

Marketing Communications Mix in the Islamic Windows of Conventional Banks

Case study: Maisarah Islamic Banking Services Window

Iman Achour^{1*}, Abdelhamid Ghedjati²

¹ University of Blida 2, (Algeria), achour-imane@live.fr/i.achour@univ-blida2.dz

² ²University of Blida 2, (Algeria), a.ghedjati@univ-blida2.dz

Received: 15/03/2024

Accepted: 13/05/2024

Published: 01/06/2024

Abstract:

This study aims at highlighting the importance of marketing communications mix in promoting products and services of Islamic windows in conventional banks and gaining trust of customers. This study is based on case study methodology where it showcases the experience of Maisarah Islamic windows of bank Dhofar about different communication strategies and tools to promote their Islamic banking products and services. The study shows how the marketing communications mix of Maisarah Islamic window contributed in boosting sales and attracting new customers along with increasing the awareness on its Islamic banking products and services in the market.

Keywords: Islamic banking window, conventional banks, marketing communications mix.

Jel Classification Codes: G210, M310.

1. INTRODUCTION

Islamic windows in conventional banks have become increasingly popular in recent years, particularly in countries where Islamic finance is gaining popularity. The development of Islamic windows in conventional banks has contributed to the growth of Islamic finance globally. It has also

* Corresponding author

enabled conventional banks to tap into the Islamic finance market without having to establish a separate Islamic banking entity. This has helped conventional banks to diversify their product offerings and attract customers who seek shariah-compliant financial products and services, which can help increase their customer base and revenue.

Islamic windows typically offer a range of products and services, including deposit accounts, financing, investment accounts, and trade finance, among others. These products and services are designed to comply with Islamic principles, such as the prohibition of *riba* (interest). Instead, Islamic finance products are based on principles of risk-sharing and profit-sharing.

Because Islamic banking operates differently from conventional banking, it is critical for Islamic windows of conventional banks to educate their clients about the principles of Islamic banking and how it works, especially given that Islamic windows continue to confront issues even after years of operation. The most notable are that some people question the purity of the initial capital for Islamic windows, as well as the difficulty in convincing clients to trust them and their ability to genuinely implement Islamic Shariah law without manipulation or fraud, as Shariah law prohibits interest, which is directly opposed to the principles of the traditional banking system.

Therefore, marketing communications can be used to explain the different types of Islamic banking products and services available and how they can benefit customers. This can help build trust with customers who are looking for a banking system that aligns with their Islamic values.

This brings us to the question, which might be stated as follows: **What is the importance of marketing communications mix in promoting products and services of Islamic windows?**

The importance of this study arises from the remarkable growth of Islamic windows in conventional banks which in turn has provided a significant boost to the growth of Islamic finance, and it is expected to continue to play an important role in the future. Also, this concept has also been seen as a way to increase financial inclusion by providing shariah-compliant products

and services to a broader range of customers.

This study is attempts to highlight the importance of marketing communications mix in promoting the Islamic banking product and services offered by Islamic windows in conventional banks along with showing the experience of Maisarah Islamic Banking Services Window in this respect, the Islamic window of Bank Dhofar based in Sultanate Of Oman, this in turn could help and benefit Algerian Islamic windows in conventional banks.

2. The Islamic Windows:

In order for conventional banks to offer services inside an interest-free environment, a specific procedure must be established. Conventional banks establish Islamic windows to offer banking products that are free from interest. The services offered by interest-free banks are identical to the ones given by Islamic windows (shamsadlen & aziz, 2019, p. 1). An Islamic window refers to a specific feature within a traditional bank that allows customers to engage in financial transactions using solely Sharia-compliant products. Islamic banking windows refer to specialized services provided by conventional banks to cater to consumers seeking Islamic banking services (emirhidayat & alkhalifa, 2016, p. 1). An Islamic window is a distinct division within a traditional bank that operates under the rigorous control of an independent Sharia Advisory Board. Its purpose is to create and provide Islamic financial products to clients who specifically request them.

The term "Islamic banking window" describes a scenario in which a conventional banking system offers part of the Islamic banking goods or services. Consequently, Islamic windows provide products to those conventional consumers who choose interest-free transactions (wahiba & kamoumia, 2020, p. 289).

