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## The Marketing Strategy of the Product with Sensual Marketing Reviewed from Islamic Perspective

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### Abstract

There are many SPG who dress un-accordingly to the teachings of Islam when they are running product promotion activities. This study uses qualitative research method with a phenomenological approach. Subjects in this study were women who worked as SPG, while the research object was in Semarang City. The results of this study indicates that the use of Sales Promotion Girl is potential to violate Islamic Sharia because of the inadequacy of the clothes used by SPG, since in the marketing system, the clothes used by Sales Promotion Girl are considerate un-accordingly to the provisions of the Islamic Sharia or not in accordance with the perspective Islam.

### *Keywords:*

*sales promotion girl; Islamic perspective; marketing*

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## 1. Introduction

An entrepreneur is a human being who is able and capable of doing business, regardless they are tired and always trying to reach the glory. A businessman, in doing his business also conducts activities called marketing (Nurcholifah, 2014). Kotler & Keller (2013) explained that marketing is a social and managerial process where individuals and groups get what they want and need by creating, offering, and exchanging goods/services with other parties. In this state, marketing is a process of meeting between individuals and groups where each party intends to get what they need/want through the stages of creation, supply and exchange.

Marketing is an activity carried out by a company/organization to maintain the continuity of its company, to grow and to profit. In marketing, there is a design of activities to support the income target to be obtained, so the need for marketing management is to manage all these activities runs smoothly. The activities that support marketing management are sales/marketers. Marketers are individuals who are looking for one or more prospective customers to distribute products from one location to another so that the exchange of values is involved.

One strategy that has become a trend among companies now, is marketing with a model of Sensual Marketing carried out by Sales Promotion Girl or often called SPG. Sales Promotion Girl is a woman who sells certain products. The number of women who work to fulfill their daily needs, particularly as Sales Promotion Girl as a result of the time's development and the changing perspective and pattern of thinking about the position of a woman. Today's life does not provide an opportunity to limit women's work. Nowadays, many women are working in government and private offices, and not a few also become members of the military and state police, quite a lot are working in the field of the company, for example selling or often called marketing. Marketers are the spearhead of the company since they are in direct contact with candidates of customers/potential customers. Sales promotion can contribute to the success of ongoing marketing efforts if there is a proper understanding of consumers and markets (Mendez, Bendixen, Abratt, Yurova, & O'Leary, 2015).

In selling the company's products, it requires several activities involving resources, in this matter, these resources can affect the management of a product that can further be accepted by the community. Promotional activities are usually carried out involving skills for each person, such as Sales Promotion Girl (SPG). The Sales Promotion Girl is aiming to attract consumers, this is based on the appearance of an attractive Sales Promotion Girl since in the recruitment process, Sales Promotion Girl must meet several criteria, namely good looking, dare to be different, having height above average, proportional weight, and also possess the ability to speak.

In the recent competition era, there are quite a lot of companies utilizes the Sales Promotion Girl as a method to smooth their product's marketing. In this era of competition, not a few companies in Indonesia use Sales Promotion Girl as a way to make their product marketing run smoothly. The utilization of Sales Promotion Girl in marketing a product now can be found anywhere, especially if the company launches a new product that is not familiar yet to the public. There is even a Sales Promotion Girl recruitment service company, it is named as Agency Sales Promotion Girl, it will be a distinct advantage for the service company because of the tendency of companies in Indonesia to require Sales Promotion Girl. As with cigarette products, Sales Promotion Girl tends to be targeted at product knowledge as a way of successful promotion. The statement was corroborated by the results of study from (Alvo & Hasan, 2017) which stated that the promotion and marketing through SPG was very effective and efficient in increasing sales turnover.

The determined criteria by the Sales Promotion Girl (SPG) agency and the company are sometimes falsely implemented in the field by women who are Sales Promotion Girl professionals.

They assume that being SPG must be sexy like the opinions that have been developed in the community by far, although not all agencies and companies require Sales Promotion Girl to dress sexy and indulge in genitalia. Based on the observations that the researcher has done, 80% of the SPGs Muslims who in Islamic teachings forbid the use of clothing that shows or reveals body curvature (*aurat*) in every activity of life including work.

By looking at the attached symbols to the SPG also enables a poor stigma for SPG as a profession based on the sexy outfit, make up to the more aggressive and coercive verbal language when offering the product. The previous study conducted by (Sari, 2014) stated that the community leaders' perspective towards the automotive Sales Promotion Girl (SPG) in Surakarta is poor or negative. Surakarta is a city which well-known as identic to the stigma of woman who is polite, friendly and soft tends to consider physical appearance, the body language and how an automotive Sales Promotion Girl (SPG) interacts with a customer already has a poor image.

