

EXPLORING VALUE PROPOSITION MARKETING  
STRATEGY FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF ULUL  
ALBAB: A CASE STUDY ON MY #QURANTIME

BY

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## ABSTRACT

A value proposition is important for any organization as it plays a significant role in marketing strategy. However, the development of a compelling value proposition is still lacking among the practitioners (Payne et al.,2020). This study was focused on the value proposition from an Islamic perspective specifically the concept of Ulul Albab. The success of an Islamic TV program, My #QuranTime, in gaining a tremendous number of audiences has aroused the researcher's interest in conducting an in-depth exploration of the value proposition of My #QuranTime. The concern was given to the characteristics of Ulul Albab which are applied to the concept of the value proposition of My #QuranTime. The elements of value proposition (economic, functional, emotional, and symbolic) developed by Rintamaki et al. (2007) were employed to identify the key elements that describe the value proposition of My #QuranTime. This qualitative research was carried out using explanatory case study approach. Data were collected from in-depth and open-ended interviews with five participants who were the key managerial persons involved in the production of My #QuranTime. The findings highlighted four main themes representing the characteristics of Ulul Albab (visionary, sincerity, knowledgeable and thinking/tafakkur) which are applied to the value proposition of My #QuranTime, and that functional value is the key element that describes the value proposition of My #QuranTime. Accordingly, this study proposed a research model which emphasizes a need to inculcate the characteristics of Ulul Albab to create a compelling functional value proposition of an Islamic TV program so that it could sustain and gain a wide range of audiences.

## مُلخَصُ البَحْث

يعد عرض القيمة مهمًا لأي منظمة لأنه يلعب دورًا مهمًا في استراتيجية التسويق. ومع ذلك، لا يزال الممارسون يفتقرون إلى تطوير عرض قيمة مقنع (Payne et al., 2020). في هذه الدراسة، ركزت بشكل أكبر على وجهة نظر الإسلام لأنها تستكشف عرض القيمة من منظور أولي الألباب. وقد أدى نجاح برنامج تلفزيوني إسلامي، # MyQuranTime، في اكتساب عدد هائل من الجماهير إلى خلق اهتمام للباحث لاستكشاف المزيد من عرض القيمة في #QuranTime. علاوة على ذلك، اهتمت هذه الدراسة باستكشاف خصائص أولي الألباب المطبقة على مفهوم عرض القيمة في #QuranTime الخاص بي. كما تم تطوير عناصر عرض القيمة (أي الاقتصادية والوظيفية والعاطفية والرمزية) بواسطة Rintamaki et al. (2007) وتم استخدامه لتحديد العناصر الأساسية التي تصف عرض القيمة في #QuranTime الخاص بي. كما تم استخدام نهج البحث النوعي مع دراسة الحالة التفسيرية في هذه الدراسة، حيث تم جمع البيانات من خلال إجراء مقابلة متعمقة ومفتوحة مع خمسة مشاركين كانوا الشخص الإداري الرئيسي الذي شارك في إنتاج MyQuranTime. أخيرًا، اقترحت نتائج البيانات أن هناك أربعة موضوعات أساسية يمكن اعتبارها خصائص أولي الألباب (أي الرؤية، الإخلاص، ووسع المعرفة والتفكير/التفكير) التي يتم تطبيقها والقيمة الوظيفية هي العناصر الأساسية التي تصف عرض القيمة من #QuranTime الخاص بي. وفقًا لذلك، تقترح هذه الدراسة إطارًا بحثيًا يوضح أن هناك حاجة لغرس خصائص أولي الألباب لإنشاء عرض قيمة وظيفية مقنعة خاصة لبرنامج تلفزيوني إسلامي من أجل الحفاظ على جماهير عالية واكتسابها بنجاح.

## APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion, it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Science (Marketing).

