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The current reference for this work is as follows:

Sirajudeen, A., Wayne, T. & Mogaji E., 2020. Towards an Understanding of Islamic Private Universities in Africa. In: E. Mogaji, F. Maringe & R. E. Hinson, eds. Understanding the Market in Higher Education in Africa. Abingdon Oxfordshire: Routledge.

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Chapter 5

Towards an Understanding of Islamic Private Universities in Africa

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With Higher Education Institutions around the world are behaving more like corporations, there is a lack of understanding about the marketing strategies of private universities in Africa, especially the Islamic private universities in Africa. This study aims to fill that gap by conceptualising Islamic higher education marketing as a common ground between three key themes. First, Islamic marketing recognises marketing strategies of Islamic product and services to Muslims and non-Muslims while respecting Islamic values and ideologies. Second Islamic higher education which recognises the contribution of the religions towards education and human resources development and Third, Marketing higher education which recognise the need for universities to adopt marketing communication strategies in the face of marketisation challenges of higher education. The chapters conclude that giving the extent of world's Muslim population, prominence of Islam and the competitive higher education market, it is essential for Islamic private universities to tap into this market dynamics, position themselves to reach out to prospective students who might be looking at attending Universities with inherent Islamic values. The study offers theoretical and managerial implication which will inspire further interest in marketing Islamic private universities in Africa and provide a basis for sound management decisions and stimulate new ideas for future research.

Keywords: Islamic Marketing, Islamic Education, Universities, Africa, Marketing, Higher Education

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Introduction

Education is essential for the development of the country, producing skilled individuals to contribute to the economic development of the country. There are growing demands for higher education. However, marketing higher education in Africa is still an under-explored area of research. There is the argument that universities in Africa are often oversubscribed and therefore, there is little motivation to market the institutions. Usually, these institutions are supported by the government, and they have a limit to the number of students they can admit. However, there is a growing supply of private universities across the continent to meet this shortage of university places.

Individuals and organisations are establishing private universities in Africa. In Nigeria, there are 79 private universities, more than any other country in Africa. There over 40 Christian faith-based private Universities, they are probably the most popular private universities in Nigeria (Farinloye et al., 2019). Two of the first three universities established in 1999 are Christian based. Most of the big Pentecostal churches in Nigeria have their universities and are expected that they have an existing customer base in their church members. There are over 30 private universities in Kenya, which work to enhance the provision of quality education to the students of Kenya (Kamau, 2019), there are many private Christian universities as well in Kenya.

While acknowledging that private universities in Muslim majority countries might align with the Islamic faith, there is little understanding about universities which are established by private individuals and organisation which aligns with the Islamic faith. These Islamic private higher institutions are posed to compete with prospective students in the competitive higher education market, to attract talented researchers and staff, build on their international collaboration and enhance the reputation of the University.

Muslims are open to considering perspectives from varied sources – but these are then filtered according to an Islamic paradigm. (Wilson & Liu, 2011). There is the identification of Muslims as an untapped and viable market segment (Sandıkçı, 2011), emergence of a Muslim middle class, which is, although geographically dispersed, united in its interest in consumption and ability to afford branded products (Nasr, 2009), likewise the number of Muslim consumers with sufficient purchasing power is deemed as significant enough (Sandıkcı & Rice, 2011). There is increasing visibility of Muslim entrepreneurs and business people who are keenly pursuing Islamic principles as well as business ventures capitalist aspirations (Sandıkçı, 2011; Osella & Osella, 2009). The purchasing power of music consumers and changing demographics with aligned interest in Islamic values are making sectors of the economy more viable, highlight opportunities for private Islamic universities, founded based on Islamic values to provide education for prospective students. This will inadeptly make marketing Islamic higher education a scholarly and managerially attractive field.

Studies in recent years has addressed different domains of marketing in the context of the Muslim markets, such as branding (Alserhan, 2010; Wilson and Liu, 2010), market orientation (Zakaria and Abdul-Talib, 2010), new product development (Rehman and Shabbir, 2010) and sales promotions (Abdullah and Ahmad, 2010; Yusuf, 2010) with the increasing academic research it also began to intensify on different sectors like financial services, food and fashion, scholarly literature on marketing Islamic higher education has been mostly missing.

