

Greener Marketing of Rice: Islamic Marketing in Focus

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ABSTRACT

Greener marketing is a form of sustainable marketing that deals with the environmental concern together with catering customers' needs. As a sustainable orientation, however, greener marketing should enable environmental, economic and social interests of the stakeholders in a balanced way acting as a holistic approach. This paper aims to view the proven method of organic rice production and marketing potentials of the organic rice seed as an industrial product, organic finish rice as a consumer product and a greener idea to save the world from the environmental hazards since the conventional rice cultivation system and its marketing does not seem to be fully environmental friendly. An in-depth field work was undertaken regarding production of a sustainable rice seed, a cost effective and innovative way of taking care of the land following the experimental research method following the Holy Qur'an in tackling the problems of the chemical reliant rice production. The successful experiments have discovered technologies including organic rice production and natural procedure of taking care of the planted seedlings. The experiments show that a sustainable method can be undertaken to offer organic rice to the ultimate consumers with an environmental friendly rice seed to the industrial users focusing the greenery notion that can save us from the environmental problems benefitting the environmental conscious group. Consequently, the findings might be recommended to the world as a greener idea of rice production and its marketing since it possesses zero effects on the environment indicating the Islamic context concerned with the Holy Qur'an.

Keywords: Environment, Greener Marketing, Idea Marketing, Islamic Marketing, Organic Rice, Rice Seed, Sustainability

1. INTRODUCTION

Greener marketing is increasingly being called as a sustainable branding. Greener products are defined as having a lighter impact on the planet than alternatives, also known as the sustainable products adding values in the social dimension (Ottman, 2011) for instance ensuring social, economic and ethical interest (Elkington, 1999; 1994). The needs of consumers with a heightened environmental and social consciousness can be fulfilled with formulating innovative environment-friendly goods as greener items requiring new strategies with a holistic point of view and eco-innovative product and service offering (Ottman, 2011). Thus, greener marketing can be defined as the process of satisfying the unmet needs and wants of the customers having zero effects or positive effects on the environment as a sustainable approach to marketing.

Marketing is known as satisfying customers' needs and a process for creation of value for the customers building a profitable relationship (Kotler and Armstrong, 2015, p. 648). Sustainable marketing calls for socially and environmentally responsible actions satisfying both the immediate and future customers' needs (Kotler and Armstrong, 2015, p. 18). Responsible marketers' sustainable marketing actions meet the present needs of consumers and business as a whole preserving the ability of future generations (Kotler and Armstrong, 2015, p. 626).

1.1. Problem Background

Green customers presently demand greener products that minimize the environmental effects of those products at every phase of the product life-cycle, starting with the raw materials processing right through to the impacts linked to a product's ultimate disposal (Ottman, 2011). Unfortunately, the conventional production method of rice is not environmental friendly.

The customers are deprived of sustainable rice since chemical, insecticides; herbicides are added gradually at every stage of the conventional rice cultivation causing environmental harm. The environmental problems tied with rice production can be segmented at different phases.

1.1.1 unsustainable seed

The alarming fact is that the environment is harmed in the traditional rice seed production and its marketing process. In the conventional process of producing rice seed, paddy is separated from the ears hitting the ears of corn on some hard objects in the very beginning. Doing so, the process of pollination and fertilization of rice is likely to be hampered. After separating corns from the ears of the paddy, insecticides are blended with seeds, and specialized cooling storages are used for its preservation for keeping its moisture at the right level. At the subsequent stage, cooling storage consumes electricity emitting carbon which is one of the causing factors for global warming: a hazard for the human survival. This human created danger is a threat for climate change as well. Poison is blended with rice seed and the farmers are bound to start the farming process with poison added seed. Moreover, the farmers are not able to use that seed as food if necessary due to the added poison as a dangerous health hazard.

1.1.2 Seedling process and land preparation

In order to produce seedling from rice seed, the seed beds are made ready using chemical fertilizers. When seedlings grow, farmers again use fertilizers to enhance the tenderness of the seedlings. The growers utilize much chemical fertilizers in preparing lands to plant the seedlings. When the land is prepared, observation shows that seven to ten seedlings at a time are planted in per cluster which seems to be the waste of many seedlings the farmers doing unconsciously. Fertilizers, irrigation and cares behind the seedlings are employed that also does not make sense.

