Non-Muslims' Beliefs about Islamic Advertising: Another Exploratory Study in Malaysia
(*Kepercayaan Bukan Islam Mengenai Pengiklanan Secara Islam: Satu Kajian Penerokaan di Malaysia*)

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ABSTRACT

This paper explored Non-Muslims' beliefs about Islamic advertising. It adapted thought elicitation for data collection using 'word association technique'. When compared to Muslims, some similar as well as very dissimilar beliefs were extracted regarding Islamic advertising. While they were categorized into the same dimensions as their Muslims counterparts, this research also extracted some different dimensions and sub-dimensions. This research develops the concept of Islamic advertising from the point of view of non-Muslims, as previously only Muslims' views were available. It will help the theorists and the advertisers equally. With a growing concern for business ethics, this research attempts to eradicate the ill-effects of contemporary advertising by providing sound evidence to revise advertising policies. It is the first of its kind and adds to the developing field of Islamic marketing.

Keywords: Islamic advertising; Islamic marketing; Ethical advertising; Ethical marketing; thought elicitation technique.

ABSTRAK

Kertas kerja ini meneroka kepercayaan orang bukan Islam tentang pengiklanan Islam. Ia menyesuaikan pemikiran elicitation untuk pengumpulan data menggunakan 'teknik persatuan perkataan'. Jika dibandingkan dengan umat Islam, ada yang serupa serta kepercayaan yang sangat berbeza diekstrak mengenai pengiklanan Islam. Walaupun mereka dikategorikan ke dalam dimensi yang sama seperti rakan-rakan muslim mereka, kajian ini juga mengekstrak beberapa dimensi dan sub-dimensi yang berbeza. Kajian ini membangunkan konsep pengiklanan Islam dari sudut pandangan orang bukan Islam, kerana sebelum ini hanya pandangan orang Islam yang ada. Ia akan membantu ahli teori dan pengiklan sama. Dengan kebimbangan yang semakin meningkat untuk etika perniagaan, penyelidikan ini cuba untuk membasmi kesan buruk pengiklanan kontemporari dengan menyediakan bukti kukuh untuk menyemak semula dasar pengiklanan. Ia adalah yang pertama seumpamanya dan menambah kepada bidang pemasaran Islam yang sedang membangun.

Kata kunci: Pengiklanan berasaskan Islam; pemasasan berasaskan Islam; pengiklanan beretika; pemasaran beretika; teknik elikasi pemikiran.

INTRODUCTION

"*How many of us here can say that he's never been a party to deceptive advertising... and who among us has not been so mesmerized by the lyricism of a piece of copy, or the beauty of a layout, or the poetic tintinnabulations of a musical instrument that he has ignored the consumer's rightful desire to be told quickly and clearly – without a lot of meaningless guff – how the product will benefit them?*" (Warne 1962: 10-11, quoted in Shafiq et al. 2017: 411).

Unfavorable attitudes toward advertising constitute majority of the literature on advertising (Aaker & Bruzzone 1985; Andrews, Lysonski, & Durvasula 1991; Ashill & Yavas 2005; Barnes & Dotson 1990; De Run et al. 2010; Fam, Waller, & Erdogan 2002; Larkin 1977; MacKenzie & Lutz 1989; Mehta 2000; Muehling 1987; Santos 1976; Ting & Run 2012). "Advertising is perceived as one of the most unethical businesses" (Mostafa 2011: 42). This creates negative attitudes towards advertisements. Rampant negative attitudes breed public and court trials from special-interest groups, consumer rights activists, or competitors, eventually resulting in lost revenue for a company (Shafiq et al. 2017).

This makes it imperative for advertisers to adopt ethical practices in advertising. The existing theories on ethics and the resulting principles lack universality and abidance (Shafiq et al. 2017). A single course of action is needed to guide ethics in advertising. Taking guidance from religious teachings can solve the issue of universality. In this regard Islamic teachings can guide advertising practices (Abdullahi 2017). Islamic teachings regarding communication and business offer a potential solution to the problems of conventional advertising. But Islamic concept of advertising is still in its nascent stages and more exploratory and empirical studies are required.

This study is another step to develop Islamic advertising theory. A critical review of literature reveals two streams: one that believes Islamic advertising is only for Muslims (for example Anwar & Saeed 1996; Abuznaid 2012); the other believes it is universal. This paper resides in the second stream. It takes inspiration from Shafiq et al. (2016 & 2017) and Shafiq (2018). In a globalized world, understanding any concept from multiple viewpoints is imperative. Thus, while Shafiq et al. (2017) found Muslims' beliefs about Islamic advertising, understanding how non-Muslims perceive it holds relevance and importance. Hence this research had two objectives:

1.   What are non-Muslims' beliefs about Islamic advertising?
2.   How do these beliefs compare with those of Muslims?

Additionally, it was expected that the dimensions explored in this research would not be entirely the same as found previously. Therefore, the dimensions discussed below are categorically compared with those found by Shafiq et al. (2017).

