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Article:	A Critical Analysis of Pakistani National Press Portrayal of Zakat Advertisements during Ramadan
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ABSTRACT

Zakat is a religious alms-giving or welfare contribution among Muslims. The Zakat donors themselves have to decide to whom it should be given or direct deduction from the banks (in Pakistan). Zakat is the fourth of Islam's five basic pillars, and it is collected during the Holy Month of Ramadan, just before Eid ul Fitr, the joyous festival at end of Ramadan. This research examines Zakat campaign during Ramadan in Pakistani leading press. The purpose is to analyse whether the specific images and symbols are spiritually drawn from established Islamic beliefs, or commercial with no religious connotation? Also, to analyse the appeals used in the process of persuasion. The results show that appeals e.g., physical disability, poverty, orphans and old age, which attract the readers and persuade them to contribute are used. But organizations ignore all other deservers described in the Quran on which Zakat can be spent. Zakat seeking organizations run extensive campaigns during the month. Quick-relief providing organizations use more appeals than organizations working on longer projects.

Keywords: Zakat, Pakistani national newspapers, religious advertisements, Media Exposure, CDA, Persuasion, appeals.

INTRODUCTION

Attracting readers through advertising is central to the newspaper industry, where readers are persuaded for product selling and buying. One of the important but so far neglected areas in research is an analysis of religious advertisements on Zakat. In Ramadan, advertisements appear in such a large quantity that they are visible across the mainstream national press. Among tens of organisations that are collecting Zakat (Zakat is one form of charity among a no of other charities featured in Islam) from the people through these advertisements, the messages are produced in a way that attracts minds in various ways. Keeping in view of the persuasion process, newspaper readers are attracted by the competitive Zakat seeking organisations in the Holy month of Ramadan. Lipovsky (2016), highlights such donation episodes as “Fundraising campaigns derive their persuasive appeal from a complex interplay of verbal text, typographic features and images, combined in a visual design employing layout” (p. 1), and readers are “influenced to donate and are persuaded” (ibid, p.1).

Even though there is little research on advertisements, according to Al-Olayan & Karande (2000), “no study has explained advertising material based on religious views, although religious beliefs are a significant component of culture” (p. 70). The writers also tell that “Neither the Qur'an nor the Sunna expressly addresses advertising” (ibid, p. 71). The objective of the research is to know the religious significance of advertising campaigns during Ramadan and the type of content used by either charitable or religious or charitable-religious organizations. Notwithstanding a well-defined system of Zakat collection by state institutions at various levels, from province-level Zakat ministries to local-level Zakat committees and in light of the religious and socio-cultural milieu that has given rise to such organisations, the study is evaluating the appeals used by Zakat seeking charities through advertisements.

Background

Religion plays a crucial role in the formation and maintenance of Pakistan's political and social structures. Through charitable action offered by Islam, it has performed an historic and essential role in the social welfare and well-being of Muslims (Kirmani, 2012). Zakat is a worldwide religious obligation for Muslims. Alms-giving must be paid by Muslims who have accumulated riches to a certain degree as prescribed by Islam. Such a multi-dimensional institute is served the powerful ground as, “Zakat is not just a form of worship but also that the receipt of the proceeds of Zakat is a right of the poor” (Al-Qardawi, 1997).

Charitable activities are accomplished by the government and non-government organizations (NGOs). These NGOs have deep roots in the general public in all sectors in Pakistan. Furthermore, these NGOs work in a variety of areas in Pakistani culture, including education, women's empowerment, health, old-age homes, well-being of children, poverty alleviation, and community development. Pertinent to be mentioned here that Islam covers all domains of human lives- their needs and requirements, whereas the organisations that collect Zakat cover a few sections of lives and supposedly need to address them too to serve the purpose of Zakat. Bano & Nair, discovered that “however, very little is known about the nature and role of social religious organizations and their contribution in addressing the development challenges that Pakistan has faced since independence. (2007)”

