

## **THE CONCEPT OF HALAL IN VISUAL ART MARKETING STRATEGY: A RESEARCH MODEL DEVELOPMENT**

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### **Abstract**

Visual art marketing strategy is a crucial aspect to be taken into consideration in order to ensure the continuous development of visual art field. It assists visual art practitioners to keep being productive in their efforts to come out with more art pieces to be sold. A few previous researches featured several marketing strategies for visual arts: nevertheless, there is no attempt to look at visual art marketing from the perspective of Islamic shariah. With uncertainties looming on visual art's place in marketing world, the researchers recognize the need to study the concept of Islamic shariah in visual art marketing strategies. Based on this identified research gap, this study aims to produce a model that is related to the Islamic shariah concept regarding visual art marketing strategies. As a result, the discussion on the model involves several aspects namely: 1) product; 2) production process; 3) market place; 4) retailer / collectors; and 5) transactions. Recommendation for future research direction in this area is a more comprehensive study on Islamic marketing strategies in visual art.

**Keywords:** Marketing Strategy, Visual Art, Halal Concept, Model, Islamic Shariah.

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

Visual art is a rapidly developing field in many aspects including its marketing scope. Other than the processes involved in visual art production, several significant aspects to ensure that the product can be marketed are production, marketing, market, buyers/collectors, and the transactional value itself (Christie, 1998). Nevertheless, there is a limited number of studies in the process of marketing visual art process since it is perceived as too exclusive as it involves the elitists and non-customer friendly gallery spaces.

At the same time, researchers found that, the scope of marketing strategy in visual art from the halal perspective is crucial to be given an in depth study. Based on the existing literature, researchers realized that a study on Islamic shariah concept in visual art marketing is unavailable. One of the contributing factors to this limitation is that many researchers in visual art marketing are non-Muslims; and they are uninterested in the issue of compliance to Islamic principles. Moreover, this shift in focus is paramount in the bid to ensure the objective or Maqasid Shariah that is to attain the good and ward off the evil can be implemented (Hussain, 2012; Al-Bakri,2014).

There are efforts done to re-evaluate the business marketing strategies from the Islamic perspectives which focus on the issue of halal and haram. Nevertheless, these attempts to revisit the business marketing system from these contexts were incomplete. In studying the Islamic marketing, Jafari (2012) emphasized that there are many rooms to explore. He stated that *Muslim and non-Muslim scholars are invited to deal with current issues (Islamic marketing), since there are many areas to be studied ( relative to Halal/Haram dichotomy, usage paradox, Islam as a culture) and Muslim scholars must be connected with the topic in order to provide answers to grey areas pertaining Islamic issues.*

Based on the conditions which are discussed, the main objective of this research is to develop a research model in relation to the concept of halal in visual art marketing strategies.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Definition of Halal and its Concept in the Visual Art Marketing Strategy

In defining the halal concept, the researchers directly refer to Halal Malaysia Official Portal, (n.d) that is *"Halal originates from an Arabic phrase that means allowed or permitted by Islamic Law"*. Something that is 'permissible' must be discussed in human daily lives. Interpreting the meaning of halal or 'permitted' is putting it in line with other issues which are often brought forth from the Islamic point of view such as rebranding, food, hotel, banking, business, marketing as well as visual art.

Halal concept is often misunderstood by the society when it revolves around: 1) something produced by the Muslims; and 2) items produced from Islamic countries. As stated by Ya et al. (2017), an issue arises regarding alcoholic beverages from Tunisia, Turkey and Egypt; it had been misinterpreted and these beverages were considered halal and Islamic because they were produced by Muslim countries. Furthermore, there were issues involving the rebranding of Islam which was inclusive of services and products which comply with the Islamic shariah principles. Islamic rebranding requires the involvement of halal accreditation board which implemented stringent procedure prior to producing halal certificate (Alserhan, 2010; Yusof & Jusoh, 2014).

With the definition and example of halal concept mentioned earlier, it is suffice to say that visual art marketing can be further explained as a system or strategy related to products and visual art marketing services which are permissible (halal) according to Islamic shariah views.

### 2.2 Marketing Strategy in Visual Art

Visual art is a field which requires systematic strategies since it involves artistic products which will be purchased by buyers/collectors based on interest and investment; and an artwork could also be obtained due to daily needs (each audience values beauty). This is part of an important element in discussing the principles of art organization in visual art foundation, namely economy (Ocvirk et. al. 2006). Therefore, effective marketing strategy is able to assist in the sustainability of visual art product business in the long run.

