The Influence of Religion and the Marketing Concept: A Case of Halal Culture

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The initiation of the marketing concept took place after the industrial revolution in Western society. Over a period of decades the concept of marketing has seen many changes by evolving and passing through two important stages such as the production and sales orientations (Zebal, 2003). There was a time when the market only had one or a few products with numerous customers in the society with very limited choice, since the production efficiencies were regarded as essential for achieving and maintaining a business activity. But today, there are various products with many choices for customers due to the argument that marketers should pay more attention to the customers' needs and wants (Svensson, 2001). Therefore, the marketing concept has replaced the product by emphasizing product quality, availability, and sales volume. Therefore, the marketing concept has become a customer oriented, integrated and profit oriented philosophy of business (McKitterrick, 1957). According to Cherry et al. (2003), advances in communications, production, and logistics technologies have established the belief in the mind of both scholars and practitioners that globalization is a fact of modern business life. The challenge is to adapt the standards dictated by the different societies.

Although the world has been talking about globalization with more or less common corporate culture in the modern society of the world, goods and services are always sold in various different cultures. Cultural influences are have a strong on influence on marketing concepts in different territories of the world. Culture also plays an influential part on ethics since the latter is dependent on the social norms. The purpose of the study is to analyze and explore the cultural influence on the marketing concept context so both practitioners and scholars are assisted to understand that although there is an existence of global marketing strategies, there is also a need for local strategies to sell in different cultures (DeLoach, Saliba, Smith, & Tiemann, 2003). This paper will discuss and elaborate the seminal theories, principles of the marketing concept as well as its relationship with cultural influence using the example of Halal brand marketing in different origins, including Bangladesh, a country that is a known as an Islamic country in nature of religion as well as is known to possess an authentic Indian culture by being part of Indian subcontinent.

The Marketing Concept

In the earlier stage of the production era (Keith, 1960), the demand for goods far exceeded the supply that resulted in a focus to produce large quantity for manufacturing industries. There were only a number of firms that was involved in production, so their primary goal was to use modern technologies and more efficient techniques to attain large production in order to fill the supply constrain. The distribution of goods was the secondary concern and it was left to whole sellers and retailers (Zebal, 2003). The sales oriented phase started to grow

after the great depression of the 1930s, when the mass production faced the challenge of selling to the consumers resulting in hard selling, (Zebal, 2003). According to Comyns and Jones (1927), the pressure to buy loses customer for the future irrespective of making immediate sales for the organization. Therefore, although, the sales phase is existent in some parts of the world, the birth of marketing concept phase took place in the late 1950.

The Marketing Concept Phase

Unlike the production and sales phase, this holds the importance of customer needs and wants. The key seminal theories are as follows

The Exchange Paradigm:

According to Sheth and Uslay (2007), the exchange paradigm has been the foundation of marketing construct for decades. The American Marketing Association (AMA) used exchange as the core definition of marketing in 1985. Therefore, using exchange paradigm, the theory of marketing was based on to create exchanges that satisfy both individual and organizational goals (AMA, 1985). The seminal theory of exchange has also been supported by Tadajewski and Brownlie (2008) as they defined marketing as a concerning tool that meets and satisfies customer needs followed by ensuring organizational profit. The authors also quoted Crane (2000), Crane and Desmond (2002) and Kotler and Levy (1969) in defense of the theory.

Although the exchange paradigm built the foundation of marketing theory, it was criticized by some scholars as they found exchange to be common in many human sciences such as, economics, sociology and education. According to Bagozzi (1975) in Sheth and Uslay (2007), there are three types of exchange: generalized, restricted and complex and most of the marketing exchanges are generalized and complex rather than being restricted between two individuals.

Based on the criticism of the seminal theory, the marketing definition was revised a few times, and finally in 2007 was proposed by AMA (1985, para. 4) as the "activity, conducted by organizations and individuals, that operate through a set of institutions and processes for creating, communicating, delivering and exchanging market offerings that have value for customers, clients, marketers and society at large." According to Sheth and Uslay (2007), the present definition maintains the stakeholder perspective and defines marketing beyond limitations of the exchange. At the same time, the contemporary definition combines both the exchange and value creation paradigm.

Although the present theory was revised serves the purpose of marketing concept, it was rooted from the critical marketing theories of early years. The early marketing concept of exchange paradigm influenced the contemporary scholars to conduct further research on the pros and cons of the seminal theories. Further research has added the value creation theory as well as customer satisfaction and stakeholders' perspective to the seminal theory. Therefore, it can be concluded that the seminal theory contributed highly in the foundation theory of marketing of today. According to Hackley (2009), the seminal theories gave birth to the functional, ethical, intellectual, and political critique that forced the revising and redefining the present marketing concept.