3. The proliferation of Islamic windows throughout:

Not only in the Islamic world but also in many other countries, where the major traditional commercial banks adopted Islamic financial products, such as American Citibank, Dutch ABN-Amro, and Australian New Zealand ANZ set, Islamic windows and branches numbering 29652 in

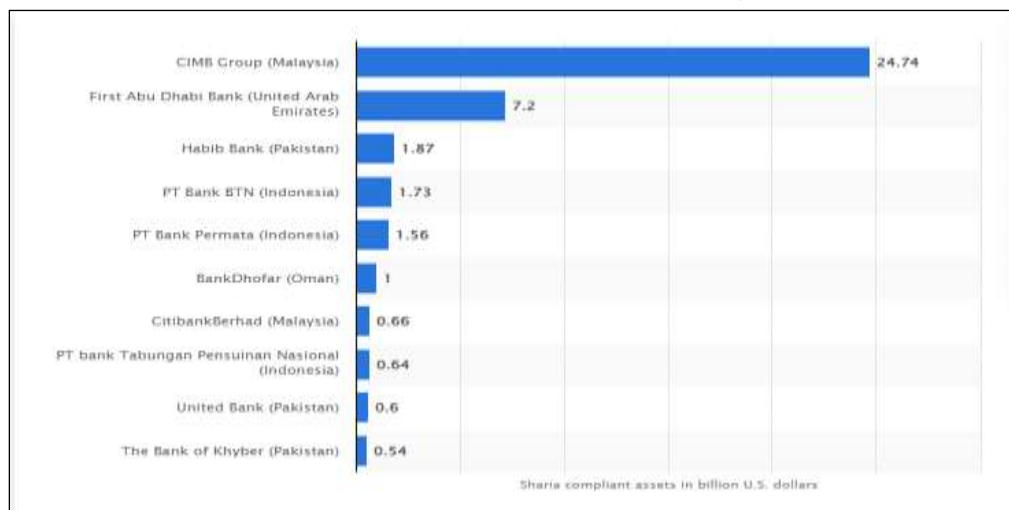
2018. The development and global spread of Islamic finance products has helped adoption by traditional banks in the form of branches and Islamic windows at the level of traditional banks.

In order to satisfy the demands of a significant portion of Muslims in Western nations, investment companies, offices, or windows operating in accordance with Sharia were adopted in London in the late 1970s and early 1980s. This marked the beginning of the emergence of Islamic windows activity in the British financial market (laounia, 2020, p. 8). In 2008, twenty conventional commercial banks launched Islamic financial products (Islamic windows), and there were five Islamic banks operating in the United Kingdom (Masiukiewicz, 2017, p. 38).

With a 71% share of the industry's assets, or US\$1.72 trillion, Islamic banking is the biggest sector within the Islamic finance industry. Various commercial, wholesale, and other kinds of banks assist this industry. However, the primary driver of the industry's expansion continues to be commercial banking. In 2021, there were 207 Islamic banking windows and 505 Islamic banks overall. (Spotlight: Islamic financing and investment structures in USA. (<https://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=4bdf0abd-b743-41db-ab1b-ed53b3e761fc>))

The following figure represents fastest growing Islamic windows among conventional banks worldwide.

Figure n°1: Islamic windows with the fastest rate of growth among global banks with assets above \$500 million in 2019.



Source: www.statista.com

In 2019, the First Abu Dhabi Bank in the United Arab Emirates had the highest growing Islamic windows rate of about 136 percent and its assets amounted to about 7.2 billion U.S dollars. With the assets of up to \$1 billion USD, Maisarah Islamic Window of Dhofar Bank (Oman) is among the fastest-growing Islamic windows and is rated sixth. However, Asian lenders dominated the remaining institutions on the list, which included two from Malaysia, three from Indonesia, and three from Pakistan.

4. Market challenges facing Islamic windows:

There are several difficulties confronting the Islamic windows as they are a component of the traditional banks. The lack of customers is one of these windows' problems. For the traditional banks, the lack of customers for the Islamic windows is an obvious problem. Customers do not invest through Islamic windows because they think that these windows cannot provide fully Islamic banking products. In other words, if customers wish to invest their money based on interest-free principles, they should use fully interest-free banking instead of Islamic windows from conventional banks. Because these banks are overseen by knowledgeable Shariah scholars, investors believe that the operations of fully-fledged Islamic banks are more consistent with Shariah law. Additionally, the investors in the Islamic windows want to make sure that the transactions they are funding are

compliant with Shariah laws.