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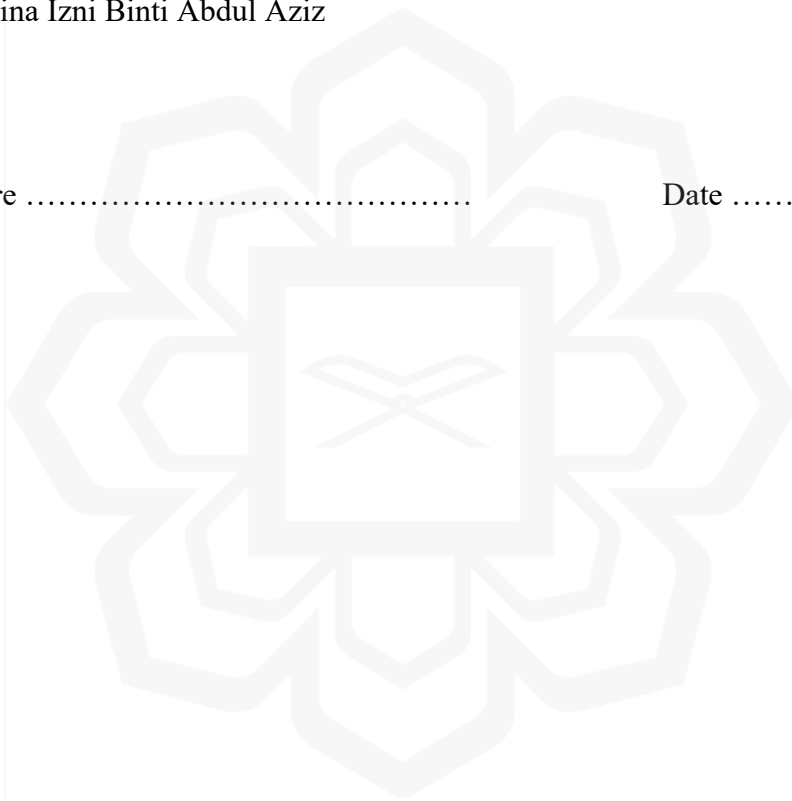
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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Value proposition can be referred to as “part of a company's overall marketing strategy” (Twin, 2020). The definition of value proposition has also been described by Payne et al. (2017, p. 472) as “a strategic tool facilitating communication of an organization's ability to share resources and offer a superior value package to targeted customers.” Furthermore, in the context of value-driven marketing strategy, the aim is to create and provide a meaningful value to customers (Corcoran, 2007). Previous scholars have developed the value proposition framework among which is the concept of value proposition that has been developed further by Rintamaki et al. (2007) in which they claimed that the competitiveness of value proposition can be based on the choice of economic value, functional value, emotional value and symbolic value. Besides, Londhe (2014) also stated that it is important in marketing to create and deliver unique value to customers in order to obtain a sustainable competitive advantage.

Furthermore, to cater customer satisfaction and provide the expected value to customers, organizations need to implement different ways of marketing strategies (Hassan, 2012). Value proposition is important for any organization. However, the ability to develop a compelling value proposition is still lacking among the practitioners (Payne et al., 2020). Moreover, Lanning (2019) pointed out that “one of the most shortfalls in applying the (value proposition) idea is to see it primarily as a tool communicating the value a business offers to customers... but it leaves out the

also crucial question of how the business will make the value actually happen for the customer.” A compelling value proposition is very crucial for any organization, and this also includes the television broadcasting industry.

Television in Malaysia has gone through many changes and developments since it was first introduced more than four decades ago, leading to more intense competition among the television stations to survive in the industry (Juliana Abdul Wahab, 2006). Later, Islamic programs have started to be produced in the Malaysian television industry (Juliana Abdul Wahab & Zatil Hidayah Abdullah, 2017). In this research, the focus is given to the television broadcasting industry, particularly the Islamic television broadcaster in Malaysia. Broadcasting industry which includes television, radio, online streaming, and webcasts, is considered essential for education, enlightenment, as well as entertainment for the community (Olubiyi & Oriakhogba, 2020). Furthermore, Ihechu (2019) claimed that broadcasts can be used to promote the culture, politics and economics of a nation.

In Malaysia, Islamic programs in its television industry have started gaining popularity among Malaysian audiences since the year 2010 onwards (Juliana Abdul Wahab & Zatil Hidayah Abdullah, 2017). As Muslims are becoming more concerned about the matters of halal and haram, the demand for Islamic contents has become more conspicuous (Shafizan Mohamed, 2020). This gave the confidence for the media companies in investing in the channel that focuses on Islamic contents (Mohamed, 2020). According to Juliana Abdul Wahab and Zatil Hidayah Abdullah (2017), many of the Islamic programs produced are mainly talk shows or programs revolving around da'wah (preaching). It is apparent that the act of spreading da'wah through television programs is an important endeavour to promote Islamic knowledge and educate the society (Naemah & Mashitah, 2020). In this research, an Islamic

television program produced by Warisan Ummah Ikhlas Foundation (WUIF) in collaboration with TV Al-Hijrah (Malaysia's free-to-air television company), known as My #QuranTime, has been selected as the case study. Building on such interest, the study aims to explore the value proposition strategy adopted in the development of the particular product (My #QuranTime). The objective of My #QuranTime program is to encourage the audience to interact with the Quran, besides educating and stimulating the Muslims to practice the values derived from all chapters of the Quran.

