

## Islam and Advertising: The Ideal Stakeholder Perspective

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### Abstract

The collective responsibility of stakeholders in the making of responsible advertisements is the essence of the multiple perspectives for responsible advertising by Polonsky & Hyman (2007) that is based on the stakeholder theory. This research study aims to contribute to current literature by defining the ideals of responsible advertisements from the Islamic perspective. The purpose of this research study is to examine the concept of Islamic advertising as what it should be rather than what is already practised as Islamic advertising. This qualitative study involves the interviewing of academicians with an Islamic background. The key findings suggest that Islamic advertising can be comparable to propagation if it adheres to the principles of da'wah, is centred on tawhīd, promotes ḥalāl products and is Shari'ah compliant. The challenge was in defining Islamic advertising as there is seemingly a paradox regarding the association of advertising whose conception was inspired by commercialism, whilst Islam promotes the view of propagation and moderation in consumption. It is hoped that this research study has contributed to current studies on stakeholder theory and defined Islamic advertising in view of Malaysia's position as the Global Halal Hub.

**Keywords:** Islamic advertising, Global Halal Hub in Malaysia, stakeholder theory

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## **Introduction**

Advertisements are used to inform target audience members about products and persuade them making a purchase. Advertising messages are successful when they move people to action by purchasing products. The capability of advertisements in terms of influencing behaviour as espoused by social learning theory makes the making of responsible messages important. Thus, this paper is focused on the process of making responsible advertisements for ḥalāl products targeted to the Muslim audience in a Muslim majority country like Malaysia.

The multiple perspective of responsibility in advertising is premised on the stakeholder theory. It is understood that a corporation carries out its business with the society in mind. Key stakeholders are identified by Polonsky & Hyman (2007) as being the advertisers (for-profit firms), regulatory bodies, intermediaries and consumers but not limited to these. From the Islamic perspective, there is the need to look at the multiple stakeholder perspective for responsible advertising. But who is the ideal stakeholder?

This study has the purpose of ascertaining the definition of advertising elements, advertising objectives (strategy) and the key stakeholders in the creation of Islamic advertising.

With Malaysia being a Global Halal Hub, it is necessary for us to define Islamic advertising. Comparable to the making of ḥalāl foods, there is the need to understand the process by identifying of the key stakeholders in the making of Islamic advertisements that are responsible advertisements.

## **Research Questions**

1. What is Islamic advertising?
  - 1) What are the objectives of Islamic advertising?
  - 2) What are the principles of Islamic advertising?
2. Who should be the key stakeholders in the creation of Islamic advertising?

## **Literature Review**

There have been few studies carried out on stakeholders in advertising and other marketing communication tools and Islamic advertising. This research study will examine Islamic advertising from the stakeholders' perspective as there are no studies found that have examined the symbiotic relationship. The marriage of stakeholder and Islamic advertising is found in this research study with the dearth of such a research study.

### **Stakeholder and Communication Research Studies**

Brower & Mahajan (2013) studied how the characteristics of the stakeholder landscape such as an organisation's sensitivity to stakeholders' demands, the diversity stakeholders' demands put on the organisation and the organisation's exposure to stakeholder scrutiny are related in a positive manner to the breadth of an organisation's Corporate Social Performance (CSP). The stakeholder theory was used in proposing that several factors increase the prominence and effect of stakeholders' demands on the organisation but it can have greater breadth. Greater CSP breadth refers to the quantity of different sub-domains of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) based on which an organisation has carried out positive behaviour and this information is recorded using a dataset from Kinder, Lydenburg, & Domini (KLD). The KLD Stats database has measured the social and environmental performance of 4,000 organisations. It measures an organisation's behaviour rather than

perception. The findings for the longitudinal sample of 447 organisations in the US from 2000-2007 demonstrate that those which are greatly sensitive to stakeholders' needs as a consequence of the firm's underlining of marketing, encountering a wider diversity of stakeholders' demands and facing a greater degree of scrutiny or risk from stakeholders' actions have a more profound breadth on CSP in response to the stakeholder landscape.

Chang (2009) carried out a study examining how from the integrated marketing communication perspective, top corporations standardised their regional sites as online audiences are seen as homogenous. Content analysis was carried out on the websites of top brands in the USA, Taiwan and China. The study found that customers, the media, financial communities, investors, communities and channel members were the most targeted and standardised of stakeholders. Advertising was established as the most standardised marketing communication tool. Standardisation was also greatest for service brands. The study went on to develop a Web Standardisation Model from Moriarty and Duncan's Standardisation Model.

Fam, Waller & Yang (2009) conducted a study using the stakeholder theory to examine the responses of 630 respondents from China to discover who is offended by controversial advertisements. The study also identified ways in which offensive advertisements could be alleviated in the future so that marketers carry out their social responsibilities better. A survey was carried out in the Chinese cities of Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. The findings indicate that more offence was found on a private product like a condom compared to a public product like alcohol. Values and various generations have had greater impact on condom advertisements than alcohol advertisements. There are apparently different levels of offensiveness that could be explained by the Chinese cultural traditions more so in terms of Confucianism. Understanding the attitudes of the stakeholders is therefore important for a business to be socially responsible.

Jahdi & Acikdilli (2009) studied the role of marketing communication in communicating corporate social responsibility policies of organisations to stakeholders. The impact of the communication on an organisation's corporate reputation and brand image was also investigated. An in-depth review of the literature was conducted. It was found that marketing communication could make major contributions creating awareness and accentuating a transparent, consistent and socially responsible image for the corporation.

Maignan, Ferrell & Ferrell (2005) provided a complete managerial framework to comprehend and presented a proportionate and integrated stakeholder orientation for applying corporate social responsibility in marketing. Existing literature on the subject was utilised to advocate a methodology to put into practice a well-integrated CSR programme that includes marketing. A grounded framework was provided, outlining the step-by-step approach for implementing CSR from a marketing perspective.

Stumberger & Golob (2015) studied the discourse of employees of advertising agencies through interviews. Different sense-making dimensions were considered when examining how employees, as stakeholders that participate in joint-meaning construction, make sense of CSR. Legitimation approaches that employees utilise to address CSR of advertising agencies were also studied. It was apparent that there is a connection between sense-making and the legitimation perspective in CSR discourse analysis.

### **Islamic Advertising Research Studies**

Previous research studies have focused on attitude toward advertising of controversial products, presence of religious values in advertisement executions and consumers' reactions to advertisements containing religious cues or symbols. The latter have been followed

modestly in the Christian context but not in the Islamic context of advertising (Naseri & Tamam, 2012).

In Malaysia, culture and religion go hand in hand. Most of the cultural values are actually shaped by various religious practices. For instance, the Advertising Code for Television and Radio (1990) was heavily influenced by the Malaysian government's effort to promote Islamic values throughout the country (Waller & Shyan, 2000).

There have been very few research studies in recent years on Islamic advertising despite the need for the development of the discipline. Recent studies on Islamic advertising have examined advertising content guided by the dimensions of Islamic advertising (Islam & Alam, 2013), audience members' perceptions of advertising from the Islamic perspective or recommended a framework of advertising. Other content analyses carried out on advertisements in the Arab world and the United States have found similarities and differences in the advertising of both regions (Al-Olayan & Karanda, 2000; Kalliny, Dagher, & Minor, 2008).

A qualitative study on advertising messages with offers of financial opportunities for home ownership in Saudi Arabia and in the United States of America (Perry & Motley, 2010) was conducted with banks in Saudi Arabia underscoring the Shar'iah compliant feature of their products compared to American banks that focused on interest rates.

A research study was also carried out on Malaysian Malay respondents who were Muslims. Using surveys, the study found that religiosity was an imperative variable when examining attitudes to controversial advertisements. Another research study used the Q-Methodology to gauge the perceptions of television advertising on two national television channels in Saudi Arabia (Al-Makaty, Turbergen, Whitlow, & Boyd, 1996). Three different types of respondents were found for the study.