During the holy month of Ramadan, the organisations that collect Zakat employ advertisements in the national print media to convince Pakistanis to pay Zakat. As disbursement of Zakat is a religious duty rather than a legal obligation it works for the development of society as Myles & Naylor (1996), observes, that if such voluntary behaviour would not be adopted the welfare of the society would suffer. In the great Islamic model, such behaviour has to be adopted to fulfil the responsibilities provided by religion. Therefore, the wealthy person who is unable to distribute Zakat loses benefit from the social custom. Outcomes for not paying Zakat are explained very clearly;

Allah's Apostle said, "Whoever is made wealthy by Allah and does not pay the Zakat of his wealth than on the Day of Resurrection his wealth will be made like a bald poisonous male snake with two black spots over the eyes. The snake will encircle his neck and bite his cheeks and say, 'I am your wealth, I am your treasure'¹".

Literature Review

Readers are relatively passive and unable to understand the motives of the advertisers and it becomes difficult for them to decode the message in its real sense. "Yet it is widely acknowledged among recent generic marketing communication researchers that consumers are more active in the interpretation of advertisements" (Hibbert et al. 2007, p. 721). The authors use 'guilt appeal' as the advertisements put in for the people to attract them and called them 'emotional appeal' (ibid). There is a vast Islamic literature available but a few studies specifically concerned with social welfare, although it is the basic value.

If the Zakat advertisements are framed as a part of a discursive practice, per se, media show a one-sided picture of the society and rampantly talk about the development and ignore social issues which are increasing at an unprecedented rate e.g., illiteracy, poor working situations, disparities among the urban and rural population differences between the social classes and so forth. Also, media use of appeals touches the hearts of the receivers as their contributions can create a cleavage among appeals to others.

Huhmann & Brotherton, (1997) stated that "guilt appeals are more frequently adopted for charity fund-raising than other types of goods and services" (p. 40). According to Hibbert et al. "Consumers are therefore expected to have a reasonable amount of persuasion knowledge about charity advertisements of this nature" (2007, p. 727), and some reasons are more "saleable" than others (Griffin et al., 1993), and at the same time "the emotional appeal of a charitable cause varies because of factors such as causal attributions." (Hibbert et al. 2007, p. 729).

As has been elaborated above, Zakat is one type of charity, other charities are Waqf (religious endowment), Sadaqaat (charitable donations), and Khairaat (charitable donations) are religion related donations or "financial worship" and played an important part in subsidising help at the institutional and personal levels in South Asian Muslims especially, where Zakat is the most significant way of fundraising in Pakistan (Benthall, 1998). From the belief "Zakat donation is

regarded as a great source of self-protection against the realm of evil spirits which is entirely a new finding concerning charity donations” (Kashif, 2018, p. 55).

Theoretical framework

In mass media, persuasion theory deals with messages aimed at quietly and subtly changing the attitude of receivers. However, according to Dooley (2016), “Various forces or factors work at the persuasive situation” (P. 47). One of the factors that affect is called ‘nudge’, also called as ‘attention step or payoff’, it convinces customers to act promptly i.e., “24 hours’ sale”. Then it comes to ‘gravity’ i.e., a force that is pulling you down, for the advertisers’ interest. Then it comes to angle, again for the advertisers’ interest. For him, it should be steep enough to resist resistance or overcome friction (ibid). ‘Friction’ is another factor that matters as persuasion never takes place in a frictionless environment (ibid). Mostly it is used in controlling & preventing acts like Aids prevention, disease control etc. The “angle” or slope is Dooley’s metaphor for the persuaders to act according to the motivation provided. The framing, the analogies, the stories, the chapters, the visuals, the balanced use of ethos, pathos, and logos, and all the other aspects that go into what Aristotle called "artistic proof" are all included. For the author, the theory of persuasion acts for prevention, attracting and fighting distraction and boosting attention (ibid). Advertisements are made to attract and persuade the consumers to buy a specific product or to adopt a specific idea or stance which can be either political, social, ideological or religious.

