



Ethical implications of sales promotion in Ghana: Islamic perspective

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Abstract

Purpose – The paper aims to examine sales promotional practices in Ghana, weighing their ethical implications from an Islamic perspective and investigates whether they meet Islam’s ethical requirements to merit Muslims’ patronage.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper uses *Qur’an* 5:90/2:219 as a theoretical framework to analyze relevant data to ascertain the extent of ethical legitimacy of strategies used in sales promotion in Ghana and cites other relevant references from *Qur’an* and *sunnah* as interpretative proofs and methodology.

Findings – Islam emphasizes ethical principles in business. Muslims can promote business but that must be done within the ethical framework of Islam. The current Ghanaian promotional strategies are ethically questionable. They lead to unethical earning of livelihood and unjust acquisition of wealth through gambling and other ill-perceived means which do not promote the ethical values of Muslims.

Research limitations/implications – The paper emphasizes the necessity for further research into the ethical dimensions of business practices, in general, in Ghana to promote ethical responsibility in the society.

Originality/value – The study inculcates mutual socio-economic and ethical responsibilities between Ghanaian sellers and buyers to save the society from the situation where love of wealth supersedes ethical interests.

Keywords Ethics, Islam, Ghana, Promotional methods, Selling

Paper type Research paper

1. Meaning of ethics in Islam

The word “ethics” and its adjective, “ethical”, originated from the Greek word *ethos*, which means custom and usage (Borhan, 1999). Its Latin equivalent, “moral”, originated from the word *more*. The two words are, therefore, sometimes used synonymously for each other (Borhan, 1999). A morally right action is deemed to be ethical (Borhan, 1999). Ethics, therefore, refers to:

[...] a systematic attempt, through the use of reason to make sense of our individual and social moral experience, in such a way as to determine the rule that ought to govern human conduct and the value worth pursuing in life (Frankena, 1973; Stephen, 1882; Borhan, 1999).

It is a way to measure or assess human conducts with the view to judging their rightness or wrongness using specific standard of judgment known as code of ethics.

Islam lays much emphasis on ethical behaviour in society; therefore, it is a code of life. This means every thing that is associated with the religion is the religion itself, i.e. the social life of a Muslim is Islam; the economic life of the Muslim is Islam; the political life of the Muslim is Islam. In other words, Islamic ethics is a body of



injunctions laid down for the practical life of the Muslim, justified from the *Qur'an* and the *Sunnah*. In the *Qur'an*, Muhammad is indicated as one who has been created with an excellent character (*Qur'an* 68: 4). In connection with this, Allah again says thus:

Indeed, you have in the Apostle of Allah a beautiful pattern of conduct for him whose hope is in Allah and the hereafter and who engages in the praise of Allah (*Qur'an* 33:21). The prophet himself stated thus: "I have been sent only for the purpose of perfecting good morals." (Al-Laythi, 1989). He also said: "good conduct will be heaviest of all attributes in the balance on the resurrection day" (Al-Ghazali, 1982).

In Islam, ethics deals with the principles governing the interaction between man and his fellow men and other creatures, on one hand, and man and his creator, on the other.

2. Ethical dimension of muslim business transaction

Islam has laid down moral principles regarding business transactions and failure to adhere to them deprives a transaction of its integration into any category of Islamic decorum. Justice is an important consideration in acceptable Islamic business transactions. "Give a full measure when you measure and weigh with a measure that is straight [. . .]" (*Qur'an* 17:35). It also condemns those who earn more than they are naturally entitled to. Such people are referred to as fraudsters in the language of the *Qur'an*:

Woe to those who deal in fraud: those who, when they have to receive by measure from men extract full measure, but when they have to give by measure or weight to men give less than due [. . .] (*Qur'an* 83:1-3).

A Muslim is not forbidden from promoting his business or enhancing the patronage of it, but it must be done in cognizance of the ethical principles of the religion. Muslim businessmen and women are to be moderate and generous in buying and selling and even demanding what naturally belongs to them. The prophet asked for Allah's mercy on him who is lenient in his buying, selling, and in demanding back his money (debt owed him) (Borhan, 1999).

