Challenges and Opportunities of Sharia Marketing in Indonesia: An Ethical and Cultural Perspective

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Abstract

Sharia marketing in Indonesia holds great potential due to the country's predominantly Muslim population. Fundamental sharia principles such as the riba, gharar, and maysir prohibitions form the foundation for developing marketing practices that align with Islamic teachings. However, the implementation of sharia marketing in Indonesia faces several challenges, including varied consumer understanding of the halal concept, cultural diversity, and competition from more affordable conventional products. Regulations and sanctions from Badan Penyelenggara Jaminan Produk Halal (BPJPH) reinforce business compliance with halal standards. At the same time, digital technology provides opportunities for companies to expand consumer education and enhance product transparency. Collaborations with Muslim influencers and the use of social media have also proven effective in raising consumer awareness, especially among younger generations. This study aims to analyze the challenges and opportunities of sharia marketing in Indonesia from an ethical and cultural perspective and identify marketing strategies that can enhance Muslim consumer trust and loyalty. The findings indicate that effective sharia marketing can strengthen the national economy by increasing the competitiveness of halal products, supporting MSMEs, and contributing to the sustainable growth of the halal industry.

Keywords: sharia marketing, halal products, digital technology, marketing strategy, BPJPH regulations

Abstrak

Pemasaran syari'ah di Indonesia memiliki potensi besar karena mayoritas penduduknya beragama Islam. Prinsip-prinsip dasar syari'ah seperti larangan *riba*, *gharar*, dan *maysir* menjadi dasar pengembangan praktik pemasaran yang sejalan dengan ajaran Islam. Namun, penerapan pemasaran syari'ah di Indonesia menghadapi beberapa tantangan, termasuk pemahaman konsumen yang beragam tentang konsep halal, keragaman budaya, dan persaingan dari produk konvensional yang lebih terjangkau. Peraturan dan sanksi dari Badan Penyelenggara Jaminan Produk Halal (BPJPH) memperkuat kepatuhan bisnis terhadap standar halal. Pada saat yang sama, teknologi digital memberikan peluang bagi perusahaan untuk memperluas edukasi konsumen dan meningkatkan transparansi produk.

Kolaborasi dengan influencer Muslim dan penggunaan media sosial juga terbukti efektif dalam meningkatkan kesadaran konsumen, terutama di kalangan generasi muda. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis tantangan dan peluang pemasaran syari'ah di Indonesia dari perspektif etika dan budaya serta mengidentifikasi strategi pemasaran yang dapat meningkatkan kepercayaan dan loyalitas konsumen Muslim. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pemasaran syari'ah yang efektif dapat memperkuat ekonomi nasional dengan meningkatkan daya saing produk halal, mendukung UMKM, dan berkontribusi pada pertumbuhan industri halal yang berkelanjutan.

Kata Kunci: pemasaran syari'ah, produk halal, teknologi digital, strategi pemasaran, regulasi BPJPH

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, as the country with the largest Muslim population globally, presents a substantial opportunity for the growth of the halal market and sharia-based marketing (Saputri, 2020). According to the Pew Research Center (2011), approximately 87.2% of Indonesia's 270 million citizens were Muslim as of 2010, making Indonesia a promising market for products and services aligned with sharia principles. In this context, sharia marketing plays a crucial role by not only prioritizing financial gains but also upholding ethical values such as honesty, justice, and social responsibility in every transaction (Aravik et al., 2022; Budianto & Dewi, 2024). These principles enable companies to foster stronger relationships with Muslim consumers, building trust through business practices that align with Islamic teachings (Aravik et al., 2022).

Amid the rising awareness of halal products, sharia principles in marketing regulate essential aspects of business activities, including the prohibition of practices involving *riba* (interest), *gharar* (uncertainty), and *maysir* (gambling) (Al-Qardhawi, 1988). The implementation of these values reflects not only compliance with Islamic teachings but also adds value for increasingly discerning Muslim consumers who seek products that are not only halal but also *tayyib*, meaning wholesome and safe to consume (Kamali, 2021).