According to Al-Momani, there are different elements involved in advertisements e.g., verbal and visual elements, connotations, as well as social and religious implications (2016).

From the perspective of giving charity, the need to lessen feelings of guilt is linked to the self-seeking aims of serving. During fund-raising campaigns, persuasive communication is useful as it stresses the guilt-reducing process, proposed to convince the customer to accept the advised behaviour through the advertisement (ibid).

Barthes (1977), categorised the meaning of the image as “denotative and connotative”, for him, denotation is the simple description of “what, or who is represented” and connotation as the ideas and values expressed “through what” was being represented, and “through how” they were represented. As a result, denotation is the precise sense of the sign, which includes a descriptor, linguistic elements, a signified, and the notion. Al-Momani says that many techniques, like word replacement, wordplay, Islamic quotes, commitment, piety, and honesty are used, along with others in advertisements (2016). Showing sympathy and acting as if you were a member of the target audience, contributing painful and happy experiences with them is one way to develop rapport (ibid). In Islamic Jordanian society, as Matheson termed it, fosters religious affection and cultural appreciation, as well as fostering trust and honesty (2005). Momani states that “all these functions aim at building rapport with the audience and achieving inclusion and solidarity which may make the advertisement more attractive and persuasive” (2016, p. 45).

Methodology

From the literature review, the study proposes a following hypothesis and a research question.

H1: Zakat seeking organizations that provide quick relief employ more comparable appeals/ methods than those who provide relief over a longer period.

Q1: What are the comparative appeals used in the different Zakat advertisements by Zakat seeking organisations?

The data has been taken from one English (*Dawn*) and one Urdu (*Jang*) newspaper during Ramadan 2011 *Dawn* and 2012 *Jang*. Zakat advertisements are found during the month of Ramadan so the ads that appear during the month are taken. The *N* is 81 advertisements, *Dawn* 2011, 40 and *Jang* 2012, 41. Based on the hypothesis and research questions, Images including their layout and accompanying text are taken. The critical approach has been used as mentioned by Brookes & Harvey “critical approach that corroborated through the principles of critical discourse analysis (CDA) (2015, p. 62).

The advertising is referred to as themes in a larger sense. These topics were chosen based on what was found in selected advertising on the issue/text in Pakistan's national print media.

Findings & Analysis

Some of the Discourses used by different organizations are:

- “*We aim at eradication of Blindness; Join hands in Fight against Blindness; Committed to helping the helpless; Send your donations and Zakat directly ...*”
- “*Hope for a brighter future; Your support has helped give back the gift of sight to over 20 million people and your continued donations can brighten the future of millions more*”
- “*We help during an emergency; Your financial help makes lives safe ...*”
- “*Isn't she a picture of health; Our monetary considerations do not stop us from providing the best patient care possible; In our life, not simply the treatment ...*”
- “*We need money, then food items, then medicines. Here money comes in the first place*”.

Zakat seeking organizations which are working for immediate relief, e.g., Edhi foundation, 1122, Shaukat khanum etc. use more comparable appeals than the organizations working on long term projects like Behbud Association, SOS and, Alamigar. During the selected time the number of advertisements was 81 presented in the following table

Table 1.

Comparative table of advertisements and appeals in *Dawn* and *Jang*

Advertisements	Dawn/ 2011	Appeals used	Jang/ 2012	Appeals used
Child add association	1	Same appeal	0	Same ad/appeal
SOS	0	=	1	=
Al Ibrahim eye hospital	2	=	0	=
The citizen foundation	4	Same ad/appeal	1	=
Sahara Life for Trust	3	Same ad/appeal	1	=
LRBT (<i>Layton Rahmatullah Benevolent Trust</i>)	1	Same ad/appeal	12	Same ad/appeal
Rescue 1122	2	Same ad/appeal	0	=
SIUT (Sindh Institute of Urology & Transplantation)	5	More than 4 appeals	0	=
Roshni Homes Trust-	3	Same ad/appeal	2	Two appeals
Al-Shifa	6	Same ad/appeal	5	Same ad/appeal
Dawn relief fund	7	Maximum appeals	0	=
Dr AQ Khan Hospital Rahman Foundation	2	Same ad/appeal	5	Same ad/appeal
Sada welfare foundation	1	=	1	=
Fatimid Foundation	0	=	4	Same ad/appeals
Agha Khan University Hospital	0	=	3	Same ad
Hijaz Hospital	0	=	1	=
Al-khidmat Network	0		2	Same ad/appeals
Chhippa Welfare Foundation	2	Different appeals	0	Same ad/appeal

