

## A Review of the Spiritual Marketing Model in the Context of Religion, Culture, and Organization

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Received : July 15, 2025

Accepted : September 22, 2025

Published : January 31, 2026

Citation: Baidlowi, R. (2026). A Review of the Spiritual Marketing Model in the Context of Religion, Culture, and Organization. *Ilomata International Journal of Social Science*, 7(1), 410-421.

<https://doi.org/10.61194/ijss.v7i1.1880>

**ABSTRACT:** Spiritual marketing is an alternative approach in marketing science that emphasizes the importance of religious values, culture and organizational spirituality in shaping the relationship between companies and consumers. This study aims to review related literature and develop a conceptual model of spiritual marketing that integrates three main dimensions: religious values as the source of ethical norms, local culture as the symbolic framework, and spiritual values in the organization as the operational foundation. Using the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework, the study maps how these three elements act as a stimulus that shapes consumers' perceptions and emotional attachments, which in turn drive meaningful purchase decisions. This conceptual approach offers a theoretical contribution in expanding the scope of value-based marketing, as well as providing practical guidance for organizations looking to build authentic and sustainable brand loyalty. The study also recommends further research directions based on quantitative and qualitative approaches to test the validity of the proposed model in various social and cultural contexts.

**Keywords:** Spiritual Marketing, Religiosity, Local Culture, Organizational Spirituality, S-O-R Model, Customer Loyalty.



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## INTRODUCTION

Modern marketing developments no longer focus solely on competitive strategies and economic rationality, but have also begun to respond to consumers' needs for value, meaning and deeper emotional connections. In this context, the spiritual marketing approach emerged as a response to concerns about marketing practices that tend to be transactional, exploitative and disconnected from the human dimension. Spiritual marketing not only emphasizes customer satisfaction and company profits, but also integrates noble values such as honesty, compassion, empathy, and meaningful service, making consumers not just target markets, but partners with dignity and spirituality. This shift overcomes the limitations of traditional marketing by offering deeper and more ethical relationships, especially in various cultural and religious contexts, where marketing strategies are aligned with spiritual principles to build meaningful connections. One form of this approach is faith-based marketing, which focuses on the commercialization of goods and services for religious consumers and the integration of religious values into broader marketing strategies to increase consumer trust and loyalty ([Salas-Canales, 2021](#)). From an Islamic perspective, spiritual

marketing emphasizes the values of honesty, trust and compassion rooted in religious teachings, and challenges conventional marketing orientations that tend towards profit and manipulation ([Abdullah & Sahad, 2016](#)). This approach aims to create added value not only for consumers but also the environment, by aligning business practices with divine teachings and ethical standards. Applicative examples can be seen in Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor (PMDG) in Indonesia which maintains its existence without conventional advertising, but rather through community service and alumni networks ([Fahamsyah, 2020](#)), as well as "Komunitas Bubur Sedekah" which is able to increase small business turnover through the integration of ethical and spiritual principles in their business, resulting in customer satisfaction and business sustainability ([Triatmo et al., 2023](#)). More broadly, spiritual marketing offers a holistic approach that supports long-term sustainability and consumer welfare ([Hamdan et al., 2022](#)), although its implementation demands sensitivity to cultural and religious contexts to avoid being trapped in superficial or exploitative applications.

In a highly religious and cultural society like Indonesia, the application of spiritual marketing has great potential to grow. Religious values provide an ethical framework for building trust, while local culture reinforces the symbolic and emotional dimensions of marketing messages. In addition, organizations or companies that integrate spirituality into their internal processes-whether in leadership, service, or employee relations-tend to demonstrate an edge in creating healthy, long-term relationships with their consumers. Spiritual marketing is therefore a holistic approach that meets modern consumers' needs for authenticity, meaning and social responsibility. This approach is particularly relevant in Indonesia, where spiritual and cultural values are closely intertwined with consumer behavior. This is reflected in the emergence of sharia markets that reflect the integration of Islamic values in economic activity as well as the role of spiritual lifestyle agents in shaping consumer identity ([Salas-Canales, 2021; Utama, 2016](#)).

The concrete application of spiritual marketing can be seen in several case studies in Indonesia. The Bubur Sedekah community, for example, managed to increase sales turnover and business sustainability by integrating spiritual principles into their business practices, in line with Hermawan Kertajaya's spiritual marketing theory that emphasizes theistic, humanistic and contextual values ([Triatmo et al., 2023](#)). In the tourism sector, religious sites such as Gunungpring's Makam Aulia apply spiritual marketing strategies to strengthen visitors' spiritual experiences, although they still face challenges in optimizing social media as promotional support ([Dwihantoro & Vianto, 2022a](#)). Islamic teachings themselves encourage marketing practices that are not only profit-oriented, but also create value for individuals, communities and the environment, by emphasizing honesty, trust and compassion ([Abdullah & Sahad, 2016](#)). This perspective challenges the profit-driven motives of conventional marketing and encourages a more ethical, meaningful and sustainable approach.