**Table 1.** Comparison between the structure of standard business and art business (Christie, 1998)

| <b>Standard Business System</b> | <b>Standard Business</b>      | <b>Art Business Norms</b>        |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Producer / Manufacturer         | Produce tools                 | Artists                          |
| Develop location / warehouse    | Develop warehouse / shop      | Establish a studio               |
| Mix raw materials               | Assemble product tools' parts | Mix paint and apply on canvas    |
| Produce products                | Produce product tools         | Produce paintings and others     |
| Search for sales location       | Retailer search               | Search traders/agents/others     |
| Attract buyer interest          | Attract buyer interest        | Attract buyer/collector interest |
| Perform transactions            | Transactions/ sales           | Transactions/sales               |

In making the comparison between different business strategies as stated in table 1, Christie (1998) elaborated on the business ultimate aim which was all visual artwork produced were sold (transactions

occurred). Each phase (artists, studio development, artwork production, traders/agents search, attract buyer/collector interest) that the process undergoes; or also known as each business deal, will eventually lead to the final objective that is a transaction (Christie, 1998; Lee & Lee, 2017). Diggle (1976, as cited in Lee & Lee, 2017) has stressed that, *the goal in marketing visual art product is to gain profits which is the main purpose that involve a large number of people for the artists.*

Visual art marketing strategies are related to several main entities in the sales of art products. Christie (1998) stated that *it is safe to say that for us to name those who are involved as artists (producer), retailers (traders) and collectors (buyers)* (refer to Figure 1). This has made it easier for the researchers to gather everything in this paper work into the visual art sales as described below:

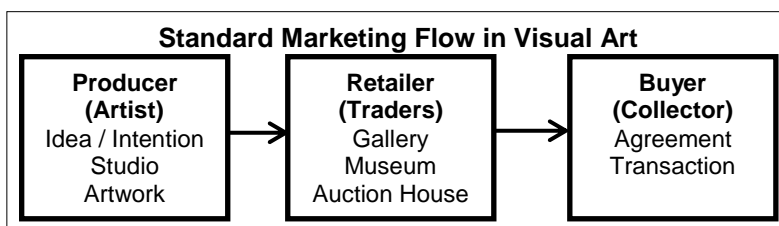


Figure 1. Visual Art Marketing Flow

In addition, to ensure that each visual artwork produced by the artists is accepted and purchased in the market, it is imperative for all parties to put extra efforts in 'rebranding of artists' names so that their career can be sustained. This career is often developed by retailers (dealers) such as at a gallery – through curatorial writing (Lee & Lee, 2017; Preece, Kerrigan & O'Reilly, 2016; Rodner & Kerrigan, 2014; Papavasiliou, 2011).

There are several researches that are related to marketing strategies for visual art. Table 2 illustrates the terms used in three different studies; the arrangement of these terms involve three entities from Christie's (1998) explanation namely producer, retailer and consumer. Lee and Lee (2017), Christie (1998) and Hirschman (1983) as cited in Rodner and Kerrigan, (2014) had also elaborated on similar matters which are linked to the visual art business concept and situation. Major differences among all three references are found in Christie's (1998) explanation which focuses on the matters that occurred in visual art marketing; as for Lee and Lee (2017) and Hirschman (1983), they provided a general topic for each phase of the marketing strategy for visual art. Nevertheless, basically, the essence of their discussion remains the same. It clearly describes that marketing strategy in the context of visual art business is rather conventional (lack in Islamic approaches).

Table 2. Research in visual art marketing

| Author            | Lee & Lee, 2017                 | Christie, 1998     | Hirschman, 1983 (as cited in Rodner & Kerrigan, 2014) |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|---|
| Producer (Artist) | Marketing with Artwork/ Artists | Product            | Self-Oriented Creativity                              |
|                   |                                 | Production Process |   |
| Retailer (Trader) | Marketing of Arts Organisations | Market Place       | Peer-Oriented Creativity                              |
| Buyer (Collector) | Marketing from the Art World    | Collector          | Commercialized Creativity                             |
|                   |                                 | Transaction        |   |

### 3 HALAL CONCEPT IN VISUAL ART MARKETING STRATEGY: DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH MODEL

In the paper work, development of research model refers to 'suggestion notes' which are presented by Christie (1998) and at the same time, the researchers also take into consideration the views expressed in Lee and Lee (2017) and Hirschman (1983) (as cited in Rodner & Kerrigan, 2014).