Based on the background above, the academic anxiety arises for the researcher about the potential issues that can occur due to SPG's behavior that is crossing the boundaries of both clothing and behavior limits. These problems are essential to be studied considering the problems that arise are very much related with the religious norms/cultural norms of the Indonesian people. This motivates the writer to study more deeply about marketing strategies with sensual marketing if reviewed from Islamic perspectives.

The number of women who work is based on several factors, one of which is the desire to develop and fulfill needs. According to (Lestari, 2012) by working, women are considered to have a higher social status and gain social rewards from the community. The opportunity to develop as broadly as possible for women makes women begin to dare in emerging excellence in job competition and issue ideas. There are so many jobs that can only be completed by women such as Sales Promotion Girl.

Poerwodarminto in (Rafikah, 2014) stated that Sales Promotion Girl (SPG) is a profession that is aimed to sell or to promote a product. This profession involves a woman who has appealed physical appearance as an effort to attract consumer's attention. Retnasih (2001) defines Sales Promotion Girl as a woman who is recruited by a company to promote the products. This opinion is seen by the existence and function which is as the presenter party of a product. This statement also illustrates that the main task of a Sales Promotion Girl is to produce a product. Sales Promotion Girl is a saleswoman who offers a service to serve the consumer. By the presence of Sales Promotion Girl, a company is able to attract consumer and influence the consumer to try the offered product (Mutiar, 2013). According to Raharti (2001), there are several obligated requirements that must be fulfilled by the Sales Promotion Girl: First, Performance is a physical appearance that can be seen by the vision. It means that performance is about the characteristic that is measured by outlook appearance (physical appearance) and dress code design (clothing design), Second is the Communicating Style which means an absolute communication must be fulfilled since the communication will create interaction between consumer and Sales Promotion Girl. This communication is measured based on the style of speech and the way of communicating that is valued from the consumer, the third is Body Language which means more body language/ physical movement (weak, soft, graceful, etc.). The body movements when offering products and touches are descriptions of Body Language. It is very possible that Sales Promotion Girl recruited by the company will be able to create a good perception of the product advertised and will be followed by interest in buying.

Marketing a product requires several activities which involve several resources. In marketing, there is also a section that has a direct relationship with consumers, namely product sales. Basically,

product sales now have a direct marketing section that offers product offerings and product samples. This section is usually known as sales promotion.

An SPG is demanded to look attractive as the initial effort to attract potential consumer's interest, at least the consumer listens to the explanation of the offered product or even try it. Furthermore, an SPG also has to possess deeper knowledge about the product so that the potential consumer is interested to buy that product. To become an SPG, it takes several conditions. The common condition for an SPG is as listed: Female, 21 y.o. maximum, High School or equivalent the academic background, height is 160 cm as the minimum, 56kg as the maximum weight, attractive looking, has experience as an SPG or having learning interest to become a professional SPG.

The company's need for sales promotion girls is matched with the character of a product to be marketed. Product promotion for daily needs usually uses sales promotion girl with lower possible criteria compared to sales promotion girls for premium products. Having that way, the selection of the sales promotion girl personnel's utilization can be completed with consideration of the products to be promoted. The compatibility between the products promoted and the sales promotion girls' qualifications makes it possible to increase the attractiveness of consumers in the promoted products. The physical character's existence of a Sales Promotion Girl, in its function is able to elevate the image of the product, especially direct consumption products. At the time of hearing the word marketing, it is often linked by many parties with sales, sales promotion girls, advertising, promotions, or products. Marketing can be interpreted as a social process that designs and offers something that becomes the needs and desires of customers in order to provide optimal satisfaction to customers (Rivai, 2011).

Marketing can be interpreted as an activity that strives to make the marketed products acceptable and favored by the market (Khasmir, 2004). Marketing is the result of work's performance of a business activity that is related to the flow of goods and services from producers to consumers (Assauri, 2013). In a broader view, marketing is a process of an activity that starts long before the goods / materials enter the production process. Marketing activities include concept of development, pricing, promotion, and distribution of a number of ideas, products, and services.

The marketing of Islamic product has no significant difference from other marketing that we are familiarized with, however, sharia marketing focusing more on and based on Islamic sharia derived from Al Qur'an and hadiths. Furthermore, (Makmun, 2015) stated that in running a business particularly in the marketing process, it has to be based on the proper management and by holding the ethics and morality that is applied in the society that possess social and religious values.