The rationale for the work is that while Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) around the world are behaving more like corporations (Veloutsou et al., 2004), and there is lack of understanding about the marketing strategies of private universities in Africa, especially the Islamic private universities in Africa. This is important for critical reasons. Firstly, some of these universities are situated in a multi-religious society across Africa, highlighting practical implication for university managers as they attempt to integrate and improve the quality of higher education. Secondly, the perception about Islam as a religion and inadvertently its impact on education cannot be overemphasised, islamophobia is on the rise, and there is a negative narrative about the faith and its effect on educational offering. Islamic organisation needs to acknowledge this and offer a narrative. Thirdly, Islamic education has its unique values and belief that is embedded in the religion which should be passed on to the students. Lastly, there are private universities which are often seen as a profit-making venture and taking into consideration the belief of Islam and money, it is essential to position the university in the right light, highlight the institution's features that distinguish it from the others, reflect on its capacity to satisfy students' needs, engender trust in its ability to deliver a specific type and level of higher education, and help potential recruits to make wise enrolment decisions' (Ali-Choudhury et al., 2009, p. 14). Branding and marketing remain essential in higher education marketing sector (Lomer, Papatsiba, & Naidoo, 2018), and this is worth exploring in the context of private Islamic institutions.

There has been an attempt towards the gradual ending of monopoly to higher education in Africa in the past. An increasing number of countries in Africa have liberalised or are liberalising their higher education laws and permitting individuals and groups to establish universities. The growth of private higher institutions is thus occurring at a time when a 'new' consensus has emerged in Africa as much of the developing world (Nwuke, 2005). The liberalisation of the higher education market in Africa is a direct response to some emerging issues, some of which border on religious awareness and of course globalisation and a free-market economy.

This chapter aims an effort to fill this gap in knowledge. The chapter explores theoretical insight into Islamic marketing, marketing higher education, specifically, it focuses on marketing Islamic Private higher education institutions in Africa. This chapter recognises the challenge in developing a conceptual argument in the absence of sufficient academic literature, empirical data, and where a theoretical precedent has yet to be set (Wilson & Liu, 2011). In an attempt to address these voids, the authors have chosen, therefore, to provide a theoretical overview, current review of scholarship and research agenda for future studies.

The study acknowledges that Africa is made up of many countries with multiple religious beliefs. The higher education market in Africa is heterogeneous with different players across different countries which makes up the continent (Ndofirepi, Farinloye, & Mogaji, 2020). Besides, it is acknowledged that there are different expectations and marketing challenges with private universities associated with religious affiliation in different countries and with that understanding, this chapter does not provide a generalizable insight but to provide a foundation and theoretical underpinning for future studies into understanding marketing Islamic private higher education institutions.

Islamic Higher Education in Africa

Education in the context of Islam is regarded as a process that involves a complete person, including the rational, spiritual and social dimensions. According to Syed Muhammad al-

Naquib al-Attas (1980), the comprehensive and integrative approach to education in Islam is directed towards the "balanced growth of the total personality … through training Man's spirit, intellect, rational self, feelings and bodily senses … such that faith is infused into the whole of his personality." Acquiring education in Islam is not intended as an end in itself, but as a means to stimulate a more elevated moral and spiritual consciousness, leading to faith and righteous actions.

It is interesting to note here that considerable efforts have been made in some African countries with Muslim majority regarding Islamic Education. In response to the need for faith-based higher education in Africa, individuals, as well as corporate bodies, have established universities with Islamic orientations. Muslims in some of these African states are now benefiting from higher institutions, which they can refer to as their own. This, of course, is an attempt in the direction of educational reforms where Islamic consciousness pervades several spheres of the services are offered in the institutions.

It is incontrovertible that ordinarily, an Islamic university must have its clear-cut educational objectives, philosophy, vision, mission, intellectual integrity as well as an appropriate educational curriculum for the products which it will in turn impact on the society. Apart from some minor variables, a perusal of the philosophy, vision, and mission of these Islamic universities appears to share similarities. From their objectives and goals, it is observed that these Islamic faith universities exhibit the four dimensions of higher education diversity, which according to Daryl Smith cited in Humpherys (2000) include access and recruitment, campus climate and intergroup relations, curriculum and scholarship, and institutional transformation.

In terms of campus climate and intergroup relations, these institutions have emphasised the provision of adequate and up-to-date physical facilities including lecture rooms, laboratories, studios, ordinary hostels and offices and the extensive use of Information & Communication Technology. This has considerably enhanced the quality of the teaching-learning environment. Oloyede has rightly noted that in the heart of higher education lies five essential attributes: teaching, learning, scholarship, research and community development. A close observation of these institutions reveals attempts at complying with the functions.

Islamic universities are created to challenge the ontological foundations that are rooted in colonial legacy. That explains why institutions such as the International University of Africa in Sudan, the Islamic University in Niger and King Faisal University in Chad are using Arabic as the language of instruction in contradistinction from European English as the medium of education. Departments and programmes have also been expanded beyond Humanities and Social Sciences to Natural Sciences, Technical Training and Computer Training as obtainable in the Sahel University in Mali. There are Muslim universities in Muslim-minority countries like Mozambique, Uganda and Ghana which are providing education to Muslims and non-Muslims alike. However, many of these universities, though mooted, advocated and initiated by Muslims themselves or their benefactors, are soon transformed into public universities.

