

Providing an Ethical Marketing Model for Non-Profit Universities in Iraq

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to develop an ethical marketing model for non-profit universities in Iraq. A qualitative approach, specifically the strategy of grounded theory, is used. The research began with in-depth interviews with 15 nonprofit university administrators, staff, and marketing experts to develop the initial model. Then, using the grounded theory research strategy, the steps of open, central and selective coding were completed and the initial model of the research was obtained. Based on this model, the research findings were categorized into groups of causal conditions, central phenomena, contextual factors, intervening conditions, strategies and consequences of ethical marketing. The central phenomenon in this mixed study is ethical marketing, which is influenced by several causal conditions such as: increased awareness and social demand, competition in the educational market, and legal and regulatory pressures. The findings of this study contribute to the development of an ethical marketing framework suited to the unique context of non-profit universities in Iraq. The purpose of this framework is to enhance their marketing strategies and promote their social and educational missions.

Keywords: Ethical Marketing, Non-Profit Universities, Iraq, Grounded Theory Strategy.

INTRODUCTION

Ethical marketing involves promoting products and services in a manner that is honest, transparent, and respectful towards consumers and society. This practice includes providing thorough and precise product information, avoiding deceitful tactics, and ensuring that marketing strategies do not exploit vulnerable groups or distort cultural norms (Aboelenien & Naaman, 2023).

Ethical marketing plays a vital role within the nonprofit sector due to its ability to align marketing strategies with the fundamental values and mission of these organizations, thereby enhancing trust and credibility among stakeholders. Nonprofit entities, dedicated to serving the public interest rather than profit-making, must adopt ethical marketing practices to cultivate a favorable reputation and establish a strong market position (Lee, 2021). The implementation of ethical marketing strategies enables nonprofits to foster empathy and demonstrate respect towards the individuals they aim to assist (Sabbagh, 2024). Furthermore, ethical marketing is a crucial element for nonprofit organizations to attentively listen to and cater to the needs of their beneficiaries, potentially leading to increased support and funding (Karuza, 2016). The shift towards social and ethical marketing signifies a broader movement where the well-being of all involved parties, encompassing society and the environment, takes precedence, thereby ensuring enduring and sustainable benefits (Rawat et al., 2015). In transitioning societies, ethical marketing conducted by civil society groups plays a critical role in supplementing deficient government services and advancing democratization processes (Radnovich et al., 2011).

Despite historical deliberations surrounding nonprofit marketing, it is now widely recognized as a guiding principle that directs behavior towards the market while emphasizing transparency and ethical conduct (Yung et al., 2023). Initiatives like point-of-sale campaigns, commonly known as "paying charity," necessitate thorough ethical deliberations to effectively balance the interests of nonprofits, businesses, and contributors (Caulfield et al., 2022). Ethical marketing within social marketing spheres entails addressing distinctive challenges and

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ensuring that recipients are accorded respect and dignity (Kamila & Jasrutia, 2023). Lastly, businesses engaging in philanthropic endeavors must ethically market their altruistic deeds to safeguard trust and uphold the esteem for moral uprightness (Trevino & Nelson, 2021). Consequently, ethical marketing emerges as indispensable for the success and ethical standing of nonprofit organizations.

Ethical marketing within nonprofit universities is a complex endeavor that necessitates a delicate balance between the institution's mission and the imperative to both attract and retain students. The utilization of marketing methodologies derived from the service sector has elicited concerns pertaining to consumerism and the potential manipulation of educational provisions (Harper & Harrison, 2020). Within this realm, ethical leadership assumes a critical role, underscoring virtues such as integrity, confidence, equity, and compassion in fostering enduring and ethical marketing connections (Nunes et al., 2019). Nonprofit universities are compelled to integrate comprehensive marketing strategies to cultivate a favorable reputation and accomplish sustainable progress, while considering the distinctive attributes and objectives of the nonprofit domain (Gibbs and Murphy, 2009). Engaging in partnerships with external entities, including nonprofit organizations, can offer practical illustrations of marketing theories, thereby enhancing students' practical readiness and ethical discernment (Hoertel & Helgren, 2011). Scrutiny of ethical dimensions within marketing practices in higher education accentuates the necessity for ethical deliberation in admissions and program promotion to avert misconduct and uphold ethical benchmarks (Simmons & Laczniak, 2014). The drive to optimize revenues in for-profit institutions of higher education frequently engenders unethical recruitment tactics, underscoring the significance of nurturing an ethical environment within for-profit universities (Gibbs, 2011). Initiatives of cause-related marketing, such as those undertaken by the University of Nicosia, exhibit the capacity for universities to augment their corporate social responsibility standing while instilling a culture of volunteerism within their academic milieu (Barber et al., 2023). Inculcating ethical marketing into a broader educational framework can impart substantial value and be congruent with the four Ps of the marketing mix—product, price, place, and promotion—while comprehensively addressing ethical predicaments (Demetriou et al., 2018). Broadly speaking, ethical marketing in nonprofit universities should be in service of the institution's mission without yielding to consumerism, ensuring that marketing continues to be a conduit for the institution and its stakeholders (Nunes et al., 2019). The questions addressed in this study are:

What are the casual factors in ethical marketing in Iraqi non-profit universities?