Customers are aware that fully fledged Islamic banks operate under Shariah law since they are governed by a stringent Shariah monitoring committee. However, there is a chance that the Islamic window may use the money of its clients to engage in non-compliant Shariah transactions. Consequently, rather than making investments via the Islamic windows of traditional banks, customers and investors attempt to engage with fully-fledged Islamic banks. In order to address the issue of a shortage of clients, Islamic windows should, first, retain current clients who want to convert to Islamic finance; and, second, draw in new consumers from other banks, including Islamic banks. Furthermore, traditional banks must to assure their Islamic window investors that all transactions adhere to Shariah laws (shamsadlen & aziz, 2019, p. 4).

5. Marketing Communications:

The terms "marketing communication" are "communication" and "marketing." The interchange of ideas or thoughts, or the conveyance of information, is communication. explains "who" "says" "what," "with what channel," "to whom," and "with what result" or "what results" in a straightforward definition of communication. According to Kotler, communication marketing is a tool used by businesses to remind, educate, and convince customers about their products—either directly or indirectly (Adawiyah & all, 2021, p. 84).

Therefore, marketing communications refers to the process of interacting with clients or consumers. It may also mean the process of successfully informing target audiences about ideas or products (Tesfamariam, 2005, p. 17).

The mechanics of communication in every kind of human interaction are either the same or very comparable to those of marketing activities. When someone communicates with another via a medium or channel, they do so with the intention of creating the intended outcome. In marketing operations, producers and manufacturers who want to sell their goods must also raise awareness of the product, develop a desire for it among current customers, or assist in opening up a new market for the product if it is new and has to be introduced properly (Kumar, 2009, p. 40).

6. Marketing Communication Mix:

To communicate with a target audience, a range of combinations and intensities of a set of instruments known as the marketing communications mix may be used. Public relations, direct marketing, sales promotion, advertising, and personal selling are the five main marketing communications methods (Fill & Jamieson, 2006, pp. 14-15). Improvements in new technologies and methodologies allow businesses to promote their own brands and goods in new and improved ways (Milichovský, 2013, p. 37).

The following will be an explanation of each of the components of the marketing communications mix that were discussed:

6.1. Advertising:

Any paid, non-personal presentation and promotion of concepts, products, or services through print (magazines and newspapers), broadcast (radio and television), network (phone, cable, satellite, wireless), electronic (audiotape, videotape, videodisk, CD-ROM, Web page), and display (billboards, signs, posters) media is referred to as advertising (Maulani, 2017, p. 27). Conventional media, such radio, television, print, and electronic media, are used for advertising, in addition to emerging media, like social media that uses internet networks. New media, particularly social media, has developed more quickly than traditional media (Adawiyah & all, 2021, p. 84). As a result, advertising helped people become somewhat aware of and knowledgeable about a brand's and product's existence (Olujimi, 2014, p. 370). Key advertising goals may be described as follows, taking into account the advertising message's main purpose and its function in the product life cycle (Bačík, Richard, & Silvia, 2012, p. 316):

- **Informative advertising:** intends to educate the audience about a new product's features. This advertisement aims to increase demand.
- **Persuasive advertising:** successfully persuades a consumer to purchase just our product at a time of heightened competition.
- **Reminder advertising:** Before the next season, this advertising has to maintain our goods and brand in the minds of consumers.

6.2. Sales promotion:

Indirect advertising, or sales promotion activities, primarily use

incentives to increase sales (SUNDAY & Babatunde, p. 69). There are three primary types of sales promotion, and each has a unique set of methods or resources for execution. These three groups consist of (Tesfamariam, 2005, p. 26):

- Consumer-focused sales promotions, such as contests, gifts, prizes, and premiums, are used to entice consumers into shops.
- Trade or company promotions, such as exclusive terms, materials at the point of sale, complimentary pens, diaries, and competition prizes, are used to encourage the distribution of products.
- Sales promotions focused on the sales force to inspire sales teams.

6.3. Public relations:

Public relations focus on the firm as a whole rather than just the product. Their primary goals are to impact public opinion and foster understanding with the audience. The definition provided by the Foundation for Research and PR-education, which was developed after 472 definitions were examined, is very well-liked: "PR is a unique management function that aids in the creation and upkeep of a two-tiered relationship between a business and its users in terms of understanding, acceptance, collaboration, and communication. It helps management stay informed and responsive to public opinion; it defines and emphasizes the managerial responsibility for serving the public interest; it helps management stay aware of the situation at all times and use change as an early warning system. It includes management of problems and results. Anticipating trends, using research and ethical communication practices as essential instruments, are vital." A collection of activities that include any of the following and are directly related to the marketing function of the business can be used to sum up the modern definition and practice of public relations: special publications, involvement in community fundraising events, sponsorship of special events, lobbies and other public works to enhance the organization's image. As part of the company's management role, public relations help to create the ideal environment for collaboration, understanding, and communication between the organization and its audience. (Olujimi, 2014, p. 372).

