

Obstacles to Ethical Marketing: a View of the Salesman's of Alternative Medicine Institutions

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Abstract:

This study aims to identify the obstacles to ethical marketing at the Algerian alternative medicine institutions. To achieve this, an interview was conducted, and a questionnaire was designed directly for the Salesman of the alternative medicine institutions in the state of Mascara.

The study concluded that evaluating salesman's orientation toward the obstacles of ethical marketing practice in the Algerian alternative medicine institutions rises to the Highest level, but it revealed no effect of the variable of Gender, Age, Educational level, Quality of Salesman's (Salesman for one institution or Mixed).

Keywords: *Obstacles, : Ethical Marketing, : Salesman's, : Alternative Medicine, Algerian.*

Jel Classification Codes: *M31, M37.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The survival and prosperity of business organizations in the 21 century will be determined by how organizations will face the following six challenges: international competition and new technologies, increased quality, employee motivation, management of a diverse workforce, and ethical behavior ¹.

Today there is widespread concern about ethics in public and private life extending to many areas—politics, education, health, as well as business, especially marketing. Indeed, The current period, may be called the “ethics era.” For marketers, that means standards of acceptable marketing practice have shifted along a continuum².

Ethics are essential for Marketing. The relationship between ethics and marketing has been given careful consideration in recent years³. It helps the company to win the trust and loyalty of its customers on the long-term, which helps it attain its aims of higher sales, increased market share, superior brand value... etc. On the other hand, it helps to generate sustainable growth, and building confidence in the economy. Ethical marketing activities can, therefore, contribute to regain the confidence of customers and society as a whole.

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The ethical concept of marketing underlines the commitment of the institution to regulations and instructions in production processes. And if it has provided the necessary information for the consumer about the products that it has provided such as the right to identify product, its specifications, components, advantages...etc. And finally, to not deceive and cheat the consumer⁴.

Previously, Marketing was easier, but it was never as important as it has become nowadays, ethical problems were less obvious, because people did not care. Currently, marketing ethical dilemmas showed up, through the separation of marketing practices from ethical values, which resulted in negative destructive effects on human survival. Malliaris summarized it as follows: (1) It encourages materialism; (2) It generates the pressure on consumers for the acquisition of goods; (3) Pollution of the natural environment; (4) contribute to natural resources deletion; (5) It creates an increase in final price of the product; (6) It deceives consumers by projecting imaginary or no quality differences on the products; (7) It allures consumers into buying products that they might not really need; (8) Advertising many times of bad taste and offends the masses; (9) The involvement of many intermediaries during product distribution; (10) thereby compelling the consumer to make buying decisions under pressure⁵. Marketing has taken the most criticism and carried the most suspicion on moral and social responsibility issues.

In order to meet the marketing practices and to reduce their effects, marketing standards must be approached to the product like: pricing, promotion and distribution.

Against those standards, the managers, marketers, or salesmen...etc are subjected to a set of obstacles that cause them to not adhere them. According to the previous two studies⁶, It turns out that the Algerian institutions adhere to ethical requirements for marketing on average. Which means that, there are some obstacles impeding the application of ethical marketing.

Unfortunately, as recent events in Algeria have demonstrated, the problem of unethical conduct leads to market crash, for example, the alternative medicine market. According to the recent report of the Merchants Directorate of the city of Mascara in 2019, several illegal sales agents were registered for institutions of alternative medicine, such as the bayt alhikma institution, the Soft Center and the Ibn Al-Shanfar institution. Also, according to the statistics issued by the National Center for Commercial Register of the city of Mascara until the last trio of 2019, only 9 stores specialized in the sale of medicinal herbs, the town of Tigheninf has two stores, and the town of Ghriss has 3 stores registered in the municipality of Camp, While in fact we find more than that. In the same recent report of 2019, the Merchants Directorate of Mascara city recorded about 34 state-level merchants selling homemade herbal and imported herbal mixtures which do not carry any treatment and mismatching claims as their owners claimed that it's effective and appropriate.

Thus, the trader of the markets of these institutions believes that most of his owners have deviated from the ethical standards of marketing that affected the consumer. .

Therefore, in this research we attempt to get an answer for our main question: **Are there any obstacles that prevent the application of ethic marketing at the**

Algerian alternative medicine institutions? And branch from it the following questions:

- What is ethics marketing?
- What are the obstacles that face marketing ethic?