LITERATURE REVIEW

CRITICISM ON ADVERTISING

To break through the clutter such advertisements are created that generate attention: "these ads may get attention, but it's the wrong kind of attention" (Wells et al. 2008: 60). The history of criticism on advertising is as old as the history of advertising itself (Wills & Ryans 1982) and is growing proportionally with advertising industry's growth (Ferle & Lee 2002). Gallup polls for measuring professional ethics often rate advertising the lowest, hence the cliché "advertising ethics is an oxymoron" (Fullerton et al. 2013: 33). Majority of criticism on advertising has been on its social effects, which include: creating false values (Shimp 2010) i.e. encouraging materialism (Anwar & Saeed 1996; Pollay & Mittal 1993; Shah & Xianhong 2011) and fueling 'shape-versus-mirror' controversy (Arens et al. 2013; Wells et al. 2008). Advertising is believed to be deceptive and misleading (Abdullah & Ismail 2011; Kottman 1969; Pratt & James 1994; Saeed et al. 2001). It promotes harmful products (Arens et al. 2013; Clow & Baack 2012). It causes nuisance with its heavy repetition and insulting people's intelligence (Shimp 2010). It is overpowering the media (Greyser 1972; Spence & Heekeren 2005) and is omnipresent (Ferle & Lee 2002). It targets children, too naïve to understand (Dubinsky & Hensel 1984; Fullerton et al. 2013; Singh & Kaur 2014), resulting in parent-children conflict (Schlegelmilch 2001). It uses celebrities to appeal to emotions (Kumar 2012) which is often offensive, poor in taste (Wells et al. 2008), and explicitly displays sex in advertising (Clow & Baack 2012; Haque et al. 2011). It also comes under fire for being stereotypical towards diversity, gender roles, and racial, ethnic, and senior citizens representation (Arens et al. 2013), especially to women (Alserhan 2011; Mokhtar 2016). From economics perspective, advertising causes an increase in prices (Schlegelmilch 2001) and wastes economic resources (Kumar 2012).

WHAT IS ISLAMIC ADVERTISING?

From the work of Shafiq et al. (2016 & 2017) and Shafiq (2018) Islamic advertising can be defined as: advertising that adheres to the principles of Islam, irrespective of the producer, the audience, or the channel religious orientation. The philosophy and the resulting principles in these researches form the foundation of Islamic advertising. Haque et al. (2017), Shafiq et al. (2017), and Abdullah et al. (2019) have comprehensively argued why Islamic advertising is necessary in contemporary business enviornment These authors contend that principles of Islamic advertising are universally applicable and cannot be denied from ethical view point. It is posited as a solution to unethical practices in contemporary advertising. Alserhan (2011) gave several general rules for promotions. These are derived from basic principles of *halāl* and *harām* deduced by Beekun (2003) (see Table 1). Shafiq et al. (2016 & 2017) and Shafiq (2018) have explained these principles in detail.

TABLE 1. The general rules pertaining to *halāl* and *harām*

1.	The basic principle is the permissibility of things.
2.	To make (anything) lawful and to prohibit (anything) is the right of Allah alone, and interfering with these is tantamount to committing *shirk*.
3.	Similarly, falsely representing the *harām* as *halāl* is prohibited.
4.	Good intentions do not make the *harām* acceptable.

2

5. The prohibition of things is due to their impurity and harmfulness. In the same vein, whatever is conducive to the *harām* is itself *harām.*

6. What is *halāl* is sufficient, while what is *harām* is superfluous.

7. The *harām* is prohibited to everyone alike.

8. Doubtful things are to be avoided.

9. Necessity dictates exceptions.

10. The basic principle is the permissibility of things.

(Source: Beekun (2003: 31)

EXISTING WORK ON ISLAMIC ADVERTISING

The existing work on Islamic advertising can be divided into two streams: those who consider Islamic advertising is only for a Muslim audience or can only be executed by a Muslim marketer. Work done in this stream includes (Abdullahi 2017; Abdul Cader 2015; Abdur Razzaque 2016; Bari & Abbas 2011; Behravan, Jamalzadeh, & Masoudi 2012; Chachula et al. 2009; Feiz et al. 2013; Ghani, Aziz, & Niazi 2019; Khraim 2012; Luqmani, Yavas, & Quraeshi 1987; Mokhtar 2016; Niazi, Ghani, & Aziz 2019; Salimi 2012; Turnbull, Howe-Walsh, & Boulanouar 2016; Yahya & Rasit 2019). These scholars have generally taken the context of a particular country/region to understand Islamic advertising and to explain the impact of Islam on advertising strategies. Some have used the same context to explain/evaluate/criticize advertisements from the point of view of their culture The strategies given in these researches are for Muslim and international marketers both. The other stream includes those who consider Islamic advertising to be universal, irrespective of the religion of the advertiser and/or the audience. The common, even though a few names within this stream are (Mokhtar & Samsudin 2015; Shafiq et al. 2016, 2017; Shafiq 2018). These authors have explained the general understanding of Islamic advertising and how it can be utilized by advertisers to fight the unethical practices within this industry. In doing so, they have not specified it to any context of religion, culture, or geography.