Even though farming is an essential occupation for Muslims, making a living by means of industry is much recommended for development in Islam (Al-Qaradawi, n.d.). Industry, the provision of goods and services, is not only permitted by *shari'ah* but also its promotion is obligatory on all Muslims (Al-Qaradawi, n.d.). Enhancing the services of industry engaged in the provision of essential services to society is *fard al-kifayah* (obligation of sufficiency). Allah mentions businessmen, especially, those who travel for the purpose of trade, alongside the *mujahidun* (*Qur'an* 73:20). In other places, He praises the equipment used to promote trade (*Qur'an* 35:12). It should be understood from these that Islam does not oppose activities aimed at promoting business and industry. As a matter of requirement, however, this promotion must be done with great sensitivity to the moral or ethical rules specified by the *Qur'an* and the *sunnah* of the prophet. Accordingly, the annual hajj instituted by Allah and His prophet between the three fruitful months of *Sha'wwal*, *Zul Qa'dah* and *Zul Hijjah* was to promote international trade and business (*Qur'an* 22:27-8 and 2:198). This affirms the fact that one of the approved ways of promoting sales or enhancing one's business in Islam is to sell during conferences, times of pilgrimage, or trade fair, as that will not compromise purity of intention and justice. It is, thus, acceptable to agree with the hypothesis that:

[...] any transaction in which one person's gain results in another's loss is unlawful, while any transaction which is fair and beneficial to all the parties concerned and which is transacted by mutual consent is lawful (Al-Qaradawi, n.d.).

Islam approves only one principle in business: "that the market, its prices, and sales, should be left free to respond to internal economic forces and natural competition without manipulation" (Al-Qaradawi, n.d.).

3. Sales promotional practices in Ghana

From a layman's point of view, the expression "sales promotion" is a business practice in which a particular company producing a particular product, in a genuine bid to influence increased consumption in order to improve productivity, employs a certain means (usually feigning a benefit for the consumers) to indirectly influence consumers to increase their patronage. In most cases, the consumer is lured into believing that buying more would avail him/her a hitherto unavailable benefit, but, in reality, he/she ends up spending on that product beyond his normal budget. In the professional language of the businessman, however, sales promotion is a "stimulation achieved through contests, demonstrations, discounts, exhibitions, or trade shows, game, giveaways, point of sale displays and merchandising, special offers, etc." (www.businessdictionary.com/definition/sales-promotion.html, accessed September 3, 2009). Sales promotion, for that matter, covers all activities other than advertising and personal selling that help suppliers or producers to increase sales of a particular commodity (www.nos.org/Secbuscour/24.pdf, accessed September 3, 2009). Producers or manufacturers, during sales promotion, employ sporadic and short-term-based methods to increase consumers' patronage or sales in varied ways. Such offers are usually not available to the customers throughout the year. In Ghana, in times of celebrations, end-of-year festivities and related occasions, these schemes usually control the markets.

On the Ghanaian local markets, sales promotions are usually done with the following purposes to:

- introduce new products;
- attract new customers and retain the existing ones;
- sustain the sales of casual products; and among others
- mitigate the challenges of competition.

Sales promotional measures enable producers to genuinely or ingenuinely draw the attention of or create new customers for their products. While shopping, customers usually get influenced towards products that offer discounts and other rewarding prizes upon purchase. These are some of the magnetic devices used to influence and encourage the customers to buy the goods. Thus, it helps to retain the existing customers, and, at the same time, attracts new ones. Products like Christmas decoratives and other items used during occasions or seasons are given off-seasonal discounts. For example, one can buy a Christmas decorative hat at a, relatively, cheaper price after Christmas, while such prices are usually higher during the actual Christmas season. Again, after *Id-ul-Fitr* and *Id-ul-Adha*, discount prices are offered for certain head scarves, headgears, footwear, and *Jilbaab* (a loose garment) for women, and footwear, hat, attires and other related things for men in Muslim communities. After *Id-ul-Adha*, sacrificial animals' sellers offer bonus services which vary from one shop to another. Some of these include free

transport to a buyer's destination if it is within town, assisting in slaughtering and preparing the meat, etc. Businesses in Ghana, today, face very stiff competitions. New products frequently come into the market and, at the same time, improvement also takes place. Sales promotional measures have, therefore, been very essential to retain the market share of the seller or producer in the product market.