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age (c) High School or equivalent as the academic background (d) Has minimum height as 160 cm (e) 56 kg as the maximum weight (f) Attractive looking (g) Posses experience as an SPG or having desire to learn to become a professional SPG.

## 2. Research Method

This study uses qualitative research method with a phenomenological approach. According to (Moleong, 2006), qualitative research is a study that aims to understand the phenomenon of what is experienced by the subject of research, such as behavior, perception, motivation, actions, etc., thoroughly, and by way of description in the form of words. Words and language, in a special natural context and by utilizing a variety of natural methods. Through the phenomenological approach of Alfred Schutz, the writer will describe the complex reality in women's lives as SPG. This research method was chosen because in addition to not using statistical numbers, the author wanted this research to explain the meaning of women as Sales Promotion Girl in Semarang city.

In accordance with the purpose of this study, the research subject was devoted to women who were Sales Promotion Girls in the city of Semarang totaling 3 SPG. The criteria for informants to see the meaning of women as SPG in Semarang City, which are: the informant is a woman who is a Muslim, the informant has promoted products in the form of information and the informants have followed at least 5 events. The object of study is the point that becomes the focus of a study. The point of attention is in the form of material that is examined or solved the problem using the theory in question (Chaer, 2007) In this study the object of the study was Semarang city.

## 3. Result and Discussion

Basically, a woman's task is to manage the affairs of the house, take care of the family, educate children, and serve the husband, as the Prophet said: "The woman is responsible for the affairs of her husband's house" (HR Al-Bukhori). Women are not required to fulfill their own needs because they are the responsibility of their father or husband. Even so, Islam does not prohibit women from working. They may sell or buy business with their personal property. No one can prohibit them while following the religious guidelines.

There is stigma arises in society indicates that by working, women are considered to have a higher social status and get social appreciation from the community (Lestari, 2012: 143).

[Having job as a sales promotion girl can increase family income, decrease family's economic burden and can fulfil the needs sir, therefore it can increase family's economic image. Woman nowadays has to be independent, become the breadwinner of herself, better than to stay jobless sir. Lately it is difficult to find jobs at the office which is why I become a Sales Promotion Girl (SPG)]. (interviewed on 29<sup>th</sup> April, 2018).

The statement of this informant strengthens the study conducted by (Samsudin, 2013) stated that woman prefer to work as an SPG for cigarettes industry because of reason like gaining bigger income to fulfil daily needs. A study from (Arfryani, 2016) stated that the past motive from a female college student to become an SPG are: economy, which is the will to live independently, means that financial needs are fulfilled.

Aside from many who falsely apply the implementation of the provisions of the agency and the company, there are some SPG who deliberately dressed that displayed aurat with the aim of tempting the customer to buy the cigarette products offered by the SPG. Many Sales Promotion Girl dressed beyond fairness / display excessive genitalia which can actually invite lust and can invite someone to commit a crime such as sexual harassment. Sales Promotion Girl who are many sensual marketing actors who are sexy, this was revealed by my informant as Aprilia (25 years): *Most of the women who work as SPG are dressed in sexy packs, it aims to attract more consumers'*

*buying interest, because the products I sell are cigarettes which are actually male users, I also eat sexy so they are attracted to me only later interested in the goods / products that I sell. Dressed in sexy, I sold the cigarettes faster and reached the sales target* (Interviewed on April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2017). What was conveyed by Aprilia (25) as an informant was corroborated by the research conducted by (Agow, 2017) which stated that the many issues circulating in the community about the SPG profession made the SPG cigarette image worse, in which the community considered SPG social negative behavior.

Basically, women may work if they get permission from their father or husband when the woman is married and if her job requires her to leave the house. The right to give permission of the husband to the wife is automatically lost if a husband does not provide for his wife. If the woman works, she shouldn't leave the obligation to take care of the family and care for her children. The criteria for work done outside the home for women according to (Manshur, 2012) are: (a) Excluding immoral acts as singing, or playing musical instrument and does not tarnishing family's honor. (b) Does not require her to spend time alone with a man, since it is feared that there could be slander between the two of them. (c) Does not require her to have over make up and shows her aurat when she is.