REVISITING SHAFIQ ET AL. (2017) – A SIGNIFICANT WORK WITHIN THE SECOND STREAM

The literature relevant for this paper is the second stream of research on Islamic advertising. The work by Shafiq et al. (2017) found what Muslims think about the idea of Islamic advertising. Data was collected from Undergraduate students and faculty members of a public university in Malaysia. It extracted 5 themes about its possibility, nature, characteristics, practical aspects, and outcomes, each with several corresponding categories. If Islamic advertising is universal, irrespective of religion of the advertiser and the audience then it is pertinent to know what non-Muslims think about it. After all, the advertisements based on Islamic principles would be aired on mass media and viewed by all. Shafiq et al. (2017) did not find it which makes this research in hand more important and necessary.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUE USED

Malaysia is a multi-religious country where the religious beliefs held by Muslims are more pronounced and strongly held (Waller & Fam 2000). It strives to become a global *halāl* hub and a society with highest ethical and religious norms, which makes it a probable choice for this research. Further, Waller et al. (2005) also highlight that the cultural diversity in Malaysia and the major influx of foreign companies has raised the importance of advertising codes and ethics.

This research was based in interpretivist paradigm. Projective technique, and therein word association technique, was used for data collection. Content analysis was used for analysis. Qualitative research agrees on the existence of multiple realities. The researcher with her own personality determines the reality presented in the research. The author is a Muslim and has written on Islamic Marketing previously. To protect from biasness caused by his religion and to ensure the 'truth value' all responses were analysed and written in their entirety without any editing or concealment of data. This ensures that the readers and other researchers see the complete data to make conclusions. 'Consistency' is maintained by mentioning all decision taken in the analysis process and the reasons of doing so. This ensured that other researchers reach the same conclusion if following this trail (Lincoln & Guba 1999).

Responses were gathered from undergraduate students of International Business and Marketing in a private university of Malaysia. The only demographic used to filter respondents was religion. Thus, responses only from non-Muslim students were included for analysis. 49 males and 47 females voluntarily took part in this research; They aged between 19-24 years, with the average age being 21 years.

The students were contacted in a classroom. They were given a sheet of paper having 20 empty boxes. They were told that they had 5 minutes to write *all* and *any* thoughts, without hesitation, that they could think of upon viewing the phrase displayed on the projector screen. Each thought was to be written in a separate box. After giving these instructions the phrase 'Islamic advertising' was displayed. After 5 minutes the sheets were collected back for analysis. This view comes from Mariampolski (2001: 23) who writes that qualitative research is often conducted to explore and "learn the right questions to ask and the most meaningful ways to pose questions in a larger survey". The most common advertising research techniques are projective techniques, one-on-one interviews, and focus groups. Their use is a function of desired information and availability of time and money (Slater 1998).

METHOD - PROJECTIVE TECHNIQUE

Projective techniques are used in advertising for exploring thoughts, associations, and mental images consumers have about a brand (Jones 1998). By using such techniques, respondents find expressing themselves easier. This research used word association technique for generating beliefs regarding Islamic advertising. In word association participants are asked to list the words when one thinks upon encountering a particular brand name, category, product, or person. The deciding factors in these tests are free association and not to lead or influence responses. The inspiration for using this technique comes from Muehling (1987) which was also adopted by Durvasula et al. later in 1993 and Shafiq et al. in 2017.

ANALYSIS

Content analysis was used to analyse the responses gathered (Graneheim & Lundman 2004). Individual responses of each respondent were the units of analysis (Mertens 1998), which requires thorough scanning of the responses to uncover patterns (Graneheim & Lundman 2004). This research takes inspiration from previous research of similar nature (Shafiq et al. 2017). It extracted some categories of beliefs about Islamic advertising which gave the foundation for this research too. For this research all responses were screened to categorize them into one of the five categories previously extracted. All the words were first listed down to ensure none is missed. Next, the words were put under one or multiple categories, depending upon their meaning and context. It was an iterative process that required multiple visits to the responses to ensure zero redundancy among the responses and the dimensions and a maximum match between nature of responses and the dimension it was attached to.

However, this research did not only limit itself to its predecessor, but extended its sub-categories further, hence stretching the knowledge boundaries. After careful scrutiny, the following belief dimensions emerged (summarized in Figure 1).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

ISLAMIC ADVERTISING – IS IT POSSIBLE?

This dimension relates to respondents' questioning the possibility of Islamic advertising and its existence. Islamic advertising is relatively a new concept; arguably, it is even more novel to the non-Muslims. Hence questions/beliefs regarding its possible existence were more frequent than those by Muslims in Shafiq et al. (2017). Some common categories of responses in this dimension are:

1. Many wrote 'marketing', 'marketers', or 'propaganda' to reflect their belief that Islamic advertising is another marketing gimmick. It is another trick to attract people's (or Muslims') attention. It is worthy to state here that the first word from a respondent was 'WHAT!' (capitalized in original) depicting total disbelief in Islamic advertising. '[There is] no need of such concept' was also found in the responses reflecting a strong disfavor. In addition, several other similar beliefs were: 'rejected', 'overblown', and 'confusing'. These reflect the respondents' disapproval with the concept of Islamic advertising. In contrast, only one favorable response, 'approved', was found.

2. In terms of awareness, there were several divergent comments. Islamic advertising was termed 'unfamous [sic] (not known)' as well as 'known', signifying the existence of a duality in this regard. Such duality exists since Islamic advertising is a new concept and it is even more novel among non-Muslims. This relates to the theme 'a new concept' in Shafiq et al. (2017).

