

## Viral Marketing and Paid Review Issues in Internet Marketing: A Study From The Lens of Fiqh Muamalat

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### Abstract

Ironically, marketing is something that every company has experience with. A product's success depends on its ability to sell and generate revenue through marketing. From the perspective of printing, mass media, and other methods, this marketing activity is often observable. But now, thanks to developments in technology, advertising can be done entirely online. As a result, internet marketing can be done in a variety of ways. Today, many businesses use the internet to promote their products and services, and one common method is through paid reviews and viral marketing. Since viral marketing and paid reviews are still relatively new marketing strategies, they are not discussed in depth in fiqh books. As a result, the burden of proof lies with the company that engages in unlawful marketing practices contrary to Shariah law. The purpose of this paper is to classify the various paid and viral marketing strategies currently in use, to analyze these strategies as they pertain to internet marketing from the perspective of Fiqh Muamalat, and to suggest remedies for issues associated with these strategies. This study employs a qualitative research approach, employing a random sampling technique for conducting interviews with study participants. The participants in the interviews were chosen at random using a simple random sampling technique. According to the study's findings, the vast majority of respondents explained that viral marketing and paid review can be used so long as they do not violate Islamic Shariah. This was established through careful evaluation and the gathering of reliable evidence. Since the scope of this study is narrow, we offer a few suggestions for how future researchers might broaden their focus. To this end, it is suggested to conduct additional studies or studies of other forms of internet advertising. Explore the many problems that crop up in internet marketing.

**Keywords:** Viral Marketing, Paid Review, Internet Marketing, Fiqh, Muamalat

**Introduction**

Internet marketing allows businesses to connect with their target audience on a more personal level and tailor their commercial offering to the specific needs of each individual customer. To a great extent, customers can customize the information they see on websites. Using specialized technologies that are integrated into the web pages, it is possible to give each target group the unique information required for this specific category of consumers for a relatively low cost (Grubor & Jak'a, 2018).

Internet marketing is defined as the practice of conducting business entirely online, as opposed to using traditional offline channels such as telephone calls, faxes, or letters (Dhir, 2020).

Internet marketing is also known as digital marketing, web marketing, online marketing, and e-marketing. As the term implies, it is the process of promoting a product or service through an online medium. Although, it does recommend promoting through electronic mail and mobile media. Internet marketing can be both artistic and technical, involving both creativity and technology in its conception, creation, promotion and sale over the World Wide Web. It paves the way for novel data-driven channels of customer engagement, such as web-based shopping, marketing, and service (Kaur & Singh, 2017).

Internet marketing that encourages people to spread information about a product or service via electronic word of mouth is commonly referred to as "viral marketing" or "paid review" today. Using this tactic, companies have seen a significant uptick in public interest and awareness. Because it takes advantage of existing online infrastructure, this form of marketing is both inexpensive and likely to generate substantial amounts of online word of mouth (Solikhah, 2021).

If all the conditions and pillars are met, and the transaction doesn't involve any of the two forbidden elements, then it's legitimate. The process of selling a product or service has the same infectious effect as a virus, bringing in more potential buyers. Due to the paucity of studies addressing paid reviews and viral marketing, the authors are interested in exploring the topic from an Islamic legal perspective (Solikhah, 2021).

Some of the many methods merchants use to get the word out about their wares online and on social media are even taught in marketing courses. As a result, businesspeople must pay closer attention to both commercial law and Fiqh Muamalat. The approach seems to have issues when viewed through the lens of Islamic tradition and muamalat principles (Che Abdullah, 2018).

In today's business world, it's all too common to hear the phrase "bad marketing is good marketing," which illustrates the issue at hand. This means that traders will resort to any method that is likely to generate controversy, sensation, and public outrage in the hopes that it will spread rapidly online. Trader's products will sell better and more people will be familiar with the brand as a result of the publicity surrounding the controversy that it sparked (Mufti of Federal Territory, 2022).

