

# Use of E-Learning to Market Islamic Service

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## Abstract

The paper aims at finding out how to use modern tools of communication to market Islamic service via e-learning. The study reported in the present highlights E-Islam and focuses on electronically marketing Islamic services. Moreover, this study will help E-marketing managers provide the best Islamic service through a survey of some virtual factors that may affect Islamic services. This study adds a new element to the list of items with a marketing and psychological nature which is "charity" as a purely Islamic feature of services.

**Keywords:** E-marketing, e-learning, Muslim consumer experience, Islamic Service

## 1. Introduction

The widespread availability of communications and information technologies are among the variables that positively and negatively affect human life, a fact which needed speed in identifying strategies to employ these electronic technologies to meet consumers' needs in a personal and interactive manner.

Interaction with the so-called "Digital generation" or "Digital consumer" or "Virtual Consumer" (Wetsch & Newfoundland, 2008), relative to the world of the Internet, can no longer guarantee the use of traditional methods. That technology shifted from just an environment for the exchange of information to one of the important pillars in the field of digital marketing. Internet opened up wide opportunities for the education sector. Consistent with global trends in this area, knowledge is no longer confined to the process of the transfer of information from the teacher to the learner but it also includes how the learner receives this information.

"E-Learning" is one of the attributes of these technologies and one of the most important applications of communications technology in the field of education. It is based primarily on technological tools ( computers , Internet ) and uses all its multimedia features (voice, image , search engines ... ). It is a strategic choice that responds to several requirements, including the need for continuous and flexible education that is not restricted by time and place, as well as an increased attraction for communication with and openness to others.

E-learning has touched on several areas, including the teaching of the Qur'an. The Qur'an did not come down to be recited or rhymed, but also to be received as knowledge and rules. People are called to study, understand and apply it. In its discourse, there are laws, a Constitution or knowledge. In its comprehension lies its divinity and argumentation. Its scientific, moral and behavioural features are revealed in understanding its divine and superior message. "Verily, this Qur'an guides to that which is most just and right and gives glad tidings to the believers (in the Oneness of Allah and His Messenger, Muhammad), who work deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a great reward (Paradise), as stated in verse 9 of Surat Al-Isra. The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, has mandated that "Indeed, this Qur'an guides to that which is most suitable and gives good tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds that they will have a great reward." and has urged its learning and teaching when he said: "best to learn and teach the Quran".

However, the desired effect did not take place to take advantage of new information technology to achieve the expected shift in Islam as the employment of e-learning to consolidate the religion of Islam in general, and teaching the Qur'an and its comprehension in particular remained limited. E-marketing is the only way to succeed as it enables planning and development of Islamic services in accordance with the needs and desires of the target market. It also looks at the attitudes of people and their motives and behavior towards the adoption of this technology in the service of the Qur'an.

In this paper, we review the importance of e-learning as one of the modern and advanced methods to teach the Qur'an, to respond to the hopes of millions of Muslims to memorize the Qur'an and learn and understand its meaning. First, we introduce the importance of the Qur'an in the lives of Muslims to clarify the concept of e-learning and to clarify the nature of its necessary tools and techniques. Second, we explain the underlying causes behind resorting to the use of e-learning in the teaching of the Quran.

### 1.1 The objectives

The aim of this paper is to put forward the idea of e-learning as a prerequisite for the development and dissemination of the teaching the Qur'an in the world and elevate it to the highest levels to cope with the great

technological development and to encourage generations to further abide by Islam. This is added to sensitizing society, its institutions and its governments of the importance and efficiency of e-learning.

### *1.2 Methodology*

This paper presents a theoretical study based on a literature review of the relevant research and scientific findings and the analysis of the expressed ideas and opinions to synthesise scientific results on the impact of e-learning.

## **2. E-marketing and E- Quran**

### *2.1 The importance of Qur'an in the lives of Muslims*

Quran is the seal of divine books and God's immortal book, from which Muslims draw their faith, rituals and God's will. Muslims look for it for guidance in terms of ethics and differentiation between right and wrong and Halal and Haram. It includes the righteous beliefs, and true worship, and good ethics as revealed by God, for the good of Life and the Hereafter, as stated in verse 9 of Surat Al-Isra: "“Indeed, this Qur'an guides to that which is most suitable and gives good tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds that they will have a great reward.”. Those who are not guided by the book of God are lost in the darkness of ignorance and misguidance as God said: “And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed life, and We will gather him on the Day of Resurrection blind.” ( Taha 0.124 ). Muslims are invited to follow this divine statement and to understand its lofty meaning, as in its wisdom and understanding shines its proof, and revealed its scientific, ethical, and behavioural out-reach.