What are the central categories in the ethical marketing model of Iraqi non-profit universities?

What are the ethical marketing strategies in Iraqi non-profit universities?

What are the underlying factors in the ethical marketing model in non-profit universities in Iraq?

What are the intervening factors in the ethical marketing model in non-profit universities in Iraq?

What are the consequences of ethical marketing in non-profit universities in Iraq?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ethical marketing pertains to the utilization of ethical principles in the decision-making, conduct, and methodologies of marketing within a given entity. This encompasses the dissemination of truthful information, practicing transparency, and upholding equity towards consumers and other involved parties, thereby cultivating trust and enduring consumer relations (Nunes et al., 2019). The implementation of ethical marketing strategies plays a pivotal role in the longevity and success of enterprises, as they aid in constructing a robust brand image and customer loyalty by aligning with the ethical values of consumers (Awasthi et al., 2020). The domain of marketing ethics systematically examines how ethical norms are utilized in marketing decisions, conduct, and practices, addressing the ethical dilemmas marketers encounter in their everyday operations (Ewah et al., 2019). Ethical marketing also encompasses integrating societal and environmental considerations into products and marketing tactics, which is imperative in the current competitive market environment (Piercy & Lane, 2007). The progression of international competition and the need to oversee ethical standards have led to the establishment of consumer protection groups and governmental bodies that enforce ethical protocols and laws (Brand, 2009). Ethical marketing decisions are guided by diverse business ethics philosophies, such as

Virtue ethics, Utilitarianism, and Deontological approaches, which aid in devising ethical protocols for organizations to adhere to (Rodríguez-Rad, & Ramos-Hidalgo, 2018). It is crucial to acknowledge that although unethical marketing may generate immediate success, it is not a sustainable tactic as it undermines consumer trust and brand reputation over time (Vassilios, 2023). Ethical marketing strategies encompass not solely avoiding unlawful activities but also abiding by standards of equity and moral entitlements, which are influenced by cultural and societal norms (Aschl, 2020). Consequently, ethical marketing constitutes a strategic consideration that ensures the long-term sustainability and integrity of a business in the marketplace.

Nonprofit Universities and Ethical Marketing

Non-profit universities, similar to other organizations operating without profit motives, face unique challenges in the realm of marketing, particularly when it comes to upholding ethical standards while striving for sustainability and efficacy. The importance of ethical marketing for these academic institutions cannot be overstated, as it serves as a cornerstone for fostering trust and credibility, attributes that are essential for their longevity and success. The adoption of comprehensive marketing strategies can yield substantial improvements in the performance and reputation of non-profit universities, rendering them more visible and better positioned within the competitive market (Lee, 2021). Engagements with non-profit entities offer students practical applications of marketing theories, enriching their educational journey and equipping them better for future challenges (Fittler, 2018). However, the organizational framework of non-profit universities may engender ethical dilemmas and moral risks, thereby demanding a meticulous balance between marketing tactics and ethical deliberations (Sroka & Szántó, 2018). In societies undergoing political transitions, non-profit universities assume a pivotal role in civil society by complementing governmental initiatives and fostering societal and environmental advancements, thereby emphasizing the criticality of ethical marketing in their undertakings (Kapoor, 2021). Despite the recognition of the significance of marketing, numerous non-profit universities struggle with comprehending and implementing effective marketing principles, which are crucial for their viability (Hermann, 2022). Professionals in marketing within these institutions are tasked with navigating the complexities arising from ethical considerations and the imperative of securing financial backing and patronage (Fourie & Froneman, 2009). Social marketing techniques, frequently utilized by non-profit bodies, hold the potential to shape interactions with stakeholders; however, their deployment necessitates meticulous oversight to ensure alignment with ethical benchmarks and participatory communication methodologies (Azizi Shamami, 2017). The cultivation of effective marketing strategies in non-profit universities revolves around strategic delineation, differentiation, and positioning to craft a distinctive value proposition that resonates with their intended audience (Tuneva, 2020). Furthermore, non-academic elements such as communication infrastructure and institutional recognition wield considerable influence on student satisfaction, underscoring the necessity of holistic and ethical marketing strategies (Kubacki & Szablewska, 2020).

Challenges of Ethical Marketing in Iraqi Non-Profit Universities

The ethical challenges encountered in marketing within non-profit universities in Iraq are predominantly attributed to the distinct socio-economic and cultural context of the region. A key obstacle lies in the requirement to harmonize the competitive aspects of higher education with ethical considerations to prevent the commodification of education, where students are treated merely as customers (Gibbs & Murphy, 2009). This complexity is further compounded by the integration of ethical marketing within the broader scope of business ethics and corporate social responsibility, which is essential for cultivating a proactive commercial environment that enhances the quality of life for stakeholders (Brenkert, 2002). Moreover, universities must grapple with the ethical dilemmas inherent in social marketing, which involve evaluating the ethical implications of marketing strategies on the target audience (Gibbs & Murphy, 2009). The incorporation of Islamic ethical principles, emphasizing the alignment of organizational and societal interests, introduces an additional layer of intricacy, necessitating marketers to ensure that their practices contribute positively to societal welfare and align with moral standards (Nunes et al, 2019). Furthermore, the significant challenge of upholding integrity and trust in marketing communications is paramount, as universities must provide potential students with precise and transparent information, refraining from misleading or exploiting vulnerabilities (Gibbs & Murphy, 2009). Establishing a virtuous framework of marketing ethics, rooted in values like integrity, trust, fairness, and