Some groups' simultaneous marketing efforts go too far. For instance, marketing in a way that might offend someone's sense of religion, using profanity or insults toward other people, inciting them, or making obscene statements or doing obscene things. However, they persist in justifying these unethical practices as promotional for the company because of the attention they bring (Mufti of Federal Territory, 2022).

## Literature Review

### a) Definition of Viral Marketing and Paid Review

According to the definition of viral marketing, it is "a communication and distribution strategy that depends on customers to transmit digital items via electronic mail to other potential customers in their social sphere and inspire these connections to likewise communicate the product." Several aspects of viral marketing can be deduced from this definition. First and foremost, the viral message is a digital channel for reaching clients. Text, images, videos, and internet links may all be included in the content of such messages. Second, one receives viral communications from people in their social network. In other words, the message is not sent directly to the company's clientele. Instead, it depends on the customer base to spread the items. Similar to word-of-mouth marketing, viral marketing spreads information through consumer networks (Liu et al., 2019).

In addition, according to Wang et al (2018) viral marketing is a method of spreading influence through social media. Marketing professionals must find people with high social networking potential in order to create a successful viral marketing campaign. The term "viral marketing" refers to a marketing strategy that encourages users of social networks to spread marketing messages (viral ads) to others in order to increase product sales or brand awareness as widely as possible. On the other hand, paid reviews are paid advertising. Paid reviews are a strategy for highlighting social media profiles or products with the aid of other users' accounts. The party that wants to be promoted by the associated account must pay a set nominal amount typically, the terms given, such as posting frequency and duration, up to the price of paid promotion, vary depending on the terms of the account owner's Instagram account. Make an effort to use services for paid online advertising. Additionally, this may result in higher sales and better-known products among consumers (Ertama et al., 2021).

Concept of Viral Marketing and Paid Review There are two basic types of viral marketing: frictionless viral marketing and active viral marketing. Active viral marketing is similar to the old-fashioned idea of word-of-mouth because users are frequently personally involved in bringing in new clients. As opposed to active viral marketing, frictionless viral marketing does not rely on users' active participation to promote or spread information about products. To the address specified, the product will automatically send a marketing message. Thus, a manufacturing company's own product came before the initial viral push (Pratiwi, 2022).

As for the paid review being an actual object, the product design has received different comments than that for other examples. When a subject is a product, the usage process involves owning before becoming a user, which can be a temporary step for a service. A person does not have an equal opportunity to replace his product with a new product if he has the option to purchase the same service elsewhere when he needs it again. This circumstance may be seen as expressing opinions about the products or the expectations more forcefully. On the other hand, there is a chance that comments made about online evaluations may be used to manipulate the reviews (Gunes et al., 2022; Jia, 2018).

Marketing in Islamic Perspectives Islamic marketing should be based on the fundamental principles of Islam. And Tauhid, or oneness, is the central idea of Islamic philosophy. The traits of Islamic marketing will then emerge from this fundamental idea (Fathoni, 2018).

Marketing According to Al-Quran and Hadith Allah SWT said

*"Then after finishing the prayer, then spread yourselves on the face of the earth (to carry out your respective affairs), and seek what you desire from the abundance of God's grace, and*

*remember God a lot (in all circumstances), so that you will be successful (in the world and the afterlife)".*

(Surah al-Jumu'ah, 62: 10)

The verse emphasizes that we should spread out on the surface of the earth after worshipping in order to find halal food and meet our needs. With virtuous and halal work, seek God's grace. And when we seek food, let us not forget God. This verse unequivocally states that working for a living is an act of worship. One of the most honorable behaviors is conducting business. Additionally, business operations are the main source of sustained income. Islam, on the other hand, establishes some rules to ensure that everything done will be approved of and blessed by Allah SWT (Abdul Halim et.al., 2019).

From Abu Sa'id al-Khudri R.A that Rasulullah S.A.W said, "*Honest and trustworthy traders will be with the prophets, honest people and martyrs.*" (Al-Tarmidhi).

According to this hadith, traders should conduct their transactions honestly. The products must be flawless and in excellent condition. High-quality goods must be sold. Traders should avoid engaging in dishonest business practices for the sole purpose of making money (Abdul Halim et.al., 2019).