The urgency of this research lies in the lack of a conceptual model that explicitly integrates the three main elements-religious values, local culture, and spiritual values in organizations-into a comprehensive and contextual spiritual marketing framework. Most literature still discusses these three aspects separately or limited to normative contexts and case studies, whereas in contemporary marketing practice, they interact with each other in shaping consumer perceptions and behavior, especially in complex and value-laden social environments. This integration is crucial

as it aligns marketing strategies with the deep beliefs and cultural context of the target audience. However, existing literature often treats these elements separately, so an integrated approach is needed to address this gap. The following sections will explore the role of religious values, local culture and organizational spirituality in building a contextually relevant spiritual marketing framework.

First, religious elements in marketing can increase brand loyalty by establishing strong emotional connections to consumers' spiritual beliefs([Kisieliauskas & Milerytė, 2022](#)) . Faith-based marketing, as noted by([Salas-Canales, 2021](#)) , has become an important aspect of meeting the needs of consumers with strong religious affiliations. Second, the interaction between religion, culture, and ethnicity influences consumer attitudes and behaviors in a multicultural society, so understanding cultural aspects is important to increase market relevance and acceptance([Dwihantoro & Vianto, 2022a; Mathur, 2023](#)) . Third, spiritual values in marketing, especially in the context of religious tourism, are able to provide satisfaction and knowledge that is in line with local cultural and spiritual values, and contribute to tourism sustainability([Dwihantoro & Vianto, 2022b](#)) . This suggests that even religious organizations increasingly need a structured spiritual marketing model to guide them in effectively engaging and retaining their members([Cardona, 2015](#))

Based on this, the following research questions can be formulated: How to design a spiritual marketing model that systematically integrates religious values, local culture and organizational spirituality, and how does this model influence consumer perceptions and decisions? This question is important to bridge the existing conceptual gap as well as open up space for theoretical and applicative exploration in the realm of value-based marketing. The objectives of this study are to examine key concepts in spiritual marketing from various theoretical perspectives, identify and map the relationship between religious values, local culture and organizational values in the context of marketing, develop an integrative conceptual model of spiritual marketing based on the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework, and provide further research directions and practical implications for organizations in designing more ethical, meaningful and sustainable marketing strategies.

### **Spiritual Marketing Concept**

Spiritual marketing is an approach that is not only oriented towards consumer satisfaction and material profit, but also emphasizes ethical values, meaning of life, and transcendental relationships in the marketing process([Sheth et al., 2011](#)) . This concept emerged as a response to the limitations of conventional marketing models in responding to the needs of modern consumers who are increasingly aware of moral aspects, sustainability, and inner well-being([Zohar et al., 2000](#)) . In practice, spiritual marketing emphasizes principles such as honesty, compassion, genuine service, and value-based long-term relationships. Consumers are no longer viewed simply as sales targets, but as equal partners who have spiritual dignity and value. A concrete example can be found at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor (PMDG) which carries out spiritual marketing through community services and alumni networks, without relying on traditional advertising([Fahamsyah, 2020](#)) . In the context of Islamic marketing, this approach is realized through adherence to the

principles of honesty, fairness, and service, in line with Islamic teachings and in contrast to conventional profit-oriented marketing practices([Abdullah & Sahad, 2016](#); [Hamdan et al., 2022](#))

Spiritual marketing is firmly rooted in ethical and religious principles, as seen from the integration of faith-based marketing approaches that not only fulfill the spiritual needs of consumers, but also shape the global market through religious values([Salas-Canales, 2021](#)) . In the Islamic context, an integrated marketing approach emphasizes consumer protection and ethical practices, thus promoting a society based on trust and justice([Alzalook et al., 2023](#)) . Some literature equates spiritual marketing with the value-based marketing approach, but in fact the spiritual approach goes much deeper as it touches on the existential dimension of the consumer. Spiritual values in this context are not limited to a particular religion, but include universal values such as empathy, love, sincerity, and the search for meaning([Kale, 2004](#)) . Therefore, spiritual marketing is not only applied by religious institutions, but also by commercial enterprises that want to build more meaningful relationships with their consumers.

The concept of consumer spirituality is receiving increasing attention, with individuals seeking spiritual well-being through market offerings designed to provide meaningful experiences with the self or a higher power([Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019](#)) . Such market offerings include spiritual products such as fragrances, incense sticks and healing crystals that are increasingly in demand by consumers([Jain, 2020](#)) . Such spiritual meanings are formed collaboratively between religious institutions, marketers and consumers themselves, reflecting a blend of sacred and secular elements([Rinallo et al., 2013](#)) . Consumers are not passive, but actively integrate their spiritual beliefs and practices into their consumption habits. The shopping experience also becomes a spiritual tool, with motivational, process and impact dimensions that support consumers' inner well-being([Poulain et al., 2013](#)) . Some retail spaces such as Biocoop and Nature & Decouvertes exemplify how the shopping environment can be developed into an authentic and immersive spiritual experience.