Rice & Al-Mossawi (2002) organised Islamic values in accordance with four cultural dimensions: relationship with people, time orientation, human nature orientation (self-concept), and activity orientation by Kluckohn & Strodtbeck (1961) and Usunier (1993) cited by the writers in their managerial framework of Islamic value dimensions and advertising implications.

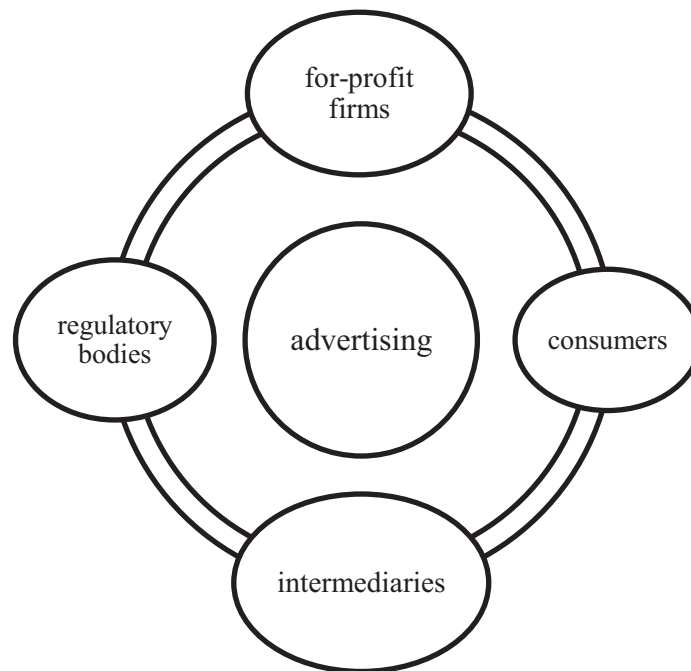
### **Theoretical Framework: Multiple Stakeholder Perspective on Responsibility in Advertising**

The multiple stakeholder perspective on responsibility in advertising by Polonsky & Hyman (2007) identifies the stakeholders and their interconnections in the advertising production process. It also highlights their collective responsibility in ensuring the production of responsible advertisements with offending advertisements being condemned by one or more stakeholders. The theory puts into perspective the importance of identifying key stakeholders and in understanding their roles in the advertising production process. The ideas of symmetrical and unsymmetrical communication are brought up by Polonsky & Hyman (2007).

The multiple stakeholder perspective was derived from the stakeholder theory. The antithesis of this theory is the shareholder theory. The shareholder model is synonymous with the works of Milton Friedman, for whom a corporation is essentially viewed as a piece of private property owned by those who hold its stocks and cannot be regarded as having responsibilities (Friedman, 1970). The directors and managers are also seen to fulfil their social obligations when they operate in the best financial interests of the shareholders, which is to maximise profits. One of the weaknesses of the shareholder model is: the inability of the model to recognise current social problems and the broader view of the organisation's

responsibilities. By contrast, the stakeholder model maintains that corporations are servants of the larger society and businesses are regarded as socially responsible when they act according to the needs and demands of the different stakeholders without abandoning profit-making altogether (Buono & Nichols, 1985). The application of the stakeholder theory in management has since crept into marketing (Maignan & Ferrell, 2004; Maignan, Ferrell, & Ferrell, 2005; Miller & Lewis, 1991; Polonsky, Carlson, & Fry, 2003) and later, advertising (Polonsky & Hyman, 2007).

According to Freeman (1983: 38), “Organizations have stakeholders. That is, there are groups and individuals who can affect and are affected by the achievement of an organisation’s mission.” Polonsky & Hyman (2007) identify the major stakeholders in advertising as for-profit firms, regulatory bodies, intermediaries and consumers (see Figure 1). Each stakeholder is believed to have an equal role in the advertising process and all within an exchange system all bear some responsibility and are affected by the activities of other stakeholders which could influence the outcomes. For Polonsky & Hyman (2007), responsibility in advertising is when all stakeholders honour their obligations to each other. Advertising that infringes upon acceptable standards will be seen as irresponsible by one or more stakeholders. Morally fair is seen as important; firms must achieve appropriate profits.



**Figure 1:** Multiple Stakeholder Perspective on Responsibility in Advertising (Polonsky & Hyman, 2007)

The example of Shell highlights that all stakeholders within an exchange system assess responsibility (Polonsky & Hyman, 2007). Consumers as receivers may act (ir)responsibly. They may misinterpret ad content and thus act inappropriately; for example, medication will only be effective if patients follow usage instructions. In extreme cases, consumers may ignore ad-based warnings and misuse products. Firms thus play a primary role in ensuring that there are responsible advertisements.

## **Research Methodology**

The study used a phenomenological research design as the main focus by examining how academicians made sense of Islamic advertising. Phenomenology is a philosophy that is related to how individuals make sense of the world around them by using their common sense (Bryman, 2012). Phenomenology means “understanding the ‘constructs’ people use in everyday life to make sense of their world. Uncovering meanings contained within conversation or text” (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003: 12). The life of Muslims should be guided by the Qur’ān that contains the words of God that are lofty and transcend beyond the words of man. The Sunnah provides the actions and words of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) who was the Messenger of God and a perfect human being as the role model for man to follow. In order to interpret the Qur’ān and the Sunnah, rational thinking is used by understanding the empirical evidence presented in the sources. This agrees with the phenomenological research design characteristic of common-sense thinking used in understanding the world around us.

Interviews were carried out with 16 academicians of an institution of higher learning in Malaysia. The ideal stakeholder perspective refers to academicians as a group of stakeholders who propose ideal practices based on theories and research studies. Their role is to suggest what Islamic advertisements should ideally be. The purposive sampling technique combined with the snowballing sampling approach was used in the study. Purposive means that the respondents were selected based on their ability to answer the research questions and snowballing means respondents were then recommended by the initial respondents (Bryman, 2012). The criteria of the sample were they had to have an Islamic studies background, a PhD as the highest level of education, belief in Islam and located in Malaysia.

Most of the interviews were conducted interpersonally and were recorded. One interview was conducted through email due to the respondent’s heavy schedule. Most interviews were transcribed verbatim and checked for accuracy by another person. The interpersonal interview was note-taken. All interviews were semi-structured. The same interview guide was used for all respondents but they had a “leeway” in terms of replying and questions that were not thought of before the interview were added during the real interview day (Bryman, 2012). The objective of using the semi-structured interview technique was to provide respondents with the opportunity of giving their interpretation of Islamic advertising in their own words and adding new information. Sufficient sampling had been achieved when the saturation point was met with the profound explanations of Islamic advertising and its constructs by respondents as agreed by Corbin & Strauss (2008).

A thematic analysis was conducted on the transcriptions and interview notes using the qualitative data analysis software, NVivo version 10. The themes made up the condensed meanings of the transcriptions. According to Kvale & Brinkman (2009: 205), “Meaning condensation entails an abridgment of the meanings expressed by the interviewees into shorter formulations. Long statements are compressed into briefer statements in which the main sense of what is said is rephrased in a few word.” Multiple themes were then generated from the transcribed data.

