Bertuah : Journal of Shariah and Islamic Economics
Vol. 7 No. 2, 2026, 74-90
e-ISSN 2747-2612

Entrepreneurial Islamic Marketing: Opportunity Creation, Ethical Persuasion, And Market Development In Muslim Economies

Gagan Hidayat[1],
[1]2259030036@student.uinsgd.ac.id
[1,]Pascasarjana, Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati

Abstrak

This study reconstructs entrepreneurial marketing through an Islamic marketing lens by asking how opportunity creation, experimentation, persuasion, and market development change when entrepreneurial action is governed by Shariah-based legitimacy and societal accountability. A critical integrative review and thematic synthesis was conducted across a curated corpus of Islamic marketing, Islamic business, small-firm, halal, ethics, and market-development sources, complemented by foundational entrepreneurial-marketing and effectuation literature. The findings show that entrepreneurial Islamic marketing cannot be reduced either to religiously branded entrepreneurship or to conventional entrepreneurial marketing with ethical constraints added afterward. Its distinctiveness lies in legitimating opportunities before scaling them, practicing bounded bricolage, treating persuasion as informed value translation rather than vulnerability exploitation, mobilizing networks as trust infrastructure, and evaluating market creation through inclusive welfare effects. The article proposes an Entrepreneurial Islamic Market-Creation Architecture (EIMCA) linking opportunity legitimation, resourceful value experimentation, ethical persuasion, networked market enactment, and inclusive market development. Five empirically testable propositions are advanced.

Keyword: *entrepreneurial marketing; Islamic marketing; opportunity creation; ethical persuasion; market development; entrepreneurship*

Introduction

Entrepreneurial marketing emerged from dissatisfaction with the assumption that firms first acquire stable resources, conduct orderly market research, formulate plans, and then execute marketing programs within relatively predictable environments. Small and entrepreneurial firms often operate in the opposite condition: resources are incomplete, market categories are still forming, customer needs are ambiguous, and strategic options must be tested before they can be fully known. Hills, Hultman, and Miles (2008) describe entrepreneurial marketing as a distinct stream shaped by opportunity orientation, innovation, networks, and non-linear market behavior, while Morris, Schindehutte, and LaForge (2002) integrate entrepreneurship and marketing around dimensions such as proactiveness, opportunity focus, calculated risk taking, innovativeness, customer intensity, resource leveraging, and value creation. Kotler, Kartajaya, Huan, and Mussry (2023) extend this logic by framing entrepreneurial marketing as a convergence of creativity, leadership, sustainability, opportunity seizing, omni-capability building, and marketing-finance integration. The result is a view of marketing not merely as a downstream function but as a market-making capability.

That market-making orientation is particularly relevant to Muslim economies, where large populations, young consumer cohorts, digitalization, halal ecosystems, Islamic finance, tourism, modest fashion, food, cosmetics, and platform commerce create new

combinations of demand and institutional possibility. Yet the phrase "Muslim market" can conceal more than it clarifies. Islamic marketing research has repeatedly shown that Muslim consumers are heterogeneous across geography, religiosity, class, lifestyle, institutional setting, and product category (Sandıkcı, 2011; Wilson et al., 2013; Jafari & Sandıkcı, 2015). Emerging opportunities therefore cannot be inferred simply from demographic size or religious identity. Entrepreneurs must sense specific problems, meanings, access constraints, trust deficits, and unmet value configurations while recognizing that the same halal or Islamic-origin proposition may be interpreted differently across Muslim and non-Muslim segments (Haque et al., 2015; Alserhan et al., 2022).

Islamic marketing also complicates the meaning of entrepreneurial opportunity. Conventional entrepreneurship research has debated whether opportunities are objectively discovered, subjectively created, or enacted through interaction between entrepreneurs and environments. Shane and Venkataraman (2000) foregrounded the nexus between entrepreneurial individuals and opportunities, whereas effectuation emphasizes action under uncertainty using available means, affordable loss, partnerships, and iterative commitment rather than prediction (Sarasvathy, 2001). Bricolage similarly explains how resource-constrained entrepreneurs recombine what is at hand to create new services and possibilities (Baker & Nelson, 2005). These theories are valuable for Muslim economies, especially where small firms must improvise around scarce capital, informal networks, weak infrastructure, or changing regulation. However, they generally treat opportunity desirability as a strategic or economic issue, not as a prior question of normative legitimacy.

Islamic business ethics introduces precisely that prior question. Alserhan (2011) argues that business decisions are embedded in duties, justice, societal benefit, and Shariah compliance rather than being governed by profit alone. Saeed, Ahmed, and Mukhtar (2001) similarly conceptualize Islamic marketing ethics as a value-maximization framework in which marketers remain responsible for fairness, truthfulness, and the welfare consequences of market conduct. Arham (2010) shows that creativity and realistic adaptation have a place in Islamic marketing, but he also asks directly whether exploiting religious belief for marketing purposes is ethically acceptable. Saeed and Baig (2013) extend Shariah-based constraints across product, price, promotion, and selling. These sources imply that entrepreneurial initiative is not rejected; rather, it is subjected to a legitimacy test before and during commercialization.