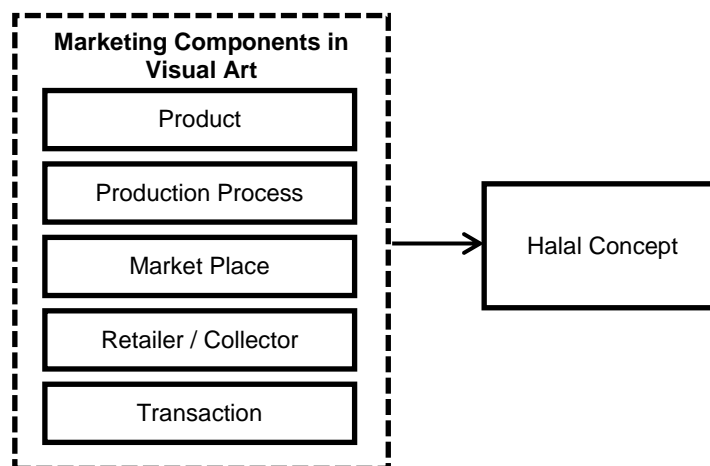


Figure 2. Halal Concept in Visual Art Marketing

### 3.1 Marketing Components in Visual Art

Research framework in this paper work (table 2) is developed based on two main variables namely the concept of marketing in visual art and halal concept.

#### 3.1.1 Product

Variable for product is an important feature which underlies the structure of marketing strategy or also known as product-centered (Rodner & Kerrigan, 2014). Lee and Lee (2017) categorized issues related to visual art product in marketing categories with artwork/artist or marketing with artworks/artists. A product becomes the measurement for value in a transaction through the selling price which generates income (Preece, Kerrigan & O'Reilly, 2016). Moreover, art products are categorized as self-oriented creativity by Hirschman (1983, as cited in Rodner & Kerrigan, 2014) who took into consideration the artist ability in producing visual art pieces. There are art products which were produced based on the artists' self expression; and some of these visual art products were created due to the requirements from retailers or collectors. For visual art, the items that will be marketed are products such as paintings, drawings, prints, sculptures, presentations, videos and others (Christie, 1998); they are also known as the artistic products (Lee & Lee, 2017); which involve a myriad of dimension that are created such as two dimensions (paintings, drawings, prints, illustrations), three dimension (sculpture, monument, furniture products) or for dimensions (videos, multimedia, film) (Ramli et. al., 2018). In all these items, product quality and unique images are the main emphasis; these factors contribute to the justification of price for the products (Christie, 1998). The value for these artistic products is linked to their continuous production. When it comes to visual art, a significant factor in the discussion of this paper work is the presentation of artwork which contains visual subjects, style and dimensions (regardless of the visuals' compliance to the halal and haram concept).

#### 3.1.2 Production Process

Production process is the most critical process since it takes into consideration various factors such as tools and raw materials, work space (studio), number of artwork and time constraint (Christie, 1998). The whole production process influences the price of the product. Lee and Lee (2017) explained the place of production process at this phase of marketing with artwork/artists, while Hirschman (1983, as cited in Rodner & Kerrigan, 2014) has categorized the process of producing art products as self-oriented creativity which involves the artists' creativity in exploring various items such as raw materials, work space (studio), number of artwork and time constraint. However, in certain issues and products, tool sets and raw materials used are not able to influence the value as highlighted by Peterson (1997) as cited in Lee and Lee, (2017); *the value of visual art cannot be calculated by the expenditure of raw material used in making it such as canvas, paints, brush, or the artists' working force*. Moreover, issues pertaining the space at which the artistic products are made depend on the amount of artwork produced. For some artists' work space (studio), the individual area is upgraded into a more spacious place which is occupied by many artists in the production of visual art products. Velthuis (2005) as cited in Rodner and Kerrigan (2014) explained that an artist known as Warhol had changed the method of artwork making which entailed the change in his private studio to the factory or warehouse. All of these factors are influenced by the amount of artwork that the artists wish to produce as well as the limitation of time in producing them. In the production process which involves the awareness in Islamic values, this paper work will deal with matters such as tool sets (whether or not they are

made of animal sources such as swine) and raw materials (whether or not they are clean), work space (studio) (whether or not it is occupied by artists of both sexes), the amount of artwork and time constraint (these involve work time and religious obligation such as prayers).