WUIF and TV Al-Hijrah have managed to deliver a compelling value proposition as one of its television programmes, My #QuranTime, has succeeded in reaching over 1.5 million viewers (Fouziah Amir, 2020) since first being produced in the year 2020. This phenomenon has aroused the researcher's interest to explore the concept of value proposition of My #QuranTime based on the elements of value proposition (for instance economic, functional, emotional, and symbolic value) developed by Rintamaki et al. (2007). In this study, the concern is given to the elements of value proposition that describe My #QuranTime program which provides an Islamic content to its audience.

Md Rozalafri and Megat (2014) claimed that it is the effort as well as the initiatives of Muslim producers that lead to the increase of the production of television programs with religious elements. Furthermore, it is important for Muslim producers to understand the ideology and thoughts in producing Islamic programs. Since a television production requires a lot of intellectual creativity, a study on the individual person who produces such program may also be required. Such effort is considered an ibadah because it brings positive values and beneficial elements, whilst the people who exert it are regarded as Ulul Albab (Naemah & Mashitah, 2020).



The term Ulul Albab which is derived from the Quran, denotes the people who make sense of themselves and relate it to their surroundings, ecosystem and the planet (Suhaimi, Dolhadi & Rohaziah, 2020). Moreover, the mind of Ulul Albab is pure and uncontaminated, giving light to a deep consciousness of Allah which is known as taqwa, and of the sovereignty of Allah SWT. Consequently, they will always be mindful in every action, thought or behavior, preventing themselves from causing Allah's SWT wrath or displeasure (Mohd Kamal Hassan, 2010). Moreover, according to Suhaimi and Yusof (2019), Ulul Albab can also be referred to as the manifestation of individuals' comprehension about life and their viewpoints on life and its requirement which is driven by Tawhidic paradigm. According to Mohd Kamal Hassan (2010), Ulul Albab or individuals with Tawhidic paradigm exhibit themselves as the true servants of Allah ('ibad al-Rahman), the vicegerents (khulafa fi al-ard), and the believers (al-mu'minin) in order to serve benefits to mankind and create a balanced community. The role of vicegerent (khalifa) is always to act as a trustee of Allah in fulfilling his duties in organizations, whether he is an owner, manager, or employee (Yusof Ismail & Suhaimi Mohd Sarif, 2011). Therefore, this current study is also concerned with the influence of the characteristics of Ulul Albab in developing and communicating the elements of value proposition of My #QuranTime.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

According to Payne et al. (2020), value proposition is important for any organization. However, the ability to develop a compelling value proposition is still lacking among the practitioners. It has further been argued by Payne et al. (2020) that even though the concept of value proposition has been recognized as a significant subject matter for research, the concept is clearly not being employed in the way it is initially

intended. This has created a misunderstanding of value proposition among its practitioners resulting in the ineffectiveness of the value-driven marketing strategy, as problems and confusion still arise with regard to how the practitioners view and implement the concept of value proposition (Payne et al., 2020). Notwithstanding that value proposition is deemed as an innovation which can act as an offering to the audience, the concept is hitherto underdeveloped (Antonopoulou and Begkos, 2020).

There are many scholarly works that have developed the value proposition framework. However, according to Payne et al. (2020), it is still poorly defined especially as to how it is being implemented. As the study done by Rintamaki et al. (2007) highlighted competitive advantage based on economic, functional, emotional, and symbolic value, this study seeks to extend the concept of value proposition proposed by Rintamaki et al. (2007) and investigate the elements that describe the value proposition of My #QuranTime.

This research chose the program produced by Warisan Ummah Ikhlas Foundation (WUIF) and TV Al-Hijrah called My #QuranTime as the case study due to its outstanding attraction in terms of the number of audience. It has been argued that many organizations or practitioners have the lack of ability to develop, understand and communicate their value proposition (Payne et al., 2020). Nonetheless, WUIF and TV Al-Hijrah have managed to deliver their value proposition as evident by one of its programs, My #QuranTime which has successfully reached over 1.5 million viewers since its first production in the year 2020 (Fouziah, 2020). Due to that, My #QuranTime as an Islamic TV program has become a phenomenon, in which this study aims to research on how it differs from other Islamic TV program based on the value proposition from the perspectives of

Ulul Albab. Further, it has piqued the researcher's interest to explore the elements of value proposition of My #Qurantime.