This distinction matters because entrepreneurial marketing is especially powerful at shaping nascent preferences, narratives, categories, and networks. When a market does not yet exist in a stable form, entrepreneurs do more than respond to demand: they educate customers, define problems, construct categories, recruit partners, and normalize new forms of exchange. Such influence can generate welfare by making useful products visible and accessible, but it can also exploit informational asymmetry, religious aspiration, fear, scarcity, or social pressure. The Islamic marketing literature is unusually sensitive to these risks. Saeed et al. (2001) reject deceptive and coercive practices, while literature on Islamic advertising and halal branding demonstrates that religious symbols can increase salience

and trust but also raise the consequences of unverified or instrumental claims (Wilson & Liu, 2010; Shafiq et al., 2017). Entrepreneurial persuasion therefore requires more than creativity; it requires governance of how creativity affects consumer agency.

A second tension concerns resourcefulness. Entrepreneurial firms often survive by improvising, substituting, sharing, and recombining resources. Baker and Nelson's (2005) concept of bricolage is especially useful for understanding this behavior, and the contemporary MSME literature in the project corpus shows why resource constraints remain central to halal certification, digital marketing, financing, and formal market access. Yet not every improvisation is normatively acceptable. A resource-constrained halal food entrepreneur cannot substitute an uncertain ingredient simply because it is cheaper or immediately available; a financial technology venture cannot justify opaque data harvesting by invoking experimentation; and a platform seller cannot treat misleading scarcity claims as harmless "growth hacking." Islamic entrepreneurial marketing therefore needs what this article terms bounded bricolage: resourcefulness within non-negotiable boundaries of lawfulness, truthfulness, safety, and justice.

A third tension concerns market development. Conventional entrepreneurial marketing often evaluates success through growth, customer acquisition, market share, innovation, and firm value. Kotler et al. (2023) explicitly connect entrepreneurial marketing to market value and sustainable trajectories, while Islamic macromarketing broadens the unit of analysis from individual exchanges to marketing systems and societal consequences (Kadirov, 2014). For Muslim economies, this broader view is essential. Market creation can improve inclusion by formalizing microenterprises, reducing trust deficits, linking local producers to larger channels, and creating new employment. It can also concentrate power, increase exclusion costs, stimulate wasteful consumption, or create symbolic markets whose benefits accrue primarily to certification intermediaries and large firms. Entrepreneurial Islamic marketing therefore requires a developmental criterion: what kind of market is being created, for whom, and with what distributive consequences?

This article addresses these tensions by asking: How should entrepreneurial marketing be reconstructed when opportunity creation, experimentation, persuasion, and market development are governed by Islamic marketing principles? The study contributes in four ways. First, it distinguishes opportunity recognition from opportunity legitimation, arguing that discoverable or creatable demand does not automatically constitute a legitimate entrepreneurial opportunity. Second, it extends effectuation and bricolage through the concept of bounded resourcefulness, in which experimentation remains adaptive but cannot trade away Shariah compliance or basic consumer protection. Third, it reconstructs entrepreneurial persuasion as informed value translation that expands customer understanding rather than exploits vulnerability. Fourth, it proposes an Entrepreneurial Islamic Market-Creation Architecture (EIMCA) that links firm-level entrepreneurial action to inclusive market-system development (Kotler et al., 2023; Kadirov, 2014).

Research Method

This study uses a critical integrative review combined with thematic synthesis. The design is appropriate because entrepreneurial Islamic marketing sits at the intersection of several literatures with different units of analysis and epistemological assumptions: entrepreneurial marketing, effectuation and bricolage, Islamic marketing ethics, halal business, consumer research, small-firm capability, and macromarketing. A narrowly systematic effect-size review would be unsuitable because the central research question is reconstructive rather than aggregative. The review instead seeks recurring mechanisms, contradictions, and boundary conditions that can support a coherent conceptual architecture. The analytic procedure follows the recursive logic of thematic analysis described by Braun and Clarke (2006), while transparency and theme development were informed by Thomas and Harden (2008) and Nowell et al. (2017).

The primary source base was the two uploaded research archives used throughout the wider Islamic marketing project. The first archive contains foundational books and edited volumes covering Islamic marketing, Islamic business, services, branding, halal management, research design, and marketing in emerging Islamic markets. The second contains journal articles on Islamic marketing theory, ethics, halal certification, Muslim and non-Muslim consumers, advertising, branding, market mechanisms, Islamic macromarketing, tourism, and small-business practice. Rather than forcing every document into the article, the archives were treated as a master corpus from which theoretically relevant sources were selected. Particular weight was given to Alserhan (2011), Alserhan et al. (2022), Sandıkcı and Rice (2011), Kadirov (2014), Arham (2010), Saeed et al. (2001), Saeed and Baig (2013), and small-firm and halal capability studies in the corpus.

Because the uploaded corpus was built around Islamic marketing rather than entrepreneurial-marketing theory specifically, a limited external theoretical spine was added. Kotler et al. (2023) was used as the contemporary entry point because it explicitly redefines entrepreneurial marketing around opportunity seizing, creativity, leadership, sustainability, omni-capabilities, and integration across organizational functions. Foundational entrepreneurial-marketing work was represented by Morris et al. (2002) and Hills et al. (2008). Sarasvathy (2001) provided the logic of effectuation under uncertainty, Baker and Nelson (2005) provided bricolage under resource constraints, and Shane and Venkataraman (2000) provided an opportunity-centered entrepreneurship perspective. These external sources were used to establish constructs against which the Islamic marketing corpus could be read rather than to displace the corpus.