6.4. Direct marketing:

The Direct Marketing Association of the United States of America

describes direct marketing as an interactive marketing strategy that employs one or more advertising medium to elicit a quantifiable reaction and/or transaction at any given place. Direct marketing aims to acquire and retain customers by getting in touch with them directly (Karaxha, Sejd, & Arjan, 2016, p. 50).

The major forms of direct marketing are as follows: (Abraham & Jerin, 2019, p. 20)

- **Direct mail:** Direct mail comes in a variety of forms (e.g. catalogs, postcards, envelope mailers).
- **Telemarketing:** Selling goods or services to prospective clients over the phone is known as telemarketing.
- **Email marketing:** E-newsletters, offers for current clients or prospects, and advertisements that may show up in emails from other businesses are a few examples.
- **Text (SMS) marketing:** Short messaging service (SMS) reminders for appointments or deliveries, links to website changes, and sales notifications are sent by several prestigious businesses to their clientele.
- **Using mailbox drops and handouts, leaflet marketing:** distributing professionally prepared flyers or pamphlets via mailbox drops and handouts.
- **Social media marketing:** Social media offers businesses the chance to communicate directly with consumers and consistently post pertinent information about their products and services.
- **Kiosk Marketing:** Kiosks are devices that businesses station in shopping centers and other similar locations in order to disseminate information and take orders from patrons.

6.5. Personal selling:

Face-to-face communication with one or more potential customers with the aim of delivering presentations, fielding inquiries, and obtaining orders is known as personal selling. Personal sales are characterized by the seller persuading and assisting the consumer in making a purchase via a personal presentation of concepts and goods to the client. Oral presentations of products, services, or ideas made in private to one or more prospective customers with the goal of encouraging and assisting them in making a purchase are known as personal sales. (Maulani, 2017, p. 27)

7. Case Study: The Marketing communication Mix in Maisarah Islamic Window:

7.1. Status legally and main operations

With its headquarters located in Muscat (Azaibah), Maisarah Islamic Banking Services was founded in the Sultanate of Oman as a branch of Bank Dhofar SAOG, also known as "the Bank." The Central Bank of Oman granted Maisarah a license on February 27, 2013, and it has been operating via ten branches around the Sultanate since March 3, 2013 (Dhofar, 2020, p. 340).

There is no independent legal body for the window. The Bank's assets and liabilities are shown inside this window and cannot be legally separated from the Bank's other assets and liabilities. As a result, the window's assets could be accessible to the Bank's other claims.

The goal of Maisarah Islamic Banking Services is to be the top supplier of Islamic banking services in Oman. It has shown a strong commitment to product innovation and offers a wide variety of financial solutions that satisfy the demands of both corporate and retail clients while adhering to Shari'a law. In line with its growth strategy, Maisarah intends to set itself apart from the competition by prioritizing exceptional service quality, creating and introducing novel products, and making technological investments to enhance the customer experience across its growing network of branches, ATMs, and CDM facilities (maisarah) .

The main business operations of Maisarah include accepting Shari'a compliant demands, time deposit and savings accounts, offering financing options such as Ijarah and Murabaha, as well as managing investor funds through Mudaraba or agency for a fee. Additionally, the company offers commercial banking services and other investment-related activities .

The Central Bank of Oman ("CBO") controls Maisarah's operations and the five-member Shari'a Supervisory Board ("SSB") is in charge of overseeing them (Dhofar, 2020, p. 340).

7.2. The marketing communication mix

The maisarah Islamic window has adopted and used various tools to communicate with its target audience. We are going to showcase those different elements as follows:

7.2.1. Advertising:

Maisarah Islamic services window has been using various forms and types of advertising to communicate with its public for different purposes. The Maisarah Islamic window is depending heavily on non-conventional media or new media which basically represented in social media as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube, where it uses them to inform its public about its new products and their features, new offers, competitions and prize draws, discounts and so on.

In order to attract more clients, Maisarah is always working on different awareness campaigns to raise public awareness of Islamic banking in general and Maisarah in particular. They also collaborate with organizations and organize conferences to bring Islamic banking to the market's attention. In addition to running a robust mobile banking app campaign to attract more users to the mobile banking channel, they are also maintaining their social media "did you know" postings to raise awareness of Islamic banking products available in the market (Dhofar, 2020, p. 51).