3. It is 'hard (to execute)'. This reflect lack of confidence in practicality of Islamic advertising. This is congruent to the finding in Shafiq et al. (2017) in which Muslims also believed that it is a difficult concept to execute. Conversely, some also felt that Islamic advertising is 'spreading' and has 'potential' and 'endless possibilities'. Another belief common to the last two was '(should be) tried' which suggests that novel ideas such as Islamic advertising should be given a chance.
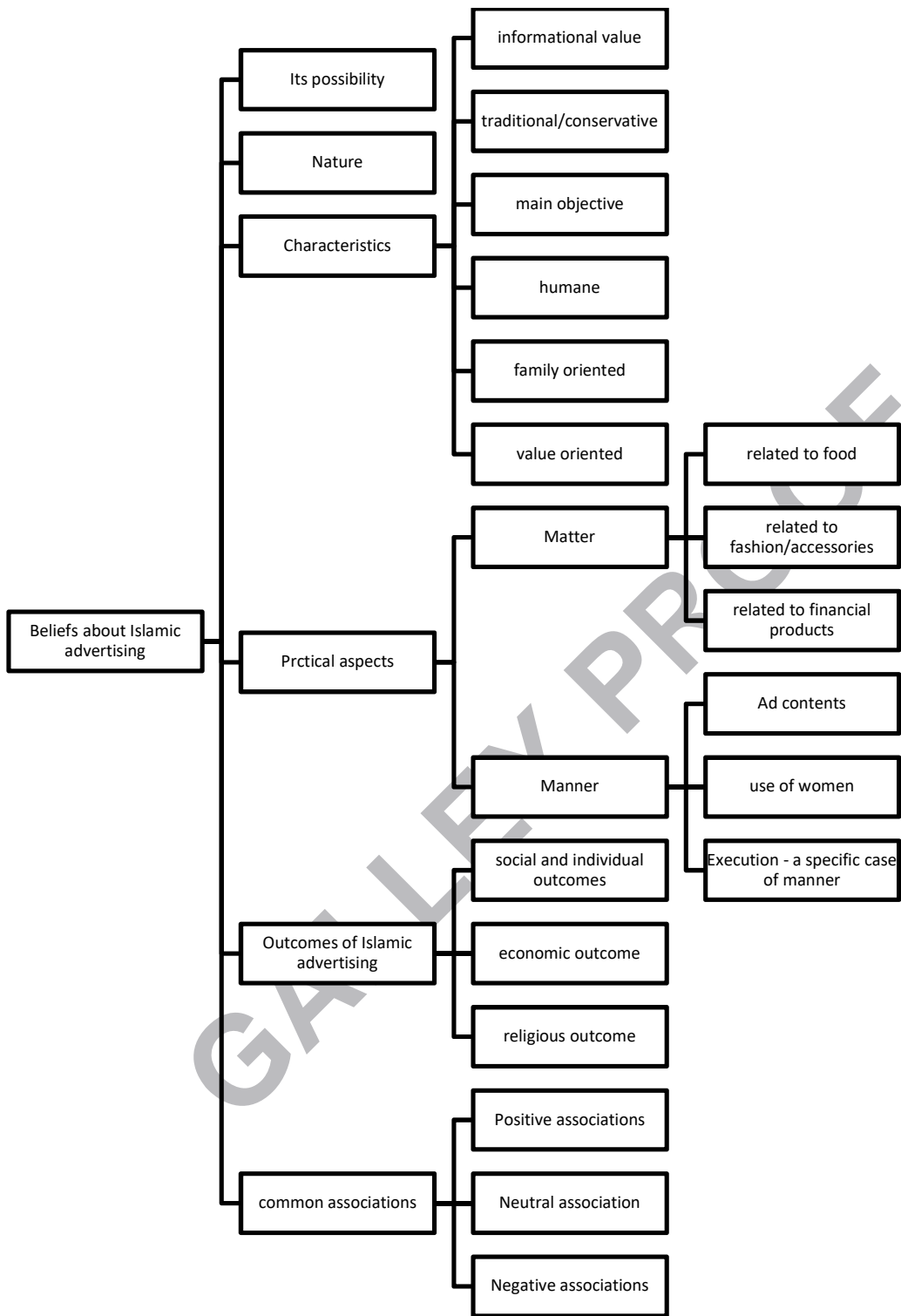
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Beliefs about Islamic advertising
├── Its possibility
├── Nature
├── Characteristics
│   ├── informational value
│   ├── traditional/conservative
│   ├── main objective
│   ├── humane
│   ├── family oriented
│   └── value oriented
├── Prctical aspects
│   ├── Matter
│   │   ├── related to food
│   │   ├── related to fashion/accessories
│   │   └── related to financial products
│   └── Manner
│       ├── Ad contents
│       ├── use of women
│       └── Execution - a specific case of manner
├── Outcomes of Islamic advertising
│   ├── social and individual outcomes
│   ├── economic outcome
│   └── religious outcome
└── common associations
    ├── Positive associations
    ├── Neutral association
    └── Negative associations
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FIGURE 1. Summary of findings