Despite the vast potential of the halal market in Indonesia, significant challenges in sharia marketing remain (Hariani & Hanafiah, 2024). One major challenge is business players' lack of understanding and awareness regarding core sharia principles (Bhatti & Bhatti, 2010). Many companies have yet to grasp the essential elements of sharia-based marketing, resulting in business practices not fully aligned with sharia principles (Hidayatullah et al., 2024). Additionally, halal regulations and certification in Indonesia are still primarily focused on food products, while non-food items such as cosmetics and pharmaceuticals remain insufficiently regulated (bin Ab Rahman et al., 2023). This gap makes it difficult for Muslim consumers to ensure that the products they choose align with their religious beliefs.

Local cultural diversity in Indonesia also poses challenges when implementing sharia marketing. Each region has distinct values and traditions influencing the public's acceptance of sharia-compliant products. Consequently, companies must adapt their marketing strategies to resonate with local cultural values. Conversely, the advancement of digital technology and globalization presents vast opportunities to expand sharia marketing's reach, both in domestic and international markets (Talib et al., 2024).

This study analyzes the challenges and opportunities in implementing sharia marketing in Indonesia from ethical and cultural perspectives. Additionally, the study seeks to identify effective sharia marketing strategies that companies can adopt to optimally meet Muslim

consumers' needs. This research is expected to provide in-depth insights into marketing practices that are financially beneficial, ethically sustainable, and compliant with sharia principles.

2. METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative approach using the library research method, where data is gathered and analyzed from various relevant written sources. Library research enables the researcher to understand the phenomenon of sharia marketing in Indonesia through literature that explores sharia principles, business ethics, Muslim consumer behavior, and the challenges and opportunities within sharia-based marketing. The data sources include primary and secondary literature, such as books, academic journals, conference articles, and other relevant publications. (Cresswell, 2013).

In the data analysis process, information from each source is categorized based on key themes related to sharia marketing, including Islamic business ethics, Muslim consumer behavior, and local cultural values. This approach aims to identify core patterns in the literature, which are then analyzed to provide insights into the challenges and opportunities of sharia marketing in Indonesia. Data validity and reliability are maintained by exclusively using literature from academic sources and credible publications that meet scholarly standards.

3. RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Challenges of Sharia Marketing in Indonesia

As the country with the largest Muslim population globally, Indonesia offers vast potential for developing sharia-based marketing (Muheramtohadi & ady Fataron, 2022). Fundamental principles of sharia, such as the prohibition of riba (interest), gharar (uncertainty), and maysir (gambling), serve as core guidelines for business operators in implementing practices that align with Islamic teachings. According to Kotler (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018), understanding consumer behavior is essential in building effective marketing strategies, particularly in the sharia market context, where Muslim consumers have high expectations of product integrity that reflects ethical sharia principles.

One of Indonesia's biggest challenges in sharia marketing is building consumer trust through honest and transparent communication. This aligns with Islamic teachings that emphasize honesty in every transaction. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "The honest and trustworthy merchant will be with the Prophets, the truthful, and the martyrs" (HR. Bukhari). In this context, honesty and transparency enhance consumer loyalty and strengthen a company's position in the sharia market (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018).

Apart from trust, sharia marketing in Indonesia faces regulatory challenges, especially in the non-financial sector, which requires specific guidelines related to sharia practices. Although the Islamic financial sector is relatively well-regulated, the non-financial sector, such as halal products, still lacks comprehensive regulations. Kotler (2018) points out that clear and targeted regulations aid companies in understanding the boundaries and guidelines within an ethics-based market, which is crucial for businesses to ensure that their practices align with Islamic values.

Badan Penyelenggara Jaminan Produk Halal (BPJPH) is responsible for halal certification in Indonesia. BPJPH has mandated halal certification for products sold in the market, with administrative and criminal penalties for companies that fail to comply with these requirements. Under these regulations, companies not meeting halal certification requirements may face written warnings, fines, and even operational shutdowns (BPJPH, 2024). These sanctions underscore the government's commitment to supervising the halal industry to ensure that Muslim consumers have access to products guaranteed to be halal.

With the enforcement of sanctions by BPJPH, companies face additional pressure to meet halal requirements in terms of certification and adherence to sharia standards throughout production processes. Borzooei & Asgari (2016) Emphasize that halal certification is not only a legal obligation but also a critical element in building a sharia brand identity and enhancing product credibility in the eyes of Muslim consumers.