empathy, is imperative for fostering enduring relationships with stakeholders and ensuring accountability (Ado, 2021). Ultimately, the effective implementation of ethical marketing demands a profound understanding of the marketing mix and the capability to address ethical concerns regarding products, promotion, price, and place, thereby contributing substantial value to the institution (Ahmed, 2017). Tackling these challenges necessitates a holistic approach that integrates ethical leadership, stakeholder engagement, and adherence to both local and global ethical standards.

METHODOLOGY

This research utilized a grounded theory approach (a qualitative research method) to explore the development of an ethical marketing framework in non-profit universities in Iraq. The research methodology adhered to the principles of grounded theory as outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1998), focusing on the iterative nature of data collection, coding, and analysis until theoretical saturation is achieved. A purposeful sampling approach was used in this study, involving the selection of 15 non-profit university administrators, staff, and marketing experts from non-profit universities in Iraq. All interviewees were male. The selection criteria were based on the participants' knowledge and background in marketing and higher education, ensuring a diverse and representative sample. Data collection comprised detailed, semi-structured interviews with the chosen participants. The interviews with the experts were conducted in person in Arabic, the predominant language in Iraq, and were recorded with the participants' consent. The interviews were open-ended to allow participants to express their views and experiences freely. The interviews continued until theoretical saturation was reached. Table 1 shows the characteristics of the interviewees.

Table 1: characteristics of the interviewees

Number	work position	Duration of activity (years)	The name of university
1	University professor	18	Altusi University College
2	University professor	15	Al Hoda University College
3	University professor	11	Al-Isra University
4	Director of Graduate Studies	14	Al-Isra University
5	University professor	17	Jamiat al-Maql
6	Human Resources Manager	8	Salam University College
7	Manager of administrative affairs	12	Altusi University College
8	University professor	11	Jamiat al-Maql
9	Student-Cultural Deputy	17	Al-Rafdin University College
10	University professor	9	Al-Rashid University
11	University professor	12	Salam University College
12	University professor-research director	15	Al Hoda University College
13	Student-Cultural Deputy	13	Jamiat al-Maql
14	Student-Cultural Deputy	10	Altusi University College
15	University professor	14	Jamiat al-Maql

Among the approaches of the grounded theory research methodology, Strauss and Corbin's approach (1998) has been used in this study. According to this approach, the data analysis process consisted of multiple stages:

Open Coding: The initial codes were refined and expanded to capture the subtleties of participants' experiences and viewpoints.

Axial Coding: Codes were categorized and subcategorized to unveil patterns and themes in the data.

Selective Coding: Further refinement of categories and subcategories led to the identification of core categories.

Theoretical Integration: The core categories were integrated into a comprehensive theoretical framework, which was utilized to develop an ethical marketing model for non-profit universities in Iraq.

Data Quality Assurance: Various measures (Varpio et al., 2017) were implemented to ensure the quality of data:

Data Triangulation: Findings from different sources, such as interviews and literature reviews, were utilized to validate the results.

Member Checking: Participants were given the findings for verification of accuracy.

Peer Review: Peers evaluated the study to confirm the validity and reliability of the methodology and results.

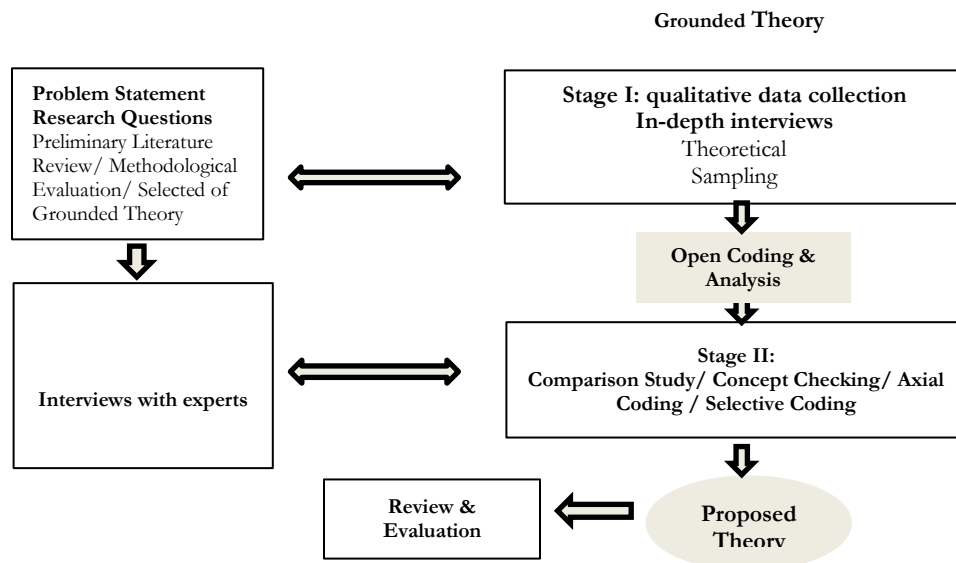


Figure1. Grounded Theory Approach for Modeling ethical marketing model (Creswell, 2013)

The analysis was conducted by a senior researcher and two other researchers. Data analysis occurred concurrently with data collection using the "constant comparative technique." The analysis followed the systematic principles of the grounded theory outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1998), which included key steps such as open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Corbin and Strauss, 1990).