Shaukat Khanum	0	Same ad/appeal	2	Different appeals
Pakistan red crescent society	1	=	1	Same ad/appeal

In *Dawn* newspaper, the “Dawn relief fund” has used maximum appeals with maximum advertisements among all the other organizations during 2011. Advertisements with more than one appeal also appeared. The theme of "Rehabilitation after Natural Disasters" focuses on deprived people. Such appeals have nothing to do with the wealthy, the elderly, or religion. In *Jang*, the maximum advertisements were given by LRBT but they give the same advertisement and the same appeal was used repeatedly. The religious appearance of the people was the most prominent feature in these appeals. It has been discovered that the producers of the commercial believe that earning charitable standing for such appearances is the most beneficial. Use of language in these appeals also has significance in the context i.e., *Dukhee Insaniyat* [pressing human condition], *Dil Khol Kar* [pour every penny here as Zakat], *Flahee kaam* [the best charity service we're providing]. As a result, the most common themes in commercials are Health, Rehabilitation following natural disasters, Religion, and We-ness. The focus then shifts to the appeals. These are the sub-themes that are part of the larger picture. For example, the chosen theme of Health includes the frames disease and treatment of eyes, Thalassaemia, Haemophilia, and others, as well as the frame disabled is sympathetic.

Appeals used in selected advertisements

Happiness appeal

“We hope that the Somalians can celebrate Eid Ul Fiter”

“A home to spend Eid; what a difference you can make”

one of the most used appeals was the happiness appeal, it contains encouragement to participate and gives the reader a feeling of happiness. The study's findings show that religious beliefs and values have a long history in Pakistan and continue to have a significant impact on philanthropy, encouraging people and organisations to react to urgent necessities and provide services that the government is unable to provide.

Health appeal

“Cancer kay marizoon ko dard main naa chorain” (don't let cancer patients' be in pain) (Cancer care hospital).

Another used tactic is showing human misery e.g., Local charities are primarily concerned with wellbeing and service provision, focusing on providing health-related services. These organizations and NGOs like SIUT, Shaukat Khanum, Sahara trust, Sundas foundation etc. show the pain, misery and agony of the patients to grab more funding and to seek the sympathies of the readers.

Scarcity appeal

Such appeals mostly are used in natural climates or disasters where the impressions are used that only “your aid/help” can rescue them from this situation.

“Emergency main aap ka madadgar kon rescue 1122” (your rescuer in emergency) (Rescue 1122)

“Aagay barhye or apnay mulk main barshoon say mutasir bahion ki madad keegeaye” (join hands to help the flood victims) (Al-khidmat).

Organizations like Al-Khidmat, rescue 1122 and Edhi give impressions that “we are the only organization who can help you in this situation”. They establish special collection centres for the collection of charity in thousands of numbers and spends lots of money on creating such paraphernalia.

Empathy appeal

Emotional appeals or empathy appeals are one of the most commonly used appeals. They are used for organizations such as SOS, which are working for orphanage children or working for health causes.

“A loving home for every child” (SOS)

“This Eid I could see only if you help me” (LRBT)

They use children with miserable faces as observed by Kim, “faces of children, and facial expressions are known to influence consumers’ intention to donate” (kim, 2015, p.715).

Fear appeal

Sometimes the name Islam has been synonymously used as creating happiness as well as creating fear. Many organizations that consider as Islamic based and trustworthy among the public impose fear tactics. Such as pay zakat otherwise; you have to face the consciences. Though most of the time such appeals are in a soft language it sends a message to the readers that paying zakat to such organizations is the only way to fulfil their Islamic responsibility.