The BPJPH data shows a significant increase in halal-certified products each year. 2020 there were 59,405 halal-certified products, which increased to 315,668 in 2021 and reached 704,989 in 2022. By September 2023, halal-certified products had risen to 1.43 million. This growth highlights the increasing attention of business operators to the importance of halal certification (Santika, 2023), which in turn supports the continuously expanding national halal market. The table below shows the development of the number of halal-certified products in Indonesia:

Table 1: The Development of The Number Of Halal-Certified Products In Indonesia

Year	Number of Halal-Certified Products
2020	59,405
2021	315,668
2022	704,989
2023*	1,430,000

(databoks.katadata.co.id)

*Note: The 2023 data reflects September 20, 2023 figures.

On the other hand, Indonesia's cultural diversity adds complexity to implementing sharia marketing strategies. Each region in Indonesia has unique traditions, customs, and preferences that influence how the public receives sharia-compliant products (Hariani & Hanafiah, 2024). This diversity requires companies to develop marketing strategies that resonate with local cultural values. Marin Marinov (2007) emphasizes that in Islamic countries, marketing strategies must be adapted to local values so that various consumer segments can accept sharia products.

Another challenge lies in the differing consumer perceptions of the halal concept. While there is a universal definition of halal, some consumers hold additional preferences related to the *tayyib* concept, including product safety and cleanliness. According to research by Anam et al. (2018), these varying understandings push companies to adapt their marketing communication to assure consumers of halal products' quality, safety, and purity.

The limited understanding among some consumers regarding the importance of halal certification presents an additional challenge. Many consumers still view the halal label as an added feature, lacking awareness of its ethical and legal significance. Melewar and Alwi (2017) point out that in Islamic societies, companies are responsible for educating consumers on the importance of halal standards, as a better understanding can increase consumer preference for certified products.

sharia marketing in Indonesia also contends with competition from conventional products, which are often more affordable and readily accessible. Conventional products frequently have lower prices as they do not undergo the additional costs of halal certification. Kotler (2018) notes that price is a critical element in marketing strategy, and a higher price can deter Muslim consumers from choosing certified halal products, even if halal products may be of higher quality.

Moreover, challenges arise when companies attempt to align production processes with halal standards, particularly in non-food sectors such as cosmetics and pharmaceuticals, which require careful selection of raw materials and production methods. Marin Marinov (Marinov, 2007) underscores that companies must ensure that raw materials and production methods are free from non-halal elements to build consumer trust in Islamic markets.

According to research by Ambali and Bakar (2014) and Sayogo (2018), increasingly aware Muslim consumers prefer transparent products about the production process. This adds an extra challenge for companies that have yet to adopt halal standards in every operational aspect. Transparency in sharia marketing is crucial, as discerning Muslim consumers expect clear information regarding production processes and adherence to established standards.

3.2. The Role of BPJPH Regulation and Sanctions in Halal Certification

BPJPH plays a central role in ensuring the halal integrity of products circulating within Indonesia through the implementation of halal certification. BPJPH regulations mandate that all products marketed in Indonesia must have halal certification, with strict sanctions for companies that fail to comply with these requirements (BPJPH, 2024).

According to BPJPH, sanctions for companies not meeting halal certification obligations include written warnings, administrative fines, and potential cessation of operations. Marinov (2007) asserts that strict regulations in Islamic countries reflect efforts to protect the interests of Muslim consumers and ensure that products on the market meet sharia standards.

The imposition of sanctions by BPJPH encourages companies to take the halal certification process more seriously, which, in turn, has led to a significant increase in the number of halal-certified products in the domestic market. Research indicates that, as of 2023, there has been a substantial rise in halal-certified products, reaching 1.43 million items—a remarkable growth compared to previous years (BPJPH, 2024).

Kotler (2018) emphasizes that strong regulations create a safer and more reliable consumer environment. In the context of sharia marketing, BPJPH regulations assure Muslim consumers that their products have undergone a credible certification process, thereby enhancing consumer loyalty.

Additionally, BPJPH's sanctions act as an incentive for companies to comply with halal standards promptly. Melewar and Alwi (2017) add that halal certification instills trust among

Muslim consumers, who view it as a testament that the product adheres to Islamic values and is safe for consumption.