7.2.2. Sales promotions:

Sales promotion is one the most important marketing mix tools that Maisarah Islamic window depends heavily on to boost sales and even to attract new customers. The Maisarah Islamic window uses this technique for various offers and services and on different occasions as Ramadan, national day, holidays and so on in every year.

The most used sales promotion category by Maisarah is customer-oriented sales promotion to encourage them to buy or use specific services and products and to attract new customers. These are some examples of Maisarah sales promotions:

- A promotional campaign for the holy month of Ramadan was launched by Maisarah Islamic Banking Services in 2015. The company offered unique pricing schemes for personal, vehicle, commodities, and property financing urging clients to take advantage of the "Ahlan Ramadan" deals. The profit rates on all personal, vehicle, and real estate financing have been lowered to 4.20% annually, according to Maisarah's Head of Retail. Clients may also take advantage of a grace period with no payback requirements. The property financing special offer was applicable for a year from the date of

disbursement in order to further prolong the advantage to consumers.

In Ramadan of 2022, Maisarah Islamic Banking Services has unveiled an exclusive Ramadan offer with attractive profit rates on its Auto Finance. The new profit rates started from 3.45%. So Maisarah is constantly offering diverse discounts and promotions on holy month Ramadan every year for its customers.

- Maisarah Islamic Banking Services window provides an exclusive and bundle of offers for Maisarah Visa cardholders. Maisarah window partnered with Visa and Jumeirah Hotels to offer Maisarah cardholders up to 25% discount when they use their card to book their stay at Jumeirah Hotels and Resorts in UAE, Maldives, UK, Spain, Kuwait and the Sultanate.

In addition to this offer, Maisarah provides its cardholders various benefits and offers. Customers can enjoy exclusive offers and promotions, and discounted rates on certain products/ services such as: getting 20% discount on all fabrics in North Al Hail, and 17% discount when shopping on Shein and 10% discount and cash-back with Maisarah visa cards for GCC on bookingcom along with free airport lounge access, global emergency assistance and global ATM network.

Moreover, Maisarah Islamic Banking Services launched a new mobile banking application that comes with added value, and special discounts and exclusive offerings to Maisarah cardholders. “My Offers – BD & MIBS” allows customers to enjoy 50% discounts, including Buy-1-Get-1 deals, across more than 1500 outlets in Oman and UAE.

- In 2022, Maisarah Offered Competitive finance profit rates started from 3.45% for auto finance, 4.95% for home finance and 4.99% for personal finance compared with discounted profit rates of last year that came as part of a four-month campaign that ended on 31st of December 2021. The preferential rates during that promotion was 4.5% for Personal Finance and 4.9% for Housing Finance.

Since the launch of discounted profit rates on select finance products, Maisarah Islamic Banking Services has witnessed a remarkable response from customers across the Sultanate of Oman applying for Auto Finance, Home Finance and Personal Finance to meet their specific needs. The

discounted profit rates have attracted existing and new customers to open accounts with Maisarah, according to the head of distribution network at Maisarah.

- The Prize Account Scheme, introduced by Maisarah Islamic Banking Services in 2018, is predicated on the Islamic idea of Mudarabah, which is profit sharing. Customers may enter the Prize Account Scheme and win significant rewards just by keeping a minimum balance of OMR 100 for a short period of time. The Prize Account Scheme for 2020 included increased rewards, an increased number of winners, and guaranteed prizes for every branch all year long. Customers had additional opportunities to win from a prize pool of over OMR 700,000 in the main prizes, special prizes, sector prizes, and grand prizes thanks to the system, which also made winning simpler for them.

Maisarah does its annual Grand Prize draw for the Prize Account Scheme at the end of the year. Maisarah Islamic Banking Services is giving its clients the opportunity to win OMR 25,000, OMR 50,000, or OMR 100,000 as prizes for one winner each as part of the Grand Prize draw. Every week, there are thirty winners as well. Additionally, there are special rewards for kids in the monthly drawings, where ten winners total—one winner from each location will get OMR 100. Monthly awards of OMR 500 are offered to Standard and Affluent Banking clients. Each branch will choose one winner, for a total of ten prizes. In the meanwhile, ten customers from each branch of Priority Banking have the opportunity to win OMR 2,000 each in monthly drawings.