The Muslim University of Morogoro emerged from politically charged historical context of Muslim education in Tanzania. Likewise, the establishment of an Islamic University in Uganda (IUIU) was contingent on addressing the diminishing status of Muslim education in the region. However, King Faisal University in Chad which was designed to be a model of the contemporary Islamic university in Africa, has some constraints such as lack of modern teaching means, departure from the reality of African nations and lack of zeal to compete with

other universities in Africa through participation in seminars and conferences (Moussa, 2016 p.175).

The turning out of graduates from these schools means that Islamic based universities have joined their counterparts in contributing to the human capital development of the country. The category of graduates who eventually secure employment within Nigeria will contribute to national economic development but those who are not will join the long queue train of job-seekers. This is an area the universities need to focus attention. The entrepreneurial skills planned for the students should be able to guarantee self-employment. This brings to the front the challenges the universities are contending with.

Apart from the fact that the primary objectives of the Islamic universities are to complement the government efforts in providing adequate human resources in terms of graduates to boost the human economic resources, one cannot rule out the commercialisation of the educational sector. This is not peculiar to the Islamic faith-based institutions, but also most of the Christian faith-based universities exhibit similar tendencies. This is as a result of the government's inability to adequately fund most of the government-owned universities. Consequently, it gives concerned individuals and groups the elbowroom to venture into the establishment of private universities most of which are commercial in orientation.

Mbaye Lo (2016) identifies five historical developments that precipitated the upsurge of formal Islamic institutions of higher learning in Africa. First, traditional African Muslim education system embodied in mosques or madrasas and diffusing socio-cultural and religious ethos had produced students who were well-versed in Arabic and Islamic sciences, which survived the antics of the colonial system. Secondly, the traditional system is domiciled in regional centres of learning in places like Mali, Kayor, Mauritania, Kano and Kano and other prominent institutions of Islamic learning in North Africa like Al-Qarawaniyyin in Fez, Morocco, Azzaitoune in Tunisia; al-Azhar in Cairo. Thirdly, there is a widespread belief among African Muslims that many Arabic and Islamic department and programmes in post-colonial national universities are too narrow in scope and too poorly resourced to accommodate the educational needs of local Muslim communities. This is because most of these departments were established in pre-independence era 'to develop colonial experts and to train civil servants to understand and administrate Muslim affairs' (p. 26). Fourthly is the presence of the global network of Indian-based Deobandi Islamic revival under which Islamic college of Higher Learning in South Africa. Lastly, there is proliferation of Islamic institutions sponsored by countries and organisations such as Islamic Revival movement of the 1980s which helped Muslim communities to deal with impact of globalisation through Islamization of knowledge.

While it is true that Islamic universities have raised high hopes among Muslim populations of Africa, they are not free of ambivalent tendencies in terms of their operation. For instance, the Muslim University of Tanzania, which is partly state-sponsored and partly financed by donations from the country's Muslim populations, is in theory open to any young Tanzania citizen regardless of ethnic or religious affiliations. In practice, nearly all the students are Muslims. This scenario has been the case with IUIU in Uganda, IUA in Khartoum where there is a contradiction between university statutes and de facto religious discrimination.

Islamic Universities in Africa

This paper considers Islam private universities as higher education institutions founded by an individual or organisation, these institutions do not receive direct funds from the government,

and they are formally affiliated with the Islamic religion. There is no definite official list of Islam private universities to refer too, importantly as well university numbers are bound to change as more universities are being created while some are folding up. To arrive as a list of Islam private universities, two sources of information were adopted. First, the Federation of the Universities of the Islamic World (FUIW) and Second, UniRank. These sources were also complemented with secondary data and research by the authors.

FUIW was created in 1978, upon the recommendation of the OIC Standing Committee for Scientific and Technological Cooperation with the mission of upgrading and developing higher education to address the needs of Muslim societies and benefit by the scientific and technological new developments in line with the Islamic Ummah's civilizational constants (FUIW, 2019). The federation has 193 members. The members are separated into public and private universities. As of 2019, 23 of their members are private universities in Africa across 19 countries.