**Table 1:** Profile of Respondents

No.	Pseudonym	Gender	Location	Religion	Occupation	Highest Education Level
1.	Aminah	Female	Malaysia	Islam	Academician	PhD
2.	Ali	Male	Malaysia	Islam	Academician	PhD
3.	Ahmad	Male	Malaysia	Islam	Academician	PhD
4.	Zaid	Male	Malaysia	Islam	Academician	PhD
5.	Aziz	Male	Malaysia	Islam	Academician	PhD
6.	Azman	Male	Malaysia	Islam	Academician	PhD
7.	Sara	Female	Malaysia	Islam	Academician	PhD
8.	Aishah	Female	Malaysia	Islam	Academician	PhD
9.	Zulfkifli	Male	Malaysia	Islam	Academician	PhD
10.	Jamilah	Female	Malaysia	Islam	Academician	PhD
11.	Azhar	Male	Malaysia	Islam	Academician	PhD
12.	Rania	Female	Malaysia	Islam	Academician	PhD
13.	Borhan	Male	Malaysia	Islam	Academician	PhD
14.	Alya	Female	Malaysia	Islam	Academician	PhD
15.	Shamsul	Male	Malaysia	Islam	Academician	PhD
16.	Azrul	Male	Malaysia	Islam	Academician	PhD

## Findings

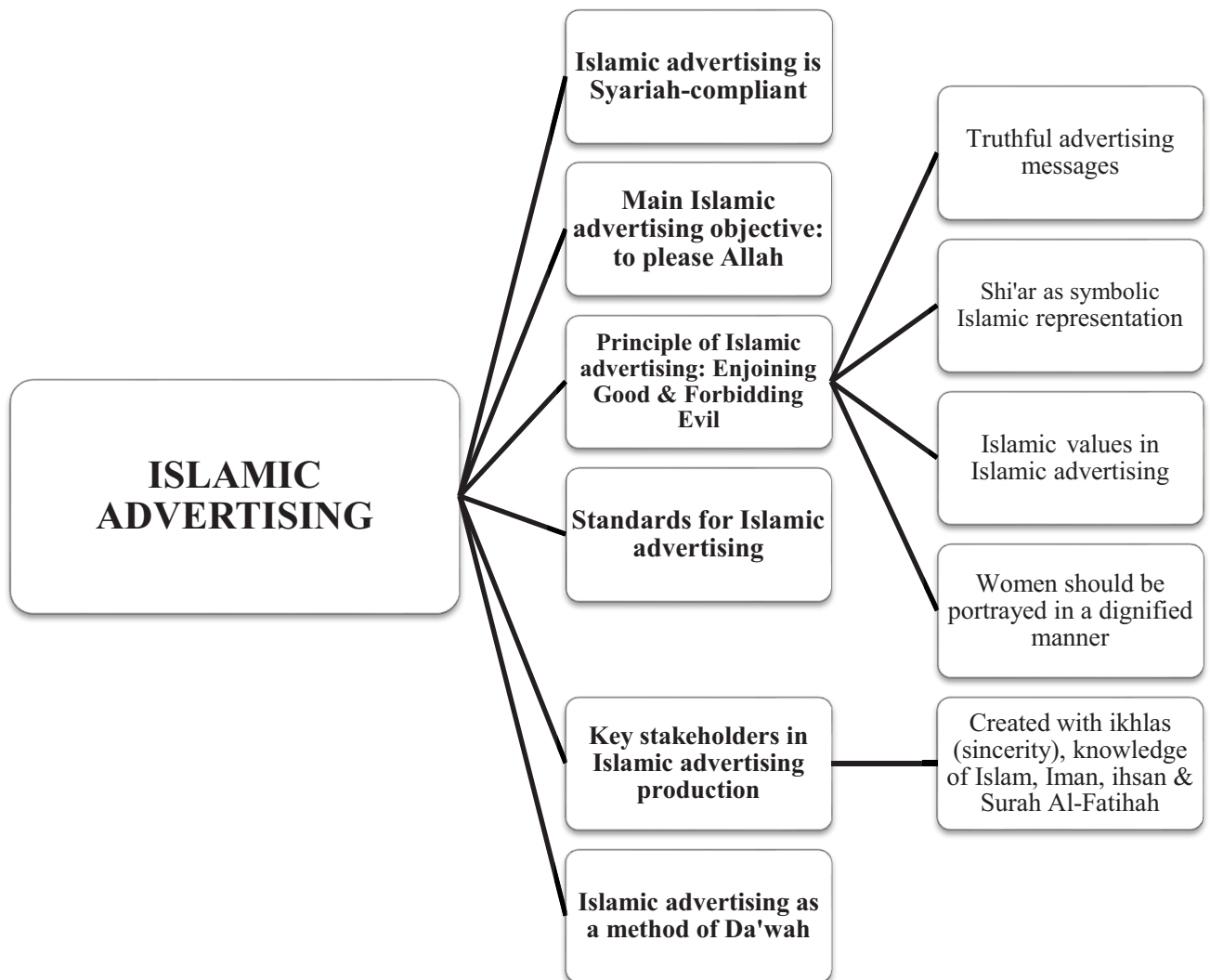
Several themes and subthemes were generated from the interview data. There are six significant themes and five subthemes: 1) Islamic advertising as a method of da'wah; 2) the main principle of Islamic advertising is enjoining good and forbidding evil (subthemes: truthful advertising messages, Shiar as symbolic Islamic representation, Islamic values, portrayal of women in a dignified manner); 3) key stakeholders in Islamic advertising production (subthemes: stakeholders are dā'i' who embrace the Islamic worldview, subsequently, Islamic advertising should be created with ikhlās and using the knowledge of Surah<sup>2</sup> Al-Fātiḥahh, Īmān, Islam and Iḥsān); 4) standards for Islamic advertising; 5) Islamic advertising objectives and 6) Islamic advertising is Syariah-compliant.

### Theme 1: Islamic Advertisements is a Method of Da'wah

Islamic advertisements can be used as a method of da'wah as they could be promoting, telling, informing people, correcting, improving and calling people to Islam or the truth akin to da'wah. For one of the academicians, Borhan, the opposite of making known is to conceal. It is thus very important to make Islam known to people and this can be done through Islamic advertising as an approach of da'wah. Earlier forms of advertising were verbal and later in written form, "... the Prophet (peace be upon him) went to 'Mount Ṣafā'

<sup>2</sup> Surah means Chapter in the Qur'an in Arabic.

and announced to the Quraysh about Islam. In addition, when they are in Madina, they used verbal channel very much then later they used the medium of writing.”



**Figure 1:** Significant Themes & Subthemes from Islamic Advertising Study

This Qur’ānic verse provides the definition of da’wah as, “Invite (all) to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching...” (Surah An-Nahl, 16: 125). Islamic advertising as an approach of da’wah can be compared to the list of communication activities that go by the principles of da’wah, by making people know about their Creator or Allah and His attributes, doing whatever He commanded and refrained from what he prohibits are considered as methods of da’wah (Hussain, 2009). These activities include making conversations, informal talks, speeches, lectures, sermons, discussions, and dialogues. Together these activities result in a system of da’wah which play complementary roles.

What makes it as a method of da’wah is ways, means, approach grouped together as a system to make things, I mean, go right or to make things work. Yes. It (Islamic advertising) is one of the groups, one of the means to convey the message of da’wah. (Aminah, female, Malaysia)

For another academician, Shamsul, advertising messages should depict ideal behaviour in Islam as some Muslims do not demonstrate good Islamic behaviour. This is true



in the light of terrorists who have been linked to Islam when in fact Islam does not condone their violent acts.

## **Theme 2: Principle of Islamic Advertising: Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil**

Several academicians in this study have mentioned that Islamic advertising should be guided by the Islamic principle of enjoining good and forbidding evil. The subthemes of this principle are: 1) truthful advertising messages; 2) promotion of Islamic values; 3) shi'ar in Islam; and, 4) dignified portrayal of women.

This principle that is the essence of the Qur'ān and Sunnah is stated in the Qur'ān as, "amr bil ma'ruf" and "nahyi anil munkar" in Surah Al-Īmran (3:110), "Ye are the best of Peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah." Promoting ma'aruf may also include promoting products that are beneficial to people and in ways that are ḥalāl or permitted, not harām or forbidden in Islam.

Advertisements should convey messages of products to prospective customers who really need them that are known in marketing as target markets. Product information should not be placed in places where the target market will not be able to afford the products as this could stir jealousy.