Statistical/gratitude appeal

This is also one of the most popular appeals in Zakat ads. Given the number of achieved goals, these organizations try to persuade through trust-building.

“Now once again thanks to your support. We are working to make our oncology centre. Pakistan's largest cancer hospital” (SIUT)

“Aap ki zakat say 12 lac mareez jaanbar huay” (12 lac patients have been recovered through your Zakat) (SAHARA)

“Thank you for sending me school” (The citizens' foundation)

Claim appeal

Organizations with long term plans and projects sue such kinds of appeals and

“We aim at eradication of blindness” (Al-Shifa Trust)

People, NGOs, and political opponents have always blamed governments for their misdeeds, and this discourse has been heard all across the world. Individuals and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) who come for the sole purpose of collecting funds, on the other hand, do not even utter the word “government”. These are the advertisements' communicative functions, through which the message of increased alms and generosity in the name of Zakat is conveyed. Al-Momani, (2016), discussed how the advertising creates an atmosphere that emphasizes religious bonding and “cultural appreciation”. Another finding of the study is that such commercials in most nations include more information about the particular attitude being promoted. It was called “high versus low context cultures” (ibid).

Table 2.

Categories Represented in Advertisements

Categories				
s.no	Disability	Poverty	Education	Deprivation
1	Blindness	Old age	Children enrolment	Floods
2	Thalassaemia	Poor child health	Islamic education only for poor/deprived/orphan	Earthquake
3	Dialysis	Widow	Female education	

Conclusion

It is more commercial activity than a religious one. NGOs, charity organizations and other fundraising groups working in the private sector run huge advertisements campaigns during the month of Ramadan. They spend millions of rupees on these campaigns running through print, electronic and social media. They use appeals that attract readers and persuade them to pay Zakat. Showing human misery and proving an organization's trustworthiness through statistical figures are the most commonly used appeals. Showing children in malnourished, bald, and lying on hospital beds situations is another of the most used appeals. As has been observed that people give more charity than organizations or groups (Chang & Lee, 2009), these advertisements mostly target persons than organizations. They persuade people through appeals that attract the readers. Quran gives eight reasons on which Zakat can be spent e.g., Poor, needy, administrators of Zakat, those who are newly converted to Islam, debt-ridden, slaves, in the way of Allah and travellers with few resources. Most of the organizations working in the private sector hardly mention all these. Health, poverty, old age and education are the

most commonly depicted causes for which donations are mentioned to be spent. The reason could be that these factors shown or presented seem more lucrative for donors and they find it more effective to generate money. Quranic reference for Zakat is rarely used in advertisements in mostly privately-owned organizations. According to a survey, 85% of total charity or Zakat in the UKⁱⁱ has been collected in the last ten days of Ramadan. These days the governmental and non-governmental organization in Pakistan touches on the very key points of Islamic values by showing human misery. Pakistani government collect and distribute Zakat in several ways e.g., Zakat deduction at source, Bait-ul-maal, Zakat and Usher committees, Ehsaas program etc. These organizations also run huge media campaigns in Ramadan and give the impression that Zakat will reach every needy person. But they also address very few of the eight reasons mentioned in the Quran e.g., on the website of the Zakat and Ushar department the following statement is written “deservers of Zakat are widows, lonely people, orphans and poor, the remaining aspects like travellers, newly converted to Islam, and slaves/prisoners are missing. Health has been utilised as a synonym for the charity collection since it provides instant relief as well as immediate collection. Education has also been used as a model for a short-term aid organisation. Health is portrayed as being more depressing.

By empowering women via education, financial resources, and regenerative social insurance, they might make significant contributions to the climate fight. To get this underway, “we need to connect sectoral barriers and collaborate to ensure that women are climate winners, not climate losers” (June 10, 2016, panel discussion at Wilson Center the US).

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