The production of Islamic programs in Malaysia has gained popularity among the audiences, whereby most of the programs produced are talk shows concerned with preaching (Juliana Abdul Wahb & Zatil Hidayah Abdullah, 2017). As mentioned by Shafizan Mohamed (2020), Muslims are becoming more aware of the matters of halal and haram, and this has resulted in the increased demand for Islamic contents. As mentioned earlier, Payne et al. (2020) highlighted the importance of developing a compelling value proposition so that the companies can successfully reach their target marketplace. However, in the case of Islamic broadcasters, in order to develop and produce a TV program with religious elements, the development of compelling value proposition aligned with the Islamic principles is important. Besides, there is still a lack of research in regards to value proposition based on Islamic viewpoint that can guide the Muslim TV producers or marketers to produce an Islamic TV programs. This study aims in exploring value proposition based on the perspectives of Ulul Albab, a sthe term 'Ulul Albab' mentioned in the Quran connote a literal meaning of 'the people of intellect', and in order for Muslim to be successful in their lives and business, they should refers back to Holy Quran and Hadith as their main references in all their marketing activities (Abbas, Nisar, Mahmood, Chenini and Zubair, 2019). This has further piqued the researcher's interest to explore the characteristics of Ulul Albab applied to the concept of value proposition.

The definition of Ulul Albab is described by Mohd Kamal Hassan (2010) as "possessors of sound intellect referring to the production and growth of more Islamic intellectuals, scholars, scientists, professionals, political leaders and educated classes who combine or unify scientific and worldly knowledge with religious values,

thinking and contemplation (fikir and tafakkur) with spiritual remembrance (dhikr) of Allah (SWT), worldly means with otherworldly ends, reason with Divine revelation, professionalism with taqwa (deep ethical consciousness of the pleasure and displeasure of Allah), and are not afflicted with the diseases of the spiritual heart which al-Ghazali called al-muhlish (destructive elements)”. Furthermore, Ulul Albab is driven by Tawhidic paradigm which implies a manifestation of individuals’ comprehension about life and their viewpoints on life as well as the requirement in this life (Suhaimi and Yusof, 2019). Additionally, the act of producing Islamic television programs can be regarded as an ibadah as it brings positive values and beneficial elements (Naemah & Mashitah, 2020). This is what comprises the characteristics of Ulul Albab. Furthermore, it is important for Muslim producers to understand the ideology and thoughts in producing Islamic programs. Therefore, the this study aims to explore the characteristics of Ulul Albab that are being applied to the concept of value proposition with My #QuranTime program as the case study, and to identify the key elements of value proposition that describe the value proposition of My #QuranTime TV program.

### **1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

Research objectives can be referred to as specific statements that focus on the crucial issues in the research (Thomas and Hodges, 2010). The general objective of this study is to explore the Ulul Albab’s characteristics being applied on the value proposition of the program, My #QuranTime, as well as to further identify the main elements of value proposition that describes the value proposition of My #QuranTime.

The specific objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To explore the characteristics of Ulul Albab applied to the concept of the value proposition of My #QuranTime.
2. To explain the key elements of the value proposition of My #QuranTime.

#### **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. How are the characteristics of Ulul Albab applied to the concept of the value proposition of My #QuranTime?
2. What are the key elements of value proposition (economic value, functional value, emotional value, symbolic value) that describe the value proposition of My #QuranTime?

#### **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

It is believed that this study will give a theoretical contribution towards enriching the definition of the elements of value proposition from an Islamic perspective especially relating to the characteristics of Ulul Albab. Furthermore, this study is expected to contribute to the field of Islamic marketing, as it looks into how the concept of value proposition influenced by the characteristics of Ulul Albab can further be applied as a value-driven marketing strategy from an Islamic perspective. Apart from that, this study is believed to provide a sort of benchmark for an Islamic television broadcasting company such as TV Al-Hijrah to implement the characteristics of Ulul Albab and further developing a compelling value proposition in order to achieve its objectives in producing a successful Islamic TV programs. Besides, the findings of this current research will be able to provide a clearer and practical understanding for Muslim marketers of the way the concept of value proposition influenced by the

characteristics of Ulul Albab plays its role in the development of value proposition not only for other Islamic television programs, but can be implemented for other industries as well.

## **1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

This study seeks to explore and provide an in-depth understanding of the elements of value proposition influenced by the characteristics of Ulul Albab, by focusing on an Islamic TV program, My #QuranTime, as the case study. This study is conducted with the key managerial persons involved in the production of My #QuranTime, who serve as the main participants for this research.