Maisarah arranges a variety of prizes, Prize Account Scheme drawings, and special draws each year. Three winners from each branch will get weekly prizes of OMR 100 each, for a total of 30 winners every week, in the prize account scheme's prize draws. Additionally, there are special rewards for kids in the monthly drawings, where ten winners total—one winner from each location will get OMR 100. Monthly awards of OMR 500 are offered to Standard and Affluent Banking clients. Each branch will choose one winner, for a total of ten prizes. In the meanwhile, ten customers from each branch of Priority Banking have the opportunity to win OMR 2,000 each in monthly drawings.

Furthermore, there are mid-year grand prize drawings that award OMR

10,000 in the Priority Banking area, OMR 5000 in the Standard and Affluent Banking category, and OMR 1,000 in the Children category to three clients from throughout the Maisarah branch network. Additionally, the following is the value of the prizes for each of those three categories in the Year-End Mega Draws: OMR 2,000, 10,000, and 100,000.

Above that, there are Special draws which include the following: new to bank prizes: one winner of OMR 500 per branch; new credit card user: one winner of OMR 500 per branch; Health professionals' prizes: one winner of OMR 1,100 per branch; teachers prizes: OMR 1,100 for one winner per branch; Retirees prizes: OMR 600 each; ROP & MOD prizes: OMR 1,100 for one winner per branch. In addition to these previous prizes, also there are other prizes such as: National Day Prizes where five winners per branch will be awarded OMR 11,000 with total number of 50 winners, and also Omani Women's Day Prizes where one winner per branch will be granted OMR 1000.

7.2.3. Public relations:

One of the most public relations tools used by Maisarah is sponsorship especially sponsoring of events related to Islamic banking and finance. Since its foundation, Maisarah Islamic window sponsored various events an example of that as follows:

- The second Islamic banking and finance conference was sponsored by Maisarah Islamic Banking Services in March 2013 and was held in Oman. It was notable for the high level attendance of prominent figures in the Islamic finance sector.
- Maisarah Islamic window sponsored the first Arab conference for female entrepreneurs in 2016 which focused on SME and entrepreneurship industry. Maisarah's involvement in this convention aligns with its overarching goal to help SME and provide a conducive atmosphere for them to expand, network, and share knowledge (<https://www.zawya.com>).
- The conference on Islamic banking and finance, which was sponsored and attended by Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), represented by the College of Economics and Political Science, in cooperation with the Islamic Research and Training Institute of the Islamic Development Bank, was organized by Maisarah.

- Maisarah Islamic Banking Services participated in the seventh edition of Islamic Finance News (IFN) Oman Forum 2022 held at the Grand Millennium Muscat Hotel. A panelist on the subject of "Building a Nation: Funding National Development through Islamic Finance" was Maisarah Islamic Banking Services. The discussion centered on Islamic real estate finance and how it might be utilized in Oman to fund intricate projects and assets via structures that adhere to Shariah. It discussed whether Islamic goods are a good fit for financing public-private partnerships that create infrastructure and undertake large-scale projects .

Maisarah Islamic Banking Services reaffirmed its leadership position as a socially conscious company by endorsing a range of social projects that advance the growth and welfare of the community. Among these projects are: Maisarah, the scientific conference for His Eminence Burhan Al Haqq's book *Under the direction of Shaikh Hamad bin Hilal bin Ali Al Maamari, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Heritage and Culture for Cultural Affairs, the Grand Mufti of the Sultanate, Shaikh Ahmed bin Hamad Al Khalili, was present at the Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) Conference Hall. The conference was attended by a number of scientists, researchers, and intellectuals from both within and outside the Sultanate .*

Conversely, Maisarah supported Al Sharqaiya University's 4th Cultural Week, which strives to showcase the student body's ideas and abilities. Several organizations from the public and corporate sectors as well as students took part in the event.

Maisarah recognizes its importance as a vital component of the community and works to enhance its reach by forming external collaborations with a range of governmental and commercial sector institutions, as well as non-profit and philanthropic groups. It engages in events and activities throughout the Sultanate and works with different organizations and non-profit associations to strengthen its social responsibility and community outreach programs (Dhofar, 2020)

7.2.4. Direct Marketing:

Maisarah has been using various forms of direct marketing in order to connect with its customers and get closer to them along with promoting and raising awareness about its products and services.

