sunnatic views about man and his resources should be the basis for designing promotional tools and media strategies in Islamic marketing. According to Abdullah and Ahmad (2010), Muslim marketers must ensure that all aspects of marketing activities, such as planning of goods and services, pricing and distribution strategies, as well as the promotional techniques used are in accordance with the regulations stipulated in the Quran and the Sunnah.

In the views of Hassan et al.(2008) there is no room in Islam to justify any form of deceptive promotional behaviour. Al-mighty Allah is unequivocal on this as the Holy Qur'an condemns all forms and shapes of false assertion, unfounded accusation, concoction and false testimony (Al-Qur'an, 43:19). Also, Ibn al-Ukhuwwah (1983) reported that under Islamic marketing ethics, it is unethical for the salesman or customer relations advisor (CRA) to over-praise his products and attribute to them qualities which they do not possess. Hassan et al.(2008) further added that giving a false impression of any kind to promote or sell a product is strictly prohibited within the Islamic ethical framework of international marketing practices. Thus, Hassan et al.(2008) identified the following ethics that Islamic marketers must observe in product promotions:

- (a) Avoidance of false and misleading advertising;
- (a) Rejection of high pressure manipulations, or misleading sales tactics;
- (m) Avoidance of sales promotions that use deception or manipulation.

Tyser et al. (1967) pointed out that it is obligatory for every seller to reveal all known defects which cannot be seen "on the surface" and cannot be found out by the " cursory glance" to the purchaser. In addition, it is dictated that – "A sale without any stipulation makes it necessary that the thing sold should be free from defect". Marketing disclosure is manifested either by assurance which will be given by word of mouth or in writing, or in some cases silence will mean assurance (Niazi, 1996). The Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) expressly condemned all manipulative promotional behaviour stating that "One who cheats us is not one of us" (al-Nawawi 2: 770).

The principle Islamic of marketing ethics according to Hassan et al.(2008) enjoin that promotional techniques must not use sexual appeal, emotional appeal, fear appeal, false testimonies and pseudo research appeal, or contribute to the dullness of the mind or encourage extravagance. Thus, from Islamic marketing context, these methods are unethical since they are utilized purely to exploit the basic instinct of consumers worldwide with a view to gain profits and greater market share. Furthermore, Islamic ethics strictly prohibits stereotyping of women in advertising, and excessive use of fantasy. The use of suggestive language and

behaviour, and the use of women as objects to lure and attract customers are also not allowed (Hassan et al. 2008). There is a need to develop not only general guidelines for achieving marketing goals and corporate objectives in a morally acceptable manner, but also to devise an Islamic code of marketing by Muslim marketers, corporate leaders, and shari'ah experts (Anwar & Saeed, 1996). Therefore, there is need to formulate not only general strategies for achieving marketing goals and corporate objectives in a morally acceptable manner, but also to conceive an Islamic code of marketing by shari'ah experts, corporate leaders and Muslim marketing practitioner

iv. Place (Distribution)

In the views of Saeed et al. (2001) and Hassan (2008) the main purpose of distribution system and its components in Islamic marketing is to create value and uplift the standard of living of consumers through the provision of ethically satisfactory goods and services to the target market. According to the principles of Islamic marketing, distribution channels are not supposed to create a burden to the final customer, in terms of higher prices and delays. Ethical lapses in distribution channels as those which cause unnecessary delays in their delivery compelling customers to return repeatedly and thus causing them unnecessary inconveniences are not allowed in Islam (Ibn al-Ukhuwwah, 1983; Abuznaid, 2012). Islamic marketing does not prohibit agency representation as a link in the market to facilitate the easy movement and acquisition of product in the markets as long as such representative performs his/her obligations within the ambit of Islamic principles guiding agency representation.