Based on the research problems, the following study hypotheses will be examined:

- **H1:** Evaluate salesman's trends of the obstacles of ethical marketing practice in the Algerian alternative medicine institutions rises to the highest level.
- **H0:** Not found statistically significant differences at the level (0.05) in the Evaluation salesman's orientation toward the obstacles of ethical marketing practice in the Algerian Alternative medical institutions attributable to the variable demographic: Gender, Age, Educational level, Quality of Salesman's (Salesman for one institution or Mixed)".

The aim of this study is to identify the obstacles to ethical marketing at the alternative medicine institutions in particular and economic institutions in general.

Those who will benefit from the study are: Owners of economic institutions in general and alternative medicine institutions in particular, and the Government.

In this study I did not take a literary look at the alternative medicine in order to avoid repetition, because I had previously dealt with it in a previous study entitled: "Ethic Advertising at the Algerian Alternative Medicine Company - The case from the standpoint of customers" In addition, this study is considered a complement to the previous one and the thesis. PhD.

The study is divided into two sections. The first section gives a brief literature overview regarding ethics marketing and its obstacles. The second section presents the case study on the ethical marketing at alternative medicine institutions in Mascara -A View of the Salesman's.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Marketing Ethic

There is no specific definition of marketing ethics yet. However, Ethics are a collection of principles of right conduct which shape the decisions that people or institutions make⁷. When the term 'ethics' is applied to marketing, it means Practicing ethics in marketing means.

Marketing ethics is defined as "the moral principles that determine good or bad behavior of marketing"⁸. John F. Gaski finds that marketing ethics can be considered as "standards of conduct and moral judgment applied to marketing practice"⁹.

Consequently, Ethical marketing is based on ethical product standards, such as dealing with useful and beneficial products, safety and security of products, adherence to complies in the product composition... and on ethical pricing standards; like fair pricing, stop prices reduction to harm the competitors and prohibiting dealing with usury... and on ethical Promotion standards; avoid the instincts and feeling lusts, reduce using of vulnerable groups (children, women), No exaggeration in attributes

and No swearing in the name of Allah. Prophet Mohammad Peace Be Upon Him (PBUH) said “Swearing produces a ready sale for a commodity, but blots out the blessing”¹⁰, honesty and avoiding cheating and fraud; Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) said “whoever deceives us is not one of us”¹¹, Do not use comparative advertising...., and finally on ethical distribution standards; Tolerance and fairness in distribution, forbidding monopoly, save consumer privacy... etc¹².

Ethic marketing helps the institution to win the trust and loyalty of its customers on the long-term which helps it attain its aims of higher sales, increased market share, superior brand value... etc. On the other hand, helping to generate sustainable growth, and building confidence in the economy. Ethical marketing activities can therefore contribute in regaining confidence of customers and society as a whole.

2.2. Obstacles to the Application of Ethical Marketing

Versus previous ethical standards for marketing, managers, marketers, or salesmen ... are subjected to a set of obstacles that cause them to not adhere to them. Three main obstacles to ethical marketing can be identified as:

- **Religious Obstacles**

According to one study, marketers in some institutions believe that the obstacles which justify to them adopting unethical practices are as follows¹³:

- In recent time Islamic ethical standards cannot be applied.
- Marketers' Weak faith in religion.
- Marketers believe that adherence to Islamic regulations limits the profits of the institution.
- There is no specific religious reference in the institution that defines ethical standards.

- **Organizational Obstacles**

Most experts emphasize that the general manager responsible for marketing, defines ethical tone of the entire marketing institution¹⁴. Which leads some managers impose personal values on employees; It is abundant in the traditional approaches to management.

Organizational pressures create unethical topics. For instance, with increasing competition and shrinking profits often increases the pressure to return the product components with poor quality to reduce costs. Ethical problem arises when marketers fail to inform customers about changes in the quality of the product, which is a form of improbity about the nature of the product¹⁵.

- **Rewards System**

In a study titled: “The Effect Of Organizational Climate And Organizational Commitment On Unethical Behavior At Work”, It was found out that organizational factors such as the reward system, affect the frequency of unethical behavior at work¹⁶.

Among the driving causes of ethical practices is the "reward system". Where the corporation puts for each delegate a certain sales volume coupled with financial

incentives (commission), which motivates the delegate to distribute the corporation's products in unethical ways in order to get the maximum possible commission, as it stands now with agents selling pharmaceutical products and medicines.