We should not abuse other people's rights because of our conduct in advertisements. It does not mean they (advertisers) should not make profit but the advertisers should not create some sort of injustice to people's family or society (that) creates disparity. (The products should) Only (be) for people in need. People will start to be jealous because of other people. Any advertisement that may provoke injustice, fitnah, or any other form of problem should not be condoned ... (Shamsul, male, Malaysia)

Advertising messages could disseminate fitnah that has been defined in the Qur'ān as "trial or temptation, or else tumult, turmoil or sedition" (The Ministry of Hajj and Endowments, n.d.: 516). Advertisements can create fitnah if they were produced with ill intentions.

### *Subtheme 1: Truthful Advertising Messages*

As Islamic advertising enjoins good, truthful messages are therefore necessary. The definition of false advertising, instances of deceptive or untruthful advertising, a fair assessment of products, and upholding transparency are explained here.

Untruthful advertising is similar to false advertising that is a form of misleading advertising with messages that are not true (Moriarty, Mitchell, & Wells, 2015). This practice is unacceptable in Islam. The respondents used words like "honest," "transparent," "accurate," and "reliable" messages when referring to truthful advertising. The words used to describe advertisements that are not Islamic were "deceptive," "cheating," "exaggerating," "propaganda used to attract people to peddled wares," "manipulative," and "false advertising."

Some respondents raised instances of deception in advertising when close-up images were used, making them believe that the product is of a larger size when it is not or when a store uses a poster advertisement carrying the message "70 percent off" placed outside it when in truth not all items in the store are sold with a 70 percent discount yet this is not clearly indicated. These practices are not acceptable in Islamic advertising. Instances of "brainwashing" customers by using attractive words in advertisements, increasing the prices of products before sales take place in stores and providing loyalty memberships for those who are frequent patrons of a store that promises rewards when there is none, are some of the

issues that should be addressed by Islamic advertising. Again, these practices are not acceptable in Islam.

Exaggerated advertising messages that are not supported should not be used as the overstatements made are untruthful. According to Moriarty et al. (2015), puffery is advertising or other sales messages that compliment products with exaggerations and superlatives in an unclear manner without specific facts. The opposite to irresponsible advertisements is Islamic advertisements that contain non-manipulative selling messages, transparent messages and promises that will be fulfilled as “They (prospective customers) can make a good choice based on good and reliable information because advertisements can give reliable information,” said Borhan.

Ahmad recommends the responsible selling of products where products should supply demand and not create demand for products that are not needed. A simple hijāb is sufficient for some women without the need for an elaborate and expensive one. Customers should not be manipulated through advertising messages that persuade them to spend money they do not have, making their lifestyle unsustainable.

Transparent advertising messages should give a fair and truthful assessment of the product to audience members. Although Alya mentioned that advertising truthfully amounts to communicating the product’s good attributes, most academicians mentioned that both the good and bad attributes of the product should be communicated to consumers as this gives them a fair assessment of the product. This practice would be a just and transparent act as the advertiser does not conceal what is bad about the product to prospective customers. Negative information of the product ought to be conveyed to them so that they can make informed purchasing decisions. According to Zulkifli, the negative information of the product should be presented first before the positive information. Idioms should not to be used in advertising language as they convey hidden meanings. It is important to be clear when conveying advertising information to target audience members so that they understand the messages well.

In Islamic banking, the principle of the murābaḥah contract is where the cost of the product and profit to be made are disclosed in truth by the seller to the buyer. Such openness reflects the importance of the seller as a person with integrity. By not telling the truth, the seller is cheating the buyer and this is distrustful.

Murābaḥah contract is a type of “trust sale” contract under Sharī‘ah in which the purchaser relies upon the integrity of the seller to acquire the desired Sharī‘ah compliant asset at a reasonable cost. In line with the underpinning element of trust in murābaḥah contract, the seller is required to disclose the breakdown of the selling price to the purchaser, which comprises the acquisition cost and the mark-up or profit margin (Bank Negara Malaysia, 2013).

There are negative implications of false advertising. Cheating in Islam is profoundly frowned upon as it is considered as the act of a disbeliever.

A Hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah (Sunan Ibn Majah) mentioned, “The Messenger of Allah (SAW) passed by a man who was selling food. He put his hand in it and saw that there was something wrong with it. The Messenger of Allah (saw) said: “He is not one of us who cheats” (Zulkifli, male, academician).

Being truthful is a characteristic of the God fearing. It is mentioned in the Qur’ān

(Surah al-Baqara, 2: 42) how Allah SWT<sup>3</sup> reminded the Jews with this message but this is meant for all of us:

And do not mix the truth with falsehood or conceal the truth while you know [it].

Islamic advertising is about fulfilling your promises.

What you see is what you get without over promising or under delivering because sometimes in advertisements you see something they make you believe you're buying something and then at the end you are buying something else. For example, in the advertisement of products in catalogue if you buy from a catalogue ahh when you want to buy a perfume you see the picture is very big, ohh this is a good deal for only 20 dollars. So you order it. When it arrives it is very small. (Azhar, male, Malaysia)

There are several negative implications of being untruthful or cheating customers from not receiving the blessings of Allah SWT to distrusting the advertiser leading to legal suits by customers. Aziz mentioned that the Islamic way of doing business is by providing a service which is the form of Ibadah<sup>4</sup>. There will be no blessing from Allah SWT if a businessman cheats his or her customers. Obtaining Allah's blessing is important for Muslims. Blessing means that Allah is pleased with what we are doing and rewards us in this world and in the Hereafter. This is the ultimate goal as a slave of Allah SWT, the Master of all creations.

For Aziz, the effect of sending untruthful advertising messages has resulted in customers in developed countries suing advertisers for not providing them with the products as advertised. Cheating is sinful in Islam and the prospective customers should investigate the truthfulness of the message when in doubt of the messenger; however, it would be best if the communication was honest in the first place to make it easier for them. Surah Al-Ḥujurāt (49: 6), "O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful."

#### *Subtheme 2: Shiar as Symbolic Islamic Representation*

Shiar as symbols can be used in Islamic advertising but should represent the truth.

Shiar is a symbolic representation of what you are. For example, mosque is a Shiar of Islam so that when people look at the mosque they know there is a Muslim there or there must be a Muslim community (Shamsul, male, academician).

Shiar can be in the form of photographs, illustrations and words used in Islamic advertising. The Shiar of Islam includes ḥijāb, Islamic behavior, civilization, culture, scholars, ulama' and other symbols. The problem with using Shiar is when the symbol is different from what it represents in truth. According to Shamsul, "the kalimatul shahādah<sup>5</sup> is a signature of ISIS (the extreme group called the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria). Is the flag (the ISIS flag with the kalimatul shahādah) there to provoke people?" The kalimatul shahādah should not be used to represent ISIS as the extreme group is not Islamic. In this case, the symbol or Shiar by ISIS does not represent the truth.

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<sup>3</sup> SWT stands for Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala or "glory be to Him."

<sup>4</sup> Ibadah is worship in Arabic.

<sup>5</sup> The wording in Shahadah.

*Subtheme 3: Islamic Values should be promoted through Islamic Advertisements*

Related to the principle of enjoining good and prohibiting evil and the kalimatul shahādah, are justice, humanity, love and mercy to people that make up some of the positive Islamic values, mentioned by Aminah. These values are taken from the Revelation<sup>6</sup>, the practices of the Prophet (peace be upon him), his Companions and the generation after the Prophet.

Most respondents mentioned that universal values and Islamic values are the same. Some respondents highlighted slight differences between the Western and Islamic worldview that shape values and the different specifics regarding some universal values. For them, there are similarities and differences between the Islamic and Western parameters of values.

In fact in the very beginning where our scholars realised that...knowledge...means the sciences have been developed based on the Western worldview therefore they are not universal and they are not equally applicable to all communities in the world. (Ali, male, academician)

According to Jamilah, for a value to be regarded as universal, it should not be harmful and is acceptable by the sound mind, “Freedom of speech, social justice, equality, human rights, and women’s rights” are both universal values and Islamic values. However, Islamic values have to be within Shar’iah parameters such as the case of freedom. It is a universal value that is perceived differently in Islam and the West because of its different parameters. For instance, the freedom of practising homosexuality among Muslims is forbidden. In the Qur’ān (Surah Al-A’raf, 7: 81) transgression by homosexuals is mentioned, “For ye practise your lusts on men in preference to women: ye are indeed a people transgressing beyond bounds.”