## **1.7 ORGANIZATION OF CHAPTERS**

This research presents the ideas and methods used by the researcher throughout the study, and it consists of five chapters. The first chapter provides an explanation of the background of the study, statement of the problem, the objectives of the study, and the research questions. Besides, the scope and the significance of the study are also stated.

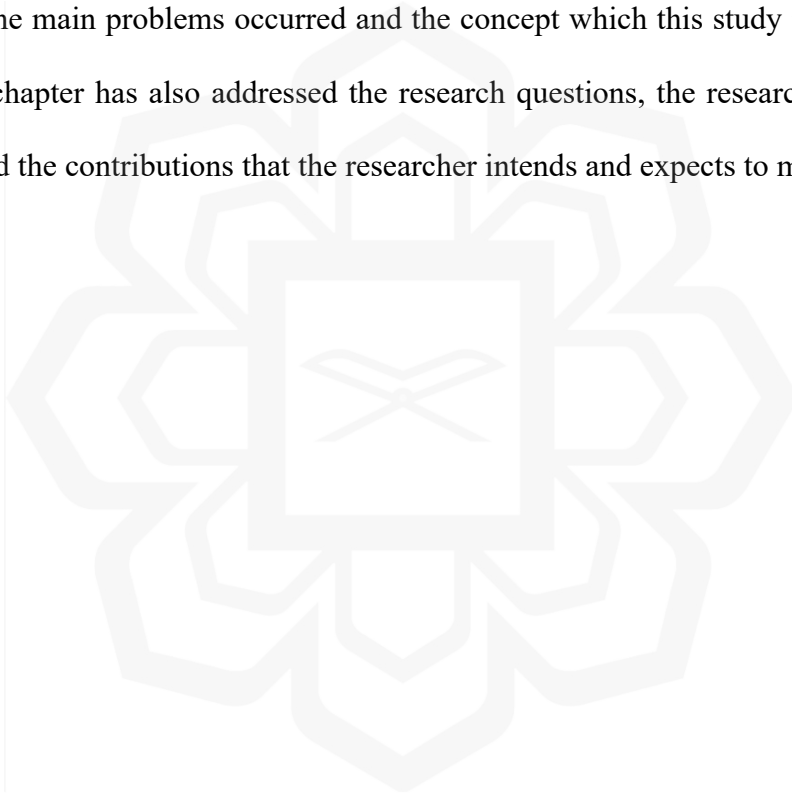
The second chapter will be devoted to literature review, in which the researcher reviews past studies done by various scholars that are concerned with the television broadcasting industry, the concept of value proposition, as well as the characteristics of Ulul Albab. This chapter will also accentuate the background of the case study including the background of TV Al-Hijrah and one of its programs, My #QuranTime.

The third chapter will elaborate the research methodology undertaken by the researcher for the study. It will also include an explanation of how the research was

conducted as well as the process of data collection. Finally, chapter four and chapter five will present the research findings and the discussion of the findings respectively.

### **1.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter has started with an introduction of the title of this study, followed by the discussion on the background of the study whereby the crux of this study has been explained in detail. Next, the researcher has disclosed the problem statement which highlights the main problems occurred and the concept which this study is concerned with. This chapter has also addressed the research questions, the research objectives pursued, and the contributions that the researcher intends and expects to make through this study.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the literature review related to the area of the study concerned. It expounds the definitions of key terms such as value proposition and Ulul Albab within the context of the television broadcasting industry in Malaysia. The review of literature further discusses the background of the television broadcasting industry and the rise of Islamic contents in Malaysia, followed by the background of TV Al-Hijrah and one of its TV programs chosen as the case study, My #QuranTime, the discussion on value proposition, and last but not least, the concept of Ulul Albab.

#### **2.2 TELEVISION BROADCASTING INDUSTRY AND THE RISE OF ISLAMIC CONTENTS IN MALAYSIA**

In Malaysia, radio became the only medium for broadcasting until 1963, and it was only in the same year that television was officially introduced (Juliana Abdul Wahab, 2006). Juliana Abdul Wahab (2006) further added that based on the statement by the Malaysian government, the two network channels of the Malaysian TV industry in the early days (The First Channel and The Second Channel) aimed to promote the government policies, the art and culture of Malaysia, besides providing contents aiming for education, knowledge and entertainment. Furthermore, since Malaysia is a multi-ethnic country, the offerings by the radios and televisions in Malaysia have to