Open coding stage: During the initial stage, the data undergo categorization, followed by a process of comparison and contrast as described by Creswell (2013). In the phase of open coding, transcripts of interviews are meticulously transcribed and systematically coded line by line based on their content. All significant words or brief statements uttered by interview participants are recorded as codes. Subsequently, these codes are amalgamated and refined to develop concepts, subcategories, and overarching categories. A thorough comprehension of the data necessitates multiple readings of the transcripts, during which detailed notes are recorded. The number of open codes in this research is 63 codes (Table I) illustrates an instance of open coding to identify the precursors of ethical marketing in non-profit educational institutions.

Table I. Examples of how to get spoken evidence into Central category's items

Evidence in interviews	Concepts	Sub category	category
<p>- The students asks us to respect them and pay attention to their wishes (I1)</p> <p>- Students want us to use up-to-date technologies and thus provide them with a fair environment for growth and upbringing (I4)</p> <p>-Students want us to provide their university with scientific advice in various fields in a fair manner (I 13)</p>	<p>Incorporating basic ethical concepts, • practicing ethical values in practice, examining ethics in various scientific fields, incorporating ethical concepts in the work environment, responsible research</p> <p>Providing students with modern • technology, creating a suitable platform for the growth and development of students</p> <p>Providing educational advice •</p> <p>Providing advice in various matters of • life</p> <p>Respect for students •</p> <p>Observance of fairness and equality for • all students</p> <p>Attention to the needs of students •</p>	Moral education	Ethical product
		Ethics-oriented academic facilities	
		Ethical consulting services	
		Honoring the student	
<p>- The conditions of all students are not the same and many of us want to provide them with various payment options so that they can use educational facilities (I 2)</p> <p>- I think if we want to price ethically, we should even give free education to certain groups of society (I 14)</p> <p>- Even students sometimes ask us for financial advice in matters related to their personal life . I think providing such services can help our marketing process to be ethical (I 11)</p>	<p>Providing financial aid and scholarships to • needy students</p> <p>Providing financial support for • extracurricular activities by offering special discounts to certain groups</p> <p>Providing installment payments and • financial assistance</p> <p>Provide special assistance for international • students</p> <p>Evaluating the impact of pricing on • various stakeholders</p> <p>Transparency in pricing and costs •</p> <p>Treat students as human beings, not just • sources of income</p> <p>Addressing the special needs of students •</p> <p>Providing financial advice to students •</p>	Financial support	Ethical Pricing
		Transparency and fairness in pricing	
		Responsible pricing	
<p>It is important that we listen to their concerns and work with them to find solutions. It is also important to have processes in place to appeal decisions. (I4)</p> <p>I think the distribution process should include several stakeholders, and space should be provided for students' opinions and feedback. We believe in maintaining a high level of transparency to ensure fairness and build trust with our student community (I 6)</p> <p>If there are any concerns raised about how funding is being managed, we have a clear process for investigating and addressing those issues. Transparency and accountability are core values for our university (I9)</p>	<p>• Educational support for students with special needs.</p> <p>Ease of registration process,</p> <p>• Selection of units,</p> <p>• Class meetings,</p> <p>• Expansion of online facilities</p> <p>• Equal and non-discriminatory access to training courses.</p> <p>• Not considering genetic differences,</p> <p>• neutralization of economic weakness,</p> <p>• Eliminating ethnic discrimination in benefiting from education</p> <p>• Implementing the university's social responsibility in distributing university services to underprivileged areas</p> <p>• Establishing counseling bases in deprived areas</p> <p>• Supporting underprivileged students</p>	Ease of access to educational facilities	Ethical distribution and
		Non-discriminatory access to educational services	
		Responsible distribution	

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In my opinion, deceptive advertising turns the student into an unhappy customer (I 15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accurate and honest information • avoiding fraudulent or false advertising 	Compliance with the principles of transparency and honesty	Ethical promotion
In my previous role, I was tasked with leading a team to develop a new product. We faced several challenges, including tight deadlines and limited resources. However, we were able to overcome these challenges by working together as a team and using our skills and expertise to find creative solutions (I3).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoiding provocative advertising • Avoiding violent ads • Avoidinf fake ads 	Absence of unusual and unpleasant advertising	
I think we need a system to ensure a fair distribution of resources among students. It is necessary to consider their needs and circumstances to ensure that everyone has access to the resources they need. (I 8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoiding obtaining personal information • obtaining satisfaction in using people's information • avoiding entering unrelated areas 	Respect for privacy	

The researcher examined the data to identify categories and their characteristics by examining where items occurred and when they did not occur. Data were analyzed to gain insight into behavior and process over time. The researcher then attempted to group the codes received from the participants into categories that may not directly reflect the language of the original data (see Table I). These groups had special characteristics that distinguished them from others. This step facilitates the analysis, integration, and reorganization of data into a conceptual narrative.