Acceptability of the Marketing Concept

Although there are a number of philosophies related to the success of business, the marketing concept philosophy seems to be most effective tool of business success. The cost philosophy that deals with reducing cost is considered to be a short-term disinvestment approach strategy that does not bring long term profit (Thompson, 1993). The product philosophy, that only limited to quality of product requires large investment on research and product development, but may not see sales success due to lack of promotion as managers believe the quality would sell automatically (Diehn, 1992).

The production philosophy that only elaborates to large production and availability and creating capacity requires a market development today in order to make the products reach to the customers (King, 1985). The sales philosophy engages an organization to seek out customers aggressively and persuade them consume their offerings (Houston, 1986). The idea behind it is to sell more to make higher profit.

Finally, the marketing philosophy places more emphasis on the analysis of target market needs and wants followed by delivering the desired satisfactions more efficiently and effectively than competitors. According to Raymond and Barksdale (1989), the marketing concept provides a single prescription for running a successful business that is recognizing consumer satisfaction. The marketing concept that is combined with some specific techniques assists organizations to identify and satisfy customer needs (McGee & Sprio, 1988). The concept involves the marketing mix, the tools that managers combine in a specific marketing situation to reach consumers. According to Webster (1994), the list of 15 interrelated ideas that include, 1) creating customer focus, 2) listening to the customer, 3) defining and nurturing distinctive competence, 4) defining marketing as market intelligence, 5) targeting customers precisely, 6) managing for profitability, not sales volume, 7) making customer value the guiding star, 8) letting customer define quality, measuring and managing customer expectation, 10) building customer relationship and loyalty, 11) defining the business as a service business, 12) committing to continuous improvement, 13) managing culture with strategy, 14) growing with partner and alliances and 15) destroying marketing bureaucracy. Webster (1994) addressed that the managers under marketing concept philosophy are guided by the above ideas.

Therefore, it can be concluded that apart from marketing philosophy, none of the others consider customer needs and wants in making a product. Irrespective of uncontrollable challenges such as different culture within the same territory or outside the same, marketing concept philosophy is able to deliver consumer satisfaction since only targets the consumer segment.

Consumer Behavior in Relation to Marketing

Marketing theory evolved from consumer behavior. According to Hackley (2009), the marketing concept places an understanding of consumer needs, motivations and drives that are the central of the organizational activity irrespective of the industry. At the same time, it is also evident that although products, services and brands have a symbolic role in regards to social status, group membership and identity, consumers are also motivated beyond the rationale evaluation of product utility with experiential, psychodynamics and emotional drives that are not necessarily connected with utility. Hackley (2009) said that consumers may be both rationale and subjective in which case may be easily manipulated and exploited and irrational where their behavior is hard to measure and may be hard to be manipulated.

International versus Global Marketing

According to Van Heerden and Barter (2008), there is difference between international marketing and global marketing.   In the former the marketer treats the international market as a separate venue for product placement, therefore, tries to be adaptive to the controllable and uncontrollable factors. On the other hand, global enables marketers to treat their marketing activities throughout the world with a standardized strategy. According to Van Heerden and Barter (2008), controllable factors can be manipulated or controlled by the marketer using different strategies such as, marketing mix, product, price, place and promotion. On the other hand, the uncontrollable factor can only be adapted. International marketing environment analysis (IMEA) has listed cultural forces as one of the uncontrollable factors.

Culture

Cultural environment plays an active role both on personal characteristics and the marketing concept. Culture can be defined as a system of values and norms that are shared among a group of people that results as a design of living when adapted together. For example, due to the Hindu ritual norm, eating cow is forbidden in India. Van Heerden and Barter (2008) addressed that need for marketers to explore the constitution of culture since it is often accepted as an abstract term. According to Van Heerden and Barter (2008), the influence of culture in international marketing is profound. Therefore, it is a necessity for the marketer to understand culture in order to achieve success in international marketing venues.

There are terms like revolution, reform, and progress that derive from demonstration from the act of individual on a dream or goal that was beyond a norm. According to Wheeler (2011), it is impossible for an individual to rise above his or her environment. He suggests that culture affects the society drastically in terms of what is believed to be right and wrong.