Coding proceeded in three passes. The first pass identified entrepreneurial mechanisms: opportunity recognition or creation, experimentation, resource leveraging, innovation, network mobilization, persuasion, customer learning, and scaling. The second pass coded Islamic marketing sources for normative conditions that qualified those mechanisms, including lawfulness, justice, transparency, non-deception, responsible use of

religious symbolism, trust, social welfare, and accountability. The third pass searched for market-development implications such as inclusion, formalization, SME participation, cluster effects, certification barriers, distributional consequences, and public trust. Negative cases were retained when they challenged a simplistic synthesis—for example, research warning against essentializing Muslim consumers, studies showing that halal or religiosity does not mechanically determine purchase behavior, and literature identifying barriers that can exclude small firms from formal halal markets (Jafari & Sandıkcı, 2015; Haque et al., 2015; Prabowo et al., 2015).

Themes were retained when they satisfied three conditions: recurrence across more than one literature, explanatory relevance to entrepreneurial action, and capacity to generate a falsifiable implication. The final synthesis produced five interdependent themes: opportunity legitimation, resourceful value experimentation, ethical persuasion, networked market enactment, and inclusive market development. These themes form the EIMCA presented in the Discussion. The architecture is recursive rather than linear: experimentation can reveal legitimacy problems, stakeholder networks can alter the perceived opportunity, market feedback can require redesign, and scaling can expose welfare effects invisible at venture inception. The objective is therefore not to offer a religious checklist for entrepreneurs but to theorize how entrepreneurial marketing changes when legitimacy and market-system consequences are internal to the entrepreneurial process (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Kadirov, 2014).

Rsult and Discussion

Result

a. Entrepreneurial opportunity requires legitimation, not only recognition

The first theme is that Islamic entrepreneurial marketing must distinguish between seeing an opportunity and being justified in pursuing it. Entrepreneurial-marketing theory prizes opportunity focus because young firms cannot afford to allocate scarce resources to every possible segment or idea (Morris et al., 2002; Hills et al., 2008). Kotler et al. (2023) similarly place finding and seizing opportunities at the center of entrepreneurial marketing architecture. In Islamic marketing, however, market attractiveness is not sufficient. Alserhan (2011) emphasizes that commercial conduct is governed by Shariah and societal duties, while Saeed et al. (2001) argue that ethical marketing can pursue profitability without surrendering fairness. Opportunity therefore has at least two dimensions: economic possibility and normative admissibility.

This distinction changes how entrepreneurs treat customer demand. In a conventional opportunity frame, strong unmet demand can be evidence of attractiveness; in an Islamic frame, it may also be evidence of vulnerability, informational asymmetry, or an undesirable consumption pattern. Saeed and Baig (2013) show that Shariah-compliant marketing constrains both what may be offered and how the offer is made. Arham (2010) accepts proactive creativity but directly raises the ethical issue of exploiting religious beliefs in marketing. A demand for fear-based spiritual products, opaque financial

arrangements, misleading health claims, or status consumption can therefore be commercially visible without being a legitimate basis for market creation. Islamic entrepreneurial marketing inserts an opportunity-legitimation stage between sensing and pursuit.

The result is what this study terms a legitimate opportunity frontier. On one side are opportunities that may be profitable but impermissible, deceptive, harmful, or dependent on vulnerability exploitation. On another are legitimate opportunities that have weak market fit and therefore remain unsustainable. Entrepreneurial Islamic marketing operates in the intersection: problems worth solving through means that are lawful and capable of generating viable value. This does not eliminate uncertainty or entrepreneurial judgment. Instead, it makes legitimacy one of the constraints through which entrepreneurial judgment acquires direction (Alserhan et al., 2022; Kadirov, 2014).

b. Effectuation and bricolage become bounded resourcefulness

The second theme concerns action under uncertainty. Sarasvathy's (2001) effectuation logic begins with available means—who the entrepreneur is, what the entrepreneur knows, and whom the entrepreneur knows—and builds possible futures through affordable loss and stakeholder commitments. This logic is attractive for small firms in Muslim economies because many operate without the data, capital, and institutional certainty assumed by formal planning models. Baker and Nelson (2005) add the notion of bricolage: making do by recombining resources at hand for new purposes. Both perspectives explain why entrepreneurs can progress without waiting for perfect conditions.

The Islamic marketing corpus supports such resourcefulness but places boundaries around its acceptable form. Alserhan (2011) repeatedly emphasizes that even seemingly small non-compliant streams can damage the legitimacy of the wider business. In halal sectors, resource substitution is constrained by ingredient status, handling, supply-chain integrity, and certification claims; in Islamic finance, innovative structuring remains constrained by contractual and ethical requirements. Tieman (2021) similarly frames halal excellence as a management system rather than a label. Entrepreneurial improvisation is therefore legitimate only when flexibility does not break the evidence chain behind the promise.

This produces the concept of bounded bricolage. Entrepreneurs may substitute channels, repurpose equipment, share logistics, use digital platforms, partner with community organizations, test minimum viable offers, and recombine local capabilities. What they may not do is improvise away non-negotiable conditions such as truthful representation, consumer safety, Shariah admissibility, or contractual fairness. The boundary is especially important because resource scarcity can normalize shortcuts. Prabowo et al. (2015), for example, show that certification barriers can be meaningful for small firms; the response should be capability building, institutional simplification, or collective infrastructure rather than lowering claim integrity.