The Axial Coding Stage: During this stage, the investigator investigated connections between categories, consolidating them into broader concepts through merging or elimination as necessary. The number of axial codes in this research is 19 codes. The axial coding concentrated on pinpointing fundamental categories, delineating surrounding categories as causal, contextual, and indirect factors, strategic actions or interactions, and outcomes. Causal factors delineate the occurrences leading to the emergence of a category and impacting the phenomenon. Contextual factors illustrate trends linked to a particular group. Intervening factors adjust the impact of causal factors on the phenomenon. Strategy denotes purposeful actions that shape the phenomenon. The objective of the procedure was to establish more abstract and inclusive classifications (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Outcomes embody the consequences of these strategies (refer to Figure 2).

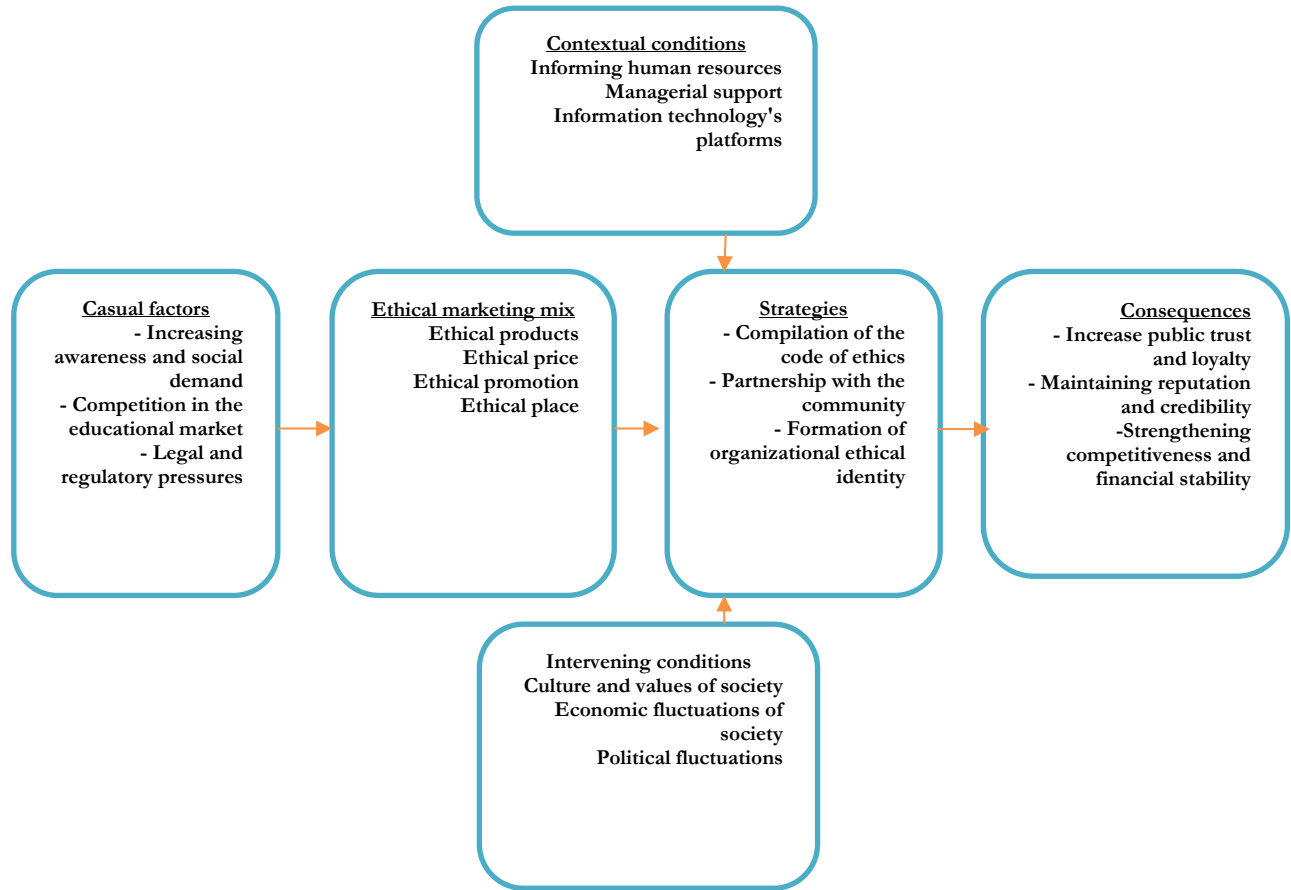


Figure 2 : Model of ethical marketing in non-profit universities

The Selective Coding step: To accurately delineate and formalize the connections among the various categories encompassing the central category, a selective coding phase was devised by thoroughly saturating concepts, categories, and subcategories. During this phase, these codes were intricately integrated to formulate a conceptual framework, while codes that did not make a substantial impact on the overarching narrative were eliminated.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH MODEL