Unirank is an international higher education directory, and search engine featuring reviews and rankings of over 13,600 officially recognised Universities and Colleges in 200 countries. The directory has a dedicated page for Islamic universities under their religious university section. The list contains 43 Islamic universities from 13 counties in Africa. There were, however, 19 private Islamic universities from 7 counties (Ghana, Kenya; Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda). Some of the countries in the Muslim majority countries (in the Northern part of the continent) do not have private universities listed on the Unirank list. All the five Islamic universities in Algeria were public, same also for all four in Libya and three in Morocco. It appeared there is no market for private Islamic universities in that part of the continent where Islam is predominant and more so public universities may be aligned to the Islamic values as well. The 19 Universities were mostly located in West and East Africa where there is minority Muslim population. Somalia with seven universities on the list, has the highest number of Islamic private universities on the continent.

Secondary research was also carried out to identify and verify some of the Islamic universities that may not have been covered in these two lists. Summit University was discovered as a private Islamic university in Nigeria established by the University of Ansar-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria (ADSN). A final list of 40 Islam private universities from 17 African counties is presented in Table 1, and their geographical location is presented in Figure 1, which indicates the geographical spread of these Universities.

Table 1: List of Identified Islamic private Universities in Africa.

Country	University	Source
Burkina Faso	1. Burkina Faso Polyvalent University Center	FUIW
Gambia	2. Islamic Online University	FUIW
Ghana	3. Islamic University College	UniRank
Kenya	4. Kisauni Islamic University	FUIW
	5. RAF International University - Kenya	UniRank
	6. Umma University - Kenya	UniRank
Libya	7. College of Islamic Daawa	FUIW
	8. Sebha University	FUIW
Mali	9. The Sahel University	FUIW
Mauritania	10. Chinguitt Modern University	FUIW

Morocco	11. Al Akhawayn University	FUIW
	12. International University of Rabat	FUIW
	13. International University of Agadir	FUIW
Niger	14. Islamic University in Niger	FUIW
Nigeria	15. Al-Hikma University	FUIW
	16. Fountain University	FUIW
	17. Al-Qalam University - Nigeria	Unirank
	18. Crescent University - Nigeria	Unirank
	19. Summit University	Authors
Chad	20. King Faisal University	FUIW
Senegal	21. University of Sheikh Ahmadou Bamba (UCAB)	FUIW
Somalia	22. Mogadishu University	FUIW
	23. Jaamacada Golis	Unirank
	24. Jaamacada Jamhuuriya ee Culuumta iyo Tiknooloojiyada	Unirank
	25. Jaamacada Plasma	Unirank
	26. Jaamacadda Banaadir	Unirank
	27. Jaamacadda Jobkey	Unirank
	28. Jaamacadda SIMAD	FUIW, Unirank
	29. Jaamacadda SoomaaliyaJaamacadda Soomaaliya	Unirank
Sudan	30. International University of Africa	FUIW, UniRank
	31. Shandi University	FUIW
	32. University of the Holy Quran & Islamic Sciences	FUIW
	33. University of the Holy Quran and Taseel Sciences	FUIW
	34. National Ribat University	Unirank
	35. University of Science and Technology	Unirank
Tanzania	36. Abdulrahman Al-Sumait Memorial University -	UniRank
	37. Muslim University of Morogoro	UniRank
	38. Zanzibar University- Tanzania	UniRank
Tunisia	39. Central University	FUIW
Uganda	40. Islamic University in Uganda	FUIW

Figure 1: Geographical location of Islamic Private Universities in Africa.

Marketing Higher Education

Globalisation has become the focal point of higher education, as universities compete in the closely connected, global, free-market economy that is currently reshaping higher education (Mogaji, 2016b), Irrespective of the country or the type of university, the competition for higher education enrolment is acknowledged as institutions compete with each other within and across their municipal, national and continental borders to connect with prospective students. The reduced funding from Government for the public universities and the increasing number of private universities to meet this growing demand for tertiary education is also shaping the marketing strategies of universities.

Universities are upgrading their advertising strategies in this competitive situation and revitalising their marketing departments to maintain their share of the global international

student market (Maslowsky, 2013). Brown, Varley and Pal (2009) noted that, given this competitive environment, universities need to provide information to their prospective students to enable them to make informed choices. Universities are adopting different digital marketing strategies, using social media and websites to engage with students, rebranding, and changing their logo to appear more refreshed. The universities are beginning to adopt marketing strategies from other industrial sectors to higher education (Gibbs, 2002).

Though these marketing strategies due to globalisation is often more intensive and well researched in the developed countries like the United States of America, Australia and the United Kingdom. In many of these countries where universities operate in a market place where students are consumers of educational service, they are investing massive amounts of money in repositioning themselves and appealing to prospective students (Chapleo, 2010). Likewise, researches are emerging from countries like Malaysia and Vietnam to understand the marketing strategies of universities that factors student choices. Research about marketing higher education in Africa is however in shortage, highlight a considerable gap in knowledge that needs to be filled.