There are various types of cultures that need attention prior to limiting to a particular culture. Culture can be categorized among the possible followings:

- Culture by Religion: Different religion groups follow different religious culture, such as Hindu, Christian, Jewish, Buddhist and Islamic culture. At the same time, some of the religious groups also have sub-culture such as, Catholic and Protestants; Shiah and Sunni Muslims. Although people may come from different origin, due to the similar religion they share similar behavior.
- Culture by Origin: Different countries or territory have different unique cultures that have become norms. For example, no matter where they reside, there is a similarity among Chinese, Indian and people from Middle East.
- Other Cultures: There are other man-made cultures such as, organization, and technology has given birth to a different culture. For example, there is an i-Pad generation as well as an Amish generation. Also each organization has its own culture. In the last few years, a green culture has started to a consistent growth due to people depending on more naturally processed goods as well as promoting recycling.

The individual factors that affect the decision making power of an individual may also include other factors driven from inheritance of nationality, sex, and age as well as some factors resulting from human development and socialization process like personality, attitudes, values,

education, religion, and employment (Ford and Richardson, 1994). According to Hunt and Vitell (1986), religion plays an influential role on an individual's perception of ethics that is derived from three factors such as cultural environment, personal characteristics, and finally religion.

Religion and Cultural Views

Religious views can play an important role in marketing concept in some countries. In Asia and in the Middle East, religious and cultural perspectives have a very strong influence on the conduct of business and the creation of business values. But it is important to distinguish between the religion and the culture. Religion is the guide that people believe to be coming directly from God, whereas culture is the norm of action in certain territories that are practiced for eternity. Many cultural views are seen as religious views because the latter was also influenced by culture (Hunt & Vitell, 1986). For example, many Hindu traditions from India are still practiced by the Muslims of Bangladesh since both the country shared a common culture as a unified country for thousands of years. Therefore, although Bangladesh is known to be an Islamic country and India being a Hindu state, despite the religious differences, many cultural norms still exists in both countries.

Islamic Branding

Although the concept of Islamic branding has been a common marketing theme in the Islamic territories such as the Middle Eastern countries as well as countries such as Bangladesh, it is yet to received much academic attention. According to Alserhan (2010), the subject provides a better understanding of Islamic branding through conceptualizing the terms relevant to the brand-Islamization efforts of non-Muslim brands, by identifying the necessary branding to Muslims practices. Commercialization of the Islam religion is not likely. This is due to the teachings of the Islamic faith. In Islam, there are clear and strict conditions that must be fulfilled by a firm prior to the entrance into the marketing vehicle of the religion. For example, a brand cannot by Shariah-compliant until it fulfills numerous conditions such as ingredients, logistics, impacts and intentions. Such fulfillments are on Islam called Halal (Alserhan, 2010). Therefore, religion plays an important role in putting ethics ahead of sales and revenues. But at the same time, it is evident that certain organizations in certain countries use Muslim sentiment and have gone too far in their commercialization effort of Islam. Mecca Cola is one of the perfect examples. The manufacturer of Mecca Cola tried to build a negative sentiment against Coca Cola because it is a Western company. It markets its cola as an alternative to Coca Cola.

Types of Islamic Brands:

- Islamic brands by compliance: Strictly Sharia-compliant product and service such as, Halal products and Islamic banking system. These brands were initially targeted only Muslim consumers as they are faith-based (Alserhan, 2010). However, these brands are expanding their horizon among other customers. For example, 60 percent customers of Islamic hotels in Dubai are non-Muslims.
- Islamic brands by origin: These brands are called Islamic due to their originating from the Islamic countries. For example, Emirates Airlines from UAE. These companies do not promote themselves as Sharia-compliant as some of them are clearly non-compliant due to their market segment being global (Alerhan, 2010). For example, Emirates Airlines serves alcohol to customers even though it is strictly prohibited in the teachings of Islam.

- Islamic brands by customer: The third type of Islamic branding may originate from any territory such as in a non-Islamic country. These Islamic brands are designed especially for Muslims consumers and may be manufactured by non-Muslim organizations. The examples of Halal brands manufactured by some non-Muslim manufacturers are Nestle, Unilever, L'Oreal, McDonalds, KFC and many others (Alserhan, 2010).