One of direct marketing form that Maisarah used is kiosk marketing, it opened many kiosks and commission mobile branch to help to increase the footprint in locations where the bank do not have presence or further penetrate into the market which is contributing to reaching out to potential customers. Another example of kiosk marketing which used by Maisarah is ATM and CDM facilities (Dhofar, 2020, p. 51), where the Islamic banking window of Bank Dhofar had launched a bundle of pioneering facilities to give customers instant access to more services through a larger network of ATM/ CDM outlets nationwide. Therefore customers can benefit from free-of-charge cash withdrawal through over 140 ATMs within Maisarah and Bank Dhofar network across Oman. Also in a remarkable move to making banking easy for customers in all parts of the Sultanate, Maisarah had enabled customers to deposit cash to their own accounts and to other Maisarah accounts instantly via a wide network of more than 70 Bank Dhofar and Maisarah CDMs in all major Omani cities and towns. This made Maisarah one of the first Islamic banking services provider in the Sultanate to offer such cost-free instant cash deposit facility using beneficiary phone number instead of the bank account number. Also, Maisarah customers can now activate their newly opened accounts via Bank Dhofar and Maisarah CDMS, and complete charity and Zakat payments through Maisarah CDMs

One of other direct marketing types that used by Maisarah is direct selling which involves a consultant selling products or services at customer's home or workplace. Maisarah has conducted a customized seminar on banking products, services and financial options for staff of the Ministry of Defense, Sultan of Oman's Armed Forces – Izki on the latest methods of the Islamic banking in Oman (Spotlight: Islamic financing and investment structures in USA; <https://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=4bdf0abd-b743-41db-ab1b-ed53b3e761fc>).

Additionally, Maisarah has set up an awareness campaign at Haya Water in an effort to engage with clients and highlight the company's goods and services. Personnel from Haya Water and Maisarah representatives attended the awareness program. The awareness campaign at Haya Water was a part of Maisarah's aim to interact with consumers and showcase its goods and

services via a variety of touch-points (zawya).

Social media is another powerful direct marketing tool used by Maisarah. They use different platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube to interact directly with its customers and regularly share relevant products and services information such as launching new products, and offers, and promotional campaign and so on.

7.2.5. Personal selling:

To achieve its marketing aims and objectives, Maisarah has been paying close attention to this marketing communication instrument, which is reflected in ongoing training sessions for its sales staff. As an illustration, Maisarah Islamic Banking Services organized the well-liked professional sales training program "Carew International's Dimensions of Professional Selling (DPS)" in 2017 for the benefit of its employees as a strategic approach to improve customer experience by developing its employees' skills .

The DPS training session was attended by more than 20 workers from Maisarah Islamic Banking Services' corporate and head office. Its objectives were to improve client interactions, support innovative problem-solving techniques, better position selling systems, and develop and execute a strategic selling strategy. It helped raise staff members' knowledge of marketing, sales techniques, and customer communication. It also gave them better tools to use in determining the requirements and priorities of customers, ensuring both customer happiness and corporate success. (bankdhofar, <https://www.bankdhofar.com/en-GB/News/2/919.aspx>)

As previously said, Maisarah has arranged several awareness events that are given by company representatives in an effort to engage with clients and highlight their offerings.

8. Conclusion

The Islamic window concept enables conventional banks to tap into the growing market of Islamic finance while leveraging their existing infrastructure and expertise in banking. By offering Islamic finance products, conventional banks can attract customers who seek shariah-compliant financial products and services, which can help increase their

customer base and revenue. Still Islamic windows are facing a number of challenges; one of the major challenges is the perception and credibility among customers. There are concerns among some customers that Islamic banking products are not genuine or that they are just a marketing ploy. To overcome this, Islamic windows of conventional banks need to educate customers about Islamic banking principles and the Shariah compliance of their products. Therefore, this paper intends to investigate the importance of marketing communications mix in Islamic windows in conventional banks. Marketing communications mix in Islamic windows is a combination of various promotional tools and techniques that are used to communicate with their target audience and promote Islamic banking products and services. Since Islamic banking operates based on Shari'ah principles, the marketing communications mix for Islamic windows of conventional banks may differ slightly from the conventional banking sector.

Some of the promotional tools and techniques that are commonly used in Islamic banking are:

- Advertising: Advertising is an important promotional tool for Islamic banking products and services. The advertising messages are designed to communicate the Shari'ah compliance of the bank's products and services to the target audience. Advertising can be done through various media channels such as print, electronic media, social media, and outdoor advertising.
- Public Relations: it is an important tool for building and maintaining the reputation of Islamic banks. Public relations activities can include press releases, media interviews, sponsorships, and community involvement.
- Sales Promotion: Sales promotion techniques such as discounts, cashback offers, and gift vouchers are commonly used to encourage customers to use Islamic banking products and services.
- Direct Marketing: it involves using targeted communication channels such as email, or telemarketing to communicate with specific individuals or groups of customers. Direct marketing is commonly used to promote Islamic banking products and services and to generate leads.
- Personal Selling: it can be an effective tool for Islamic windows to explain the benefits and features of their products and services, especially for

complex financial products such as investment funds. This method involves direct communication between the bank's representatives and the potential customers.

