

Muslim markets

The impact of marketing strategies on halal products and Islamic marketing

The global market for Muslims is growing at an exponential rate. According to Shah *et al.* (2019) Muslims have the fastest growing population globally, with a projected rate of 1.5% compared to 0.7% for non-Muslims, and are already the second largest religions grouping in the world. This population growth means that the Muslim market is one of the most profitable and potentially under-exploited due to the sheer size of it, and holds the potential for significant growths for organizations which cater towards Islam and in particular, have Halal products and services. The population growth rate of Muslims mirrors the significant increase in collective wealth, with total assets held by Muslims globally set to rise from \$2tn to \$3.5tn by 2021, with \$3tn of that estimated to be spent on food and lifestyle products and services. As such, Muslim consumers are an attractive market segment, which indicates the need for Halal marketing to be put into better practice.

Shah *et al.* (2019) have indicated that, compared to the large majority of mainstream global religions, Islam is one of the most traditionally adhered to, and has not gone as far as other religions in terms of adopting more modern approaches to cultural or personal choices. What this means in terms of marketing is that advertising based upon Islamic concepts and concerns has a focused but very large target audience. This results in the ability for Muslim-focused marketing to be able to reach an extensive, global, audience, and be distinct from all other forms of marketing. There is, it appears, less pressure to market products for Muslims and be concerned with reaching other audiences. As such, Halal marketing is becoming a fast growing and important aspect of global marketing strategies. Halal marketing, relating to those things that are permissible under Islam and opposite Haram, those things that are prohibited, is now of key concern. The typically more uniform nature of Islam across the world means that, coinciding with the rise of the Muslim middle class, products marketed for Muslims can be sold universally despite the geographical spread of the Muslim population.

Faithful marketing

The segmentation, targeting, and positioning (STP) framework in strategic marketing allows those involved in deciding marketing strategies to understand how best to frame their products or services. STP is a three-step process which first identifies market segments, before targeting the marketing activities at specific segments, and finally positioning the offerings of products or services. In this process market segmentation can occur based on several different principles depending on the desired result for the organization involved. Because of the growing interest in providing Halal products to the mass market, the Halal market can now be distinguished as its own market segment. Because of this, and the clear target audience of Halal products (predominantly Muslims), Halal products and services can be positioned to engage with the widest possible number of consumers – those abiding by the laws and rules of Islam, and those non-Muslims who consider Halal products as an alternative option for health food, for example.

Halal products can have broad appeal, according to Shah *et al.* (2019), especially if those who engage in marketing consider a wider segment than just Muslims. This means that product positioning should be considered to not alienate other potential customers, and for organizations that sell Halal products to be careful to avoid being perceived as Muslim-centered only. Whilst the Halal market has grown to be able to be considered using a segmentation strategy, savvy Halal marketers should leverage the positioning rationale in order to combine Halal principles with wider marketing strategies to broaden potential customer bases.

Keywords:

Marketing strategy,
Positioning,
Islamic marketing,
Halal marketing,
Marketers

Comment

The review is based on 'Halal marketing: a marketing strategy perspective' by Syed Adil Shah, Sarwar M. Azhar and Niaz Ahmed Bhutto, published in the *Journal of Islamic Marketing*.

Reference

Shah, S.A., Azhar, S.M. and Bhutto, N.A., (2019), "Halal marketing: a marketing strategy perspective", *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, doi: [10.1108/JIMA-11-2018-0211](https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-11-2018-0211).

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