Halal

Halal is an Arabic word that is defined in English as lawful and wholesome. According to Alserhan (2010), it is an all-encompassing concept that encourages a Muslim to adopt products that promote goodness in all aspects of life, safe for consumption and produced in a clean and healthy environment. The Halal industry is growing continuously as it is not limited to only meat products, but has expanded to other products such as vaccines, lipsticks and even savings account in banks. Alserhan (2010) said in 2009 there were about 2000 organizations worldwide that became Halal certified by the Islamic Food & Nutrition Council of America as compared to only 23 certified organizations in 1990.

Halal Certification and the Market

Organizations need to use Halal certification and logos to communicate their Shariah-compliant products to the Muslim consumers (Alserhan, 2010). This confirms that products are permissible under Islamic law. To receive Halal certification the products must be inspected by an Islamic certifying agency. Many companies are finding it challenging as becoming Halal certified may mean to amend their production process. But they also finding it profitable as Muslims comprise the largest consumer segments in the world today with approximately one-fourth to one-fifth of the world population being Muslims that is expected to reach a market segment of $2.1 trillion (Alserhan, 2010). At the same time, there is also a growth in the demand for Halal products in the non-Muslim consumers as well. Based on the above, it can be easily predicted that a country like Bangladesh that contains approximately 80% Muslims also holds a big market of Halal products in terms of compliance, origin and consumers.

Consumer Decision Making Process in Shopping for Halal Products

Consumers are blessed with choices when it comes to shopping. But at the same time, consumers do not know, or feel that it is not necessary for them to know how the products such as food items are processed. In Western society consumers are confident about the product if it has ISO certification. In the Islamic society, Muslims are confident about the product when they see the Halal certification on the packaging. According to Anderson et al (1994), there are positive relationships between product quality and customer satisfaction, and customer satisfaction and profitability. According to Nooteboom, et al (1997), Garbarino and Johnson (1999), Morgan and Hunt (1994), and Tax, Brown and Chandrashekharan (1998), trust is the fundamental ingredient for the long term relationship between consumers and organization. Therefore, according to Abdul et al (2009), seeing the Halal certification increases the confidence among Muslim consumers for shopping. Without seeing the certification logo, a Muslim shopper investigates the ingredients of the product as there is always a risk that includes lack of assurance. According to Abdul et al (2009), there is a significant relationship between religion and the perception of Halal logo and ingredients among Muslim consumers. The authors also addressed from their study that Muslim consumers make purchase decisions with

respect to Halal logo as it gives them the confidence of quality matched their lifestyle. At the same time, study shows, that a growing number of non-Muslim consumers also make their purchase decisions based on ingredients such as animal products prior to buying, although the product at the store passed quality certification.

According to Acebron, Mangin and Dopico (2000), there are numerous models of consumer behavior. But the behavioral perspective model (Leek, Maddock & Foxall, 2000) and the classical attitude behavioral model (Trondsen, Braaten, Lund & Eggen, 2004) illustrate that the choice and motivation toward product such as food consumption are mainly driven by attitude towards the product. At the same time the attitudes toward a product are determined mainly by consumers' perceptions of the product along with their motives and consumption experience (Alvensleben, 1997). According to Kotler and Armstrong (1993), the more positive or negative a consumer's attitude is towards a product, the more drawn the consumer is to the positive or negative properties of the brand-leading to a stabilization of the attitude towards the product. Based on that, Aitelmaalem, Breland and Raynold (2005) concluded that the main factor that influences meat purchasing decision of Canadian Muslims is having confidence and trust that the product they are about to purchase is Halal.

Marketing of Halal Products

Consumer behavior plays the most important role in brand marketing of Halal products (Cheng, 2008). Muslim consumers are the same as any other consumers in they that prefer quality products that conform to their religious beliefs. According to Gobe (2001) the concept of emotional branding strategy applies to this segment as the concept places consumers before the product. At the same time, it can be noted that not necessarily all Muslims are 100% compliant with Halal products. The Halal segment is for hardcore practitioners for whom it is critical to being religiously correct (Cheng, 2008). Therefore, Low (2006) suggested that Halal product retailers should serve the core benefits to the Halal consumers instead of just selling products. Cheng (2008) also suggested that the consumers of Halal products would turn their attention to a well-marketed product which does not have Halal mark on it and read the ingredients in contrast to purchasing one which has less credibility but has a Halal mark. The perfect example can be McDonald's restaurant. The company has enjoyed approximately 20% higher profit along with Burger King, KFC and Taco Bell since obtaining Halal certifications in countries such as Singapore (Cheng, 2008). The marketing of Halal product falls under same marketing strategy segmentation such as,