The Prophet, peace be upon him, has cherished the place of Qur'an readers in Paradise, where he said peace be upon him: "such who read and memorize the Qur'an is kept with the noble sons ". The Prophet peace be upon him urged his companions God bless them to memorize the Qur'an and understand it and work with it. Othman Ibn Affan may Allah be pleased with him narrated that the Prophet peace be upon him said: « the best of you are those who learn and teach the Qur'an» (Narrated by al- Bukhari ). He peace be upon him also said "Convey on behalf of me even one verse ".

So scientists have worked hard in teaching and interpreting the Qur'an. However, examining the methods of teaching the Qur'an we notice that most of teachers follow a traditional teaching pattern, which is based mainly on memorization, a method that negatively affected its memorization, reciting and rhyming. Therefore, it became necessary to use different and modern teaching techniques that will arouse the interest of students, and motivate them, and therefore contribute in reaching the above objective of e-learning.

### *2.2 E-marketing*

Electronic marketing represents one of the contemporary fundamental concepts, as it was able to change business and marketing activities into contemporary trends compatible with current shifts and changes through the use of tools and means of modern technologies in the implementation of marketing operations and delivering of products and services using multiple tools.

Bashir Abbas Allaq (2002) defines e-marketing as: "Application of relevant Internet and digital technologies to achieve marketing objectives. Among the most important advantages of e-marketing, we mention shopping 24 hours a day and a rich and large range of products or brands unlike traditional marketing . E-marketing also helps to provide goods or services fast and easy for the consumer.

As the role of E-marketing grows, for each Islam pillar there is site on the Internet , for example, we mention the "Noor Islam Network" , " the talking electronic Quran, Iqraa " etc. ... Electronic marketing allows for an opportunity to target consumers in an individual and personal manner.

### *2.3 E-Learning*

The so-called e-learning or virtual learning or open learning, that all stem from distance education, emerged in the mid-nineties. The literature is rich with definitions of the concept of e-learning, yet there is no agreement on a unified and comprehensive definition. There are many concepts and definitions that are developed for e-learning in previous studies ((Broadbent 2002, Khan and Morrison 2003) This discrepancy is due to the difference in the research interest. There are those who believe it is a web-based learning, and others who consider it as computer-based learning, whether using Internet or using other means for storing information. Still others believe that it is network-based learning in which an educational institution designs special site to display programs and materials of their own. (Othman Shahat, 2009). With reference to the above, the definition of Zaytoun ( 2005) is the most comprehensive where e-learning "provide(s) electronic educational content via computer-based multimedia and computer networks and communications to the learner allowing them the possibility to actively interact with content, teacher and colleagues simultaneously or non- simultaneously in the time, place and speed that suits the conditions of the learner and their abilities, and electronically manage all the activities and requirements of the educational process through dedicated specialized systems" .

E-learning has many advantages, namely:

- Freedom from the constraints of time and place.
- Dependence on Internet makes communication and cooperation and partnership between the learners and teachers quick and easy.
- Taking into account individual differences in comprehension and understanding.

E-learning is different from other traditional teaching methods as shown in the following table:

**Table 1 : Traditional learning vs E-learning**

	<b>E-Learning</b>	<b>Traditional learning</b>
<b>Role of teacher</b>	Teacher's role diminishes and is limited to guidance to knowledge sources	The teacher controls the process as essential source of learning
<b>Role of learner</b>	The learner contributes to the learning process and learns through auto-search	The learner receives information from teacher (passive learning)
<b>Used tools</b>	Use of various tools and different learning patterns .	Limited use of supporting tools and limited to verbal teaching
<b>Relationship between them</b>	The learner learns in groups and interacts with others.	Learning is individual and there is no interaction between learners
<b>Time and place of learning</b>	Time and place are determined to suit learner's conditions.	Time and place is pre-determined (classroom)
<b>Continuity</b>	The learner has the opportunity to learn for life.	Limited and stops.
<b>Possibility to update</b>	Updating is easy and cost-effective.	Updating is not possible
<b>The objective</b>	Treatment of knowledge.	Production of knowledge

### 2.3.1 Patterns of e-learning

E-learning Includes several different techniques and methodologies, therefore it is divided into many styles including:

- Synchronous E-learning: It is education which needs the presence of learners and the teacher at the same time but not necessarily a physical presence in the same place to communicate and interact directly with each other. Characteristics of this type of education ensure flexibility of place and not of time.
- Asynchronous E-learning: This type of learning does not require presence of the teacher and the learner at the same learning time or at the same place. Learner's interaction with educational content can be done, for example, through e-mail providing the opportunity for the learner to choose the time and the right place to learn and also providing the possibility of re-examining the subject and revisiting it when needed.
- Blended learning: it includes a number of tools that are designed to complement each other. It is a mixture of traditional and e-learning. It relies on providing an appropriate environment characterized by rich interactive applications based on computers and internet. Learners come to interact with learning sources and activities in direct electronic fashion. In blended learning, there is a mixture of synchronous and asynchronous learning and its importance lies in developing learners' knowledge and skills and promoting social values.

### 3. Experience of the Muslim consumer with the virtual world

E-marketing researchers (Hoffman and Novak, 1996; 2009) think that the importance of analysing virtual consumption or else known as "Experiential Consumption" represents the essence of consumers' virtual experience. Several studies pointed to the presence of internet users in 3-dimensional space in a "person-entity-state" scheme, where experience combines both cognition and affection (Filser, 2002). Hoffman and Novak (1996), through their study of web marketing, showed that "the consumer in a virtual world actively participates in an interactive process of reactions and direct and fast communication". Therefore, the consumer plays a pivotal role as a service consumer and a producer at the same time (Emmons & Oreenbaum, 1998) .

Of the characteristics of this experiential experience is that the virtual world perfectly matches with a current set of concepts that attend to consumer behaviour and development. Despite the significance growth of this technology and its compatibility with the modern consumption experience, few marketing researchers in general and researchers of Muslim consumer behaviour in virtual environments in particular showed interest. Therefore, we see it fit to understand this phenomenon as a subject of Experiential Consumption in the Muslim virtual world.

Virtual experience can be described in terms of its ability of providing active participation and psychological presence. During the experience, the consumer participates in virtual environment (Witmer and Singer, 1998) as they no longer seek a conscious act outside the activity itself (Agarwal and Karahanna, 2000), rather they become impressed and totally engaged in the experience.

E-learning applications allow consumers to interact and react with the service (Kim and Forsythe, 2008) and increase service pleasure

#### **4. Factors influencing Quran E-learning**

It is possible that some not all factors affect Muslim consumer behaviour. Therefore, it is necessary to shed light on these factors that represent the experiential dynamics of e-learning an Islamic service and differently affect consumers' reactions. Moreover, we put emphasis on an important influential factor which is charity

##### *4.1 Motivation for E-learning*

Marketers show a particular interest in motivation as it explains reasons for behaviour. No one can act unless there is a will to act. Ability to act is achieved through training; however, willingness to act is achieved through motivation. Similar to other psychology concepts, several definitions have been proposed to define and explain motivation. Mohyeddine and Abderrahmen (1990) believe that the term motivation includes a set of internal and external conditions that make people act to rebalance a situation. However, Petri & Govern, (2004) believe that motivation is a motive or many motives that direct behaviour to achieve, maintain, preserve and ultimately stop a goal. According to psychologists, there are two types of motivation: a) external motivation which leads people to act in response to an external stimulus, and b) internal motivation which leads people to act in response to an internal desire. Marketing-wise, Viot (2006) defines motivation as « the driving power in people that leads them to behave in manner and allows them to identify environment and explain information in this environment”.

The more the individual is motivated the more they tend to act. Motivation is considered as one of the factors that encourage knowledge and learning, as those less motivated are unlikely to learn. Ghergulescu & Muntean, (2010) believe that motivation is the power that induces achieving the goal of learning and maintain participation in that process. As for Aissaoui (2011), it is “from a behavioural perspective it is the internal and external facet of the learner that drives their behaviour and performance. It ensures their continuous performance and directs them towards the objective or goal. From a cognitive perspective, it is an internal state that moves the learner's ideas and knowledge and their store of knowledge and conscious, as it constantly directs them to continue performing to reach a state of cognitive and psychological balance. From a human perspective, it is an internal arousal state that moves the learner to use the maximum of energy in any learning environment in order to satisfy their desire and their self.

As E-learning environment is completely different from the traditional one, the learner critically needs support to raise and maintain their motivation (Mokdad, 2010). Therefore, strategies of increasing motivation within the traditional perspective are different from those in E-learning. It became necessary to find appropriate strategies for e-learning

Researchers have proposed a number of models that can be used to increase motivation in e-learning like the Attention, Relevance, Confidence, Satisfaction model proposed by Keller (1987), Wlodkowski' model (Wlodkowski, 1985). As for Mokdad (2010), he believes that we count on good conduct which is doing good job supported by an internal power supported by god's oversight and fear.