Hence, a good number of researches have observed the commercialisation of private universities in Nigeria. In his paper titled "Global Trends in Higher Education Reform: What Lessons for Nigeria," Jimi Adesina noted that 'commodity' approach to education gave rise to the advent of private universities most of which are not research-based but mostly profit-oriented. It is further observed that though not limited to government universities, there is this trend of unethical practices by most private universities lecturers treating the students like customers in their sacred duty of conducting examinations. In the same vein, Ebirima Sall noted the 'commodification' of education which is characterised in the privatisation of education sector in Africa. According to him, not less than 300 bodies including individuals and groups have applied for university license which points to the commercialisation of education.

On the contrary, James Otiende paper 'Institutional Transformations and Implications for Access and Quality in Public and Private Universities in Kenya: A Comparative Study' observes that while university education has been privatized in Kenya as a result of globalization and neoliberalism, yet Kenyan government has devoted 30% of its annual budget to education, which has a positive impact on the enrolment. This does not mean that the quality of education is low, especially at the private universities most of which have religious background.

It is apparent that the admission process equally indicates the quest for economic gains as germane to the proprietors of these institutions. For example, while the government-owned universities – both federal and states – admitted prospective candidates based on some particular parameter to ensure standard, for instance, most private faith-based ones go for less ostensibly to get a good number of students as this gives them a right amount in terms of school fees. This is observable in the conduct of admission intake of these universities.

A practical example is that when the Joint Admission Matriculation Board (JAMB) in Nigeria pegs the minimum admission cut off marks at 180, it has always been the practice that most of the private institutions/universities will go a little bit lower in their admission cut off marks. This is done in order to ensure that prospective candidates who could not pass and meet up with the 180 cut off marks as minimum but have enough funds required by these private universities wherein these faith-based ones are not absolved could be offered admission. It now goes without saying that these institutions are apparently commercial in their orientation as

opposed to the fact that they want to provide adequate manpower for economic development of the nation as contained in most of their objectives of establishing the institutions Besides, the highly competitive environment has perhaps forced the universities to pursue their objectives with caution and tact. The need to attract diverse patronage from the pluralistic Nigerian society has made universities to dis-emphasise the role of traditional subjects like Arabic and Islamic studies in an Islamic institution. Unlike the case of universities such as Oxford, Cambridge, and Harvard, which took the model of Paris by tilting towards theology, most of the Islamic Oriented universities here in Nigeria, do not primarily have such theological inclination. The fact remains that such subjects, it is believed, might not be directly economically viable compared to others such as Computer Science, Business and Management Sciences etc. perhaps that has been the more reason why Arabic/Islamic Studies could not be found in the curricula of Crescent University, Abeokuta and Fountain University Osogbo.

If the remark of late Waziri Junayd is anything to go by, one may not be far from truly believing that 'our (Islamic) universities belong to us only in *name* and *location'*. Apart from the academic curricula that lack Islamic epistemological orientation, subjects such as Islamic Studies and Arabic have not been given the pride of place in these Islamic universities except in Al-Hikmah University whose interest in developing the cause of both Arabic and Islamic Studies is currently at the lowest ebb. In Fountain University, Arabic is only included in the General Studies Curriculum while there is no separate department of Arabic and Islamic Studies. In Crescent University, however, courses such as Islamic Banking, Islamic Economics, etc. are offered while Arabic and Islamic Studies are incorporated into the General Studies of the university. Funding of the Arabic and Islamic studies are no more there at Al-Hikmah.

Most of these universities are mostly carrying the label without commensurate Islamic characteristics in their curricula and co-curricular activities. We, therefore, find in Nigeria, a model of Islamic university that considers the members of a pluralistic society. In other words, the Islamic universities in Nigeria function through the subtle consciousness of Islamic academic culture alongside the realities of a multi-religious and multi-cultural society.

In terms of funding, the National Policy on Education recognises education as an expensive social service that requires adequate financial provision for the successful implementation of the educational programs. Nigerian Government bears financial burden which appears overwhelming but yet still managing the available resources to finance the education sector. Privately-owned Islamic Oriented universities in Nigeria are excluded from most of the funding facilities available. Hence, donations from the proprietors and philanthropists are usually employed to augment the proceeds from exorbitant school fees, which constitute mainly their Internally Generated Revenue (IGR). This has constituted a severe challenge to the smooth running of private institutions of higher learning in Nigeria.

Though there is an increase in marketing as universities are becoming more strategic with their targeting of prospective students (Roy & Naidoo, 2016), there is shortage of evidence about how universities in Africa are going on about it, especially the private universities who do not receive funding from the government and have to be commercially viable to sustain the quality education they promise. Universities need to recognise the value of marketing (Foroudi et al., 2017), and as Higher Education Institutions (HEI), they need to become more market. While funding may still be coming from the founders, it is crucial to consider a sustainable approach.