- Product: Product packaging is one of prime factors in brand marketing of Halal products, because Muslim consumers buy Halal as part of their religious commitment to Islamic principles and teachings. According to El-Mouelhy (2007), the attitude of Halal food producers toward the Halal consumers that their lives are hard and dry for limited choice must be changed with willingness to supply quality Halal products. The failure of some Muslim countries to supply quality Halal products such as meat and poultry opened the door for countries from Europe, Australia, New Zealand, USA and other countries to supply quality Halal products to the segment as these countries have come to the Halal terms and have entered the market with superior quality products.
- Promotion: Halal brand promotion is similar to other brand promotion. According to Hazair (2007), by creating a Halal brand the organizations can enjoy the opportunity to

touch the lives of more people that is branded as a culture itself. Usually Halal businesses advertise their products in Halal journals as well as other community media. According to Al-Haran and Low (2008), advertising strategy depends on the market being Muslim or mix or so many different communities.

- Pricing: Strong Halal brands are created in terms of pricing. Pricing depends on supply, demand and costing. A brand can also value to a product allowing the manufacturer and sellers to enjoy the ability to command a higher price for their products, (Cheng, 2008). But at the same time, it is also to be noted, that although Halal brand is mainly targeted for Muslim community, the remaining world of the non-Muslims are also welcome to consume them as Islamic way of purity can be consumed by anyone. Therefore, large scale production for the whole world can also reduce the production of Halal products and supply would be sufficient for all the marketing segments, so the producers can offer reasonable price.

- Place: Muslims do not live in a set community in the non-Muslim countries, therefore, the distribution of Halal products seem to have trouble finding dealers as the products are available in small retail stores only. Although Low (2007) suggested that the manufacturers of Halal products should capitalize on the Muslim community, it is also arguably true that Halal was not only meant for Muslims, but to the whole population of the world as it is scientifically the pure way of processing products. Therefore, there is a continuous growth in consumption of Halal products within non-Muslim community as well (Cheng, 2008). It is also noted that due to the mix communities, there are many traditional grocery stores in Canada offer Halal products with the regular product.

Based on the above, it can be concluded that Halal marketing is similar to the ordinary marketing that applies the 4Ps appropriately. Therefore, the marketers can be assured that Muslim, who are loyal to the Halal brand, are the most loyal consumers; therefore, adapting to the Halal culture using a localized strategy instead of standardized product strategy may seem to be more appropriate.

Standardization versus Cultural Adaptation

According to Van Heerden and Barter (2008), there is a debate between standardization and adaptation. The advocates of the former believe that the whole world is becoming a global market in the present socioeconomic Internet based culture, therefore, marketing effort should follow a standardized strategy. The usage of the standardized marketing strategy can result in a consistent image of particular brand such as McDonald's restaurant. On the other hand, advocates of adaptation argue that the differences between cultures being extremely vast where standardization may result in lower sales (Van Heerden & Barter, 2008). Therefore, the authors suggest that marketers should introduce products adapting to each culture.

Van Heerden and Barter (2008) emphasized that culture is an uncontrollable factor in the environment in regards to international marketing. But at the same time, different culture can be experienced in the different regions of the same country. For example, even the American culture is divided into East coast and West coast. India has multiple languages and cultures within the same country. Therefore, accepting culture as an uncontrollable factor only in international marketing may result in limiting the factor. At the same time, further research is necessary for marketers to understand other uncontrollable factors such as, economy, currency,

financial, international trade rules, demography and infrastructure of a country or a local community.

Halal Soap Marketing in Bangladesh

Apart from a few majority manufacturing companies in Bangladesh, most organizations are not concerned about customer satisfaction, but are concerned about their own interests such as profit. Therefore, in most cases neither of the customer satisfaction and good business practices are achieved. In 1996, the Aromatic Soap Industry, a local manufacturer of cosmetics in Bangladesh introduced a Halal soap considering the religious sentiment of the country and captured a significant proportion of the soap market share that was dominated by Lever Brothers the local manufacturer and distributor of Unilever. Although Aromatic Soap Industry was sued by Lever Brothers to justify authenticity of the Halal soap, the law suit was dismissed by Bangladeshi court in favor of Aromatic after a vigorous testimony (Zebal, 2003).