NATURE

Nature is the essence of Islamic advertising. If Islamic advertising is analogous to a tree, *nature* forms its roots from which stem its *characteristics*, bearing fruits of *execution* (Shafiq et al. 2017). Under this dimension, though there were responses similar to what Shafiq et al. (2017) found, they were with the same passion and appropriateness in terms of terminologies. The author attributes this to the religious orientation of the respondents who were not Muslims:

1. *Submission to God* was a category in Shafiq et al. (2017) built on the notion that everything that a Muslim does is for Allah (SWT). This research did not find this phrase explicitly. Instead, the words 'Allah', '*Qur'an*', and 'Islam' appeared several times – 10, 4, and 10 times respectively. While this does mean that Islamic advertising follows the will of Allah (SWT) which He revealed through the *Qur'an*, the respondents did not say this in an obvious way. This can be attributed to lack of knowledge, and perhaps conviction, in the religion.
2. The word *halāl* was very commonly found in Shafiq et al. (2017) and thus formed a category of 'nature'. Islamic advertising was termed '*halāl* advertising' there. Similarly, the word *halāl* was repeated 46 times in this research, while its opposite, *haraam* and non-*halāl* were mentioned only 2 and 4 times, respectively. It can be inferred that even non-Muslims firmly believe that Islamic advertising pertains to everything that is *halāl*. Other commonly mentioned words synonymous to *halāl* were 'pure' and 'clean'. *Halāl* is translated as pure and clean by scholars before (Abuznaid 2012; Shafiq et al. 2015). It is also a common belief that *halāl* (food or other items) is purer and cleaner (Jamal 2011/2012; Rajagopal et al. 2011). This was another similarity found with Shafiq et al. (2017).
3. Many Muslims termed Islamic advertising as '*Shari'ah* oriented or *Shari'ah* compliant ads' in Shafiq et al. (2017). These terms were not found exactly but the respondents of this research did believe that Islamic advertising was 'holy', 'by the book', and '(follows the) book'. Similarly, Islamic advertising was believed to be 'clear' in terms of 'rules', delineating the permissible and impermissible. So, similarity is conveyed in meaning but not by words.
4. Finding similarities was not the objective of this paper. This paper meant to draw a comparison. While comparing, one very sharp dissimilarity was drawn. Respondents believed Islamic advertising to be 'assertive (at time)' in the sense that it has 'imposed information'. The non-Muslims believed that Islamic advertising is a result of strict rules and confines which dictate the adherents of Islam about what can/cannot be done. This carries a duality: one for audience, the other for practitioners. For the audience it is mainly result-oriented, meaning that Islamic advertising influences the audience to behave in certain ways. From practitioners' angle, this category means that Islamic advertising imposes certain restrictions on how advertisements should be made. The readers have the liberty to take it positively that Islam restricts Muslims within a boundary, nevertheless the words used by the respondents were not pleasant and optimistic in nature. These words reflect more pessimism and repulsion, implying that Islamic advertising *forces* the adherents *against their wills.*

CHARACTERISTICS

The nature of Islamic advertising implies certain characteristics. As said earlier, *nature* of Islamic advertising is the root, while *characteristics* form stem of the tree. The *nature* of Islamic advertising rests in submission to Allah (SWT), while its *characteristics* define what it means. Some of the common characteristics are:

Information Value   This is a generic category inside which many beliefs can be categorized. Some commonly occurring beliefs were 'informative', 'awareness', 'factual', 'logic', and 'educative' all of which relate to type of information being given. The respondents believed Islamic advertising gives factual information, educates, and creates awareness. This covers several aspects of the principles of advertising by Shafiq et al. (2016). Interpreting these beliefs means Islamic advertising is honest, as it is based on facts. In addition, Islamic advertising is believed to be educative about the problems and issues of a society. It must have a purpose behind its copy, theme, and message. Similarly, by educating people it creates awareness among masses.

Similarly, respondents believed Islamic advertising is 'meaningful', 'purposeful', and 'message oriented'. It does not contain purposeless contents. 'Good teachings' form the message/purpose of Islamic advertising.

Traditional/Conservative   These can be interpreted differently depending upon who is reading it. If interpreted favorably, other words associated with it also appear favorable. For example, respondents think that Islamic advertising shows 'no sex' hence it is very 'conservative'. This is true representation of Islamic character which prohibits public display of sexual contents. From the opposite perspective, the respondents believed that Islamic advertising is 'not too modern' and not being up-to-date with contemporary practices. This is not a complete truth. Islam is not against modernity and development. In fact it promotes progress and prosperity. It is, though, against lewdness, immorality, and indecency under the disguise of modernity and progress.

Main Objective   'Non-profit' (profit is not the main objective) was a common belief stated by the respondents. Another similar belief which occurred was 'not worldly'. Hence, the respondents believed that Islamic advertising does not aim for worldly gains. A comparison with Shafiq et al. (2017) reveals that this is not true. While Muslims would ultimately aim for gains in the Hereafter, Islam does not stop them from worldly gains as long as they do not become the main objective. Islam permits instrumental materialism and not terminal materialism (Rice & Al-Mossawi 2002).