Moreover, gifts and other benefits are often provided in a business-to business context as a means of developing the relationship between suppliers and their business customers still, at the same time, giving and receiving gifts and benefits is cited as one of the most ethically problematic issues in marketing (purchasing and sales). The Principles and Standards of Ethical Supply Management Conduct of the US's Institute for Supply Management contains two relevant standards¹⁷:

- Avoid any personal, business or professional activity that would create a conflict between personal interests and the interests of the employer.
- Avoid soliciting or accepting money, loans, credits, or preferential discounts, and the acceptance of gifts, entertainment, favors, or services from present or potential suppliers that might influence, or appear to influence, supply management decisions.

- **The weak legal framework and its weak implementation**

Although laws have been enacted, they remain few compared to the reality of marketing practices. What makes the institutions do not face any ethic dilemma. J.E. Mc Carthy says that in most countries minimal ethical standards are merely defined by laws. "A marketing manager does not face an ethical dilemma about complying with the laws and regulations. Whether a marketer is operating in his or her own country, or in a foreign nation, the legal environment sets the minimal standards of ethical behavior as defined by a society"¹⁸. For example, comparative advertising and harmful products such as tobacco, wine etc. Also, there are some sectors that have been absent from the national and legislative policies to regulate them as is the case with alternative medicine products in Algeria.

- **Competition**

Ethic Marketing put the needs of consumers and society first, as for the competition is a language that emphasizes the concepts of power, control and domination - the antithesis of concern, caring and cooperation, and scarcely consistent with the concepts of ethical behavior¹⁹.

As a result of the multiplication of institutions, the trust and reliability factor which governed relations among marketers²⁰. And under the pressures of trade liberalization, managers often find themselves in race against time to make profits and compete efficiently. In doing so, many of them neglect ethical principles. For instance, fraudulent practices among marketers are not limited to manipulating prices, especially during religious holidays or events, but include selling commodities with long expired dates to customers who are either illiterate or are unaware of the significance of buying products with valid dates. The pressure to make a profit, too, may induce some marketers or companies to bribe government officers in order to obtain export or import licenses or influence governments to open markets for imported agricultural or industrial products, irrespective of the damage done to local producers²¹.

- **Opportunities**

According to O.C.Ferrel, opportunities are among the factors that influence ethical decision. An opportunity could be described as a favourable set of the conditions that limit barriers or provide rewards²². Experience shows that if a marketer uses the possibility of unethical behavior and is rewarded but not punished he can repeat such action again when the opportunity arises. Therefore, the greater rewards and the smaller penalties for unethical behavior, the likelihood of practice such behaviour is increasing²³. So, Marketing managers perceive many opportunities 'in their firms and industries to engage in unethical behaviors. However, they report that few managers frequently engage in such behaviors²⁴.

- Poor role played by consumer protection societies makes the institution avoid the application of ethical standards.
- The lack of understanding and awareness of the consumers to their right or their failure to claim them.
- Marketing managers are unaware of the concept and practices of deception, and the severe damage it can cause to institutions. Marketers who are adopting this orientation may remain oblivious about the possible consequences of their actions. Top MNC companies like Mc Donald and Nestle had faced lots of problems even after incurring billions of dollars in monetary values because of neglecting ethical issues in their marketing practices with consequences of losing thousands of valuable hybrid customers. Later it was identified that those are the results of adapting unethical advertising & promotional strategies²⁵.

3. Methods and Materials

In concerning side of literature and to the practical aspect applied, we the researcher have worked to projection from theoretical concepts to reality. Through a field study on the obstacles to the application of ethical marketing at alternative medicine institutions in Mascara -A View of the Salesman's (Lina Center, Bait Al-Hikma, Ibn Al-Shanfra, Abu Saad, Physical Care Centers, and Mixed Agents).

3.1. Study Methodology

Descriptive studies involve collecting data in order to test hypotheses and answer questions concerning the current status of the subject of a study. In this study, the researcher chose the analytical descriptive method using an applied manner.

To achieve this, interview was conducted, and a questionnaire was designed directly to the Salesman's . The researcher used a simple random sample. (10) Questionnaires distributed as a sample of the study. (01) of the returned questionnaires were removed from the statistical analysis because they were insufficient so, the number of questionnaires used for analysis is equaled to (09).