As a result, Aromatic Soap Industry emphasized the needs, wants and the religious sentiment of the Bangladeshi Muslim consumers prior to the introduction of Halal soap. Unfortunately, there has not been much research undertaken to investigate whether or not implementing the marketing concept or the level of market orientation leads to success (Zebal, 2003). Apart from a case of Aromatic Soap Industry, it is observed that the consumer goods manufacturing industries of Bangladesh are still unaware about the condition for becoming market-oriented. It is also evident that although consumers in Bangladesh are taking for granted that everything is Halal, it is evident that many products, especially food and cosmetics are not Halal certified. There are many restaurants that sell food without maintaining proper hygiene. Therefore, the concept of Halal must be understood by general consumers in countries like Bangladesh.

Apart from Bangladesh, there are also many poor Muslim countries, where consumers are also victims of not receiving Halal products manufactured locally. Therefore ethical consideration must be existent prior to producing and marketing Halal products (Zebal, 2003).

The Future of Marketing in the Halal Culture

The discovery of new cultural segments has only strengthen the future of marketing due the diversity of the subject. Before the birth of the marketing concept, trade was limited to cost, product and production philosophy without placing the customer in priority (Zebal, 2003). But the existence of marketing concept has placed the customer before the rest that has opened the door for the concept to explore in the new horizon. According to Wright and Clarke III (2010), the marketing graduates, scholars and practitioners will experience an increasingly diverse and multicultural workplace both within and outside their home countries. The market place is no longer limited to locality, but has turned into an international marketplace. Therefore, a need of cross-cultural human relations and people skills (Bush & Bush, 1998) is needed for marketers to survive in the international market place.

Scholars and practitioners have been debating whether the global standardized marketing strategy or the adaptive localized strategy should be utilized to survive in the diverse market. Study shows that one customized strategy is not enough when the customer is placed in the first priority (Van Heerden & Barter, 2008). Organizations tried the standardized strategy in order to

maintain cost effectiveness, but later had to adapt to the cultural norms of the individual territory to survive the competition. McDonaldization, the concept that is highly talked about in North American society is also adaptive to different culture by selling Halal product in Islamic countries. The future of marketing also lies in the globally minded attitudes of the marketers to succeed in the international marketplace (DeLoach et al. 2003). The future of marketing can be determined if the marketing educators maintain the strategies to prepare the marketing students for the global and multicultural marketplace. For example, the existence of Halal culture is not limited to the Islamic countries any longer. Rather it has spread to the entire world.

Therefore, the success of the marketing concept lies in marketers conducting research on the Halal segment and adapting to the culture instead using standardized strategy (Van Heerden & Barter, 2008). Future marketing students and practitioners need to experience the intercultural sensitivity, culturally appropriate attitudes, behaviors and feelings. A positive attitude and behavior toward adaptability of a culture is essential for marketers to enter a new segment. Therefore, the existence of the uncontrollable environment, such as culture mainly opens the door for marketing concept to explore instead of challenging it. It is very important for marketers to acknowledge that the existence of Islamic culture has already been there where Halal is a way of everyday life. It is only recently when global marketers have entered the culture. Therefore, the challenge of entering a different culture is inevitable. But at the same time, the challenge opens the door with full of opportunities for exploration and for increased market share with scope of satisfying customer of different segments. According to Zebal (2003), satisfying customer is the main philosophy of marketing concept.

The future of marketing is strengthening with the exploration of new culture. The rise of different culture only strengthen the future of marketing concept due to its philosophy of placing customer in first priority leading to further research on consumer behavior.

Conclusion

This paper attempted to elaborate the cultural influence on marketing concept. Islamic culture and Halal branding was used as an example to analyze the exploration of marketing concept in a different market segment. In order to conduct the study, the author explored through the Islamic culture, and the life style of a Muslim consumer in regards to Halal products. The study also explored to the different segment of Islamic branding such as by compliance, by origin and by customer. The finding of the study clearly states that Halal certification is by Shariah-compliance, therefore not necessarily all the products that are originating from the Islamic countries are Halal certified. Halal is a way of life based on Shariah. Therefore, it is very important for marketers to understand the philosophy behind Halal and market their product accordingly. At the same time, the study also stated that despite being a different culture the marketing of Halal product falls under the same marketing strategy of 4 Ps. The author also elaborated about standardized versus adaptive method of marketing. According to Van Heerden and Barter (2008), it is better for international marketers to adapt to the culture in order to enter the segment instead of using standardized method. The marketing of Halal soap in Bangladesh was used as an example of marketing concept. The case of Bangladesh also showed that being Islamic country does not guarantee Halal life style. The existence of an uncontrollable environment factors such as culture does not threaten the future of marketing concept; rather each challenge opens the new segment for marketing concept to explore and expand.

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