4. Instrument/strategies of sales promotion in Ghana

To increase sales, some of the promotional devices used by Ghanaian producers include the following:

- *Free samples.* This involves giving away certain products which are usually of lower quality or value than what is intended for sale. For example, one may receive a box of matches free of charge after buying a tooth paste from a super market or from a road-side vendor. In many cases, such products are also produced by the same manufacturer. Sometimes these free samples are also distributed by shopkeepers to prospective customers even if these customers purchase no items from their (shopkeepers') shops. These are distributed to attract consumers to try out new products and thereby create awareness in new customers. Others also supply such free samples to selected persons in order to advertize new inventions. For example, communication companies distribute their company flags and phone booths to recharge-card vendors in order to increase awareness and subsequent patronage.
- *Premium or bonus offer.* Here, one is offered what can better be known as a discount. Unlike the free sample offer, one may get an additional and similar product as a bonus after buying a particular product. For example, when one buys a tooth paste, one may be given another tooth paste or a tooth brush as a bonus. This is very effective in inducing consumers to buy a particular product while encouraging and rewarding existing customers. Communication network providers are the patrons and effective users of this device of sales promotion. After purchasing a particular amount or unit of recharge card, one is offered an addition or a bonus of, at times, 100-300 percent. Yet, after continuously staying on line or chatting on the phone for certain minutes of time, one is given free of charge a certain percentage of units as a bonus.
- *Price-off offer.* With this strategy, products are sold at a price lower than the original price. For example, one may hear on radio or television that within a certain period of time (usually not more than a month), at a given store, "a standing fan would sell at GHC 35.00 instead of GHC 40.00." At a supermarket, one may observe that an old price affixed to a product has been canceled and attached with a reduced one (in such cases, both the old and new prices are observed on a paper affixed to the product). After the specified period, they revert to the old prices. These are common examples of the above scheme. This is usually done to improve sales in off-season and, sometimes, while introducing a new product into the market. For the new product, usually, the objective is not to make a huge profit but to increase customers' patronage while trying only to break even.
- *Coupons.* Producers issue coupons usually located in the packet of a product or through an advertisement in the newspapers or magazines. The coupons are meant to be presented to the vendor or placed at the point of sales after buying the product. The bearer of the coupon sometimes gets an immediate discount

on the product, while, at the same time, his coupon is entered into a draw. In this draw, the bearer of the coupon, if he/she wins, could go home with a fortune he had very little toiled for and which he could often not have acquired in even five solid years of fruitful toil. Generally, the more one buys that particular product and fills the coupon, the greater one's chances of winning the ultimate prize (which is, usually, in the form of the latest model of a car or a house and, on rare occasions, fridges and other household appliances). This is a game of chance. The flamboyant and easy-to-attract reduced prices offered by this device attract the attention of prospective customers towards new or improved products.

- *Exhibitions and fairs.* Exhibitions and fairs are organized at local, regional, national or international levels to introduce new products, demonstrate the use of products and explain their special features and usefulness. Goods are displayed and demonstrated and their sale is also conducted at a reasonable discount.
- *Scratch and win offer.* This is done with the purpose of influencing customers to buy a particular product. With this device, a customer scratches a specific area on the package of the product, after purchasing it, and gets the benefit according to the message written there. In this way, customers may get some items free of charge as mentioned on the marked area or may get part of the price waived, or sometimes visit different places on special tours arranged by the manufacturers. Drink manufacturers are the major patrons of this device. Usually, when one buys the drink, one is expected to take the cork off and remove the sticker fixed inside it to uncover a particular benefit that accompanies the purchase. At times, upon showing the sticker to the retailer, depending on what benefit is written inside it, one is instantly given one's benefit. Soap manufacturers put these benefits inside the soap bar only to be uncovered by customers when they cut it. One is, thereafter, expected to send it to the appropriate place for the reward. This is illegitimate by Islamic ethical standards because it is fraught with uncertainty and that brings about anxiety.
- *Money back offer.* This strategy offers customers the assurance of the unconditional return of the full value of the product if they are dissatisfied with the quality of the product after using it. This is meant to arouse the confidence of the customers of that particular product in terms of quality. This technique is particularly useful in introducing new products onto the market.

In all these trading strategies, consumers or customers are the ultimate target. With the current level of religiosity in Ghana, therefore, one would be right to say that both Christians and Muslims are caught in the web of these kinds of sales promotion. In fact, in business dealings, any attempt to increase production and patronage is very necessary and a welcome development; but one needs to observe the issues that bother on ethical values if religious tenets should be kept intact. There have been serious ethical issues that can be mind boggling to religious and moral thinkers, including Muslim consumers, as far as the above promotional devices are concerned. In fact, some Muslim men and women also exploit some of these strategies to bring about increased consumption and production, and this overlooks and puts to question the Islamic ethical principles and practices. The question is: are these sales promotional practices religiously or ethically justified to merit the apparent harmless patronage of Muslim consumers or suppliers?