The initial research data provided categories for a theoretical model (Figure 1), exploring the antecedents and consequences of ethical marketing through grounded theory. Emerging during open coding, general themes led to subthemes. Verbal expressions were developed into concepts, subcategories, and categories (Table 2). Due to space constraints, a few statements per category were presented. In the ethical marketing model for non-profit universities, a group of causal factors have been identified. Based on the information obtained from the interviews, these include increased awareness and social demand, increased competition in the educational market, and legal and regulatory pressures, which lead non-profit universities to adopt ethical marketing practices. The ethical marketing drivers resulting from the analysis of qualitative data emphasize the importance of issues such as social responsibility, changing stakeholder values, the need to create competitive differentiation among universities, the importance of reputation and branding to attract talent and quality employees, and the influence of laws. As one of the managers in this field stated: "In recent years, the number of non-profit universities in Iraq has increased. As a result, we are facing the pressure of competition to attract students. If paying attention to ethical issues is effective in attracting quality students and employees, we will move in this direction, perhaps we have no choice but to do so".

The study by Rizard et al. (2022) aligns with these findings, asserting that brand equity and service quality impact students' university choice. Additionally, Harper and Harrison (2020) noted that the importance of ethical

education in non-profit universities is significant in attracting students, as it corresponds with the increasing societal focus on ethical conduct and social accountability. Throughout history, non-profit higher education establishments have strived to cultivate individuals who are actively engaged in civic matters and possess democratic values, a goal that appeals to students desiring an education that goes beyond merely career-oriented objectives. Furthermore, the study by Kapias and Polok (2018) confirms these results, stating that the rising trends in global transformations and the necessity for a comprehensive education that equips individuals for continuous learning emphasize the significance of moral education. This type of education incorporates ethical considerations and human aspects into the academic curriculum, promoting a well-rounded development of students. The core phenomenon, "Ethical Marketing Mix," emerged from the data, influenced by price, product, promotion, and place factors. According to Dašić (2014), non-profit universities play a vital role in the social value system and should incorporate comprehensive marketing strategies to establish a favorable reputation and competitive positioning within the higher education sector. The ethical products, such as respectful behavior, new technologies, ethical facilities, and ethical counseling, could play a crucial role in ethical marketing in non-profit universities in Iraq. As one of the interviewees stated:

"I think to a large extent a student seeks to receive respect and be seen. I think a moral university should offer such a thing to students"

Also one of employees here says that:

"I think the student buys not only the education but also the university environment. Here he wants facilities, he wants respect and he wants us to treat him as a human being. Students who have been treated well will come in the following years and remember us again. This is very enjoyable for me".

The second "P" of marketing mix is price. Here ethical pricing concluded 3 concepts: Financial support, Transparency and fairness in pricing, and Responsible pricing.

For example, it is expected that in an ethical marketing, providing financial aid and scholarship to needy students will be on the agenda of managers. Also, in such a system, providing financial support for extracurricular activities and giving special discounts to special groups can work. Other ethical pricing programs include making it possible to make installment payments and financial aid, providing special aid for international students and Evaluating the impact of pricing on various stakeholders. Here is what a marketing expert says:

"When I talk to students about the attractiveness of universities, one of the most important topics for them is how they are priced. It cannot really be said that all students who wish to continue their studies at non-profit universities do not face financial challenges".

The third "P" of marketing mix is promotion. Compliance with the principles of transparency and honesty, absence of unusual and unpleasant advertising, and Respect for privacy are the sub-categories of this concept. In the ethical marketing model, accurate and honest information is expected to be provided to students and fraudulent or false advertisements are avoided. Refraining from provocative, violent and fraudulent advertisements is another indicator of ethical advertisement. One of employee says:

" Students tell us they don't like being under too much monitoring. They like to have freedom and respect in the university".

Finally the Place is vital in ethical marketing mix. Here the fairness and responsibility of the university plays an important role. To deliver the university products to every stratum that wants to enjoy them with respect for equality, and also to fulfill the social responsibility of the university for paying attention to the deprived and less privileged society. One of the interviewees here says:

"I think ethical distribution in academic marketing means equal and non-discriminatory access to educational courses regardless of genetic differences".

In lines with these results, Gibbs and Murphy (2009), asserted that Ethical marketing practices, highlighting integrity, trust, fairness, and empathy, are crucial for cultivating long-lasting connections with students and various stakeholders. At the other hand the study of Simmons, and Lacznik (2014) confirms these results.

That says that the caliber of programs and courses (product), reasonable fees (price), convenient locations (place), impactful advertising (promotion), skilled faculty (people), efficient admissions processes (process), and properly maintained facilities (physical evidence) are all vital elements that are associated with increased student enrollment and allegiance.

In order to design an ethical marketing mix as a central category, there is a need to design a group of strategies. The strategies extracted from the analysis of the interviews include the development of an ethical charter, partnership with society, strengthening of ethical infrastructures and the formation of the organization's ethical identity. One of interviewees here says:

" I think we should establish a closer relationship with the community. This communication itself tells us what exactly society wants and what it considers moral"

In lines with these results, Dowdy (2006) asserted that, the significance of engaging in partnerships with society for the implementation of an ethical marketing strategy is diverse and pivotal in guaranteeing the strategy's efficacy and social responsibility. Collaborations, especially those that entail partnerships between communities and researchers, play a crucial role in safeguarding at-risk communities and ensuring they receive advantages from the research, reflecting fundamental beliefs regarding the communal worth and social essence of individuals. Also, The level of ethical culture within an organization and the extent to which individuals internalize a moral identity play a crucial role in shaping ethical conduct. These factors contribute to a decrease in the likelihood of engaging in unethical behaviors and an improvement in ethical decision-making. (Resende et al., 2024).