BPJPH also takes a proactive approach by closely monitoring products in the market to ensure compliance with halal standards. According to Melewar & Alwi (2017), this approach ensures the integrity of halal products and strengthens Indonesia's reputation as a nation committed to managing the sharia-compliant market.

Beyond food and beverage products, Indonesia's halal regulations have expanded to include non-food items such as cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, and household goods. BPJPH states that this expanded coverage aims to provide Muslim consumers with a broader range of options in line with Islamic principles, particularly those outlined in the Qur'an that emphasize the importance of purity and cleanliness in all aspects of life.

BPJPH's strict supervision provides added assurance for consumers. Kotler (2018) notes that effective monitoring enhances brand credibility, making consumers feel more confident when selecting certified products.

3.3. The Role of BPJPH Regulation and Sanctions in Halal Certification

Digital technology has simplified the process for companies to educate Muslim consumers on the importance of halal products. Kotler (2018) states that education is a vital element in marketing, and technology provides an effective means for companies to deliver relevant information to consumers. Businesses can leverage social media to provide information about the halal certification process, product benefits, and the advantages of halal products over conventional ones. Research by Sayogo (2018) shows that Muslim consumers are more likely to trust transparent brands about production processes and the halal status of their products.

Beyond social media, e-commerce platforms play a crucial role in sharia marketing. Melewar and Alwi (2017) note that e-commerce facilitates easier access for consumers to search, compare, and purchase halal products, ultimately boosting the competitiveness of sharia products in the digital market. Additionally, BPJPH's halal verification application allows consumers to check a product's halal status quickly. Nestorović (2016) highlights that technology in sharia marketing helps maintain consumer trust, enabling consumers to make more informed and confident purchasing decisions.

The convenience offered by halal verification apps further enhances consumer loyalty. Marinov (2007) asserts that the ease of verifying halal status in Islamic countries strengthens consumer loyalty to products that meet sharia standards. Furthermore, using data analytics on digital platforms provides companies with deeper insights into Muslim consumer preferences. Kotler (2018) explains that data analytics allows businesses to understand consumer behavior better, enabling them to tailor marketing campaigns to suit their needs and preferences.

3.4. Collaboration with Influencers in Building Halal Product Image

Collaboration with Muslim influencers has become increasingly popular in Indonesia as an effective marketing strategy. Melewar and Alwi (2017) point out that it significantly influences consumer perceptions of a brand, particularly among younger generations who are active on social media. Millennial and Gen Z Muslims tend to be more discerning and

aware of the importance of halal products. Marinov (2007) mentions that in Islamic countries, this awareness creates vast opportunities for halal product marketing through partnerships with influential figures who can promote sharia values.

Kotler (2018) notes that collaborating with influencers enables companies to strengthen brand communication with consumers. Muslim influencers help introduce halal products and build trust by conveying authentic messages aligned with Islamic values. Such collaborations also enhance the visibility of halal products in the market. Social media influencers can help increase the exposure of halal products and foster trust among skeptical consumers (Ho et al., 2024).

3.5. Effective sharia Marketing Strategies

Effective sharia marketing strategies in Indonesia emphasize continuous education for business players and Muslim consumers regarding the importance of sharia principles in all aspects of marketing. VonDras (2017) stresses that education aims to help the public understand the benefits of consuming halal products, which satisfy both spiritual and health standards. Robust education builds greater consumer trust, as consumers know their products meet rigorous sharia standards.

Another strategy is ensuring that each element of the marketing mix—product, price, promotion, and distribution—reflects sharia values holistically. Alzeer et al. (2018) explain that products marketed within the sharia context must satisfy the concepts of halal and *tayyib*, meaning they are not only permissible but also safe and of high quality. Prices should be fair and non-exploitative; promotions should be honest and avoid misleading information; and distribution should be equitable, ensuring all consumers can access the products without discrimination or excessive pricing.

Transparency is a critical component of promotional strategies. Muslim consumers tend to trust companies that honestly disclose information about the products they market. According to Silalahi & Fahham (2023), informative and educational content enhances consumer awareness and loyalty toward halal products, as consumers can directly observe the company's commitment to sharia principles. In practice, sharia promotion avoids misleading claims and focuses on the objective strengths of the products.