5. Ethical implications of sales promotion for Muslims

The *Qur'an* contains a myriad of injunctions regarding the moral obligations of the individual within the society he/she lives in. The following extracts from the *Qur'an* expose the censorious approach of the *Qur'an* in respect of morality:

Allah commands justice (*'adl*), the doing of good (*ihsaan*), and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you that you may receive admonition (*Qur'an* 16:90).

[...] on a plea of want, we provide sustenance for you and for them, do not draw near to shameful deeds, whether open or secret, except by way of justice and law; thus He commands you that you may learn wisdom (*Qur'an* 6: 115).

While the above extracts may be unspecific and subsequently apply to numerous vices, a believer must not have a problem of defining vice in any particular context or shape, and this is expected to model one's thought about morality and immorality. In the light of the abundant grace of Allah, the *Qur'an* calls on believers not to despair. In fact, it describes excessive pessimism as loss of faith and a sign of *Kufr*. "[...] and never give up hope of Allah's soothing Mercy, truly no one despairs of Allah's soothing Mercy, except those who have no faith" (*Qur'an* 12:87). Again, *surat-ut-takathur* is contemptuous of those who are always attracted to wealth beyond what they require for their daily subsistence. Such a struggle diverts one's attention from the path that leads to *jannah* and, instead, provides one with an illusory sense of eternity till one reaches one's grave (*Qur'an* 102:1-2).

The notion of sustenance being ethically earned (*rizq halal*) is central to the *Qur'an's* approach to wealth and this is supposed to be the guiding principle of every pious Muslim man and woman. The *Qur'an* singles out for renunciation a myriad of means of unlawful acquisition of wealth, which, among others, include gambling and theft (Esack, 2002). While some unwittingly become victims of such ill-perceived means of appropriating wealth, others willfully find it as genuine and legitimate full-time occupation.

In *Qur'an* 2:219 and 5:90, Allah (the Exalted in Might) has declared thus:

They ask you [Muhammad] concerning wine and gambling. Say: "in them is great sin, and some profit, for men, but the sin is greater than the profit." They ask you how much they are to spend, say: "what is beyond your needs." Thus, does Allah make clear to you His signs: in order that you may consider their blessings on this life and the hereafter (*Qur'an* 2:219-20).

O you who believe! Intoxicants and gambling (*maysir*), (dedication of) stones, and (divination by) arrows, are an abomination, of Satan's handiwork: eschew such (abomination), that you may prosper (*Qur'an* 5:90).

The worthy question seeking to relate the above verses to the discussion is: "what constitutes gambling to merit prohibition in the above verse?" Explaining the meaning of gambling, Muhammad bin "Abdul-Aziz al-Musnad states thus: "gambling [is] a kind of activity that oscillates between loss and profit [...]" (Al-Musnad, 2002). Abdallah Yusuf Ali also makes it clear that it is "[...] a means of getting something too easily, getting a profit without working for it" (Yusuf Ali, 1983). The Arabic word *maysir*, used in the above verse to mean "gambling", has so many related words associated with it. There is *muyassar*, which means, "that made easy", "simplified", or "facilitated" and *maysuur*, which also means, among others, "that which is likely, easy,

of probability”, or “achievable”. The several phrases here may be confusing but all of them point to an acquisition by virtue of chance. It is by this principle that gambling and all other vices associated with it are prohibited. The form best known to the environmental circumstances of the revelation of the above verse was the Arabs’ massive involvement in gambling by the casting of arrows which were marked to serve the purpose and nature as modern-day lottery tickets (Yusuf Ali, 1983). Victory in this type of gambling depended on luck.

Weighing the above background against the Ghanaian context of sales promotional devices enumerated earlier, one would observe clear resemblances. Carefully examining the local devices exploited in sales promotion, therefore, it is clear that the means for getting the reward (here, the benefit) is too quick and easy, while, at the same time, it offers profit far beyond the magnitude of what the customers have actually toiled or paid for. This, in the language of the *Qur’an*, is fraud:

Woe to those who deal in fraud: those who, when they have to receive by measure from men extract full measure, but when they have to give by measure or weight to men give less than due [. . .] (*Qur’an* 83:1-3).