Efforts like Islamic advertising should be existent in order to deter negative practices leading to moral decadence and the corruption of universal values.

If we do bad things without prevention or using steps to try to deter negative things, it will spread. It will become, it is strange at the beginning but then after some time when many people do it, it becomes norms and after some time if you do not do it, you are considered as abnormal. Even though, it is negative values [sic] like homosexuality; in the past it is considered very negative. Now if you do not do it, you are homophobic. You are considered as something wrong [sic] with you, you are sick. So this is very important. (Aminah, female, academician)

*Subtheme 4: Women should be portrayed in a Dignified Manner in Islamic Advertisements*

The tendency for women to be negatively portrayed in advertisements was mentioned by several respondents. The way how some females were scantily dressed and their role as sex objects to attract men to advertisements were the concerns raised. As Islamic advertising is guided by the principle of enjoining good and forbidding evil, it was agreed that women should be portrayed in a dignified manner by being decently dressed as opposed to being scantily dressed.

And say to the believing women, that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands their fathers, their

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<sup>6</sup> The Revelation is the Qur’an.

husbands' fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers or their brothers' sons or their sisters' sons, or their women, or the slaves whom their right hands possess, or male attendants free of sexual desires, or small children who have no carnal knowledge of women (Surah An-Nur, 24:31).

Women are found in many advertisements and they are sometimes not related to the product but are there to attract male target audiences. This is an exploitation of women and forbidden in Islam.

What is the role of women in Islam? It seems that the role of women in Malaysia has moved away from what is preferred in Islam. This matter was brought up by Alya who recommended a re-examination of the roles of women and men in Islam. It is important to include images of the ideal role of women in Islamic advertising. Women should be protected and not used in immoral ways in advertisements, even with their approval.

Muslim and non-Muslim stakeholders in advertising should come to an agreement regarding the decent portrayal of women in Islamic advertisements.

### **Theme 3: Key Stakeholders of Islamic Advertising**

The respondents had outlined the key stakeholders in the making of Islamic advertisements as the advertisers, the consumers, the advertising agencies, the ummah (the whole community of Muslims), the government, regulatory bodies, Shari'ah scholars (or ulama'), academic experts on advertising, consumer associations, the media, the industry of the product and society at large.

In general, we mention something about Ulama'. And yeah, these are the group, that very important group as for the people, each institution, each organization, agency the leaders of each group leaders. Should be doing this job, yeah, should be responsible. (Aminah, female, academician)

The demands of the stakeholder consumer should not be fulfilled if they are against Shari'ah rules and regulations.

You are trying to entertain the client and you're going to that level giving services and all that. Sometimes they ask for something you know un-Islamic thing, you cannot entertain. Advertisement goes with some ethical principles. So you can do business but you cannot do harām business, promoting certain thing that is doing promotion, promoting certain thing which is not allowed in Islam. (Aziz, male, academician)

The stakeholders have to apply Shari'ah principles in their discussions otherwise it would be blind following, mentioned Azman. We have to have standards and fatwa from time to time like in Islamic finance where there are round table discussions among experts from time to time and they have the decisions printed and distributed among Shari'ah advisors which can be accessed by the public.

#### *Subtheme 1: Stakeholders are Dā'i' and Embrace the Islamic Worldview*

The key stakeholders are also dā'i'<sup>7</sup> as they are involved in da'wah by making advertising messages that call to people, according to Aminah. She also said that it is important that the Muslim leaders of stakeholder groups believe in the Islamic worldview and uphold the oneness of Allah for Islamic advertising to be sustainably practised. The leaders of

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<sup>7</sup> Dā'i' refers to the person who does da'wah by calling people to the right path in Islam.

all organisations have to have good personality and character<sup>8</sup>, good soft skills and high emotional intelligence<sup>9</sup>, and clear mission and vision in terms of the shahādah<sup>10</sup> that determines the direction of the organisation.

It is a problem when stakeholders look at Islam in isolation and do not apply its principles to real life, said Ali. In Islam, it is believed that life on earth is a test that we have to pass before earning our place in the eternal goodness in the Hereafter but people are focusing on the Hereafter without considering the tests.

By embracing the Islamic worldview, one will not look at Islam as a mere religion. This worldview ought to be embraced by Muslim stakeholders. According to Aminah, much rhetoric has remained as mere rhetoric. The lack of understanding the Qur'ān has limited the scope of the Islamic worldview. "We have turned this (Islamic) worldview into a religion and a religion into certain physical/visual and ritual kind of things," said Ali.

It is important that stakeholders realise that they are 'abd<sup>11</sup> and khalīfah<sup>12</sup> on this earth who should be thinking about the well-being of people and other creatures. Islamic advertising should go beyond making profits per se and promote products for the benefit of society. According to Aminah, the concept of khalīfah also known as stewards, is also accepted by other world religions; Christianity and Judaism.

The truth and reality of this world which includes the recognition of man as 'abd and khalīfah...And every behaviour, every mode of living has to be guided by these two concepts, 'abd and khalīfah. Khalīfah here means you are responsible for bringing more development, more beauty, and more positives to this world.  
(Ali, male, academician)

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has been mentioned as the perfect human being and a good example for Muslim stakeholder leaders to emulate. Abū Hurayrah<sup>13</sup> related that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "I have only been sent to perfect good moral character." The Prophet (peace be upon him) is mentioned in the Qur'ān as rahmatan lil `alamin or as a mercy for Allah's creatures as mentioned in the Qur'ān (Surah Al-Anbiyaa, 21: 107), "We sent thee not, but as a mercy for all creatures." All creatures here refer to all man and other creatures with spiritual responsibility (The Ministry of Hajj and Endowments, n.d.).

In the case of non-Muslims as leaders, they can make Islamic advertisements so long as they have good moral character. Stakeholders should come together by cooperating and collaborating in propagating Islamic values through Islamic advertising. "Yes, collaboration in order to bring strength to propagate Islamic values together, if only one small party or group propagates positive values and the rest just do not care, so you cannot do much."  
(Aminah, female, academician)

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<sup>8</sup> Character is akhlaq in Arabic.

<sup>9</sup> Aminah says the human touch refers to high emotional intelligence and good soft skills.

<sup>10</sup> The shahādah or kalimatul shahādah is a declaration when translated from Arabic into English means Islam is to testify that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.

<sup>11</sup> 'Abd is slave in Arabic.

<sup>12</sup> Khalīfah is vicegerent in Arabic.

<sup>13</sup> Abu Hurayrah was Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) companion and a narrator of his hadith.

But it is important to look at the economics aspect of Islamic advertising as Sharī‘ah advisors would be advising from the Fiqhi point of view and leave out the philosophical ethical and economic points of view. The ḥalāl and harām aspects of products would be their domain but not child labour for instance, mentioned Azman. The Islamic advertising expert could look at the economic role of advertising.

*Subtheme 2: Stakeholders have to Create Advertising with Ikhlas and Guided by Three Principles of Faith (Islam, Īmān, Ihsān) and Surah Al-Fātiḥahh*

Stakeholders should ensure their involvement in the making of Islamic advertisements is with ikhlās<sup>14</sup> and good intentions as mentioned by several respondents interviewed. For the advertisements to be acceptable in Islam, they should be created with the sincerity of providing reliable information for people to make informed purchasing decisions.

When advertising, it is firstly important to seek the pleasure of Allah SWT followed by the satisfaction of human beings. Seeking Allah’s pleasure in business is in the form of His blessings as narrated by Hakim bin Hizam (Sahih Bukhārī):

The Prophet said, “The buyer and the seller have the option of cancelling or confirming the bargain unless they separate, and if they spoke the truth and made clear the defects of the goods, then they would be blessed in their bargain, and if they told lies and hid some facts, their bargain would be deprived of Allah's blessings.”