Humane   This is a category also found in Shafiq et al. (2017). It was not as elaborate as expressed by the Muslim respondents, there were similarities though. The non-Muslims believed that Islamic advertising is 'sympathetic', 'empathetic', 'comforting', and 'relieving'. As these adjectives form a part of Islamic advertising characteristics, therefore, they can also be categorized under *the manner* sub-dimension of *practical aspects* (discussed below). Islam is divided into two parts: worship, which is specified in certain acts; and daily conduct, which comprises the larger part. For a Muslim the daily conduct is also a form of worship to Allah (SWT), if conducted in specified ways.

Islamic advertising is considered 'safe'. It will not cause harm to audience, advertiser, or the competitors. Deception, lies, materialism, etc. are not part of Islamic advertising.

Family Oriented   This category is dual in nature, as it also belongs to *practical aspects* of Islamic advertising. Here it describes the notion that Islamic advertising promotes family orientation rather than individualism; it not only depicts family setting in its advertisements but also promotes it through 'respect' and 'value-orientation'. Respect is depicted by showing women in respectable roles, by depicting humans in dignity, and by portraying serene mutual relationships (Shafiq et al. 2017).

Value Oriented   The non-Muslim respondents believe the core values of Islamic advertising are 'respect', 'love', 'caring', 'friendly', 'kind', 'polite', and 'considerate'. 'Trust (being trustworthy)' is another important value of Islamic advertising.

PRACTICAL ASPECTS

This dimension reflects the belief how Islamic advertisement *is* or *should be*. In this regard, there is *matter*, what is being advertised; and *manner*, the way something is advertised (Ting & Run 2012). Both are real-time decisions for advertisers. Contemporary advertising has been severely criticized on both aspects, as discussed in the literature above. The following describes what the respondents believed about Islamic advertising for these two aspects:

The Matter   The respondents wrote many words to describe the 'matter' of Islamic advertising. Their responses are broadly categorized under food, fashion/accessories, and financial services:

1. **Responses related to food.** This sub-category can be further divided into permissible and impermissible food.
   a.   There appeared a consensus on impermissible items (*haram*) as many respondents mentioned 'pork', 'pork free', 'no pork', 'no alcohol', and 'dog'. Some used the general term 'no animals' to reflect their beliefs. The time when this research was conducted, there was a controversy looming in Malaysian media about JAKIM denying *halāl* certification to Auntie Anne's because of the word *pretzel dog* on its menu (Surach 2016). Even though this controversy was rejected by officials (Jalil & Surach 2016), the damage had been done. This issue was taken very seriously by the respondents and many sarcastically mentioned it when describing Islamic advertising.
   b.   The permissible food items included *Rendang*, chicken, and beef. Another eatable commonly associated to Muslims was *kurma* (dates). These foods are typical to Muslims but not exclusive to them. In addition, these are not the only food items that can be advertised through Islamic advertising. But general consumers, Muslims and non-Muslims, often lack full knowledge about Islamic advertising. As a matter of fact, anything *halāl* can be advertised. This is the centrepin of Islamic advertising as Islam does not prohibit advertising, but only prohibits the malpractices in it. In the same vein, Islam is only against the promotion of certain kinds of products.
2. **Responses related to fashion/accessories.** The other main sub-category under 'matter' relates to clothing or fashion accessories. In general, Islamic advertising was associated with 'boutique' selling '*pakaian*' (clothes) like '*songkoks*', '*baju kurung*', and '*tudung*' (other commonly occurring words were headscarves and *hijab*). These are typical Muslim wearables in Malaysia. It gives the impression that non-Muslims think that Islamic advertising will promote only those products that Muslims use. On the contrary, Islamic advertising is broad enough to include everything that is permissible. These responses are also discussed under advertising *manner* below.

a. Some other product categories mentioned were fashion accessories such as 'gold', 'silver', 'perfumes', and 'sunglasses', though they are not exclusive to Muslims.

3. ***Responses related to financial products.*** The respondents also felt Islamic advertising could promote 'finance' (or Islamic finance services), 'banking' (or Islamic banking), and 'insurance' (or *takaful*). This is in line with Islamic *Shari'ah* which does not approve conventional banking, financial, and insurance services. The respondents also believed that Islamic advertising would never promote gambling or related activities when they wrote 'no gambling'. This response can be categorized under *the matter* as well as *the manner*.

The Manner   This category pertains to advertisement execution and answers the question 'how should Islamic advertisements be made?' Similar to what has been observed above, there were similarities and differences found with Shafiq et al. (2017):

1. ***Ad contents.*** Overall 'appeal' of Islamic advertisement should be 'non-offensive'. Offensiveness is often determined by one's cultural norms, hence 'culture' appeared many times in the responses. Islamic advertising should be culturally non-offensive in addition to adhering to Islamic confines (Shafiq et al. 2017). In this regard, two important phrases commonly found were: Islamic advertising is 'non-explicit' and 'non-sexual', meaning the 'gesture' and 'language' used should adhere to cultural and Islamic norms. As mentioned above, the hotdog controversy was fresh in their minds so many believed an Islamic advertisement should not contain the words 'dogs', or 'hot dogs'. Some even believed that 'no animals' should be stated within an Islamic advertisement.