The argument here is that such people (here, applicable to the beneficiaries) defraud by paying small money only to be given an astronomical and mathematically unequal measure of reward. What makes it even more ethically unacceptable and dangerous from the Islamic viewpoint is that the participants themselves are the indirect buyers of the prize and one person (the winner) takes away what naturally belongs to a group. There is even a greater guilt on the part of communication network providers in the promotion of their air time. In their promotional bid, at times, they do not even give the consumer the chance to decide whether to join the promotion or not. Promotion that enters one into a draw has no moral or doctrinal justification in Islam and often reaps the following effects:

- Since one’s chance of winning is increased when one buys more, it lures one to spend beyond what one would have naturally spent on such an item. This places an additional burden on the person and his/her dependents. This is religiously unethical for a Muslim even if the end result or profit is intended for a good purpose (Al-Musnad, 2002). This is because Islam does not accept the philosophical maxim that “the end justifies the means”. A good intention does not make a *haram* action *halal* (Al-Qaradawi, n.d.). For an act to be ethically acceptable, both the end and the means to achieving it should be *halal*.
- Sometimes, people purchase such a product just to get the chance to win the prize and not because they need it. Communication network providers are the hardest hit in this transaction. Sometimes a draw covers only new subscribers and people buy new telephone lines to qualify them for the draw. As soon as the draw is over they discard the SIM card; and this action misplaces the real purpose of the promotion. The love for the prize in the draw, therefore, leads to deception and dishonesty. This is gambling by Islamic standard and description. This is because it leads to wrongful taking of people’s wealth. Products promoted this way usually have substitutes and such producers or promoters will take away the customers of the competing products in addition to siphoning people’s financial resources by that insidious means. This is unfair business dealing according to Islamic law (Al-Musnad, 2002). “O you who believe! Do not eat up your property among

yourselves unjustly except it be a trade among you, by mutual consent and do not kill yourselves [...]” (*Qur’an* 4:29). Such a business lifestyle breeds contempt and disappointment and prepares the illegitimate ground for exploitation.

There is yet another sphere of gambling influenced by these styles of sales promotion which Muslims are directly involved in. This form is influenced by the communication companies. It usually happens during occasions with heavy Muslim involvement like *Id-ul-Adha*, Ramadan and the *Id-ul-Fitr* day. The various television stations are the weapons that are used to involve Muslims in this form of gambling. In most cases, when an Islamic programme which is meant to educate Muslims about the importance of such activities or occasions is being broadcast, a question would be posted onto the screen (like “for how many days do Muslims fast during the month of Ramadan?” Easy-to-get-correct answers would be supplied) and viewers would be called upon to text the correct answer to a specific code to be entered into a draw that might win them a handsome prize (usually a copy of the *Qur’an* or something precious). The perception is that since a good thing is intended for the viewers, it is permissible (*halal*). This is a *bid’a* in matters of religion which is disapproved. This is because, it does not only involve an individual gambling but it also involves inviting others to an ethically indecent activity, a sin expiation of which attracts a compulsory *sadaqah* according to a tradition of the prophet (Al-Bukhari, 2002). The practice even sometimes involves a deception of the viewers as more units are deducted than normal text messages.

One must not be astonished by the treatment of gambling as a socio-economic threat to present-day living in Ghana. Instead, one must rather wonder why present Ghanaian Muslims are also ingenuinely trapped in the web of gambling. Gambling is considered a moral problem in every environment and of all epochs (Ahmad, 1997). In economics, gambling:

[...] is more objectionable than drinking. In gambling, money changes hands without pushing the wheel of economy just as money is exchanged for money without an underlying exchange of commodity in the money markets (Ahmad, 1997).

Money acquired in an illegitimate way through gambling is equally not spent on things approved by Islam; neither do the victims even appreciate how hard it is to accumulate wealth in a legitimate way (Hadimi, 2008). They easily get irritated in the face of the slightest financial difficulty because they get addicted to making money the quick and easy way. Yet, a tradition of the prophet quotes him as saying: “Poverty is a blessing for my *sahabah*. Being rich will be a blessing for Muslims who will live in later times close to the Doomsday” (Hadimi, 2008). The argument of participants is that they are trading or doing business. Yet, on becoming drunk with appropriation of wealth, they do not pause to consider the fact that it is inconceivable that the majority of traders in a genuine business should suffer losses more often as it happens always to gamblers. Islam does not approve a business situation where for the gain of a few, hundreds of thousands of the participants must suffer (Ahmad, 1997). “The only value they get is the excitement and thrill of suspense until the realization that they have lost their stake at last dawns upon them” (Ahmad, 1997). Afterwards, the excitement turns into anguish and, among the lower income group, the daily needs of the family have to be compromised on the altar of gambling (take the case of a poor salaried worker who patronizes promotional sales draw). Explaining the meaning of the expression, “do not kill yourselves”, which means, “do not kill each other”, in *Qur’an* 4:29,

Maududi opines that a person who makes someone suffer by his own benefit is in effect shedding his blood and opening the way for others to do the same to him and thus leading to his own ruin (Al-Qaradawi, n.d.).