Our purpose in life is to worship Allah thus, obtaining His pleasure is important.

Actions will be judged according to intentions on Judgment Day. It is important for advertisers to carry out advertising with noble intentions for the sake of Allah. It is narrated on the authority of Amirul Mu’minin, Abu Hafs ‘Umar bin al-Khattab, radiyallahu ‘anhu, who said:

I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) say: Actions are (judged) by motives (niyyah), so each man will have what he intended. Thus, he whose migration (hijrah) was to Allah and His Messenger, his migration is to Allah and His Messenger; but he whose migration was for some worldly thing he might gain, or for a wife he might marry, his migration is to that for which he migrated. (Al-Bukhārī & Muslim)

The connection between action and intention underscores the connection between the physical and the spiritual components of man. We must be conscious when making our intentions and make the connection between our physical actions and their spiritual consequences. A good action coupled with the wrong intention will not earn us any reward in the Hereafter.

For a respondent, understanding the Qur’ān is important before one could examine oneself according to the three principles of faith. Knowledge of Surah Al-Fātiḥah as the essence of the Qur’ān is important for better guidance in the making of Islamic advertisements. It is best to read and know the Qur’ān in totality.

When understand Islam and the Qur’ān then level of faith will come. First of all they have to read the Qur’ān as a book of knowledge and guidance then they have to understand the basic, spirit of Islam. The second characteristics and third those who understand two positions of man as ‘abd and khalīfah. I am

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<sup>14</sup> Ikhlas is sincerity in Arabic.

emphasizing sister on khalīfah here because this world is given under our custodian. We are responsible for this world. If environmental pollution, we are responsible. (Ali, male, academician)

In order to make Muslims understand what Allah SWT wants, they would have to understand Surah Al-Fātiḥah. This surah is vital in the entire Muslims' life, spiritually and physically. All Muslims should recite it 17 times when performing their five daily prayers. The repetition shows the importance of it in the life of all Muslims.

One of the Prophet's saying was narrated by Abu Hurairah who said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) say:"

Allah said: "I have divided the prayer between Myself and My slave into two halves, and My slave shall have what he has asked for. When the slave says: 'Al-hamdulillah i rabbil Alameen (All the praise is to Allah, the Lord of all that exists),' Allah says: 'My slave has praised Me, and My slave shall have what he has asked for.' And when he says: 'Ar-Rahmanir-Rahim (The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful),' Allah says: 'My slave has extolled Me, and My slave shall have what he has asked for.' And when he says: 'Maliki yawmiddin [The Only Owner (and he Ruling Judge) if the Day of Recompense],' Allah says: 'My slave has Glorified Me. This is for Me, and this Verse is between me and My slave in two halves.' And when he says: 'Iyyaka na'budu wa iyyaka nastain [You (Alone) we worship, and You (Alone) we ask for help],' He says: 'This is between Me and My slave, and My slave shall have what he has asked for. And the end of the Surah is for My slave.' And when he says: 'Ihdinas-siratal-mustaqeema, siratal-allhdhina an'amta alayhim a lad-dallin [Guide us to the Straight Way, the way of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace, not (the way) of those who earned Your Anger, nor of those who went astray],' He says: 'This is for My slave, and My slave shall have what he has asked for'."

From this Hadith we learn how to praise Allah which is suited for Him alone and what to ask from Him in this worldly life.

Īmān and Islam are defined by their pillars that could be incorporated in advertising messages. Iḥsān in advertising means that advertising has to be carried out while being mindful of His observation. A person who goes by the highest level of faith and Iḥsān has excellent behaviour. It can be added that the advertising message could be incorporated with the pillars of Islam, Īmān and the principle of Iḥsān.

On the authority of Omer (may Allah be pleased with him), who said: One day while we were sitting with the Messenger of Allah (i.e. Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him), there appeared before us a man whose clothes were exceedingly white and whose hair was exceedingly black; no signs of journeying were to be seen on him and none of us knew him. He walked up and sat down by the Prophet (peace be upon him). Resting his knees against his (the Prophet's) and placing the palms of his hands on his thighs, he said:

O Muhammad, tell me about Islam.

The Messenger of Allah (may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: Islam is to testify that there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, to perform the prayers, to pay the Zākat to fast in Ramaḍān, and to make the pilgrimage to the House if you are able to do so.



He said: You have spoken rightly, and we were amazed at him asking him (the Prophet peace be upon him) and saying that he had spoken rightly.

He said: Then, tell me about Īmān.

He (the Prophet) said: It is to believe in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, the Last Day, and to believe in divine destiny, both the good and the evil thereof.

He said: You have spoken rightly.

He said: Then, tell me about Iḥsān.

He (the Prophet peace be upon him) said: It is to worship Allah as if you are seeing him, and while you see Him not yet truly He sees you. (Hadith narrated by Muslim)

#### **Theme 4: Islamic Advertisements should be Sharī'ah-Compliant**

Several respondents have indicated that Islamic advertising has to be Sharī'ah-compliant which means that only ḥalāl products and ḥalāl elements are featured and the way the advertisements are produced should also be ḥalāl.

Yeah, Sharī'ah is the way of life, prescribed to Muslims by Allah (SWT). This is what Sharī'ah is. So it should not contradict the Sharī'ah means that it should be in compliance with the Sharī'ah. Meaning that for example...the advertisement should not be for something that is not ḥalāl. So if you advertise for something that is not ḥalāl, it means that it is in contradiction with the Sharī'ah. For example, you cannot advertise for liquor, you cannot advertise any product or service, which is considered by the mainstream Islam as harām. (Zulkifli, male, academician)

Sharī'ah compliant means that if women are included in the advertisements, they should be portrayed in ways that are acceptable, said Alya.

Creativity is allowed as long as the advertisements are based on the Sharī'ah.

Islam allows us so long as it is ḥalāl, you can experiment but you cannot go beyond the Sharī'ah. The Sharī'ah is everything. Sharī'ah is like guiding principle for us. In all works of life, the Sharī'ah is a guiding principle. The Sharī'ah guides us, family matters with neighbours within office work, professional life and also industry and business. So, we are very, very careful with that (Aziz, male, academician).

The first elements should be in Islamic advertisement and to define what Sharī'ah compliance is, no prohibited elements in that advertisement, in the product itself. Of course, everyone knows no alcohol, no gambling that is very cliché isn't it? No gambling, no *Riba*, I mean no prohibited things in the advertisement. It can be advertising itself and product itself. Ok, that one is the first Sharī'ah compliance. (Jamilah, female, academician)

That's why I said no prohibited element in the making of advertisement as well as during the advertisement is published to people or public. (Jamilah, female, academician)

The products should be ḥalāl and the advertisements themselves should be excellent, said an academician, "The Prophet (SAW) in his Hadith encourages us that if we want to do

something, we should do it in the best way.” It is reported by Bukhārī, Muslim, Abu Daud, Ibn Majah and Darimi:

What is ḥalāl is clear. And what is harām is also clear. And in between those two is a dubious area in which many people do not know about. So whoever distanced himself from it, he has acquitted himself (from blame). And those who fall into it, he has fallen into a state of harām.

Products that are harām should not be promoted in advertisements that are Islamic.

So when we talk about Islamic marketing strategy, advertisement right, so it should be ḥalāl compliance, the product should be ḥalāl, the market, the manner in which you market the product should be ḥalāl, the advertisement should have the Islamic elements. (Aziz, male, academician)

The issue of sustainability in terms of preserving the environment, ensuring sustainable lifestyles and selling products in a sustainable manner that would not manipulate the customer must always be considered. This could add on to the definition of ḥalāl products which is the focus of Islamic advertising.