Bounded resourcefulness also changes the meaning of experimentation. Entrepreneurial marketing commonly treats experiments as tools for learning which offer, messages, or channels generate traction. In an Islamic frame, experiments should be low-cost not only financially but morally. A/B testing deceptive scarcity messages, dark patterns, religious guilt, or opaque pricing may produce conversion data but violate the legitimacy of the learning process. The appropriate principle is trust-preserving experimentation: test propositions, channels, designs, and bundles while maintaining informed choice and verifiable claims. This preserves the entrepreneurial advantages of speed and learning without converting customers into unprotected experimental subjects (Sarasvathy, 2001; Saeed et al., 2001).

c. Persuasion becomes informed value translation

The third theme is the reconstruction of persuasion. Entrepreneurial firms frequently face a problem that established brands do not: customers may not understand the category, technology, financing model, or benefit logic being introduced. Market creation therefore requires explanation, storytelling, demonstration, comparison, and sometimes deliberate reframing of how a problem is understood. Kotler et al. (2023) treat creativity and customer engagement as essential to entrepreneurial marketing, while classical entrepreneurial-marketing research emphasizes close customer intensity and interactive learning (Morris et al., 2002). Persuasion is consequently not peripheral; it is part of how entrepreneurial markets become intelligible.

Islamic marketing ethics, however, draws a sharp line between persuasion and manipulation. Saeed et al. (2001) reject deceptive practices, high-pressure selling, and unfair exploitation while still allowing active marketing. Arham (2010) asks whether one's religious belief may be exploited for marketing purposes, signalling that religious salience creates a special vulnerability. Research on Islamic advertising shows that consumers evaluate not only message effectiveness but the moral acceptability of representations, product categories, and persuasive techniques (Shafiq et al., 2017). Entrepreneurial firms therefore cannot justify manipulative communication by claiming that early-stage ventures need attention at any cost.

The synthesis reframes persuasion as informed value translation. The entrepreneur's task is to make the value proposition comprehensible in the customer's language without misrepresenting the evidence. For a halal food venture, this may mean translating certification and process controls into claims about integrity, cleanliness, or traceability. For an Islamic fintech venture, it may mean explaining risk, fees, and contractual structure in language accessible to users who lack financial literacy. For a sustainable modest-fashion firm, it may mean explaining durability and responsible sourcing rather than merely attaching religious imagery. Value translation seeks understanding; manipulation seeks behavioral compliance independent of understanding (Saeed et al., 2001; Arham, 2010).

This distinction is particularly important in digital entrepreneurial marketing. Small firms can now use targeting, influencers, urgency cues, behavioral analytics, and generative content with very low marginal cost. These tools reduce the resource disadvantage of new ventures but also increase the ability to exploit cognitive bias. The Islamic principle of truthfulness cannot be satisfied merely because a statement is technically accurate. If a message is designed to create a materially false impression, hides a relevant limitation, or uses religiosity to suppress critical evaluation, its persuasive architecture remains problematic. Entrepreneurial Islamic marketing therefore requires reciprocal transparency: the more an entrepreneur asks the customer to trust an unfamiliar offer, the more evidence and intelligibility should accompany the claim (Shafiq et al., 2017; Wilson & Liu, 2010).

d. Networks become trust infrastructure, not merely resource access

The fourth theme concerns networks. Entrepreneurial-marketing research has long emphasized personal contacts, referrals, alliances, and stakeholder relationships because new ventures lack the market power and formal systems of large firms (Hills et al., 2008). Effectuation likewise treats stakeholder commitments as a means of co-creating possible futures (Sarasvathy, 2001). In Muslim economies, networks can be especially important where family business, community reputation, religious institutions, trade associations, Islamic finance, halal certification, and local intermediaries shape access to resources and legitimacy. Yet the corpus suggests that networks do more than provide resources; they also distribute trust.

This trust function becomes visible in halal markets. Certification bodies, suppliers, logistics providers, retailers, and community institutions collectively affect whether a claim is believed. Tieman's (2015) halal-cluster perspective shows that halal value is ecosystem-dependent, while Wilson and Liu (2010) show that halal as a brand signifier becomes fragile when symbolism outruns substantive integrity. New ventures often borrow credibility from these institutions because customers cannot directly inspect every process. Entrepreneurial networking is therefore partly credibility borrowing, but borrowed trust creates obligations. A venture that misuses a partner's reputation can damage not only itself but the wider network.

The study therefore conceptualizes networked market enactment as the fourth entrepreneurial capability. Entrepreneurs assemble customers, suppliers, validators, financiers, platforms, and community actors whose commitments make the opportunity viable. The Islamic qualification is distributed accountability: firms should know which partner performs each trust-critical function, what evidence supports the claim, and how failures are corrected. Market narratives must remain traceable to networked operations (Sarasvathy, 2001; Tieman, 2015; Tieman, 2021).

e. Market creation is evaluated through inclusive development

The fifth theme extends entrepreneurial marketing beyond venture growth. Market creation changes who can participate, what gets normalized, how trust is distributed, and

which costs become visible or hidden. Kotler et al. (2023) explicitly connect entrepreneurial marketing to sustainability and future trajectory, but Islamic macromarketing pushes the analysis further by asking how marketing systems affect collective welfare (Kadirov, 2014). This is especially relevant to Muslim economies, where entrepreneurship is frequently expected to contribute to employment, SME development, halal-industry expansion, financial inclusion, and poverty reduction. Such developmental language should not remain rhetorical; it requires evaluation of who benefits from the market being built.

