Chapter 10
Islam, Sustainable Consumption, and Consumers’ Motivations in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The chapter considers the views of Islam, consumer, and consumption researchers on the compatibility and incompatibility of Islam with sustainable consumption. To this end, the author examines the consumers’ motivations for consumption and critically evaluates their parallels within Islamic norms. Then, the notions of Islam and consumption are analyzed and evaluated in depth. The study also attempts to show the Muslims’ perception of consumption and motivation. The findings suggest that Muslim consumers in Nigeria are motivated to practice sustainable consumption and are driven primarily by their Islamic understandings. This study, therefore, recommends the concept of moderation as a major Islamic motivation to consumption sustainability and if put in place could result in a compatible motivation to sustainable consumption.

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable consumption is one of the main objectives of the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The United Nations Environment Program characterizes sustainable consumption and production as an all-encompassing approach in limiting the negative natural effects from consumption and production...
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systems, while advancing quality of life for all (Sustainable Development Goals Fund, 2016). However, resource can only be utilized efficiently if consumed sustainably. Furthermore, either from the demand or consumer perspective, the main goal of sustainable consumption is to meet the consumption needs of poor people and low income earners, and to redress unsustainable consumption issues among higher income societies.

For over a decade now, research on the influence of values on sustainable consumption shows the need for a systemic approach in order to maintain a sustainable economy in our contemporary world (Thøgersen & Ölander, 2002; Alkon, 2008; Vermeir & Verbeke, 2008; Young, Hwang, McDonald, & Oates, 2010; Phipps et al., 2013). In other words, this can be regarded as a change of values from narcissistic to generosity; from material to spiritual; and from social to sustainable consumption culture. A consumption culture seen as embodying self-sacrifice, spiritual and ecological values can be said to be in line with Islamo-spiritual and cultural values (Samsudi, 2017).

Background

Contrary to current reasoning in addressing environmental consumption and crisis as an ecological emergency, some Muslim researchers and activists (e.g. Nasr, 1997) have observed the situation and concluded that the problem is more of a spiritual crisis (Nasr, 1997). Perceiving that the environmental crisis is not an emergency independent from anyone else, but rather a reflection of a spiritual crisis, the methodologies in managing the ecological circumstance will be unique. Therefore, this article aims to contribute to the literature on sustainable consumption from the perspective of Muslim consumers in a developing country, specifically, by identifying their motivations for sustainable consumption and how it is driven by the need to fulfil certain needs. The rest of this article proceeds as follows: First the relevant literature on sustainable consumption and consumers’ motivations for consumption is presented and the current gaps are highlighted and discussed. Next, Islam and consumption is introduced and discussed. Here the different types of motivations are identified and examined. Following that, consumption motivation in Nigeria is presented. Subsequently, the consumption motivation among Muslims are presented and discussed in Nigerian context. This is followed by a discussion of the findings and its practical implications within a wider regional context. This is followed by conclusion and future research direction.