##### *4.2 Learning styles*

The subject of learning and thought received a great deal of attention from researchers in cognitive psychology. It is deemed among the issues that closely relate current changes because they are interrelated in explaining individual differences. Thought is considered the best method of facilitating students learning by taking into account individual differences and cognitive functions by focussing on intellectual and learning styles, because learning relates to thought and individual differences correlate with our use of particular styles when we think and learn (Cano & Hewitte , 2000: 413).

Affective and physiological factors lead each individual to opt for a unique style in the way they treat information. This is what cognitive psychology studies found (Mc Carthy, 1990) Kolb, 1984). Kolb (1984) defined learning style as the way the learner identifies and treats information during learning. Kolb (1984) and Mc Carthy (1990) propose that difference in styles relates essentially to two main factors:

- The way new information is attended to
- The way new information is treated

When identifying new information, there are who opt for affection and feelings to learn new skills during practice. There are those who opt for thinking and prefer understanding and awareness. Concerning treatment of new information, there are those who just observe and there are those who involve themselves personally. With reference to the above, awareness can be represented into a continuum with at each end respectively “feeling” and

“thinking”. As for the treatment component, it can be represented “observation” and “action”. Kolb presented his experiential learning cycle and proposed a model for its application. In this model, learning contains four-stage cycle as presented in Figure 1. The basis of this model is how to translate experience into knowledge and concepts and then into awareness and choice of new skills.

Kolb (1984) classified learning styles into four: the Converger, Diverger, Assimilator, Accomodator, which were described by Mc Carth (2005), Duff (2004), Loo (2004) and Kolb (1984) as follows:

The **Converger**: includes learning styles that use reason, thinking, and learning by doing. It is a style that favours practical and technical solutions than personal and social problems.

The **Diverger**: groups learning styles that uses real experience and observation. It is a multi-faceted style to solve a problem. People with this style prefer having detailed information in a reasonable manner. One of the favourite methods of divergers is lecturing based on specific features like strengths and weaknesses.

The **Assimilator**: includes learning styles that use reason and observation. To build constructs, the learner relies on prediction and reason. People with this style focus on abstract concepts and ideas. They consider that theory is reasonable than its application. They prefer accurate and organized detailing of information and they show great respect for experts. They are distinguished by creating theoretical models. Order is not randomly discovered. Among the learning methods that fits assimilators is the audio-visual presentation followed by laboratory analysis.

The **Accomodator**: includes learning styles that use experience and learning by doing. Behaving in a given context is the basis of determining knowledge. People with this style are able to learn basically from personal experience. This style is important for those working in marketing and sales. Accommodators always seek meaning for learning experience and look for what they are able to do following others who did it in the past. They are good at complicated issues and they have a tendency for problem solving using previous information.

Kadhem and Yasser (1998) believe that “quality and level of learning is greatly affected by level or style of treating object of learning”. Using learning styles theory in e-learning may lead to increase learner’s creativity. The following figure represents Kolb’s learning styles model:

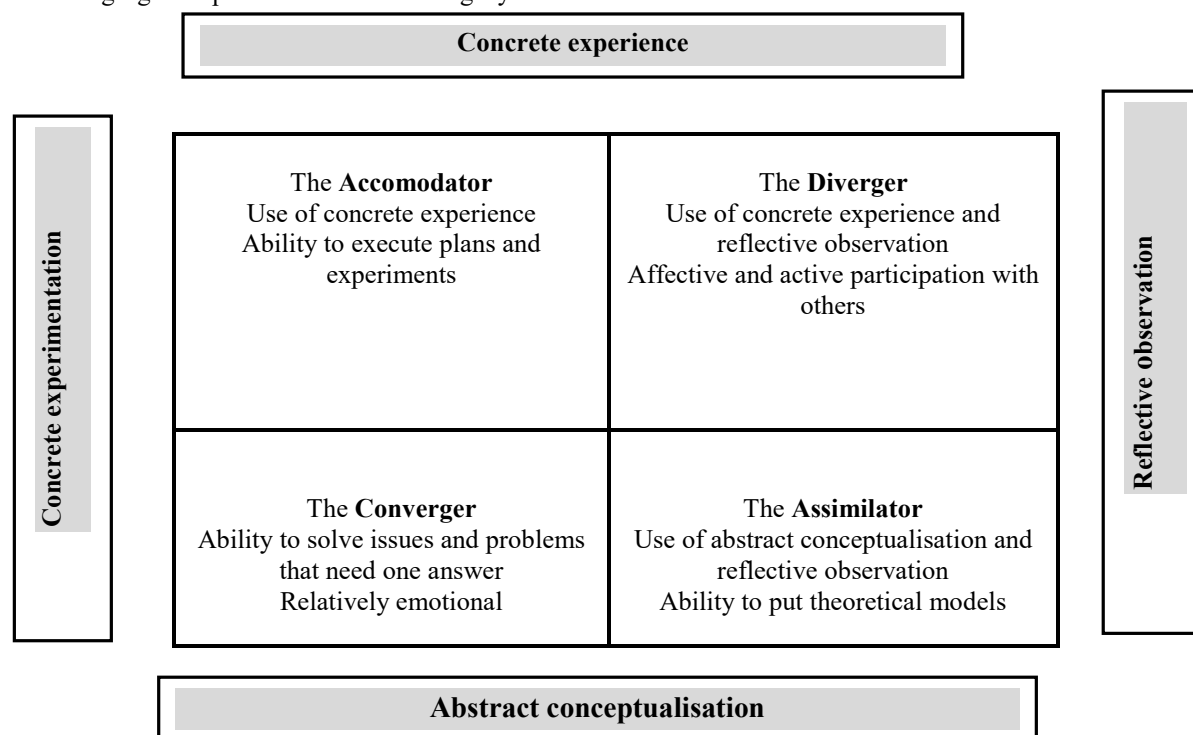


Figure 1 : Kolb’s Model

#### 4.3 Self-Efficacy

Bandura (1997) defines perceived self-efficacy as “the judgments that individuals make on their skills to organize and execute actions that need clear types of performance within a uniform behavior change theory”. It is not just general feelings rather it is what individuals believe what they have in terms of skills and what they are able to do, and the extent of their efforts and perseverance, the extent of their abilities to handle difficult situations and the extent of facing failure. Individual’s awareness of their own ability starts at early childhood and continues for life.

Researchers in social theory believe that perceived self-efficacy represents an essential component of individuals’ awareness of self-control and integrity.



There is no doubt a strong relationship between scientific progress and social changes and the extent individuals' ability and perceived self-efficacy in absorbing that fast progress. Therefore, the extent of perceived self-efficacy to out-weight those fast and cumulative changes is important, changes that represent psychological, moral and social pressure.

Perceived self-efficacy is considered one of the important components of human personality because of its influence on individual behavior. Perceived self-efficacy plays an important role in directing and determining new behavior.

#### 4.4 Good conduct in Muslim Virtual World

Good conduct manifests itself in doing a good quality act. Quality as proposed by e-marketing Parasuraman et al., (2005; Zeithaml et al. 2002), is an accurate design of a set of specifications particular to a producer of a service and makes it easily useable.

Good conduct in Islam is faith. It is as the prophet, peace be upon him, "to worship god as if you see him, if you do not see him, He sees you". God has insisted on it saying: "Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded ». in general, good conduct is perfectly achieving a good deed and "it is driven by an internal power the center of which is God's control and His fear" (Mokdad, 2010). Islam encouraged engraining fulfilment in individual's mind and behaviour, as it elevates them to higher positions. Therefore, good conduct should be encouraged in children during early years because personality is shaped around that age as psychologists believe.

Quality is controlled by ensuring accuracy and fulfilment in e-learning materials. Quality in e-learning programs means ensuring a fulfilled Islamic service that satisfies learners and that is continuously improved. Therefore, marketers should deploy efforts that provide programs and methods that fit learners' needs in terms of quality and keep following until they are satisfied with the Islamic service.

### 5. Recommendations and conclusions

In this paper, we showed that using e-learning and adapt its techniques to serve Quran is an important step towards promoting Quran across the globe. Thanks to its flexibility with learners' needs, e-learning can promote appeal with Quran memorization and interpretation and comprehension and use its messages.

Against the above, we recommend the following:

- Determine the way that should be used to electronically teach the Quran, as it is important to look for the quality of published information and check its integrity and ensure publication in several languages to reach wider users of internet.
- Develop and select appropriate e-learning techniques that motivate individuals to learn the Quran electronically.
- Marketers should promote use of e-learning and provide the best value added services that satisfy the needs of target consumers.

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