Islamic Marketing

Marketing and Religion are two words that up till recently were not used together (Sandıkcı & Rice, 2011), Sandıkçı (2011) noted that there is a certain unease that the term "Islamic marketing" generates. Islamic and marketing is still an under-researched area with very little written about it. Wilson & Liu (2011) acknowledge that the term "Islamic marketing" is still very new, and reflective of an emergent phenomenon which stretches across the Muslim world and beyond, however this is changing as there Islamic marketing has attracted the attention of both academics and practitioners, presenting a bridge between established subject disciplines in Business and Management, Social Sciences and the religious belief of Islam.

More so, researchers and practitioners begin to recognise that Islam as a religion still influences the needs and wants of its followers (Temporal, 2011). Islam as a way of life, a philosophy, a religion, and a belief system rooted in culture, which is both evolutionary and revolutionary (Wilson & Liu, The challenges of Islamic branding: navigating emotions and halal, 2011). Besides, Muslim have a set of shared values and principles which the market must recognise and therefore behave very differently. Temporal (2011) acknowledges that country of origin, varying culture and degree of religiosity makes Islamic marketing very relative and difficult to describe in the context of consumer behaviour.

Temporal (2011) considered Islamic branding and marketing as any brand that seeks to address the needs of the Muslim market, this rather broad definition also encompasses marketing activities from countries, products or services to Islamic audience regardless of their country of ownership, as afar it recognises the benefits and belief of Isalm ad meets the need of the Muslim market. Wilson & Liu (2011) considered Islamic marketing as a 'school of thought which has a moral compass which tends towards the ethical norms and values of Islam and how Muslim interpret these, from their different cultural lenses. Alserhan (2010) defines an Islamic brand according to three constructs: country of origin, target audience, and whether it is halal. Ogilvy Noor (2010) states that Islamic branding is an approach which is friendly or is compliant with Sharia' principles.

While Islamic marketing has often focused on Islamic Banking and Finance, there appear to be few courses on Islamic marketing, branding and Muslim consumer behaviour. A fan of opinions and challenges will inevitably be commonplace, as with any newly identified phenomenon. Therefore, there is a real need for more scholarship in this field, as there are opportunities for innovative thinking and new marketing approaches (Wilson, The new wave of transformational Islamic marketing: reflections and definitions, 2012)

Marketing of Islamic Higher Education in Africa

Individuals and groups have taken advantage of government ineptitude to give education sector the needed financial resources. It has been argued in some quarters that the present 'market-driven' reform program in the higher education sector is inimical to the national interest; that they do not stem from a well-articulated program of action that is founded on the present economic, social, cultural and political realities of Nigerian nation; that they are externally driven by the combined forces of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund(IMF) as exemplified by the Nigerian University System Innovation Project (Sule-Kano, 2005).

Private universities are striving to meet the need for tertiary education, not only in Muslim majority countries but also in the eastern and western part of Africa where Islam is not often in Majority. Marketing these universities becomes essential as they are competing with government-owned universities and also other faith affiliated universities. Marketing, communication, brand identity and position become essential as they engage in the vast heterogeneous higher education market in Africa,

From a branding perspective, one strategic feature that sparks or tends to spark of marketability value for Islamic private universities is the application of nomenclature, 'Islamic or Muslim' in naming these educational institutions. El Miskin (2011) noted that the laws governing the licensing of private universities in Nigeria do not allow specific nomenclature of "Christian" or "Islamic" university.

Leading Islamic private institutions of higher learning in Nigeria include Al-Hikmah University (Ilorin), Crescent University (Abeokuta), Fountain University (Osogbo), North Central University (Kano) and Katsina University (Katsina). This is however not applicable in some other part of the continent as we have Islamic University College in Ghana, Kisauni Islamic University in Kenya, Muslim University of Morogoro in Tanzania and Islamic University in Uganda.

Muslim organisation needs to encourage brand building in other to reap the benefits of branding and not get left behind in the increasing global level of achievement. Islamic private universities must adapt and change their marketing strategies as relying on past reputation does not always ensure success in the future (Temporal, 2011). Like any organisation, universities and in particular private Islam universities need to differentiate these in the face of increasing competition. They need to make an effort to differential in terms of service offering, programs they offer, values, facilities and location. Islamic private universities need to assess what they stand for, their position is necessary,