Data from the returned responses were collected for analysis and conclusions of the study questions. The researcher used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences SPSS, and the researcher used the suitable statistical methods that consist of:

- Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to test Reliability.
- Descriptive statistics and Arithmetic Mean and standard deviations. It has also been used test (t-test), and a test of variance (ANOVA).

- Relative importance: Number of levels are (3) as; High, Mid and Low. The following (table 1) shows how the range of number of levels computed.

Table 1. Range of Level of Importance Scale

Mean Range	Coefficient
from 1.00 to 1.66	Low
from 1.67 to 2.33	Mid
from 2.34 to 3.00	High

Source : By Author from Spss output

Reliability (Cronbach alpha coefficient); the reliability analysis applied the level of Cronbach's Alpha ($\alpha=0.753$) as the criteria of internal consistency which at a minimum acceptable level were ($\alpha \geq 0.60$) suggested by Sekaran.

3.2. Results and discussion

This part describes the results of the distribution of responses for each demographic variable, statistical analysis of the data collection for research question and research hypothesis.

- **Demographic Variables of Sample**

Table 2. Distribution of Sample individuals according to demographic Variables

Variables	Class	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	3	33.3
	Female	6	66.7
Total		9	100
Age	less than 25 years	0	0
	25-34 years	3	33.3
	35-45 years	4	44.4
	more than 45 years	2	22.2
Total		9	100
Educational Level	primary	0	0
	Average	3	33.3
	secondary	3	33.3
	academic	3	33.3
Total		9	100
Salesman for:	Salesman for one institution / center	6	66.7
	Mixed Salesman	3	33.3
Total		9	100

Source: By Authors from Spss output

• **Descriptive Variables**

This section illustrates the descriptive statistics for each variable and its item as mean and standard deviation, beside the rank and the level of importance.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of obstacles to ethical marketing

ite	Statement	Mean	Sta.dev	Rank	Level
01	The weakness of religious at some marketers of alternative medicine.	2,22	0,667	5	Mid
02	Marketers of alternative medicine believe that adherence to Islamic regulations limits the profits of the institution.	2,11	0,782	6	Mid
03	There is no specific religious reference in the institution that defines ethical standards.	2,78	0,441	2	High
04	Regulatory pressure of the institution that hinder the applying of ethical standards.	2,00	0,707	7	Mid
05	The reward system pushed up salesman's to not apply ethical standards.	2.00	0,866	7	Mid
06	The absence of national and legislative policies which regulates alternative medicine prompts the institution that defines ethical standards.	2,89	0,333	1	High
07	The competitiveness of institution among themselves pushed up the institution to not apply ethical standards in order to sell their products.	2,44	0,882	3	High
08	Poor role played by consumer protection societies makes the institution avoiding the application of ethical standards.	2,33	0,866	4	Mid
09	The lack of understanding and awareness of the consumers to their right or their failure to claim them prompt the institution to avoid the applying of ethical standards.	2,89	0,333	1	High
Obstacles to Ethical Marketing Practice		2,4	0,423		High

Source : By Author from Spss output

From table 3 the obstacles to ethical marketing practice variable scale which has High level with mean (2,40) and standard deviation (0,423).

The majority of respondents items belongs to "Mid" and "High" level of importance.

From Table 2, it is clear that the most important marketing ethics obstacles are as follows:

- The absence of national and legislative policies which regulates alternative medicine (1st rank).

- The lack of understanding and awareness of the consumers to their right or their failure to claim them (1st rank).
- There is no specific religious reference in the institution that defines ethical standards (2nd rank).
- The competitiveness of institution among themselves (3rd rank).

While the least marketing ethics obstacles, was the smallest mean (2,00) belong to the statement " Regulatory pressure and The reward system" with a standard deviation of (0,707-0,866) and in the (7th) rank.

• **Study Hypotheses Testing**

“Evaluate salesman’s trends of the obstacles of ethical marketing practice in the Algerian alternative medicine institutions rises to the highest level”.

A priori Arithmetic Mean (1.49) and test (t-test) is used to test this hypothesis. The final results of these effects are in table 4.

Table 4. Results of t-test to compare the arithmetic mean with a priori arithmetic mean of acceptance of the (1.49).

Independent variable	Mean	t – test	Sig
Obstacles to Ethical Marketing Practice	2,40	6,505	0.000

Source : By Author from Spss output

The test for the difference in sample mean from the hypothesized mean is statistically significant (as it is less than 0.05). That is to say the sample evaluated was high. accordingly; we accept the hypothesis of the study.