Except for those who are pious, honest in business, and always do good, those who engage in commerce will be resurrected in the hereafter in a state of sin, according to the hadith. We can encourage people to start their own businesses by using social media. Social media can also assist traders in conducting business quickly and affordably. If observed, most large companies also use social media for their product marketing efforts in addition to small traders. This lowers the price of marketing and advertising (Abdul Halim et.al., 2019).

### **b) Concept Marketing in Islam**

A number of definitions of Islamic marketing have been provided by academics, and they have also identified a number of Islamic marketing concepts that are based on Islamic Sharia, Islamic culture, and the opinions of past Muslim thinkers. As a result, a single definition of Islamic marketing cannot give a comprehensive understanding of the subject (Hasan, 2019). Islamic marketing must be built on the fundamental principles of Islam. and 8 notion Islam's ideology is based on the concept of monotheism, or unity. The traits of Islamic marketing will therefore be born from this fundamental idea (Fathoni, 2018).

According to Fathoni (2018); Kartajaya et. al (2006), Islamic marketing is divided into four elements which are spirituality, ethics, practicality, and hypocrisy. The first is spirituality, where all marketing endeavors must adhere to the Qur'anic and Hadithic principles. An Islamic marketer must think that applying Islamic law is the greatest option possible when doing marketing operations. The second trait is ethics, where every Islamic marketer must adhere to Islamic principles that derive from the Al-Qur'an and Hadith. An Islamic work culture that can balance the interests of the earth and the afterlife will be developed if corporate ethics are always upheld in accordance with Islamic teachings. The third one is practical. Here, being realistic primarily refers to having a flexible outlook while addressing local marketing issues. An Islamic marketer may not break Islamic law, notwithstanding this mentality and realistic character. Hypocrisy is the fourth. Islamic marketers must consider social responsibility, which is a representation of a humanistic attitude when developing

marketing concepts and strategies. Islam's position in marketing studies can be seen as a marketing tool if we consider the different existent Islamic marketing principles. Humans were given the role of caliphs on this planet, enforcing Islamic law, by Allah Almighty (Fathoni, 2018).

By operating impartially and fairly toward all parties, the Islamic marketing theory, on the other hand, creates a balanced relationship between vendors and purchasers. To contribute to society's total satisfaction, one should improve themselves by honoring the worth of business partners and adhering to Shariah-based ethical standards. In traditional marketing, businesses that commit treason or fraud will be held accountable for their errors. Islamic marketing firms that defraud clients are not only prosecuted in this life; they will also face punishment for their crimes in the hereafter (Ahmad & Jasmi, 2020).

According to Zainuddin (2016) Islamic marketing could be seen with three key processes which are strategy, tactics, and measurement. Strategy is the thought of the process behind the plan. For example, SWOT analysis, PEST, and PORTERS. Secondly, tactics are the execution using tools based on the strategy which could be seen in the marketing mix, 4Ps such as product, price, place, and promotion. Lastly, measurement is to monitor success and short- and long-term results. These three processes are alien to Islam. Islamic marketing techniques ought to be incorporated as obligations that people have to one another as a Khalifah. Additionally, Islamic marketing strategies should balance making a profit for the firm with adhering to Islamic religious law without compromising at any point or for any reason (Zainuddin, 2016).

Viral Marketing and Paid Review in Islamic Perspectives Business in Islamic Shariah basically include the muamalat category whose original law is based on fiqh:

*"In principle, all laws in muamalat are permissible, unless there is an argument or principle that prohibits it"*

Based on this fiqh, it could conclude that Islamic marketing is any form of advertising whose beliefs, tenets, and advertising rules are derived from shariah law. *Rishwah* (bribery), *ihtikar* (supply manipulation), *najash* (demand or supply manipulation), *tadlis* (mischief and cheating), and *zulm* (cruelty) are examples of behaviors that marketers must avoid when conducting their marketing activities (Fathoni, 2018). In viral marketing and paid review, the prohibition that could occur is *al-tanajusy* or also referred to as *bay' al-najasy* was convicted based on the hadith:

Abu Hurayrah said that the Prophet SAW forbade sales between townspeople and 10 village people, don't you rush *tanajusy*, don't someone do it sale of what has been sold to his brother, and let no one proposing to his brother's betrothed". (Sahih Al-Bukhari)

*Al-najasy*, according to Imam al-Syafi'i, is a person who attends a sales session for items that he does not intend to purchase and then places a greater bid than the rest in the hopes that others will bid higher. According to Ibn al-'Arabi, *al-najasy* is when someone purposefully offers something for sale at a high price without even intending to acquire it. The individual who commits *al-najasy* truly has conspired with their tribe so that those who are in the sales council offer the price is high and they share the fault of trying to deceive, according to Imam Ibn Hajar's conclusion (Che Abdullah, 2018).

*Al-najasy* is actually a type of *ghisy* and *taghrir*, which is an indirect fraud attempt or might be described as an attempt to fool someone such that assumptions are made that may not accurately reflect the true nature of a good or service. Al-Qurrahdaghi included *al-najasy* as one of them as a defective at-will transaction because of this. This is due to the fact that the buyer's perspective and the actual facts do not match, and this is a part of the transaction that contains aspects of deception. The customer is not bothered by viral marketing and paid that happens naturally without any effort on the part of the owner. However, if the transmission effort is planned, this effort needs to be observed and examined to determine whether it includes power cheating schemes like *al-najasy* or *taghrir* (Che Abdullah, 2018). Various academics have different perspectives on *al-najasy*. First, according to Syafi'iyah, Hanabilah, and al-Maziri, *al-najasy* is a law that is unquestionably forbidden, whether or not the price of the good increases from the regular price due to impurity. Second, the scholars of Imam Malik, Abu Hanifah, and Ibn Hazm contended that the increase in commodity prices was due to *najasy* because when the price exceeds the standard price, it is not illegal (Maelani et. al., 2020).

The act of *al-najasy* in viral marketing has been fraudulent such as fake personal messages and using fake bots. It was clearly contradicting Shariah because 11 the fake actions itself already give the impression of attempted fraud. Next, in paid reviews happen to have dishonesty, which is in paid reviews that do not state that they are paid, and paid reviews that disparage other people's products. These actions are obviously violating the Shariah and have the *al-najasy* (Che Abdullah, 2018).

### **Research Methodology**

This paper's goal was to examine paid reviews and viral marketing in Fiqh Muamalat. As a result, this paper covers the entire flow of research techniques used to complete this research paper, including recommended techniques for data collection and analysis. It provides information about the study's methodology, participants, data collection strategies, and data analysis procedures. Literature reviews and interviews are used to gather qualitative data because qualitative methods put a strong emphasis on the experiences of those involved and seek to understand the motivations behind the definition of the activities.

**Population, Study Sample, and Sampling Technique** Research Instruments In order to ascertain what is necessary for viral marketing and paid reviews in Islam, this research employs a library- and literature-based research methodology. The tools display a wide range of expert opinions that are in line with the objectives of the study. This is so because a particular kind of qualitative research method uses research tools based on libraries and literature. Additionally, it was founded on research, scholarly writing, and pertinent studies. Participants in this study are academicians who had knowledge of Fiqh Muamalat. They can give the best answer to the research questions and help people better understand the phenomenon they are studying. The academicians' understanding of viral marketing and paid review from an Islamic point of view led to creating the criteria used to choose the larger group of respondents. Therefore, the respondents of this study are lecturers, muftis, and others. As a result, a researcher had to ask them for help finding people to participate in the study and organizing qualitative data to meet the study's goals.