The MSME literature in the project corpus illustrates the issue. Halal certification can improve credibility and formal market access, but barriers involving knowledge, cost, process complexity, and capability can disproportionately burden microenterprises (Prabowo et al., 2015). Islamic financing literacy can support small-business participation, yet literacy alone does not guarantee conversion into usable financing capability. Market creation can therefore be simultaneously inclusive for consumers and exclusive for producers. A successful entrepreneurial ecosystem should reduce unnecessary conversion costs without diluting assurance standards.

This leads to the idea of developmental market creation. The entrepreneur does not bear sole responsibility for national development, but entrepreneurial marketing can be evaluated by whether it expands legitimate choice, lowers harmful information asymmetry, creates fairer access, builds useful capabilities, and generates spillovers beyond the founding firm. A halal logistics platform, for example, may create private revenue while also lowering traceability costs for small suppliers. A digital Islamic-finance interface may create customer value while improving financial literacy. Conversely, a venture that monetizes religious fear or creates artificial scarcity may grow without producing developmental value (Saeed et al., 2001; Kadirov, 2014).

Discussion

a) Entrepreneurial Islamic Market-Creation Architecture (EIMCA)

The synthesis supports a five-layer Entrepreneurial Islamic Market-Creation Architecture (EIMCA). Layer 1 is opportunity legitimation: entrepreneurs sense market gaps, but they distinguish demand from legitimate opportunity by testing product, process, persuasive method, and expected consequences against Shariah and justice-based boundaries. Layer 2 is resourceful value experimentation: entrepreneurs act under uncertainty using effectual commitments, affordable loss, and bricolage, but experimentation remains bounded by non-negotiable integrity. Layer 3 is ethical persuasion and trust formation: new value is translated into intelligible customer meaning without deception, coercion, or exploitation of religiosity. Layer 4 is networked market enactment: partners, validators, financiers, suppliers, platforms, and communities co-produce both resources and credibility. Layer 5 is inclusive market development and renewal: the market is evaluated through venture viability, customer value, producer

access, societal welfare, and the venture's ability to learn and renew (Kotler et al., 2023; Kadirov, 2014).

Table 1. Entrepreneurial Islamic Market-Creation Architecture (EIMCA)

Layer	**Entrepreneurial question**	**Retained entrepreneurial mechanism**	**Islamic qualification**	**Primary evidence**
1. Opportunity legitimation	Which problem is worth solving?	Opportunity sensing, proactiveness, market creation	Lawfulness, justice, non-harm, no exploitation of religious vulnerability	Legitimation screen, customer problem evidence, Shariah/ethical review
2. Resourceful value experimentation	How can we learn and act with scarce means?	Effectuation, affordable loss, bricolage, rapid experimentation	Bounded bricolage, truth-preserving tests, no compliance shortcuts	Experiment logs, process controls, minimum viable proof
3. Ethical persuasion & trust formation	How should an unfamiliar offer become understandable and desirable?	Storytelling, category education, customer intensity, creative communication	Informed value translation, reciprocal transparency, non-deception	Claim substantiation, disclosure quality, comprehension evidence
4. Networked market enactment	Who must commit for the market to become viable?	Partnerships, referrals, co-creation, stakeholder commitments	Distributed accountability, credible validation, fair partner relations	Partner roles, certification, traceability, governance agreements
5. Inclusive market development & renewal	What kind of market is being built, and who benefits?	Scaling, capability building, ecosystem learning	Inclusion, welfare, responsible demand shaping, accountability	Access metrics, SME participation, trust, welfare and renewal indicators

The architecture differs from a conventional entrepreneurial-marketing funnel because legitimacy does not appear once at the beginning and then disappear. It operates recursively. A venture may initially offer a legitimate product but later discover that a high-performing promotional technique exploits vulnerable customers; the learning should

trigger redesign. A halal food business may launch with compliant ingredients but discover that scaling through a new logistics partner weakens segregation or traceability; opportunity growth should pause until proof is restored. An Islamic fintech platform may find that a personalized interface increases conversion but reduces users' understanding of contractual obligations; performance data should not override the integrity problem. EIMCA therefore treats legitimacy as a continuous constraint on entrepreneurial adaptation (Alserhan, 2011; Saeed & Baig, 2013).

b) From opportunity discovery to opportunity legitimation

The first theoretical contribution is the concept of opportunity legitimation. Entrepreneurship research has generated rich debates about discovery and creation, but the EIMCA adds a question prior to exploitation: even if an entrepreneur can discover or enact demand, should that demand be commercialized in the proposed form? Shane and Venkataraman (2000) establish opportunity as a defining concern of entrepreneurship, while Sarasvathy (2001) shows how entrepreneurial futures are shaped through action rather than prediction. Islamic marketing adds a normative filtering mechanism. The entrepreneur is responsible not only for whether an opportunity can work but whether the market being built rests on legitimate means and consequences (Alserhan, 2011; Saeed et al., 2001).