1.1.3 Taking care of the rice field

The farmers use chemicals after few days to block the birth of the unnecessary plants or weeds. Most importantly, the nature of making food of the green plants is almost same since they use the sunlight and takes carbon what human emits. Therefore, blocking the growth of weeds or unnecessary plants in the field must create an imbalance in the environment. In the upcoming stages, chemicals and insecticides are added considerably at least for two times. Thus, unconsciousness and mass use of chemicals and pesticides are damaging our land decaying the top soil, its fertility increasing the cost of production. Additionally, living creatures including birds, frogs, and human health are being threatened. To sum up, our traditional rice production method is putting the world in a great threat. That is to say, we are heading towards a sure upcoming human-made catastrophe.

1.1.4 Consumption of chemical reliant rice

The environment is being contaminated in numerous ways in the traditional rice cultivation process. Most of the farmers, however, seem to have lack of proper consciousness on the environmental pollution and its long term impacts on the living creators. In general, the farmers buy rice seed consumed electricity due to the cooling storage system contaminated with poison for the safety from pests preparing seed bed with chemical fertilizers. Moreover, a significant amount of chemical fertilizers is used in the land preparation for sowing more seed plants. However, densely used seedlings are not cost effective at all the farmers are practicing. A considerable portion of chemical and insecticides are used in the subsequent stages till the harvesting and the ultimate consumers are taking a fertilizer, herbicide and pesticide added rice.

1.2 Aim and Objectives

The aim of this paper is to show a way of offering green rice to the customers identifying a sustainable method of rice production feasible to the marginal privileged-less farmers addressing the environmental problem. It aims to offer an idea of sustainable seed, organic rice and a green approach of rice farming country wide and then worldwide for international marketing. With a view to fulfilling the goal, the study intends to cover the specific following objectives:

1. To identify a sustainable rice seed and its marketing
2. To overview the process of offering the organic rice to the customers and
3. To promote the green rice marketing idea as a global one.

2. METHOD

The study has followed an experimental method. According to Zikmund, Babin, Carr, and Griffin (2010) experimental research allows a researcher to control the research circumstances as to causal relationships among inputs where experimenter manipulates variables along with information for future scientific research. It seems to be natural doing an experiment in which the crops variety is planted in a growing season when an agricultural economist would like to study the yield of a certain variety of seed corns (Hill, Griffiths and Judge, 2001).

However, the agricultural experiment is always uncontrollable experiment whose success depends fully on the nature since uncertainty prevails, and this type of research is an adventure (Hill et al., 2001). For the experiment, scriptural knowledge has been used as the base theories relating to Islamic marketing. In particular, few selected verses from the Holy Qur'an have been followed as the principles of Islamic marketing. Therefore, the study can be considered as a blending of the theories from book and practice in the field as an experiment.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The following Figure 1 framework has been considered for the present work.

2.2 Sustainable Rice Seed

The following verses “The harvest which you reap you shall leave it in the ears” (Chapter 12:47), “Verily! It is Allah Who causes the seed-grain and fruit-stone to spilt and sprout” (Chapter 6:95) and “A grain that grows seven ears and Allah gives many folds increase to whom He wishes” (Chapter 2:261) have been experimented for marketing of sustainable rice seed.

2.3 Organic Rice

Two verses “O mankind, eat of that which is lawful and good on the earth” (Chapter 2, verse 168) and “purified food” (Chapter 18, verse 19) are the motivation for marketing organic rice.

2.4 Green Idea Promotion

Two verse consisting of “speak the truth” (Chapter 33, verse 70) and “speak good to people” (Chapter 2, verse 83) are the considerations of promoting the idea of greenery marketing.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1 To Identify a Sustainable Rice Seed and its Marketing

Islam, M.M (2016) has worked on producing sustainable rice seed in order to succeed the first objective of the present study. The experiment identifies that seed can be produced for the marginal privileged-less farmers having zero effects on the environment without the help of any chemical use and power consumption at an affordable cost. This work was about the production of rice seed following two stages of experiment researching two verses of the Holy Qur'an. The verse 47 of chapter 12 has been researched and paddy was left in the ears for 8 months at the first stage. Then, verse 95 of chapter 6 has been considered. The results show that rice seed was not infected or damaged during this time. Germination process was successful in which seeds grew shoots without using any chemicals and cold storage system.

Marginal farmers shall be highly benefitted using this method which is environment-friendly, very easy and cheap. In addition, the experimented seed is organic which shall save the planet from carbon emission whereas the traditional seed production process requires chemical use to save seeds from pests, and cool storage system that consumes power producing carbon.