Overall, the marketing communications mix of Islamic windows should focus on building trust, providing clear information, and promoting transparency and ethical conduct.

The study also shows based on case study of Maisarah Islamic Banking Services Window of bank Dhofar that marketing communications mix is important to promote Islamic banking products and services, and boost sales and attract new customers, raising a positive awareness and build a good reputation of Islamic windows.

In conclusion, marketing communications in Islamic windows of conventional banks should be tailored to the unique needs and values of Islamic banking customers. By using strategies that focus on education, targeted advertising, collaboration with Islamic organizations, and community engagement, these banks can build strong relationships with their customers and promote their Islamic banking products and services effectively.

9. Bibliography List :

- Abraham, V., & Jerin, J. (2019). An Empirical Study on Direct Marketing as the most effective form of marketing in the digitalized marketing environment. *International Journal of Research Science and Management*, 6(1).
- Adawiyah, S. E., & all. (2021). Integrated Marketing Communications Sharia Banking Economy. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Social, Economics, Business, and Education*. Atlantic press international.
- Bačík, R., Richard, F., & Silvia, Š. (2012). Advertising as a tool of marketing communication and its consequent impact on consumers. *Polish Journal Of Management Studies*(5).
- bankdhofar. (s.d.). <https://www.bankdhofar.com/en-GB/News/2/919.aspx> .
- bankdhofar. (2018, october). <https://www.bankdhofar.com/en-GB/News/2/1077.aspx>.
- Dhofar, B. (2020). *Annual report 2020*.

- emirhidayat, s., & al-khalifa, k. m. (2016, july). Islamic Banking windows Vs Islamic Banking Subsidiary: Educators' Opinion In Bahrain. *international journal of pedagogical innovations*, p. 1.
- Fill, C., & Jamieson, B. (2006). *Marketing Communications*. The United Kingdom: Edinburgh Business School.
- <https://www.zawya.com>. (s.d.). Récupéré sur <https://www.zawya.com/en/press-release/maisarah-conducts-awareness-program-at-haya-water-g2dn076c>.
- Karaxha, H., Sejd, T., & Arjan, A. (2016). The Role of Direct Marketing in Relation with the Consumers in Kosovo. *ILIRIA International Review*, 6(1).
- Kumar, N. (2009). Integrated Marketing communications. *Himalaya Publishing House*.
- laounia, b. (2020, decembre). Islamic Windows experience in Algerian legislation. *journal of economic and management* .
- maisarah. (s.d.). https://www.maisarah-oman.com/Maisarah_Islamic_Banking_Services .
- Masiukiewicz, P. (2017, june). Expansion of Islamic Finance in Europe. *Journal of Intercultural Management*.
- Maulani, T. S. (2017, april). the effectiveness of promotional mix toward image of the thematic day in Bandung. *International Journal of Business, Economics and Law*, 2(12).
- Milichovský, F. (2013). *New Tools for Effective Marketing Communications*. Acta Univ. Bohem. Merid.
- Olujimi, K. (2014). *Marketing communication*. Available on: <https://bookboon.com/fr/author/0908031c-ce02-9b86-11e6-6dd9f2f099d1>.
- solé, j. (2007, july). Introducing Islamic Banks into Conventional Banking Systems. *international monetary fund*, 8.
- Spotlight: Islamic financing and investment structures in USA* ;<https://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=4bdf0abd-b743-41db-ab1b-ed53b3e761fc>. (s.d.).
- SUNDAY, A., & Babatunde, B. (s.d.). *Strategic influence of promotional Mix on organization sale turnover In The face of Strong competitors*.
- Tesfamariam, T. B. (2005). *THE USE OF MARKETING COMMUNICATION TOOLS IN LESS DEVELOPED COUNTRIES WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO THE ERITREAN MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY*. University of Stellenbosch.

wahiba, b., & kamoumia, s. (2020, march). , An Empirical study of factors affecting successful converting to the Islamic finance through the Islamic banking Windows in Algeria - A Case Study of CNEP/BANK. *journal of economic integration* , p. 289.

zawya. (s.d.). <https://www.zawya.com/en/press-release/maisarah-conducts-awareness-program-at-haya-water-g2dn076c> .