Opportunity legitimation should not be confused with risk avoidance. A legitimate opportunity can be highly uncertain and still deserve pursuit. Nor is legitimation equivalent to obtaining a formal halal certificate, because many entrepreneurial decisions concern domains not captured by certification: pricing architecture, persuasive design, platform rules, data use, inclusion, and partner treatment. The proposed legitimate opportunity frontier therefore has two axes: market viability and normative admissibility. Ideas below the viability threshold require redesign because they cannot sustain value; ideas below the admissibility threshold require rejection or fundamental transformation even if demand is strong (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Alserhan, 2011).

c) Effectuation with boundaries: trust-preserving experimentation

The second contribution is a normative extension of effectuation and bricolage. Effectuation is attractive because it accepts uncertainty and starts from means rather than forecasts (Sarasvathy, 2001). Bricolage is attractive because it explains how entrepreneurs overcome resource poverty by recombining what is available (Baker & Nelson, 2005). However, these logics can be misread as "do whatever works with what you have." EIMCA rejects that interpretation. The entrepreneur can flex the configuration of resources but cannot flex away the truth of the promise, consumer safety, contractual justice, or Shariah admissibility.

The distinction is practically important for resource-constrained Muslim

entrepreneurs. Certification, formal logistics, digital tools, and specialist advice may be expensive, so entrepreneurs often need shared infrastructure and staged investment. Bounded bricolage legitimizes creative solutions such as cooperatives, shared production spaces, common fulfilment, community referrals, and modular technology. What it rejects is hidden substitution that undermines the claimed standard. This implies that policy should subsidize or collectivize trust-critical infrastructure rather than simply telling microenterprises to "be more entrepreneurial." The more a standard depends on evidence, the more ecosystem infrastructure affects whether resourcefulness can remain legitimate (Prabowo et al., 2015; Tieman, 2021).

Trust-preserving experimentation also gives entrepreneurs a concrete rule for growth marketing. Experiments are acceptable when they test uncertain propositions without reducing customers' ability to make informed choices. This favors reversible trials, transparent pilots, small-batch launches, prototype demonstrations, opt-in learning, and honest comparison. It disfavors dark patterns, false scarcity, undisclosed influencer incentives, fabricated testimonials, religious guilt, and experiments that conceal material information. The principle extends Saeed et al.'s (2001) anti-deception logic into the experimental routines of contemporary entrepreneurial marketing.

d) Ethical persuasion as a source of competitive trust

The third contribution is to treat ethical persuasion not as a cost imposed on entrepreneurial marketing but as a potential source of durable trust. Young ventures face a legitimacy deficit because customers lack history, reviews, routines, and familiarity. Aggressive persuasion can produce short-term acquisition, but it increases the risk that growth outpaces credibility. Islamic-origin ventures face an additional risk: religious cues can accelerate trust before operational evidence is mature. Wilson and Liu (2010) show the complexity of turning halal into a brand, while Shafiq et al. (2017) demonstrate that consumers have beliefs about the acceptability of Islamic advertising itself. Ethical persuasion therefore affects brand credibility at the moment the market is being created.

The proposed concept of informed value translation offers an alternative. Entrepreneurs should identify what customers need to understand in order to evaluate an unfamiliar offer, then translate technical or religious attributes into evidence-backed value language. This approach is entrepreneurial because it can be creative, narrative, and category-forming; it is Islamic because it preserves informed agency. The entrepreneur may use strong storytelling, but the story cannot materially outrun the proof. This principle mirrors the "brand promise to supply-chain proof" logic developed in halal operations: persuasive intensity should be matched by evidentiary capacity (Wilson & Liu, 2010; Tieman, 2021).

e) Market creation as developmental entrepreneurship

The fourth contribution is to connect entrepreneurial marketing to market-system development. Entrepreneurial marketing often celebrates market creation because it rewards innovation and first-mover advantage. Islamic macromarketing asks a more demanding question: what social pattern does the new market reproduce (Kadirov, 2014)? EIMCA incorporates this question into entrepreneurial performance. The entrepreneur remains responsible for viability and growth, but strategic success is incomplete when market expansion depends on exclusion, systematic misinformation, or harmful consumption (Kadirov, 2014; Saeed et al., 2001).

The article proposes inclusive market development as a measurable outcome. Indicators may include small-supplier participation, customer search costs, category trust, finance and channel access, quality upgrading, job creation, and distribution of value across the network. These metrics recognize that entrepreneurial markets create observable externalities and institutional trajectories (Kadirov, 2014; Tieman, 2015).

f) Managerial and policy implications

For entrepreneurs, EIMCA can be operationalized as a five-part venture review. First, conduct an opportunity-legitimation screen: define the customer problem, proposed solution, prohibited or harmful alternatives, vulnerable groups, and conditions under which the opportunity would no longer be legitimate. Second, build an experimentation boundary map identifying which elements are flexible—channel, packaging, bundle, message, partner—and which are non-negotiable—lawfulness, product integrity, material disclosure, safety, and contractual fairness. Third, create a claim-to-proof register linking each marketing claim to the evidence capable of supporting it. Fourth, map trust-critical partners and assign responsibility for verification, correction, and recovery. Fifth, track not only acquisition and revenue but inclusion, trust, complaints, and capability development (Kotler et al., 2023; Kadirov, 2014).