2. ***Use of women.*** Use of women has been largely and rightly criticized (Shafiq et al. 2017). It is a common criticism in any research related to advertising ethics. Many phrases specific to women were found which were like those mentioned in Shafiq et al. (2017). Women shown in an Islamic advertisement should be wearing 'non-revealing', 'traditional clothing' with 'long sleeves' and 'less exposure of skin'. She should be properly 'covered up' and protecting her 'privacy'. This can be a reason why *Malay* traditional dresses were mentioned numerous times (see the discussion on *matter* above). People expect a 'no [non] sexy model' in an Islamic advertisement.

Contrary to what was mentioned in Shafiq et al. (2017), none of the non-Muslim respondents mentioned human dignity, honesty, exaggeration, deception, or concealment of facts with regards to Islamic advertising. This is a major belief gap about Islamic advertising. These values form the foundation of Islam.

EXECUTION – A SPECIFIC CASE OF 'MANNER'

This sub-dimension is unique to this research and was not found in Shafiq et al. (2017). Manner is general, execution is specific; manner encapsulates a broad guideline, execution is specific script based on those guidelines; manner is theory, execution is practical. This can be elaborated from the responses below:

1. Since they believed Islamic advertising is only for Muslim audience, they expected them to cast '*Malay* celebrity' only. If a female is casted, she must be wearing '*hijab* (headscarf)'. The ad must contain '*Jawi* wordings', '*Malay* language' or '*Bahasa Melayu*', at least in the subtitle, if not the main language.

2. Green is expected to be the dominant color. This resonates with Alserhan (2011), even though the author disagrees with it.

3. Common images expected to be seen in Islamic advertisements are 'mosques' and 'prayers'; 'festivals' like '*aidil fitri/hari raya*'; 'traditions' like 'marriage', and display of 'Islamic calendar'. 'Arabic songs' or 'dance' are also expected to be seen in such advertisements. This represents a limited view of what Islamic advertisements can show.

4. Some negative beliefs were also unearthed when a few respondents termed Islamic advertising to be 'serious', 'unattractive', 'boring', 'non-creative', and 'unimpressive'. Some also expressed that Islamic advertising will have 'dress code problem'. While this is a misconception, it is still very important. Islamic advertising can be fun and lively without transgressing the religious boundaries. Islam promotes modesty, but it does not mean being funny, enjoyable, and creative is also prohibited. An analogy can be made here with the "World's funniest man", who is a *Malay* and does not put sexual contents in his performance (World's funniest man shares his style of comedy, 2016). This points to the notion that *attractive* does not have to be *explicit* or *sexual* in nature.

5. As discussed above, the characters in the ad should portray the values of 'love and care'. 'Respect' should be the dominant characteristic. The model should be portrayed respectfully and if there is an interaction shown, it should show mutual respect and dignity. In addition, the actors should be shown behaving and talking with 'kindness, politeness, friendliness, and consideration'. 'Family setting' should be projected more than individualism. Moreover, there should not be any projection of forbidden items or activities in the ad, like consumption of liquor, gambling, smoking, and sexual intimacy.

'Men' should be commonly seen rather than women. This coincides with some of the general principles of Islamic promotion, and how Islamic advertisements should be made (Alserhan 2011), even though the author disagrees with some.

6. ***Target audience.*** Almost all the respondents believed that Islamic advertising is targeted towards 'Muslims' or '*Malays*' only. In this regard some even termed it as 'non-diverse' and 'standardized'. Further comments in this sub-dimension divided the respondents into two: one group considered this target audience (Muslims only) to be a 'large market', 'large audience', 'vast', as it is the 'largest [homogeneous] group'. This sheds light on the potential opportunities that exist for Islamic marketing in general. The other group considered the same segmentation to be 'narrow in terms of target audience' as it is a very 'small [limited] market'. While this cannot be denied that Muslim market offers huge potential in size (Al-Hyari et al. 2010), yet Islamic marketing is not restricted to Muslim audience only.

OUTCOMES OF ISLAMIC ADVERTISING

This dimension of Islamic advertising deals with potential consequences. Shafiq et al. (2017) identified three conspicuous sub-dimensions – social and individual, religious, and economic outcomes. This research agrees with it.

Social and Individual Outcomes   Ethical advertising results in positive social and individual outcomes, while unethical advertising creates vices in the society. The only belief that could come under this category was 'relieving'. They believed Islamic advertising to be relieving from materialism, dishonesty, injustice, and other ill-consequences caused by unethical contemporary advertising. It goes in line with Shafiq et al. (2017) though their beliefs were richer and more diverse.

Economic Outcome   Contrary to Muslim counterparts, the non-Muslims had quite a lot to say about its economic effects, mostly from the practitioners' point of view. Their responses were divided along the line of cost-efficiency for practitioner. Hence, some responded that Islamic advertising is 'financially savvy' and that it will result in 'cost savings'. Even though simplicity and other similar beliefs were not mentioned, it is the simple nature of Islamic advertising which made them believe so. The other group considers Islamic advertising to be 'costly' and 'expensive'. They thought this way because making Islamic advertisements requires special knowledge and talent, which might be difficult to obtain, and hence costly.