This is a direct antithesis of Islam's consideration for the individual, the family, and the society as a whole. It does not take long for gambling to be an addiction on individuals and the society as a whole. Frustration and envy on the part of losers against winners become well entrenched and this, in turn, breeds socio-economic and other crimes. The famous cyber crime, popularly known as *sakawa*, that has assumed a spiritual dimension, is a clear case in point. Muslims are called to avoid such a dangerous socio-economic phenomenon.

6. The Islamic promotional choice

The question then arises as to what a devoted Muslim must do in this competitive world when business activities are grounded in sales promotion. In other words, what is the Islamic alternative to sales promotion? The answer is very simple: Islam approves every business practice which seeks to improve the lot of business people and their businesses, provided, however, that it benefits, unconditionally, all the parties of its transaction. All the parties in business transaction (producers and traders, on one hand, and customers or consumers, on the other) must be committed to practices that will enhance their businesses in accordance with their conscience and intuition. They must, however, bear in mind that permissible wealth only comes in drops, and that wealth that comes in a flash flood is forbidden (Hadimi, 2008). In other words, every reward or incentive (as it is called) that does not commensurate with or correspond to the toil of the beneficiary is unjust and ethically questionable. In the language of the *Qur'an*, it is cheating or fraud (*Qur'an* 83:1-3). The customer must be given a reward that corresponds justly with his/her effort as the buyer of the product, and that reward must be the same for every customer of the product and not one or a few of them benefiting at the expense of the lot. This inculcates mutual socio-economic, just, and ethical responsibilities between sellers and buyers, and saves the society from the situation where love of wealth supersedes ethical interests.

Again, what makes the promotional practices forbidden or ethically open to doubt is the lottery or gambling elements that are usually introduced into them, making the rewards uncertain when a customer buys such products, and so deprives some of the customers of their share while granting wealth beyond acceptable magnitude to others without any recourse to justice. To make the practice *halal*, all customers should be given equal chances to enjoy the booty and none should be deprived of such benefits. This will remove the uncertainty and anxiety that are characteristic of gambling that has clouded most of the promotional practices, and will be an adequate motivation for the customers of any particular product. Islam recommends moderation in every thing, and, therefore, care should be taken so that customers are not enticed to the excessive consumption of goods even if they have no need for them. Business people must consider the ethical dimensions of their business practices to safeguard the ethical fiber of the society.

7. Conclusion

This paper discussed contemporary sales promotional practices in Ghana, weighing their ethical implications in Islamic perspective. It discussed some of the devices or

tools used by Ghanaian companies in their bid to enhance patronage of their products. It also examined, with the motive of finding, the extent to which these business practices meet the ethical or moral reasoning and validity of Islam to merit active and unreserved involvement of Muslims in them. The analysis used the Qur'anic ruling in the twin verses of *Qur'an* 2:219 and 5:90, whose ruling questions these contemporary sales promotional practices, as the theoretical basis for the argument. It was noted that some of these practices are meant to increase consumption and boost production, yet, the means towards achieving these good ends is spurious, according to the Islamic moral standards, and is, therefore, unacceptable.

8. Recommendations

The researcher makes the following recommendations:

- The producers should constantly organize business conferences to ram home support for their services and inform customers about their products. In such conferences, they should do well to attract unwilling customers for their products. This practice is approved by Islam as the great annual pilgrimage (similar to a conference) was instituted not only for religious rituals but also for the purpose of legitimate interaction and trade (*Qur'an* 22:27-8 and 2:198).
- Producers should also sell their products at reduced prices that will both be just and affordable to customers. This will benefit all customers and at the same time encourage them to patronize such products instead of making them distressed by piling all of them as the so-called reward for only one customer or a few of them.
- Distributors or sellers should also change their locations to take advantage of customers wherever they are located even if they are at a distant location. Long distance trading has been praised by the *Qur'an*, and long distance traders are classified alongside the *mujahidun* (*Qur'an* 73:20). This is because sometimes one may be forced by circumstances to employ ethically questionable and illegitimate means to promote one's business if customers are readily not available. Both academics and business experts should also realize the growing necessity for further research to be conducted into the ethical dimensions of business practices, in general, in Ghana to promote ethical responsibility in the society.

When the above suggestions are taken into consideration, the identified ethically dubious promotional practices will be curtailed.

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