Imported seeds some of the cases encounter problems but local seeds are likely to adjust with the climate easily. The experimental seeds are local which are environmentally, economically and ethically fitted, that can be addressed as a sustainable seed for the

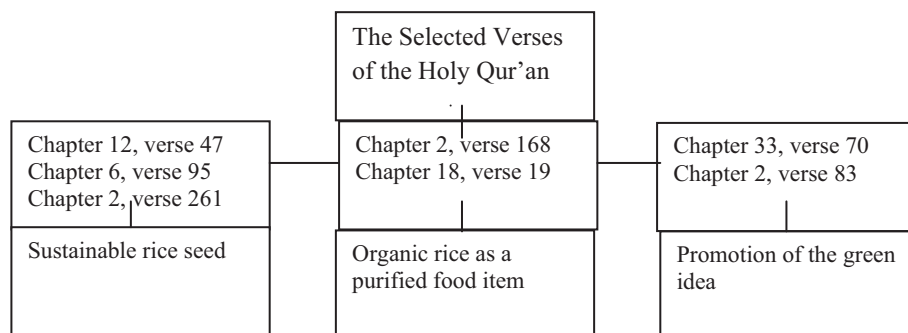


Figure 1: Outline of the theory and practice of the green rice idea

less privileged farmers. Importantly, the experimented method of seed production can be applied for all corns related crops. Marketing of the organic seed may contribute in the agricultural marketing sector as a greener marketing of rice. Thus, application of the experimented method can save the world from global warming and can offer us a viable agricultural production system.

In conclusion, the findings of the study show that seed production process is completely economic, ethical or sustainable. Now, the sustainable rice seed is ready to be marketed following the marketing process in the coming season.

3.2 To overview the Process of Offering The Customers Organic Rice

To be organic, the finished rice should be chemical free. Therefore, a rigorous experiment has been undertaken including land preparation, sowing seedling and taking care of the land.

3.2.1 Land preparation

Experiment has been carried out focusing sustainability notion addressing the negative impacts of chemical fertilizers. According to the experiment, the farming land has been prepared with five stages of fertilizers including compost, bio-fertilizers and green fertilizers. Paddy was cut off with a long straw and the plot of land was ploughed for compost creation. At the next stage, a seed of a tender green plant was applied. When the green plants grew, they were blended with a plow to create green fertilizers. At the later stage cow dung, compost with household biodegradable objects and manure of hens and ducks has been utilized in the field. Finally, water has been irrigated and land has been prepared for sowing the sustainable seed.

3.2.2 Seedling plantation

One seedling of rice was planted in the experimented land following the Qur'anic verse 261 of the second chapter having a gap of six inches between two seedlings to tackle the waste of 7 to 10 seedlings problem of the traditional rice production method. In the experiment, local rice has been considered so that a comparison can be made testing the feasibility of the local rice seed since hybrid and imported seed is criticized for its costs and environmental adaptability.

After few days of the seedling plantation, the tender seedling turned into greener than all other rice field. Probably, biodegradable fertilizers and organic seed played important role.

3.2.3. Taking care of the rice field till the harvesting period

After few weeks, unnecessary plants or weeds grew have been cleaned and inserted inside of the soft soil so that they are turned into compost. Urine of the cows was applied throughout the land three times and the experimented plot looked very tender and fresh in comparison to the other fields the farmers cultivated rice. Manure of the cows also helped in controlling pests.



Figure 2: One seedling sown that produced many green plants



Figure 3: 37 plants produced from one seedling and a spike of 12 inches

Additionally, branches of the trees were rooted in the field so that birds can sit and eat insecticides. Interesting matter is that ducks and frogs come in the plot several times. It is about living with nature. Significantly, a single seedling produced 12 to 37 plants having 7 to 35 long spikes of rice containing 150 to 200 rice in per spike. Thus, the study finds the proof of the experimented Qur'anic verse "A grain that grows seven ears, and each ear has a hundred grains. Allah gives many folds increase to whom He wishes" (Chapter 2, verse 261).

The organic rice can be processed for the use of ultimate consumption. Since, the experimentally produced rice is sustainable from seedling to harvesting free from herbicides, pesticides and chemicals; it is addressed as organic rice that can be offered to the markets as a purified food item following the two verses "O mankind, eat of that which is lawful and good on the earth" (Chapter 2, verse 168) and "purified food" (Chapter 18, verse 19). Additionally, organic rice can be used as sustainable or organic seed following the verse "The harvest which you reap you shall leave it in the ears" (Chapter 12:47), of the Holy Qur'an.