One of the experts here says that

" Non-profit universities should review their programs. It is necessary to make it clear to all members of the university exactly what is meant by being ethical or to inform everyone about the principles that should be followed" .

Similar to this, GIURGIUMAN and VÂTCĂ (2022), say that the Code of Ethics offers a structure for appropriate behavior, directing students, faculty, and staff in how they should conduct themselves professionally and personally. It covers important principles like freedom, honesty, integrity, respect, tolerance, and responsibility, all of which are essential for students' overall growth and their involvement in social, cultural, and economic settings.

The ethical marketing model of non-profit universities also includes a group of factors that are referred to as contextual factors. Such as training and awareness of employees and professors, information technology platforms, society's approach to non-profit universities and management support that the positive and reinforcing presence of these factors can enable the implementation of ethical marketing strategies. For example, commitment and ethical leadership are very important for designing ethical marketing strategies. One of the interviewees here says:

"When we are evaluated based on the level of student satisfaction, I definitely care more about honoring students. It comes down to management's view of what is important to them".

Similar to the results of this research, Szymankowska (2019) also says managerial assistance is of paramount importance in the execution of an ethical marketing plan, as it has a direct impact on the ethical atmosphere and conduct within a company. Proficient managerial communication, incorporating ethical factors, is crucial for the strategic transmission of information and safeguarding sensitive data, thus playing a significant role in the prosperity of the organization. In addition, according to Chang et al. (2022) Employee awareness plays a pivotal role in the implementation of an ethical marketing strategy, as it directly impacts their actions and decision-making processes. Studies have shown that the moral awareness of employees can significantly moderate the correlation between ethical leadership and organizational deviance (Coffie et al., 2023). This suggests that employees with a higher level of moral awareness are more likely to comply with ethical standards and decrease deviant behaviors. Additionally, cultivating a strong sense of ethical awareness among employees can boost their engagement and drive in corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, which are essential

components of ethical marketing strategies. Actively involving employees in CSR not only increases their dedication and allegiance but also fortifies the company's reputation and brand (Ali, 2018).

In the ethical marketing model, a group of agents are intervention agents. These factors are not so much under the control of non-profit universities, but they are in a fluid and ongoing environment. In this category of factors, we can refer to the economic fluctuations of the society, political fluctuations, and social fluctuations. For example one of the experts here says:

"When society is faced with political and economic instability, it does not think much about moral issues. Even a person is willing to come and continue his education and get a higher degree under any conditions just for the salary increase".

Similarly, Batista and da Cunha (2012), asserted that the close connection between the lack of political stability and society's disregard for ethics is evident in various situations. Political instability often arises from the decline of ethical and moral standards among politicians, resulting in corruption and societal decline. Also, in Zaharia (2017) opinion, the issue of political instability in Third World nations is complex and closely connected to a lack of respect for ethics within society. The instability is frequently a result of governments not establishing proper political structures and gaining support from the people, which can result in oppression, political unrest, and sometimes even uprisings.

Finally, If the principles of the ethical marketing model can be implemented in non-profit universities, it is expected that there will be positive consequences. For example Increase public trust and loyalty, Maintaining and strengthening the university brand, and Strengthening competitiveness and financial stability. One of experts here says that:

"Maintaining and sustaining financial profit in the long term is in the group of customer satisfaction, who are the most important customers for non-profit universities, students. It may be necessary to examine the various interests of students who choose non-profit universities, but certainly one of the reasons for choosing an ethical university under equal conditions is the observance of ethical principles and respect for students".

In line with the statements of this marketing expert, Mazur (2022) asserted that Ethical marketing is vital for improving financial stability as it helps build trust, satisfaction, and loyalty among customers, which are key for the sustained success of financial institutions. Gibbs and Murphy (2009) belief that Ethical marketing plays a vital role in shaping the university's brand through the cultivation of trust, integrity, and a favorable image among various stakeholders. The integration of marketing approaches from the service sector by universities poses a potential threat of consumerization, potentially compromising the institution's core values if not handled with ethical considerations. Also, Radiman et al. (2019) asserted that Ethical marketing plays a pivotal role in influencing student loyalty within universities through the cultivation of trust, satisfaction, and a favorable university reputation. The implementation of ethical principles in marketing, including integrity, fairness, and empathy, is essential for establishing enduring connections with students, thereby bolstering their loyalty. In addition, El-Kassar et al. (2019) say that the ethical comportment of higher education institutions, encompassing openness and commitment to commonly-held principles, has a favorable impact on the confidence and allegiance of students.