In Islamic marketing, physical distribution is viewed as an integrated collection of information, people, equipment, and organization (Hassan et al., 2008; Abuznaid, 2012; Ahmed & Rahman, 2015). These scholars unanimously agreed that product distribution in Islamic institutions should be conducted in compliant with the following principles:

- i. Not to manipulate the availability of a product for purpose of exploitation
- ii. Not to use coercion in the marketing channel
- iii. Not to exert undue influence over the re-sellers' choice to handle a product
- iv. Use of packaging designs with adequate security and protection for the product
- v. Use appropriate package for product
- vi. Not to transport dangerous and toxic products on public high ways and,
- vii. Not to create a burden for the final customer in terms of higher prices and delays

Hassan et al. (2008) warned that unethical practices in distribution such as the usage of packaging designs without adequate security and protection for the product, inappropriate packaging, and dangerous and toxic products transported through public highways are inexcusable and unjust marketing practices from Islamic perspective. Thus, Islamic marketers that want to succeed in this world and in the hereafter are expected to ethically display at all times a sense of fairness and just to every customers regardless of whether they are rich or poor, Muslims or Christians, black or white, individual or corporate body.

3.0 Summary of Submission

The conception, development and production of product from Islamic perspective must be guided by Islamic rules and regulations which emphasis principles of lawfulness, purity, existence, deliverability, and precise determination. The Islamic law specifically allows all Muslims to consume wholly *Halal* products and *Halal* products from Islamic perspective simply refer to those products that are Shariah-compliant from the transformation of its inputs to processes and outputs. In Islam, pricing is not exclusively seen from business perspective but also from the perspective of fostering the general interest of the society. Islamic marketing emphasizes the need to take buyers' concern into consideration when setting product prices and this is because Islam believes that the interests of all parties' (buyers, sellers, etc.) should be adequately protected in the society. The reason behind this is that all self-interests should be sacrificed for the interest of the society in general. Thus, business operators are enjoined to move beyond the narrow-minded objective of profit maximization. Promotional activities from Islamic marketing perspective must be strictly based on strong foundation of Islamic creeds and injunctions guiding the conception and transmission of product information to end users. Islamic principles prohibit deceptive promotional behavior, any forms and shapes of false assertion, unfounded accusation, concoction and false testimony about goods and services. The purpose of distribution and logistics system in Islamic marketing is to create value and uplift the standard of living of

consumers through the provision of ethically (Halal) satisfactory goods and services to the target market. Islamic marketing enjoined business operators to make products available to the consumers at the right place, at the right time and in right form and to always guide against hoarding of products and unethical tendencies of channel members.

4.0 Conclusion

This paper reviewed literature on the concept of traditional marketing mix elements from Islamic perspective. Based on the review of the extant Islamic literature on marketing principles and practices, the following conclusions are made:

- i. That a high number of Muslims all over the world are increasingly aware of the need to consume products that are Shari'ah-compliant (i.e. allowed by Islamic Law).
- ii. That the relationship among Islam, marketing and consumption is becoming more and more important every day that any firms that aspire to succeed must not toy with the potentials of Halal markets which is estimated to worth more than 2.3 trillion USD annual marketing value.
- iii. That the philosophy of Islamic marketing is based on the belief of value maximization which is built on fairness and integrity for the extensive well-being of humanity.
- iv. Product and brand management decision making process is guided by the principles of lawfulness, purity, existence, deliverability, and precise determination.
- v. That promotional techniques must not use sexual appeal, emotional appeal, fear appeal, false testimonies and pseudo research appeal, or contribute to the dullness of the mind or encourage extravagance.
- vi. That channel of distribution should not create any form of encumbrance to the final customer, in terms of higher prices and delays but create value and uplift the standard of living of consumers through the provision of ethically satisfactory goods and services to the target market at right time.
- vii. Marketing activities from Islamic perspective should be spiritualistic, moral, realistic and humanistic in nature.
- viii. Formulation of Islamic marketing programmes, policies and strategies are to be in line with Allah's main purposes of creation which are worshipping Him and serving as His vicegerents on earth.

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