### Data Collection

Data collection is an important aspect of research. This paper examines a variety of qualitative data collection approaches, including personal interviews and textual analysis from books and journals. However, the most common methods used in this research are interviews. In-depth interviews are semi-structured interviews that entail personal and direct contact between interviewers and interviewees. The researcher used a semi-structured questionnaire as an interview guide because some specific questions were prepared to guide the interview toward the satisfaction of research objectives, but new questions regarding the study topic were identified throughout the interviews. In this study, the researcher collected data by holding online meetings with the participants using WhatsApp, Google Meet, and Email. The interviewers are contacted via WhatsApp and a date and time for the online meeting are determined. Meanwhile, the interviewee is interviewed using Google Meet.

This is due to the fact that it is easier to understand what the interviewees and interviewer were trying to say and express. Furthermore, the platform saves time for the interview and interviewees because they have a set time when they will do the interview. It will begin at that moment and end at that time. In addition, data from published and unpublished sources such as books, journals, research papers, articles, and web articles are collected in the last step. The researcher can gain more data from those materials to complement the information gathered from the interviewee.

One of the main ways utilized to gather data in this study is to use an online platform such as the WhatsApp application or the Google Meet platform and Email to obtain information from respondents. This will make it easier for the study to meet its objectives and get accurate and complete data. The questionnaire will be distributed to the respondents who were chosen.

### Data Analysis

In addition, the primary data gathered as a result of an interview will be analyzed before being converted into interview transcripts. Following that, the researcher will organize and categorize the data using the interview transcripts and responses to the study questions. After that, summarise and simplify the data display to make it easier to read using a discussion provided in chapter four. Based on the quotes provided by respondents during the interview session, the evidence of study findings will be typed up. The respondents' responses will be gathered for data gathering and proofreading, and the analysis' conclusions will address the study's goals and concerns.

Table 1

*Categories of Informants interviewed According to Gender and Age*

Informants	Gender	Age
Male	1	34
Female	3	33 – 37

### Findings and Arguments

Generally, most of the interviewees are very knowledgeable about internet marketing and *Fiqh Muamalat*. The researcher chooses respondents of such an age range because they know more wisely. Furthermore, they are also knowledgeable about the topic and have an educational background in marketing *Fiqh Muamalat*. The researcher found that the data obtained through the study was excessive through three respondents. This shows that the researcher really expects the respondents to cooperate in the interview. Furthermore, the collection of new data does not necessarily lead to the existence of problems. It is very

suitable for obtaining and collecting data until theoretical saturation can be achieved. Qualitative samples also found that had declining returns. Researchers argue that more data does not necessarily mean more information during an investigation. The items were included with the people who participated in the fieldwork interviews, and the perspectives of those respondents were collected and expressed accurately.

As a result of this study, there are three research questions stated to study issues in internet marketing through the lens of Fiqh Muamalat. Firstly, the research questions are about the types of viral marketing and paid reviews. The understanding of viral marketing and paid review that were answered by all of the respondents are the same. Viral marketing and paid are the methods of marketing in internet marketing. All of the respondents explained this question using their own knowledge and opinion about the types of viral marketing and paid reviews. Respondent 1 explained the types of the social media marketing that is often used nowadays. Respondent 2 stated that the types had their classification that could be classified in marketing. Respondent 3 explained that the types could be in many forms. Above all, the types that were explained by all three respondents are different and it does not have solid types in viral marketing and paid reviews. Therefore. The explanation given by respondents about types is not the same. Each of the respondents had their own understanding of the types. Hence, this could be concluded that the types of viral marketing and paid reviews do not have specific types because they could be broken down into various types and methods. Apart from that, the majority of respondents agreed that the differentiation between viral marketing and paid review that are explained by all of the respondents is the method that was used in both of the internet marketing. This could be seen that viral marketing is in form of the actions to make the goods go viral while the paid review is to use the popularity of the influencers to market the product whereas both methods is to make the product known in society.