For policymakers, the model suggests moving from certification counts toward market-conversion infrastructure. Small firms need knowledge, but they also need affordable testing, shared facilities, traceability tools, financing, digital onboarding, buyer connections, and credible dispute or correction mechanisms. Support that reduces the cost of legitimate experimentation can expand entrepreneurship without weakening standards. Conversely, poorly designed subsidies may increase certificate possession without producing market access or trustworthy operations. The objective should be capability formation around legitimate market creation (Prabowo et al., 2015; Alserhan et al., 2022).

g) Research propositions

The synthesis produces five propositions for empirical testing. P1: Opportunity legitimation will mediate the relationship between entrepreneurial opportunity orientation

and sustainable venture performance in Islamic-market contexts. Opportunity orientation should improve performance when entrepreneurs identify and pursue valuable gaps, but its effect should weaken or become negative when opportunities depend on impermissible products, deceptive persuasion, or vulnerability exploitation. Measures could separate commercial attractiveness from legitimacy assessment and test whether the latter predicts trust, complaint rates, and survival beyond early growth (Morris et al., 2002; Alserhan, 2011).

P2: Bounded bricolage will have a curvilinear relationship with venture performance, such that moderate resource recombination improves adaptability while unbounded improvisation reduces trust and compliance reliability. This proposition extends Baker and Nelson (2005). Resourcefulness should benefit constrained ventures until improvisation begins to undermine evidence, process control, or promised standards. The turning point is expected to occur earlier in high-credence categories such as halal food, Islamic finance, pharmaceuticals, and tourism where customers cannot easily verify quality or compliance themselves (Tieman, 2021).

P3: Informed value translation will mediate the relationship between entrepreneurial persuasion intensity and customer trust. High communication intensity should not automatically generate trust; its effect depends on whether customers perceive the message as comprehensible, evidence based, and non-manipulative. Religiosity-based persuasion is expected to strengthen trust only when the religious cue is relevant and substantiated, while unsupported symbolic intensity may produce reactance or authenticity concerns (Arham, 2010; Wilson & Liu, 2010; Shafiq et al., 2017).

P4: Network accountability will moderate the relationship between stakeholder-network breadth and scalable market credibility. Larger networks provide resources and reach, but they also increase coordination and reputation risk. Ventures that specify partner roles, traceability, verification, and recovery responsibilities should convert network breadth into trust more effectively than ventures that rely on informal reputation alone. This proposition links effectual stakeholder commitment to halal-cluster and assurance logic (Sarasvathy, 2001; Tieman, 2015).

P5: Inclusive market-development capability will positively influence both venture legitimacy and long-run market expansion, with stronger effects where institutional barriers for micro and small enterprises are high. Ventures that reduce search costs, build supplier capability, create transparent information, or enable small-producer access should generate positive spillovers that reinforce category trust and institutional support. This proposition extends Islamic macromarketing beyond diagnosis toward entrepreneurial capability and can be tested across halal platforms, Islamic finance, food clusters, tourism ecosystems, and digital marketplaces (Kadirov, 2014; Prabowo et al., 2015).

Conclusion

Entrepreneurial marketing is valuable precisely because markets are not always given. Entrepreneurs identify emerging problems, improvise under scarcity, educate customers, recruit networks, and assemble new patterns of exchange. Islamic marketing does not remove this entrepreneurial agency; it changes the conditions under which agency is judged. This article has argued that the central question is not whether Muslim entrepreneurs should be creative or growth oriented, but how creativity and growth should be governed when entrepreneurs can shape demand, trust, and institutional development. Kotler et al.'s (2023) contemporary entrepreneurial-marketing agenda provides a useful managerial entry point, while Islamic marketing ethics makes legitimacy and welfare internal to the market-creation process.

The proposed EIMCA captures this reconstruction through five layers: opportunity legitimation, resourceful value experimentation, ethical persuasion and trust formation, networked market enactment, and inclusive market development with renewal. The architecture preserves opportunity orientation, effectuation, bricolage, customer learning, networking, and scaling, but subjects them to recurring tests of lawfulness, truthfulness, justice, and social consequence. This produces several distinctive concepts: the legitimate opportunity frontier, bounded bricolage, trust-preserving experimentation, informed value translation, reciprocal transparency, and developmental market creation (Sarasvathy, 2001; Baker & Nelson, 2005; Saeed et al., 2001).

The broader theoretical implication is that Islamic entrepreneurial marketing should not be reduced to selling halal products through entrepreneurial tactics. Its distinctive contribution lies in explaining how markets can be created without treating consumer vulnerability, religious identity, or institutional weakness as resources to be exploited. Muslim consumers remain heterogeneous, and Islamic-origin ventures may create value for non-Muslims when verified attributes are translated into relevant functional and ethical benefits (Wilson et al., 2013; Haque et al., 2015). The field therefore has room to contribute not only to Islamic marketing scholarship but also to general entrepreneurial-marketing theory by making legitimacy part of opportunity formation rather than an external constraint.

Future research should operationalize the five EIMCA layers and test them across countries, sectors, and venture stages. Longitudinal designs are especially important because entrepreneurial shortcuts may appear efficient during acquisition but produce delayed trust or compliance costs. Comparative research should examine Muslim-majority and minority markets, formal and informal enterprises, digital and physical channels, and high- versus low-credence products. Further work should also examine how Islamic finance, halal certification, platform algorithms, accelerators, and public procurement shape the feasible set of legitimate entrepreneurial opportunities. If Islamic entrepreneurial marketing can connect creativity with accountable market development, it can offer a

rigorous framework for building markets that are not only larger, but more trustworthy and inclusive (Kotler et al., 2023; Kadirov, 2014).