CONCLUSION

Ethical marketing initiatives in non-profit universities have the potential to yield numerous favorable outcomes, bolstering both their standing and operational efficiency. By integrating ethical values such as honesty, reliability, equity, and compassion into their marketing strategies, universities can cultivate stronger, more enduring connections with key stakeholders, encompassing students, faculty, and benefactors (Demetriou et al., 2018; Emad & Von Büren, 2014). This approach not only aids in positioning the university positively within a competitive educational arena but also safeguards the institution's core mission from being compromised by commercial influences (Dašić, 2014). Furthermore, ethical marketing practices can nurture a culture of volunteerism and social responsibility within the academic community, as illustrated by the successful social responsibility reputation enhancement achieved through the University of Nicosia's cause-related marketing

campaign (Gibbs & Murphy, 2009). Engagements with non-profit entities also afford students practical applications of marketing theories, thereby enhancing their readiness for professional challenges. Moreover, ethical marketing can address the financial hurdles encountered by non-profit universities by establishing trust and credibility with donors, essential for revenue diversification and sustainability (Bezuidenhout, 2017; Arambewela et al., 2006). The comprehensive marketing strategy, tailored to the distinct attributes and objectives of the non-profit sector, further aids in cultivating a favorable image and stronger market positioning (Besana & Esposito, 2014). Nevertheless, the ethical climate within the organization is of utmost importance, as unethical behaviors can trigger a series of issues, eroding the institution's credibility and student outcomes (Simmons & Lacznik, 2014). Hence, embracing ethical marketing practices not only aligns with the ethical leadership anticipated from educational institutions but also contributes to their enduring prosperity and viability by ensuring that marketing continues to serve the institution rather than merely promoting consumerism (Barber et al., 2023). This comprehensive ethical marketing approach ultimately enhances student satisfaction and institutional responsibility, fostering a more robust and esteemed educational setting.

Practical Recommendations for Non-Profit University Managers in Iraq

According to the findings of the study, practical suggestions for non-profit university managers in Iraq include:

Increase Awareness and Social Demand: This can be achieved through running awareness campaigns, utilizing social media strategies to endorse ethical marketing practices, and actively engaging with the community. Additionally, it is advisable to partner with local influencers and community figures to enhance the message and foster greater participation.

Competition in the Educational Market: it is important to create a special value proposition that emphasizes the university's dedication to ethical marketing and community involvement. To follow this suggestion, make use of social media channels to exhibit the university's successes and community engagement, underscoring its unique ethical strategy.

Legal and Regulatory Pressures: Developing a code of ethics and guaranteeing adherence to regulations is crucial for upholding a favorable reputation. It is advised to create a thorough code of ethics and provide consistent training sessions for employees and educators to promote comprehension and compliance.

Informing Human Resources: Offer consistent training sessions and workshops to educate all employees and faculty members on ethical marketing strategies and community involvement. Additionally, integrating ethics and community engagement into the university's performance assessment and promotion standards is recommended to guarantee accountability.

Managerial Support: Elevate and support managers in valuing ethical marketing practices and community involvement in decision-making. It is also recommended that you create a clear policy that highlights the importance of ethical marketing practices and community involvement, and ensure that managers are held accountable for implementing these strategies.

Suggestions For Future Researches

Here are some recommendations for future researchers on providing an ethical marketing model for non-profit universities in Iraq:

Understand the Unique Challenges of the Iraqi Higher Education Sector: Identify the political, economic, and social factors that have shaped the Iraqi higher education landscape, including the impact of conflict, sanctions, and limited resources. Identify the specific challenges of non-profit universities in Iraq, such as budget constraints, lack of infrastructure, and the need to balance educational and social missions.

Develop a Stakeholder-Centric Approach: Assess the needs, concerns, and expectations of key stakeholders, including students, faculty, administrators, government officials, and local communities and ensuring that the marketing model prioritizes the interests and well-being of these stakeholders instead of just focusing on organizational goals.

Emphasize Ethical and Transparent Practices: Establish clear ethical guidelines and policies for marketing and recruiting practices and ensure they are aligned with the values and mission of the nonprofit university and promote transparency in all aspects of the marketing process, including disclosure of tuition fees, opportunities financial aid, and program outcomes.

Leverage Digital and Social Media Platforms: Using digital platforms and social media to reach prospective students and communicate the unique value proposition of nonprofit universities. And ensuring that the digital marketing strategy is aligned with the organization's ethics and transparency goals.

Research Limitations

One of the main constraints of this study concerning ethical marketing models in non-profit universities in Iraq is the restricted size of the sample. The research comprised interviews with 15 Iraqi experts and managers, which might not represent the whole population of non-profit universities in the nation. This could potentially restrict the applicability of the results. Another limitation is the geographical scope of the research. Since it was carried out exclusively in Iraq, the findings may not be directly relevant to non-profit universities in other nations or regions with diverse cultural, economic, or educational backgrounds. It is important to approach the transferability of the findings to other contexts with caution. The bias of the experts participating is also a limitation. As the study involved interviews with experts and managers in the field, their viewpoints may not completely mirror those of other involved parties, like students or faculty members. This may introduce a level of bias in the collected data. Additionally, the data collection approach utilized in this study, known as the grounded theory method, may have its own limitations. While this method is suitable for delving into intricate phenomena, the reliance on semi-structured interviews might not have captured all the subtleties and specifics of the participants' experiences.

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