In other words, Islamic advertising should promote ḥalāl products that are sustainable.

Of course, producing goods must be produced sustainably. Sustainability is important, ethical, sustainability. So we talked about it should not be damaging the environment, how you produce the product also should be ethical, so who you pay, your workers should be well-paid. All these add to the end product. You are not just selling a product. The product must be made responsibly. (Ahmad, male, academician)

### **Theme 5: Standards for Islamic Advertising**

A standard guideline for Islamic advertising is necessary for determining whether advertisements are created in accordance with the Qur’ān and Sunnah or not. The standards should encompass the true meaning of Islam rather than incorporate how Muslims are currently practising Islam which may not always be Islamic.

For Alya, it is not easy to come up with standards for Islamic advertising, as it should follow the middle way, not the extreme as well as based on the level of Īmān or faith and the situation of the audience member and his or her akhlāq or ethics.

What I mean by ethics here is ethics from the Islamic perspective, [sic] is basically akhlāq. In fact, if you look into the term, akhlāq, it comes from the word khuluk and if you look into the dictionary, khuluk is actually the inner dimension of man. It is not what you do, it comes from within. (Alya, female, academician)

The standards ought to bring people closer to Allah and represent a symbiotic relationship of Revelation and reason. Things that are important to the stakeholders and may influence their decision on the standards should not be only considered without looking at the situation and the level of Īmān of audience members.

Advice on Islamic advertising should be given by the learned people of Islam and in the field. The importance of referring to the people of knowledge is clearly mentioned in Surah An-Nahl (16: 43), “If ye realise this not, ask of those who possess the Message”. A committee that does the check and balance is important to ensure that the advertisements are made according to Islamic teachings.

Ethics and morality are defined differently by Ali. For him, ethics is a rational understanding of the Qur'ān and morals are the rights of parents and neighbours, among others.

We can apply scientific method, rational method, whatever method we want to test and verify the claims of the Qur'ān. They satisfy every kind of curiosity....So through our rational understanding, we come to this final understanding that Allah exists, who is the Creator, who is the Sustainer, who is the Master of this whole universe. We accept these based on our rational understanding and empirical evidence. Then Allah presents before us a set of morals. In the Qur'ān we find these two things clearly separate. One is rational argument that is ethical exercise ethical discourse of the Qur'ān and the other side a set of morals. (Ali, male, academician)

### **Theme 6: Islamic Advertising Objectives**

The creation of advertising objectives is important to guide the making of advertisements and evaluate their effectiveness (Moriarty, et al., 2015). In Islam the primary objective of advertising should be to seek the pleasure of Allah before fulfilling the needs of man.

First of all, it must seek the pleasure of Allah. The advertiser, the marketer, the promoter of anything if he want it to be Islamic he must first have the pleasure of Allah and that includes ikhlās – sincerity in whatever you are doing...Secondly, I should get reward from human being by dealing with them in fairness. (Zulkifli, male, academician)

According to the respondents, advertising ideas have to be noble, correct, of good guidance for people to the right path, and convince people to buy products by giving them accurate information that would make them consider their options.

A lot of sales, attracting people to use commodity to your things is immediate goal. But that immediate goal is not the final goal which is making profit and making more and more money and becoming greedy, that is not the goal. Goal is in fact to serve. Now I said as khalifatullah, you have to make the life of man easier, more beautiful, and more enjoyable. So you are selling the things, you are producing the things; you are bringing the things which are more beautiful, more attractive, more useful, and more enjoyable. (Ali, male, academician)

The main goal or objective of Islamic advertising should be to serve Allah SWT and the second objective should be to make profit.

The purpose of our creation is mentioned in the Qur'ān (Surah Az-Zariyat, 51: 56), “I have only created Jinns<sup>15</sup> and men, which they may serve Me.” Serving Me refers to serving Allah SWT by worshipping Him or doing Ibadah. Hence, the main goal of Islamic advertising is supported by the Qur'ānic verse.

### **Discussion**

The study was carried out to understand the concept of Islamic advertising. The purpose of the research study was to identify Islamic advertising objectives, principles and

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<sup>15</sup> Jinn is a species of living beings that is created out of fire and covered or hidden from man's sight. Man is created from clay (The Ministry of Hajj and Endowments, n.d.). Iblis, or devil, is one of the Jinns that refused to bow to Adam when he was asked to do so by Allah.

stakeholders from the multiple stakeholder perspective of responsible advertising (Polonsky & Hyman, 2007) based on the stakeholder theory. Several themes and subthemes are generated from the interview data. The key themes and subthemes are: 1) Islamic advertising as a method of da'wah; 2) the main principle of Islamic advertising is enjoining good and forbidding evil (subthemes: truthful advertising messages, Shiar as symbolic Islamic representation, Islamic values, portrayal of women in a dignified manner); 3) key stakeholders in Islamic advertising production (subthemes: stakeholders are dā'i' and embrace the Islamic worldview and Islamic advertising should be created with ikhlās, using the knowledge of Surah<sup>16</sup> Al-Fātiḥah and by principles of faith [Īmān, Islam and Iḥsān]); 4) standards for Islamic advertising; 5) Islamic advertising objective is mainly to please Allah SWT and, 6) Islamic advertising is Syariah compliant. The theoretical implications of the study are presented in the next part.

### **Theoretical Implications of the Study**

The stakeholder theory advocates that firms are responsible towards their stakeholders. Profits can be made by firms while being morally fair. The stakeholders of organisations are groups of people or individual persons who can influence or are influenced by the organisation's achievement when carrying out its mission (Freeman, 1983). Stakeholders can be shareholders, suppliers of products to an organisation, customers, employees or the community. Organisations should be responsible to their stakeholders, build good relationships with them and consider their interests.

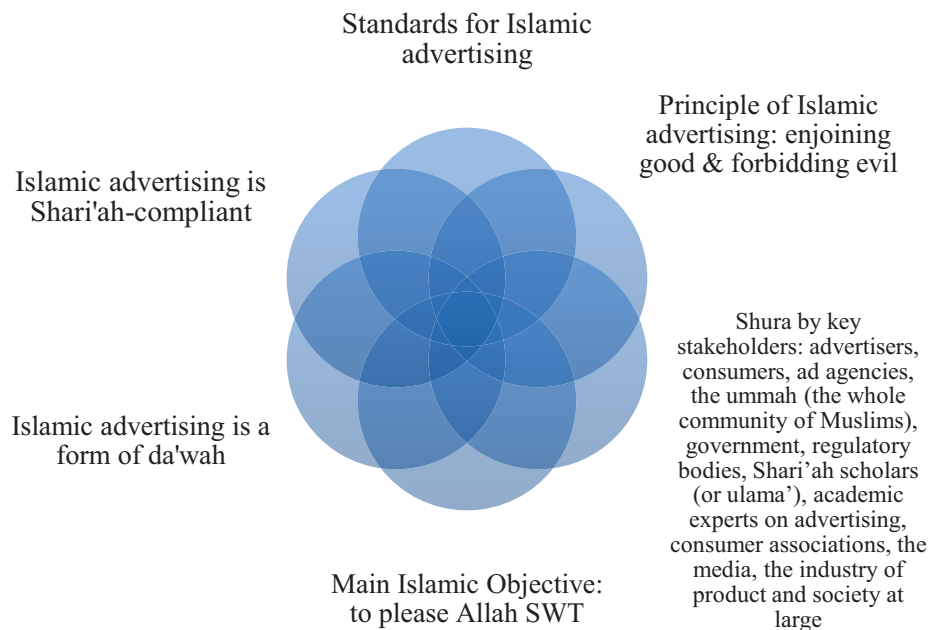
Polonsky & Hyman's (2007) multiple stakeholder perspective on responsibility in advertising espouses that stakeholders should assess responsibility in advertising. The effort could be hampered by ineffective communication through the movement of asymmetric information (insufficient information) and symmetric information (sufficient information) that is not fully understood. For advertising to be responsible, the writers suggest that all stakeholders' interests are considered when planning a firm's advertising.