3.3. To Promote the Green Rice Marketing as a Global Idea

Each and every market offering includes an idea (Kotler and Keller, 2015). Products and services compose the bundle to offer an idea in the marketplace. However, a social marketer offers an idea having demand in the mind of the concerned citizens to change certain social issues. Therefore, the greener marketing focusing common agro-product, for instance, rice possess few implications to be promoted as a green issue as follows:

3.3.1. Offering a green method of agricultural production

The effects of chemical use in farming lead soil to death including reduced soil nutrients and moisture. Chemical reliant grower adopts farming owing to the readily available inputs for quick benefits that leave a significant trace and residual impacts at the post farming stage (Islam, M.S., 2016). It is quite fairly that the conventional method of rice production is not fully environment- friendly since extensive chemicals harm the soil, human, insects, birds and other creatures.

The traditional rice production method consists of about four stages of operation including seed production, seedling process, land preparation and taking care of the rice plants in the field. Unfortunately, almost all the stages consume chemicals and pesticides that are the great threats to the environment. The negative impacts of the conventional rice farming can be portrayed with a great importance and the experimented green rice marketing can be focused as an alternative as an idea worldwide consisting of seed and finished rice. Organic rice seed can be marketed countrywide highlighting the environmental aspects and its productivity in comparison to the conventional rice seed. Since most of the farmers in Bangladesh are not higher educated but loyal to the Islamic religion, the selected verses of the Holy Qur'an may help for promotion.

In addition, the customers in the Muslim world can be motivated towards the 'Ajka toam' as per the Qur'anic verse 19 of chapter 18 focusing the values of principles of Islamic Marketing as a sustainable orientation (Islam, M.M., 2016b).

3.3.2. Islamic marketing literature's enrichment

Islamic marketing should expand its exploration to other fields as dietetics and nutrition, health and biological sciences (Koku and Jusoh, 2015). Specifically, the experimented green rice can fulfil the need of the Islamic marketing field that can be promoted focusing the Holy Qur'an according to the study of Islam, M.M (2016b). The study shows that using the verse 70 of chapter 33 (the fact) and the verse 83 of chapter 2 (the manner), the Muslims can be communicated effectively on the green rice production method based on the Holy Qur'an since it possesses value to them. Robert (2010) noted that coupled with these developments, the population of Moslem consumers is projected to account for as much as 30% of the world's population by 2025. Thus, to study Islamic marketing is not only a wise business decision, but a scholarly one given the fact that the foremost marketing principle is an exercise to satisfy consumers' needs and wants (Rod, Hussan and Beal, 2015).



Figure 4: Organic rice preserved in ears as organic seed

3.3. Targeting the other Environment Conscious Customers

The experimented green rice can be marketed communicating the sustainable value among the customers. Millar and Baloglu (2008) found positive perceptions of the customers on the sustainable practices. Due to the awareness of the international community, issues impacting the environmental affairs are accepted drastically (Lipman and Vorster, 2011). Using the environmental awareness, the consumers can be targeted who are used to taking organic rice.

The hotels also can focus the green rice in their restaurants' menu since a green image can result in favourable behavioural intentions by the hotel guests (Lee, Hsu, Han and Kim, 2010; Manaktola and Jauhari, 2007). With increased customer awareness, the green practice may become important to the travellers in choosing a hotel reported by Tzschentkea (2008). Consequently, the green rice has high potentials to be marketed in the hotels having different star brands.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The green market is not static rather it is likely to grow and mature, evolving the rules of engagement even further. Knowing how best to satisfy today's green consumers will bring future opportunities to grow top-line sales and revenue growth and increase market share among the fast-growing numbers of green consumers (Ottman, 2011). Green consumers may take a range of forms including green farmers, green final consumers of rice and the environmentalists. The experimented green rice, however, is able to meet the needs of all the stakeholders.

Almost daily, new scientific data become available, suggesting that humans will need to tread significantly more lightly on the planet to meet our future needs sustainably. Innovating for sustainability brings with it exciting opportunities for businesses to help grow their top-line sales and even evolve and transform their business models – indeed, their entire company – to better compete within the rules of a more sustainable future (Ottman, 2011). Although the experiment has been undertaken in case of rice, nevertheless, the idea also can be implemented for the other crops manipulating the whole process from seedling to harvesting that may represent an opportunity for marketers in the future since an experiment on sustainable agro-farming offers ample opportunities to gather significant amount of scientific data for future research concerning soil science, environmental affairs and development of new types of crops.

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