### 3.1.3 Market Place

Visual art product is directly linked to issues regarding local and international market which largely depend on the involvement of retailers or traders who would market them. Lee and Lee (2017) categorized the market as marketing by art organisations, while for Hirschman (1983, as cited in Rodner & Kerrigan, 2014), the market is at the creative phase which is known as peer-oriented creativity because the visual art products are involved with other important market such as the gallery, auction house and art retailers (Christie, 1998). The norm in visual art product sales is the gallery will hold an exhibition in a certain duration of time and there will be a launching event too. Another usual practice is the exhibition also includes servings of food and beverages (there is alcohol drinks served at certain galleries) for the patrons. In addition, the exhibition also requires the assembly of visual art products and logistics for product delivery and storage. As further explained by Christie (1998), there were bidding events for visual art products which were bought by the collectors. Nevertheless, there is a questionable issue when it comes to the profit from the bidding which belongs to the product collectors; no royalty is given to the original artist who produced the piece. For market component that is seen from the halal values perspective, this study focuses on marketing strategy through gallery, auction homes, retailers, exhibitions (launching event and serving of food) and issues pertaining logistics and mobility of visual art product (especially the Islamic visual art products).

### 3.1.4 Retailer / Collector

Each visual art product that is produced possesses the criteria and elements which are admired by the art enthusiasts (retailers or traders). This is dependent on the type of visual art products that are produced; whether the items are made of self-expression or via a request from the retailers or collectors. For Lee and Lee (2017), the categories which involve the retailers or collectors of visual art products are at a phase better known as *marketing from the art world*, while Hirschman (1983; as cited in Rodner & Kerrigan, 2014) categorized this phase as *commercialized creativity*. In this component, the researchers view the entity as highly relevant to the sale market due to the perfection of the market that relies on sales technique and affordability to own from the retailers and collectors who have arranged price negotiation as well as owned the artwork. Basically, retailer component involves the gallery, auction house, museum or art negotiator; who will run services such exhibition, launching event and transaction matters (this will be further explained in the transaction component) . As for collector component, their involvement is limited to the selection of visual art items which are admired and their involvement is for the selection of visual art artwork and the value that will be paid. Hence, when it comes to the halal or Islamic values, this research focuses more on the relationship between the retailer and visual art products (whether or not they adhere to Islamic teachings) and ownership of visual art collectors (Muslim collectors possess non-halal artwork; and the non-Muslims own slamic artwork).

### 3.1.5 Transaction

In the matters pertaining transaction component, the researchers realized that several issues discussed are similar among Hirschman (1983, as cited in Rodner & Kerrigan, 2014), Christie (1998) and Lee dan Lee (2017). It is a matter that is related to the objective of each business and marketing strategies in visual art product. Hirschman (1983, as cited Rodner & Kerrigan, 2014) placed the transaction business at the commercialized creativity phase and this is in line with Lee dan Lee (2017), who categorized transactional matters as marketing from the art world. As transactions are placed in the same discussion for retailers/collector, it can be clearly stated that these components are related and both depends on each other. Transaction will happen when there are retailers, the artwork, and collectors. In the discussion on transaction component, the researchers realized that the main factor which surfaces is the value of visual art product. Visual art product's value or price involves the arrangement which takes into consideration both the visual art products and artists (these are issues pertaining tools and materials, space, idea and time), visual art product and retailers (exhibition gallery preparations, museum, art negotiator or auction house) and visual art product and the buyers/collectors (price offered, bid). In addition, when it comes to making an agreement, the norm in transaction matters is that the retailers have offered one questionable solution which involves the percentage of profits (for instance, the profit is divided as such: 60%, gallery / art consultant = 40%). Furthermore, the practice in any Malaysian visual art auction is, the artists will not benefit from the profits gained. In the discussion on transaction and its relation to Islamic and halal values, the value of returns or profits of the middle person namely the gallery, museum, auction house and art consultant are major factors linked to the issue of visual art product prices or value as well as an agreement.