In this study, responsible advertising is named as Islamic advertising.

The theoretical contribution of the study is by adding to the multiple stakeholder perspective on responsibility in advertising model in terms of elements other than the identification of stakeholders themselves and the need for them to be considered in advertising strategies and tactics. The elements of the multiple stakeholder perspective on responsibility in Islamic advertising are: 1) the identification of key stakeholders in the production of Islamic advertisements and proposing of their shūrā; 2) having Islamic advertising standards; 3) adhering to the principle of Islamic advertising; 4) considering Islamic advertising as a form of da'wah; 5) putting the main Islamic advertising objective to please Allah SWT and 6) making sure Islamic advertising is Shari'ah-compliant advertising. These elements amalgamate in the formation of Islamic advertising.

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<sup>16</sup> Surah means Chapter in the Qur'an in Arabic.



**Figure 3:** Model of Multiple Stakeholder Perspective on responsibility in Islamic Advertising

### **Key Stakeholders in the Production of Islamic Advertisements**

As a result of this study, more stakeholders were added to Polonsky & Hyman's (2007) stakeholder list in relation to advertising: for-profit firms, regulatory bodies, intermediaries and consumers. The key stakeholders identified in addition to this list by the interviewees were: advertisers, consumers, advertising agencies, the ummah (the whole community of Muslims), government, regulatory bodies, and Shari'ah scholars (or ulama'), academic experts on advertising, consumer associations, the media, the industry of product and society at large.

Together these experts could assess responsibility in advertising from their perspectives. This would allow more practical decisions to be made in the creation of Islamic advertisements that are morally fair. Although the salience of some stakeholders over others is not the focus of this study, the advertisers are considered to be the most important stakeholders as they initiate the advertising process and hold the funds for advertising; nevertheless, their behaviour can be changed by other stakeholders as evident in the case of Shell if the organisation were stakeholder-centric (Polonsky & Hyman, 2007).

Stakeholders should thus be involved in consultation or shūrā on Islamic advertising.

### **Shūrā in the Assessment of Responsibility in Advertising**

Shūrā was practised by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in private and in public. In the Qur'ān, it is mentioned in Surah As-Shūrā (42: 38), "Those who respond to their Lord, and establish regular prayer; who (conduct) their affairs by mutual consultation". In a commentary of the Qur'ān (The Ministry of Hajj and Endowments, n.d.), a good man is said to conduct his affairs in the ideal way through shūrā so that he is not too egotistical or self-centred and lightly abandon the responsibilities that are entrusted upon him in the eyes of Allah SWT.

The Companions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as narrated in a Hadith also carried out shūrā when making a decision. The recommendation provided by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) triumphed over other opinions.

Ibn 'Abbas (May Allah be pleased with them) reported, 'Umar bin Al- Khattab (May Allah be pleased with him) set out for Ash-Sham (the region comprising Syria, Palestine, Lebanon and Jordan). As he reached at Sargh (a town by the side of Hijaz) he came across the governor of Al-Ajnad, Abu 'Ubaidah bin Al-Jarrah (May Allah be pleased with him) and his companions. They informed him that an epidemic had broken out in Syria. Ibn 'Abbas relates: 'Umar (May Allah be pleased with him) said to me: "Call to me the earliest Muhajirun (Emigrants)." So I called them. He sought their advice and told them that an epidemic had broken out in Ash-Sham. There was a difference of opinion whether they should proceed further or retreat to their homes in such a situation. Some of them said: "You have set forth to fight the enemy, and therefore you should not go back;" whereas some of them said: "As you have along with you many eminent Companions of Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) we would not advise you to set forth to the place of the plague (and thus expose them deliberately to a danger)." 'Umar (May Allah be pleased with him) said: "You can now go away." He said: "Call to me the Ansar (the Helpers)." So I called them to him, and he consulted them and they differed in their opinions as well. He said: "Now, you may go." He again said: "Call the old (wise people) of the Quraysh who had emigrated before the conquest of Makkah." I called them. 'Umar (May Allah be pleased with him) consulted them in this issue and not even two persons among them differed in the opinions. They said: "We think that you should go back along with the people and do not take them to this scourge." 'Umar (May Allah be pleased with him) made an announcement to the people, saying: "In the morning I intend to go back, and I want you to do the same." Abu 'Ubaidah bin Al-Jarrah (May Allah be pleased with him) said: "Are you going to run away from the Divine Decree?" Thereupon 'Umar (May Allah be pleased with him) said: "O Abu 'Ubaidah! Had it been someone else to say this." ['Umar (May Allah be pleased with him) did not like to differ with him]. He said: "Yes, we are running from the Divine Decree to the Divine Decree. What do you think if you have camels and you happen to get down a valley having two sides, one of them covered with foliage and the other being barren, will you not act according to the Divine Decree if you graze them in vegetative land? In case you graze them in the barren land, even then you will be doing so according to the Divine Decree."

There happened to come 'Abdur-Rahman bin 'Auf companion-who had been absent for some of his needs. He said: I have knowledge about it. I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) saying, "If you get wind of the outbreak of plague in a land, you should not enter it; but if it spreads in the land where you are, you should not depart from it." Thereupon 'Umar bin Khattab (May Allah be pleased with him) praised Allah and went back. (Hadith narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim)

With the practice of *shūrā*, there is involvement by key stakeholders in discussions related to Islamic advertising and its production process. Issues that need solutions could be made public as in the case of Islamic banking and finance. For Islamic advertising, advertisers should make decisions based on the consideration of key stakeholders but the Qur'ān and Sunnah prevail above all. Much thought has to be put into how this could be done effectively.

For Polonsky & Hyman (2007), responsibility in advertising is when all stakeholders honour their obligations to each other. Advertising that infringes acceptable standards will be

seen as irresponsible by one or more stakeholders. The standards for Islamic advertising should also be based on the shūrā between key stakeholders. Suffice to say here that standards could be used to ensure that there is Islamic guidance although the complexity of some advertising content may require interpersonal input from Muslim scholars.

Consensus is important in achieving when stakeholders discuss together on Islamic advertising...This is a concept of responsibility and accountability. It is very important...Yeah. They need to come together and consensus to strengthen (ties)...The concept of Ukhuwah in Islam...and if there is collaboration there will be synergy. There are all positive values; teamwork and all...We talk about respect but how to respect? How to collaborate? It is through interdisciplinary...if you are alone in this context, you cannot gain much. But if you are together, you can see things differently and you can share a lot of things. This is very positive. In order to come up with collaboration, somebody has to somewhere. (Aminah, female, academician)

### **Principle of Islamic Advertising**

Responsible advertisements are Islamic advertisements guided by the principle of the Qur'ān and Sunnah that encourages the practice of enjoining good and forbidding evil, presenting women in a dignified manner, promoting ḥalāl products, promoting Islamic values and disseminating truthful messages. In addition, Islamic advertising should be beneficial by increasing the knowledge and Īmān of audience members. Advertisements should, besides being commercial, remind audiences to prescribe Islamic values and increase positive attitudes and strong emotions in them that could lead to good behaviour.

### **Future Research**

There should be more interviews conducted with other stakeholders in the advertising industry to develop Islamic advertising further in terms of the multiple stakeholder perspective. The current content of advertising ought to be examined from the Islamic perspective to gauge whether there are Islamic values are incorporated. The stakeholder identification and stakeholder salience theories could be looked into in future studies.

### **Conclusion**

This qualitative research study on Islamic advertising has generated more elements to be considered in the production of Islamic advertisements from a multiple stakeholder perspective. As Islam is a way of life, Islamic principles have to be considered in everything that we do including business. A model of the multiple stakeholder perspective on responsibility in Islamic advertising has been developed based on Polonsky and Hyman's (2007) multiple stakeholder perspective on responsibility in advertising. It is hoped that this study has made a small contribution to advertising scholarship.

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