Using social media as a tool for sharia marketing offers companies a substantial opportunity to engage directly with consumers. Social media enables companies to communicate ethically and align promotional messages with sharia principles, building a positive image among Muslim consumers. Sayogo (2018) states that open interactions on social media enhance consumer trust in halal products. Moreover, social media allows consumers to ask questions, provide feedback, and engage in direct dialogue with companies, fostering a closer and more transparent relationship.

Market segmentation that considers adherence to sharia and local cultural values is also essential in sharia marketing. By understanding the demographic and cultural characteristics across different regions, companies can tailor their marketing strategies to be more targeted and relevant (De Villiers et al., 2020). This segmentation acknowledges Indonesia's cultural diversity and allows companies to convey messages that resonate with each consumer group's values and beliefs.

Optimizing halal certification as a branding tool is an effective strategy to enhance product appeal among Muslim consumers. Halal certification assures consumers that

products meet sharia standards, making them more acceptable to Muslim consumers and non-Muslim consumers who seek quality and safe products (Sayogo, 2018). Branding with halal certification also enhances company credibility in the sharia market, strengthens consumer loyalty, and builds a positive image that aligns with Islamic values.

3.6. Implications of sharia Marketing on Indonesia's Economy

The development of the halal market supported by sharia marketing has significant implications for Indonesia's economy. Products that meet halal standards increase domestic consumer trust and attract international investors interested in the growth potential of the halal market (Hamid et al., 2019). Thus, sharia marketing based on ethical and transparent principles can catalyze economic growth through domestic consumption and foreign investment opportunities.

Effective sharia marketing not only focuses on commercial gains but also strengthens Indonesia's position as a global hub for the halal industry. Alzeer et al. (2018) suggest that this positive image can enhance the competitiveness of Indonesian halal products in international markets, open greater export opportunities, and attract global investors drawn to an ethical and stable halal market. This vision supports Indonesia's aspiration to become a leading player in the global halal industry, particularly in markets with large Muslim populations, such as the Middle East and Southeast Asia.

Furthermore, effective sharia marketing contributes to sustainable national economic growth by promoting responsible and ethical business practices. In sharia business, fairness and non-exploitative principles are fundamental in every transaction, supporting the development of a more inclusive and sustainable economy. Hasan (2024) notes that fair and non-exploitative practices in sharia businesses can reduce economic inequality, creating a balance between corporate interests and social welfare.

Sharia marketing also plays an essential role in fostering the growth of the local halal industry, creating business opportunities for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to participate in the halal market. This, in turn, enhances community welfare at the local level and strengthens the national economy overall (Kalliny et al., 2017). With support from ethically based sharia marketing, MSMEs can gain broader access to the sharia market, both domestically and internationally, allowing them to compete and thrive within the halal industry. Through the contribution of sharia marketing to the national economy, Indonesia can establish an ecosystem that supports the sustainable growth of the halal industry. sharia marketing provides an ethical foundation for companies to focus on profit and social responsibility. This marketing approach promotes sustainable economic growth, fosters inclusivity, and creates a healthy and competitive business environment in Indonesia and internationally.

4. CONCLUSION

Sharia marketing in Indonesia has significant growth potential given its large Muslim population, though it faces complex challenges in its implementation. Core sharia principles, such as prohibitions on *riba* (interest), *gharar* (uncertainty), and *maysir* (gambling), provide essential foundations for companies to ensure adherence to Islamic values in all aspects of marketing. BPJPH regulations strengthen consumer trust through mandatory halal

certification, while challenges such as differing consumer perceptions and diverse local cultures require companies to innovate in their approach.

Digital technology opens new opportunities, allowing companies to educate Muslim consumers, enhance transparency, and expand reach through social media and ecommerce platforms. Furthermore, collaboration with Muslim influencers is an effective strategy to elevate the image of halal products and connect with younger Muslim generations who are discerning and conscious of the importance of halal products.

Effective sharia marketing strategies emphasize ongoing education, transparency, and a marketing mix aligned with sharia principles. These strategies boost consumer loyalty and strengthen Indonesia's position in the global halal industry. Positive implications extend to national economic contributions, from increased competitiveness of halal products and expanded export opportunities to enhanced welfare for MSMEs participating in the halal market. Thus, sharia marketing grounded in ethical and social values supports sustainable economic growth and reinforces Indonesia's standing as a competitive hub for the global halal industry.

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