### 3.1.6 Halal Concept

Halal concept has the same evaluation from the perspective of Islamic Shariah which covers several important aspects such as: 1) from the rules and regulation concerning activities conducted; and 2) the main goal or maqasid Shariah in discussing those 'ahkam' or Islamic laws. In discussing matters pertaining Islamic laws, the main acts to be taken into consideration are wajib (compulsory), sunat (sunnah), harus (mutahab), makrooh (detestable) and haram (forbidden). These rulings are produced based on the situation in which the activities are carried out. In this research scope, the ruling which needs to be discussed at length is the one that is related to the visual art marketing from the Islamic perspective, particularly when the view concerned is linked to the business aspect as explained by Christie (1998), Lee and Lee (2017) and Rodner and Kerrigen (2014) with regard to product, production process, marketing, traders/collectors and transactions. These are to ensure that each activity is not going against Islamic Shariah principle. In Islamic Shariah, the principle is part of the main objective or also known as Maqasid Shariah, that protects righteousness and ward off evil (Hussain, 2012; Al-Bakri, 2014). The main objective in preserving and practicing Islamic Shariah and giving an in depth study of the exact halal concept that is to protect five main pillars of life and the hereafter namely religion, mind, life, assests and lineage (Hussain, 2012; Al-Bakri, 2014).

### 3.2 Halal Concept Check List/Islamic Shariah and Visual Art Marketing Strategies

In order to ensure that visual art sales are Islamic Shariah compliance and not against the halal concept, each of the component involved in marketing the products must be studied in depth so that each process adheres to the Islamic teachings. Based on the discussion on the model above, the researchers have developed a checklist which could be used by the producer (artist), the retailer (dealer) and the consumer (collector) to assess the sales whether or not they adhere to Islamic Shariah and halal concept (refer table 3).

**Table 3.** Halal Concept Checklist / Islamic Shariah in Visual Art Marketing Strategies

| Marketing Strategy Component | Sub-Components   | Checklist for Halal Concept Compliance |    | Remarks |
|------------------------------|--|--|----|---------|
|                              |  | Yes                                    | No |         |
| Product                      | Visual Subject   | Yes                                    | No |         |
|                              | Visual Style   | Yes                                    | No |         |
|                              | Visual Dimension   | Yes                                    | No |         |
| Production Process           | Tools  | Yes                                    | No |         |
|                              | Medium   | Yes                                    | No |         |
|                              | Media  | Yes                                    | No |         |
|                              | Work space - Studio                                      | Yes                                    | No |         |
|                              | Time Constraint  | Yes                                    | No |         |
| Market Place                 | Gallery  | Yes                                    | No |         |
|                              | Auction House  | Yes                                    | No |         |
|                              | Art Retailers  | Yes                                    | No |         |
|                              | Exhibition (Food & Beverages Served)                     | Yes                                    | No |         |
|                              | Product Mobility   | Yes                                    | No |         |
| Retailer / Collectors        | Collectors / Muslim Buyers                               | Yes                                    | No |         |
|                              | Collectors / Non-Muslim Buyers Own Art Products on Islam | Yes                                    | No |         |
| Transaction                  | Price  | Yes                                    | No |         |
|                              | Agreement  | Yes                                    | No |         |

## 4 CONCLUSION AND RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

As a whole, the objective of this paper work is achieved with the development of strategic model for visual art marketing from the perspective of halal and Islamic shariah. This research model will be able to assist the comprehension of all issues pertaining visual art business which involve several aspects such as; 1) product; 2) production process; 3) market place; 4) retailers / collectors; and 5) transactions.

In addition, the model is crucial to understand the halal concept in visual art marketing in order for relevant parties to identify matters which are permissible and prohibited by the Islamic shariah. Thorough understanding of this issues is in line with the objective in Islamic Shariah (Maqasid Shariah) which is to

uphold good values and avoid evil (Hussain, 2012; Al-Bakri, 2014). Moreover, marketing strategies in visual art has its own final objective that concerns the transactions or profitable sales. Hence, matters involving returns or transactions become the basis to re-evaluating in Islamic Shariah since it deals with issues such as religion, life, mind, assets and lineage. In the process of marketing visual art products, one has to adhere to the halal concept at all stages in order to avoid questionable halal transactions. If each process and phase in the visual art marketing is submitted to Islamic Shariah, the main goal of Islamic Shariah can be safeguarded.

For future research, a more detailed study must be conducted based on data derived from experts at each stage of visual art marketing which involves all the aspects mentioned. Next, the data obtained must be evaluated by experts in the field of Islamic Shariah to determine its halal values from this perspective.

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