In addition, the second research question is about viral marketing and paid reviews in internet marketing according to Fiqh Muamalat. The purpose of this research is to explain details about viral marketing and reviews in Fiqh Muamalat. In this research question, it could be concluded that viral marketing and paid reviews could be done in internet marketing. However, it must be according to the rules of Islamic Shariah. That is why any prohibited elements in Fiqh Muamalat should avoid as it was explained in Al-Quran and As-Sunnah. Example of prohibited elements is *gharar*, *maysir*, *taghyir*, and so on. The problem with the implementation of viral marketing and paid review is that there is an action that is prohibited in Islam which had elements of fraud. Consecutively, these actions must be avoided. It is clear by all the respondents that viral marketing and paid reviews could be considered allowed in Fiqh Muamalat. Therefore, the actions of viral marketing and paid reviews must be avoided from the prohibitions in Fiqh Muamalat. If it has prohibited elements, it will contemplate that it is prohibited according to the fiqh.

As has been explained, the current issues that happen in internet marketing are the actions that clearly are the dishonesty of the seller to promote the products which could be seen as fraud as explained by Respondent 2 and Respondent 3. Also, it has a lack of information leading to dispute, *jahl mufdi ila al-niza* as explained by Respondent 1. All of these current issues are basically will affect the customers who bought the product since they are the ones that will experience the products that they bought which will lead to trust issues with the seller. all of the respondents had the same explanations about the conflict that happen which is against Fiqh Muamalat. If it had actions that are prohibited in Islamic Shariah then it is clear that it will conflict with Fiqh Muamalat. all of the respondents had the same explanations



about the conflict that happen which is against Fiqh Muamalat. If it had actions that are prohibited in Islamic Shariah then it is clear that it will conflict with Fiqh Muamalat.

Furthermore, the third research question is about the approaches to solving the issues related to viral marketing and paid reviews in Fiqh Muamalat. This research question would like to have a solution to the issues of viral marketing and paid review. The answers that were given to this research question it clear that the issues do not have a specific solution. Therefore, it is also a responsibility for the issue not to last long. In consequence, the government and society should play their role and seek knowledge to do viral marketing and paid review in a proper way. To conclude, viral marketing and paid review are permissible as long as it does not violate Shariah law and bring a lot of advantages to the seller and the buyer. The advantages are the factors of the people nowadays to involve in internet marketing, so it is widely known. Furthermore, Muslims should also participate in using internet marketing to improve Muslims' economic condition.

There are various answers to this question by the respondents which stated the actions of halal in viral marketing is in Islamic Shariah, the product that the seller sold and also, it depends on our intentions to do the marketing. The answer given by Respondent 1, Respondent 3, and Respondent 4 related to Islamic Shariah and the relation between Allah SWT respondent 2 explained the terms of halal must be set as a whole. All in all, the answers by respondents could be concluded the actions must be in the blessings of Allah SWT.

Viral marketing and paid reviews provide a wonderful platform for sellers to promote their products. There are some things to avoid, though, in order to prevent participating in any illegal activities. First and foremost, the seller must contribute to the effort of doing the marketing according to Islamic Shariah and moral values. The majority of individuals today participate in viral marketing, and paid reviews are used to promote products illegally by sellers who engage in defying laws and performing lewd acts. So, the study of Islamic beliefs is necessary for society not to get involved in any prohibited action.

Additionally, the person must play a part in preventing participation in any activity including forbidden aspects by always explaining the product in depth, the product's pricing, and many other things while engaging in internet marketing. Muslim online marketers should be avoiding any prohibitions elements. In addition, merchants must be reliable when offering their goods and services. This is done in order to avoid misleading the people who bought the merchandise. Therefore, the seller must be truthful while describing the goods and services. To sum up, paid and viral marketing both have many benefits. Businesses can grow to new heights thanks to technology, but certain activities must still be avoided. Therefore, sellers must refrain from engaging in the prohibited activity.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this study examines sponsored review difficulties in online marketing and Fiqh Muamalat in viral marketing. Marketing is widely used because commerce is expanding daily. It had a wide range of social effects, whether you were the buyer or the seller. However, all of the respondents indicate that they have a thorough understanding of issues relating to paid reviews and viral marketing in the context of Islam, and it is necessary for the seller's cooperation to increase awareness of marketing in the context of Islam so that society does not partake in any unlawful activity.

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