*And settle in your homes; and do not display yourselves, as in the former days of ignorance. And perform the prayer, and give regular charity, and obey God and His Messenger. God desires to remove all impurity from you, O People of the household, and to purify you thoroughly. (QS. Al Ahzab: 33).*

In the marketing system, promotion is the main thing because when the promotion is completed, later on we will know how consumer responses to the products we offer. Part of the sales promotion's function is not only to strengthen the consumer's commitment but to encourage repeatedly purchases (Oyenyiyi, 2011). In promoting a product, we need the services of a Sales Promotion Girls (SPG). The bidding process carried out by an SPG already has and is based on the provisions of the company itself. But in the implementation of product offerings that becomes promotions in the field, the Sales Promotion Girls (SPG) should only be to attract buyers from the goods promoted so that, consumers when buying goods really pay attention to the quality of the product to be purchased through an explanation delivered by SPG, not by consumer interest against clothes worn by SPG.

Within the field of product / goods marketing, the Prophet Muhammad has set the best example: he is charming, builds relationships, prioritizes blessings, understands customers, gains trust, provides the best service, communicates, establishes personal relationships, responds to problems, creates feelings one community, integrating, creating engagement and offering choices. The concept taught by the Prophet Muhammad SAW is often referred to as Islamic marketing. The concept of Sharia marketing is developing along with the development of Islamic economics in Indonesia. (Tamamudin, 2014) said that in some literature many people say, the Sharia Market is an emotional market, whilst the conventional market is a rational market.

In addition, in the Islamic Religion, the Prophet Muhammad had taught and told His people to market their products/goods in accordance with the teachings of Islam. The promotion strategies of the Prophet Muhammad include: Having a spiritual personality (Taqwa), behaving well and sympathetically (Siddiq), having intelligence and intellectuality (Fathonah), communicative, transparent and communicative (Tablig), serving and being humble (Khidmah), honest, trusted professionals, credibility and responsibility (Al-Amanah), do not like to get worse (Su'uzh-zhann), do not like to speak badly (Ghibah), and do not commit bribery (Risywah).

By utilizing the method of promotion through SPG media according to the economy in

general is valid. Because the system used in promotions using SPG media has fulfilled the terms and conditions of the general sale and purchase conditions. In this case all have been fulfilled in the syara which has become a provision in buying and selling, which are sellers, buyers, prices, goods, permission and qabul. In terms of Islamic Economics, the system of product sales carried out by companies using bidding through SPG is in in-line with the terms and conditions.

Because in the principle, the marketing carried out by SPG applies a system that is part of the elements that are in accordance with the provisions explained by the Prophet Muhammad. However, what makes this system a little out of the Islamic context is that it is not good enough for the clothes used by SPG, because in the marketing system the clothes used by the SPG are not in accordance with the provisions in Islamic Sharia. Which is too show the nakedness that should be covered. So that the prospective buyers of the product affect them not because of the quality of the products promoted by SPG but from the physical shown by SPG.

Hence, the marketing system carried out by companies in the context of marketing using SPG is permissible because it is in accordance with the concept of offers made by the Prophet Muhammad. Nevertheless, in the context of ethics in Islam the system by means of SPG that uses clothes shows that their genitals are deemed incompatible with the Islamic context. The marketing pattern of the company as mentioned above is not permitted in the context of Islamic marketing because the process carried out in this system is carried out in a way that emphasizes the aspect of SPG-worn clothing that shows its nakedness not because of the quality of the goods traded in the offer.

#### 4. Conclusion

In the selling/marketing, promotion is the main part of how to make a new product's marketing successful that half or even the whole society or consumer have not been informed yet about the product. Within the promotion, it needs the service of Sales Promotion Girl (SPG) with the objectives of introducing the new product to be known by the consumers. SPG has to possess the advantage which one of them is a proper communication skill with everyone, as well as possess the inner beauty so consumer can be attracted to buy the product.

By using the promotion through the Sales Promotion Girl, according to the economy is permissible in general, as it fulfils the requirements. From the perspective of Economic Islam, the marketing system applied by a company that uses the offer through Sales Promotion Girl is already in accordance with the requirements and sequences (rukun). Because in principle marketing that is run by Sales Promotion Girl, applying a system that is partially in accordance with the provisions explained by the Messenger of Allah, only, the use of Sales Promotion Girl can violate Islamic Sharia because of the lack of dress used by SPG, because in the marketing system the clothes used the Sales Promotion Girl is not in accordance with the provisions in the Islamic Sharia. SPG is more concerned with big targets and benefits, it is contrary to Sharia marketing, which is pursued not only by profit but also by the values of honesty and maintaining the prevailing norms in society. The concept of Islamic marketing emphasizes that sales are responsible not only to customers but also to Allah SWT.

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