Religious Outcome   Contrary to Shafiq et al. (2017), there were very few beliefs under this category. Islamic advertising will act as 'religious reminder'. This response occurred numerous times, which points towards the belief that Islamic advertising will remind the audience about their religious duties. This view can be combined with the previous beliefs that since Muslims are the only audience, the religious reminder is basically for them, and not general audience. Such interpretation will limit the true potential of Islamic advertising.

COMMON ASSOCIATIONS

The final theme corresponds to common association made with Islamic advertising, which were altogether distinct from those found in Shafiq et al. (2017). These responses can be differentiated into neutral, positive, and negative:

Neutral Associations   Common countries associated with Islamic advertising are the Arab states (Dubai, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE). Malaysia and Indonesia were also mentioned. Some respondents mentioned 'Islamic countries' to include all.

When Islamic advertising is linked with Gulf countries, naturally some associations are made. These included 'hot', 'sand', 'oil', 'petroleum', and 'Ferrari'. This is a very limited view of Islamic advertising which presents execution challenges in non-Gulf contexts.

Positive Associations   The respondents believed that Islamic advertising is 'the right way' as it is 'focused on inner beauty'. Such comments strengthen the concept of Islamic advertising. Islamic emphasizes more on one's inner beauty. Character, morals, and behaviors are the qualities that are repeatedly stressed upon in the Holy *Qur'an* and *Sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

Islamic advertising was termed synonymous to 'marketing 3.0'. This term was introduced by Philip Kotler in his book *Marketing 3.0: From Products to Customers to the Human Spirit* (Kotler, Kartajaya, & Setiawan 2010) where he talks about how the role of marketing has changed into becoming more spiritual, humane, and values-driven. Trust, honesty, and being beneficial are the central points of marketing 3.0. This is a very positive association made to Islamic advertising.

Another positive association is when respondents named a *Malay* pop star *Yuna*. She is popular not only for her voice, but also because she wears a Muslim headscarf which is modest yet stylish. Malaysian youth consider her a fashion icon.

Negative Associations   Negative (or unfavorable) associations gathered the most responses. Atop the rest were associating Islamic advertising with 'war and its effects', 'weapons', 'terrorism', 'war victims' etc. Other related beliefs included 'radical', 'hate, 'invasion', and 'devastating'.

Islamic advertising was also termed as 'confusing', 'misleading (at times)', and 'controversial (at times)'. Another similar group of association was 'lies' and 'corruption'.

In terms of execution, Islamic advertising would contain 'lengthy ads', which the respondents think would be 'unimpressive' and 'lame'. The respondents would tend to 'skip it' or 'avoid it' in such a situation.

One association came with a respondent quoting the lyrics of a song by Nick Jaina 'don't come to me…' Although the song was sung in a different context, but perhaps the respondent wanted to utilize the disgust and disassociation hidden in the lyrics, in a way ridiculing the concept of Islamic advertising.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This research explored the emerging field of Islamic marketing. While there is a rising interest and research in this field, more exploratory research is still needed. This research is considered another attempt to find beliefs about Islamic advertising. This research attempted to find and compare non-Muslims' beliefs about Islamic advertising with those found in Shafiq et al. (2017). This research found that many beliefs of non-Muslims about Islamic advertising were similar in nature with Muslims'. It also found that some of their beliefs were very different than Muslims'. It also found several sub-dimensions which were not found in Shafiq et al. (2017).

A general conclusion drawn is that non-Muslims had many beliefs related to the tangible aspects of advertising, such as appearnace of model, language, color, and other execution details. Their impression and evaluation of Islamic advertising was also inspired from the same aspect. This is a reason why it was termed unattractive, boring, limited audience, cost effective, etc by many. This finding carries great significance for researchers and practitioners. True image and potential of Islamic advertising are not being transposed to the general audience. There are many brands in Malaysia, and around the world which portray an Islamic image. Their brand image on Muslims might be potentially positive, but it cannot be said with confidence for their non-Mulims customers. Both, researchers and prectitioners, need to join hands to carry practitioner-led research to find attitudesg towards Islamic advertising as well as its effectiveness. Such a research will help the practitioners in portraying a desirable image.

There were many responses skewing towards the unfavorable side. Such responses ranged from being mild and undertone to being strong and clear-cut about the existence, characteristics, and effects of Islamic advertising. Such harsh beliefs were somewhat expected mostly due to global events in the aftermath of 9/11. The global security situation adds to the reason why non-Muslims have a strong disbelief in anything related to Islam. Mistakes committed by Muslims and pinpointed by media is a powerhouse for many of these unfavorable beliefs. The author feels it is appropriate to admit here that some beliefs mentioned by the respondents were purposely prevented from becoming a part of this paper to protect the dignity of some prominent personalities.

The way forward for Islamic advertising is only after removing these misconceptions and ill-perceptions. While the non-Muslims thought that Islamic advertising is for Muslims only, the Muslims disagree. Hence, this novel concept can move forward only by shedding off this image. Concerted efforts are required from theorists and practitioners both. An empirical research on Muslims and non-Muslims can help in this regards. Such a research could adopt a survey approach to contact larger populations and to understand and compare their beliefs about Islamic advertising. The scale in such a research could be created from the dimensions extracted in this research in combination with Shafiq et al. (2017). In addition, extending this research to further nations and cutures can help in developing the theory of Islamic advertising.

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