Previous positive perception about Islamic education may not be as positive; those strategies need to change to meet the changing demands of prospective students. Wilson & Liu (2011) argued that emergent phenomena and global events present opportunities for genuinely global and forward-thinking marketer to do well in the competing market. Giving the extent of world's Muslim population, prominence of Islam, the rising prosperity and spreading community of Islam (Temporal, 2011) and the competitive higher education market (Olaleye, Ukpabi, & Mogaji, 2020), it is essential for Islamic private universities to tap into this market dynamics, position themselves to reach out to prospective students who might be looking at attending Universities with inherent Islamic values. The perception about Islam in this age cannot be ignored, and it is, therefore, paramount for Islamic private universities to manage their opinions and control their images as they position themselves for world domination in higher education. They need to create a positive and engaging narrative, position themselves to attract outstanding talents around the world and offer an excellent working environment. Despite the tricky nature of Islamic marketing, there are a great many opportunities for brand managers when looking to provide for the needs of muslim customers (Temporal, 2011).

Figure 2 presents the convergence of three key themes of marketing Islamic Private Universities. It recognises the fundamental principles of Islamic marketing and the embedded values of Islamic higher education. This relationship is further buttressed by the marketing principles applied in higher education marketing. The subsequent section provides practical

marketing implication of his convergence of themes which highlights the marketing Islamic Private Universities in Africa.
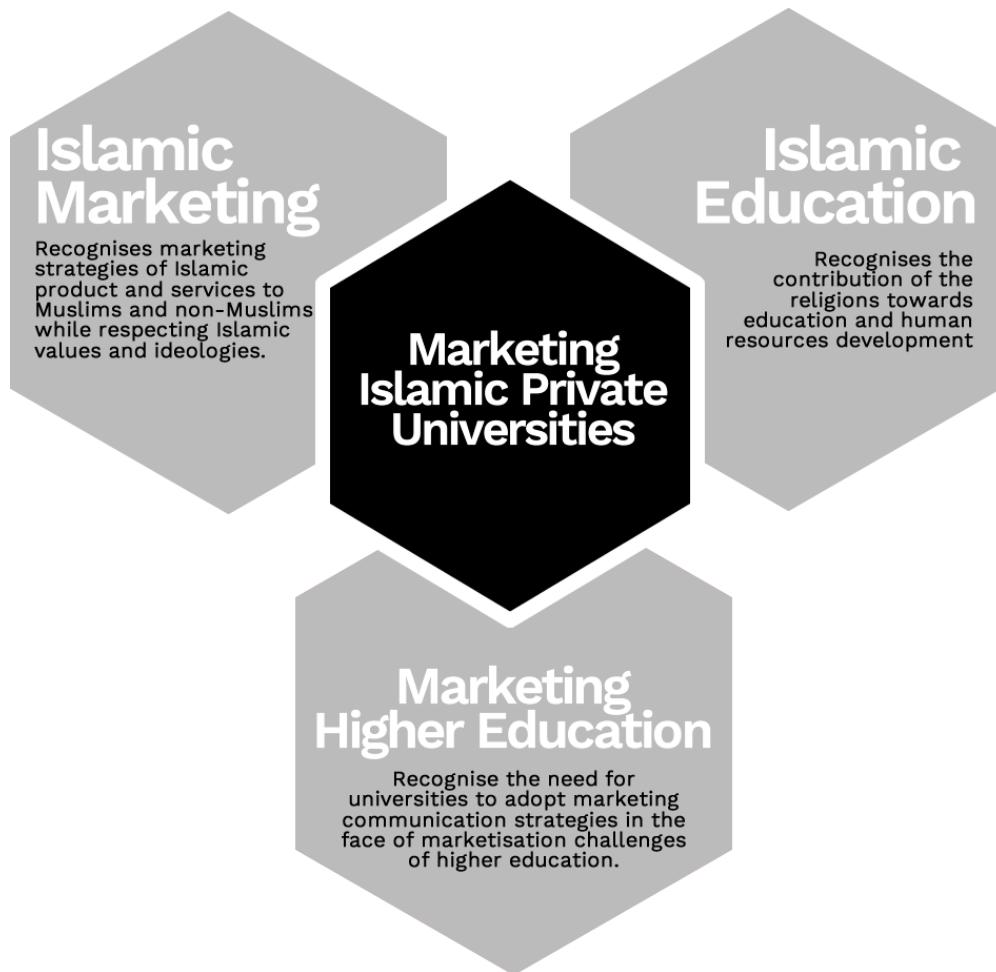

Figure 2: Convergence of three key themes of marketing Islamic Private Universities.

Marketing Strategies

Future studies should examine how marketing practices help construct Muslims as viable consumer segments. Questions such as – what are the politics of representation of Muslims in advertising, media and other marketing spaces and what purposes do they serve? Starting with the list of 40 Universities, future research can examine their marketing strategies which include the design and information available on their websites, the ALARA model of information search on website may be relevant. Social media marketing and content creation strategies and other additional media like prospectus or print advertisement. Effect of word of mouth, if any, can also be further explored, perhaps to understand if students are sharing their experiences or announcements are made within the religious organisations to prospective students.