REFERENCES

Alserhan, B. A. (2011). *The principles of Islamic marketing*. Gower Publishing.

Alserhan, B. A., Ramadani, V., Zeqiri, J., & Dana, L.-P. (Eds.). (2022). *Strategic Islamic marketing: A roadmap for engaging Muslim consumers*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-98160-0

Arham, M. (2010). Islamic perspectives on marketing. *Journal of Islamic Marketing, 1*(2), 149–164. https://doi.org/10.1108/17590831011055888

Baker, T., & Nelson, R. E. (2005). Creating something from nothing: Resource construction through entrepreneurial bricolage. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 50*(3), 329–366. https://doi.org/10.2189/asqu.2005.50.3.329

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Haque, A. K. M. A., Sarwar, A., Yasmin, F., Tarofder, A. K., & Hossain, M. A. (2015). Non-Muslim consumers' perception toward purchasing halal food products in Malaysia. *Journal of Islamic Marketing, 6*(1), 133–147. https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-04-2014-0033

Hills, G. E., Hultman, C. M., & Miles, M. P. (2008). The evolution and development of entrepreneurial marketing. *Journal of Small Business Management, 46*(1), 99–112. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-627X.2007.00234.x

Jafari, A., & Sandıkcı, Ö. (2015). 'Islamic' consumers, markets, and marketing: A critique of El-Bassiouny's (2014) 'The one-billion-plus marginalization'. *Journal of Business Research, 68*(12), 2676–2682. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2015.04.003

Kadirov, D. (2014). Islamic marketing as macromarketing. *Journal of Islamic Marketing, 5*(1), 2–19. https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-09-2012-0054

Kotler, P., Kartajaya, H., Huan, H. D., & Mussry, J. (2023). *Entrepreneurial marketing: Beyond professionalism to creativity, leadership, and sustainability*. Wiley.

Kotler, P., Keller, K. L., & Chernev, A. (2022). *Marketing management* (16th ed.). Pearson.

Morris, M. H., Schindehutte, M., & LaForge, R. W. (2002). Entrepreneurial marketing: A construct for integrating emerging entrepreneurship and marketing perspectives. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice, 10*(4), 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/10696679.2002.11501922

Nestorović, Č. (2016). *Islamic marketing: Understanding the socio-economic, cultural, and politico-legal environment*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-32754-9

Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic analysis: Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 16*, 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917733847

Prabowo, S., Abd Rahman, A., Ab Rahman, S., & Abu Samah, A. (2015). Revealing factors hindering halal certification in East Kalimantan Indonesia. *Journal of Islamic Marketing, 6*(2), 268–291. https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-05-2014-0040

Saeed, M., Ahmed, Z. U., & Mukhtar, S.-M. (2001). International marketing ethics from an Islamic perspective: A value-maximization approach. *Journal of Business Ethics, 32*(2), 127–142. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1010718817155

Saeed, M., & Baig, A. K. (2013). Islamic Shari'ah-compliant marketing. *International Journal of Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation, 2*(2), 166–178. https://doi.org/10.1504/IJSEI.2013.054160

Sandıkcı, Ö. (2011). Researching Islamic marketing: Past and future perspectives. *Journal of Islamic Marketing, 2*(3), 246–258. https://doi.org/10.1108/17590831111164778

Sandıkcı, Ö., & Rice, G. (Eds.). (2011). *Handbook of Islamic marketing*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Sarasvathy, S. D. (2001). Causation and effectuation: Toward a theoretical shift from economic inevitability to entrepreneurial contingency. *Academy of Management Review, 26*(2), 243–263. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2001.4378020

Shafiq, A., Haque, A., Abdullah, K., & Jan, M. T. (2017). Beliefs about Islamic advertising: An exploratory study in Malaysia. *Journal of Islamic Marketing, 8*(3), 409–429. https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-02-2015-0018

Shane, S., & Venkataraman, S. (2000). The promise of entrepreneurship as a field of research. *Academy of Management Review, 25*(1), 217–226. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2000.2791611

Thomas, J., & Harden, A. (2008). Methods for the thematic synthesis of qualitative research in systematic reviews. *BMC Medical Research Methodology, 8*, Article 45. https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2288-8-45

Tieman, M. (2015). Halal clusters. *Journal of Islamic Marketing, 6*(1), 2–21. https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-05-2014-0034

Tieman, M. (2021). *Halal business management: A guide to achieving halal excellence*. Routledge.

Wilson, J. A. J., Belk, R. W., Bamossy, G. J., Sandıkcı, Ö., Kartajaya, H., Sobh, R., Liu, J., & Scott, L. (2013). Crescent marketing, Muslim geographies and brand Islam: Reflections from the JIMA Senior Advisory Board. *Journal of Islamic Marketing, 4*(1), 22–50. https://doi.org/10.1108/17590831311306336

Wilson, J. A. J., & Liu, J. (2010). Shaping the halal into a brand? *Journal of Islamic Marketing, 1*(2), 107–123. https://doi.org/10.1108/17590831011055851