“Not found statistically significant differences at the level (0.05) in the Evaluation salesman’s orientation toward the obstacles of ethical marketing practice in the Algerian Alternative medical institutions attributable to the variable demographic: Gender, Age, Educational level, Quality of Salesman’s (Salesman for one institution or Mixed)”.

Table 5. The arithmetic means and the results of one-way analysis of variance " F " (ANOVA) to evaluate the trends salesman's for the obstacles to ethical marketing practice at the Algerian Alternative Medicine institutions according to Gender

Independent variable	Mean		F	Sig F
	Male	Female		
Obstacles to Ethical Marketing Practice	2,52	2,18	1,286	0,294

Source : By Author from Spss output

From Table 5, we observe that the independent variable where the level of significance has exceeded 0.05 ; **which no statistically significant differences were found at the level (0.05) in the evaluation of salesman's trends for the obstacles to the application of ethical marketing at the Algerian in medical Alternative institutions attributable to the variable Gender.**

Table 6. The arithmetic means and the results of one-way analysis of variance " F " (ANOVA) to evaluate the trends salesman's for the obstacles to ethical marketing practice at the Algerian Alternative Medicine institutions according to Age

Independent variable	Mean				F	Sig F
	less than 25 years	25-34 years	35-45 years	more than 45 years		
Obstacles to Ethical Marketing (OEM)	00	2,59	2,55	1,83	4,37	0,067

Source : By Author from Spss output

From Table 6, we observe that the independent variable where the level of significance has exceeded 0.05 ; **which no statistically significant differences were found at the level (0.05) in the evaluation of salesman's trends for the obstacles to the application of ethical marketing at the Algerian in medical Alternative institutions attributable to the variable Age.**

Table 7. The arithmetic means and the results of one-way analysis of variance " F " (ANOVA) to evaluate the trends salesman’s for the obstacles to ethical marketing practice at the Algerian Alternative Medicine institutions according to Educational level

Independent variable	Mean				F	Sig F
	primary	Average	secondary	academic		
Obstacles to Ethical Marketing Practice	00	2,48	2,29	2,44	0,126	0,884

Source : By Author from Spss output

From Table 7, we observe that the independent variable where the level of significance has exceeded 0.05 ; **which no statistically significant differences were found at the level (0.05) in the evaluation of salesman’s trends for the obstacles to the application of ethical marketing at the Algerian in medical Alternative institutions attributable to the variable Educational level.**

Table 8. The arithmetic means and the results of one-way analysis of variance " F " (ANOVA) to evaluate the trends salesman’s for the obstacles to ethical marketing practice at the Algerian Alternative Medicine institutions according to Quality of Salesman’s

Independent variable	Mean		F	Sig F
	Salesman for one institution/center	Mixed Salesman		
Obstacles to Ethical Marketing Practice	2,37	2,48	0,123	0,736

Source : By Author from Spss output

From Table 8, we observe that the independent variable level has exceeded 0.05; **which has not been found statistically significant differences at the level (0.05) in the evaluation of salesman’s trends for the obstacles to the application of ethical marketing at the Algerian in medical Alternative institutions attributable to the variable “Quality of Salesman’s”.**

4. CONCLUSION

The study arrived at many results that contribute to solving the study problem, answering the study questions and its hypotheses. The main results are:

- The most often obstacle to ethical marketing faced by marketers, we find:
 - ✓ The absence of national and legislative policies which regulates Alternative Medicine.
 - ✓ The lack of understanding and awareness of the consumers to their right or their failure to claim them.

- ✓ There is no specific religious reference in the institution that defines ethical standards.
- ✓ The competitiveness of institution among themselves.
- Evaluating salesman's orientation toward the obstacles of ethical marketing practice in the Algerian alternative medicine institutions rises to the highest level.
- There wasn't a statistically significant differences at the level (0.05) in the Evaluation salesman's orientation toward the obstacles of ethical marketing practice in the Algerian Alternative medical institutions attributable to the variable: Gender, Age, Educational level, Quality of Salesman's (Salesman for one institution or Mixed).

According to the results, the researcher provides some recommendations. The Algerian state should pay attention to the alternative medicine sector by:

- Enact laws for him;
- Establishing a national policy for him that protects him, such as placing him within the framework of social security;
- Encouraging the alternative medicine sector and breaking everything that hinders it from illegal competition, and tightening control over its practices ... etc.

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