Factors influencing choice

There are interaction and intersection of religion with other identity variables for Muslim (Sandıkçı, 2011), it is essential to understand the decision-making process and factors

influencing the choices of students attending Islam private universities. Future research needs to address how Muslim religiosity interacts with other ideologies, ethics, values and subjectivities. The influence of parents in the case of selecting which University to attend is also essential.

Branding and Brand positioning

While conceptually and culturally, brands and branding have always existed, brand theory as defined in academic business writing has hailed mainly from the west, (Wilson & Liu, The challenges of Islamic branding: navigating emotions and halal, 2011), therefore it is vital to see how Islamic organisations are developing their brands. If they are using the Arabic language or just a non-religion name and if their religious values are embedded in their mission and vision statements.

Halal Education

Observations indicate that the market is expanding towards including products such as cosmetics and entertainment – moving it beyond "Meat and Money". These brands/commodities previously may not have encountered problems when they were not overtly branded as being Islamic (Wilson, 2012). With halal being pushed to the forefront, what is the prospect of halal education if any? This is also presented as an agenda for future research.

Student/Consumer Behaviour

Muslim consumer behaviour is well research. Religion is regarded as the common descriptor that explains and potentially predicts the response of Muslim consumers (Sandıkçı, 2011), it is mostly a cultural construct, which necessitates that marketers should understand Islam through the varied lenses of Muslim consumers (Wilson, The new wave of transformational Islamic marketing: reflections and definitions, 2012). Muslim consumer behaviour is known to be affected by their religious affiliation, commitment, knowledge, orientation and commitment (Muhamad and Mizerski, 2010). Understand student's behaviour is selecting which university to attend based on religious values are also important, especially for those Muslims living in different countries which are majority or minority Muslim countries. Likewise, to understand if non-Muslim are accepted or attending these Islamic private universities and factors that influenced their decisions.

Business Motivation

As Sandıkçı (2011) asked for more research in understanding the motives, aspirations and interpretations and implementations of marketing principles of Muslim entrepreneurs, this chapter further reiterated the call to understand the motivation for establishing Islamic private universities and perhaps the limitation in creating one. It will be worthwhile to know how their practices are informed by market forces and structures of higher education in the country. This will further provide insight into the prospect and challenges of establishing Islamic private universities in countries that are majority Muslim or minority Muslims. Sandıkçı (2011) argued that understanding the influence of religion on consumption and marketing interaction will contribute to marketing theory and understanding of the contemporary world.

Conclusion

The higher education marketing in Africa is evolving, and likewise the market dynamics as universities are making an effort to provide quality education (Olaleye et al., 2020). There is shortage of funds for existing government universities, and there is overpopulation in government universities as the demand for higher education is greater than the supply, the changing demographics of prospective students in Africa is also changing - they are more demanding and tech-savvy. (Michael, 2004). Individuals and organisations are stepping up to meet this shortage of higher education places in Africa, and this necessitates the need for strategic marketing of higher education as Universities becoming more business-oriented in the competitive higher education market (Ndofirepi et al., 2020).

This chapter acknowledges that there is shortage of empirical research and theoretical insight into Islamic private universities in Africa. It is also observed that the Islamic-oriented universities have continued to play complementary roles in the quest of government to meet the demand for higher education by the teeming population of African youth who show serious interest in university education. Thus, these institutions serve as credible outlets for teeming prospective students — candidates who could not gain access to the federal and state universities despite their impressive academic credentials.

Marketing Islamic higher education has been conceptualised as a common ground between three key themes (Figure 2). First, Islamic marketing recognises marketing strategies of Islamic product and services to Muslims and non-Muslims while respecting Islamic values and ideologies. Second Islamic higher education which recognises the contribution of the religions towards education and human resources development and Third, Marketing higher education which recognise the need for universities to adopt marketing communication strategies in the face of marketisation challenges of higher education.

Strategies for effective marketing communication were covered in the chapter. Highlight the implications of brand identity, especially with regards to the choice of name – to either uses an Islamic name or a generic name. The brand position was also discussed especially with regards to the perception about the religion, and lastly their digital marketing strategies were also explored, this includes the form and function of their websites to provide information for prospective students and their social media profile as a means of engaging with stakeholders. The chapter concludes with future research agenda to shape understanding about marketing Islamic universities, not only in Africa but perhaps around the world.

It is anticipated that these insights provided will enhance the understanding in this area, and inspire further interest in marketing Islamic private universities in Africa and provide a basis for sound management decisions and stimulate new ideas for future research.

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