### **Dimensions of Religion in Marketing**

Religious values have long been a source of social norms and behavioral guidance in society, including in the context of marketing. Religiosity plays an important role in shaping consumer perceptions of various aspects such as brand honesty, price fairness, and purchase decisions([Delener, 1994](#)) . Consumers with high levels of religiosity tend to be more sensitive to moral values displayed by a brand or promotional campaign([Alserhan, 2010](#)) . Therefore, many companies integrate religious values in their communication strategies-both explicitly, such as in the promotion of religious moments and halal products, and implicitly through brand narratives that reflect faith values. However, to avoid being trapped in the commodification of religion, the application of religious values in marketing must be done authentically and thoroughly, reflecting the integrity of values in the entire business process.

The integration of religious values in marketing is done through religious symbolism, faith-based narratives, to sharia-based branding and transaction systems, such as in sharia properties that incorporate Islamic symbols in their marketing strategies([Darojatun & Busro, 2024](#)) . Advertisements with religious messages have been shown to have a greater influence on consumer

attitudes and purchase intentions, especially among individuals with high religiosity([Ustaahmetoğlu, 2020](#)) . Nonetheless, superficial commodification of religious symbols can lead to consumer skepticism if they are perceived as inauthentic or manipulative([Darojatun & Busro, 2024](#); [Harun et al., 2023](#)) . Therefore, marketers need to maintain a balance between the use of symbols and the fulfillment of the audience's moral expectations. In the Islamic marketing framework, ethical practices such as honesty and fairness become key pillars, not only to attract religious consumers, but also as a contribution to sustainable economic growth([Istiqomah et al., 2024](#))

### **The Role of Local Culture and Wisdom in Consumer Spirituality**

Culture shapes the way people view the meaning of life, including in understanding the concept of spirituality. In collective societies like Indonesia, spiritual values often manifest in local wisdom such as gotong royong, tepo seliro, and respect for others. These values are not only the foundation of social ethics, but also influence how consumers perceive brands, build trust and interact in economic transactions([Hofstede, 2011](#)) . Therefore, the spiritual marketing approach needs to be adapted to the local cultural context in order to have a deep emotional and social resonance. This understanding of local values is key for companies to design authentic and competitive marketing strategies. Local culture-based marketing not only strengthens the emotional bond between brands and consumers, but also creates a competitive advantage that is difficult to replicate([Usunier & Lee, 2009](#))

The case study of "Komunitas Bubur Sedekah" in Indonesia demonstrates the successful application of spiritual marketing, where ethical and spiritual principles such as theistic and humanistic values are used as the basis for business operations, resulting in increased customer satisfaction and sales turnover([Triatmo et al., 2023](#)) . In this context, business practices are aligned with local cultural and spiritual values, building consumer trust and loyalty organically. Cultural marketing also plays an important role in reaching global markets through the introduction of traditional symbols and narratives, while promoting local cultural heritage([Wijaya, 2019](#)) . The success of this strategy requires collaboration across stakeholders, including government and the creative community. Successful branding strategies typically integrate cultural values and origins with target market preferences to build brand relevance and trust([Ioanid et al., 2014](#)) . Thus, sensitivity to cultural values, beliefs, and communication styles is crucial in designing marketing strategies capable of increasing consumer loyalty([Rachwal-Mueller & Fedotova, 2024](#))

### **Internalization of Spirituality in Organizations**

The spiritual dimension in marketing is not only reflected in external relationships with consumers, but is also embedded in the internal structure and culture of the organization. Organizations that adopt spiritual values generally exhibit characteristics such as transformational leadership, work environments that support life balance, and fair and inclusive business practices([Ashmos & Duchon, 2000](#)) . Values such as integrity, service and a sense of belonging are important foundations in building consumer trust in brands. Models such as the Spiritual Leadership Theory([Fry, 2003](#)) and the concept of Workplace Spirituality emphasize that the implementation of spiritual values in an organizational environment has a positive impact on job satisfaction,

employee loyalty, and long-term performance achievement. Therefore, for organizations that want to implement spiritual marketing as a whole, internal value transformation is a crucial first step. This internal spiritual alignment reinforces authenticity in the marketing strategy, ensuring that every message delivered to consumers truly reflects the values and reality that the company operates in.

## **METHOD**

### **Theoretical Basis: Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Framework**

The Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework developed by (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) can be used as a key approach in mapping how spiritual elements work in a marketing context. In application, the stimulus refers to the religious values, local cultural symbols and spiritual ethos of the organization that are conveyed through content, brand communication and organizational behaviour. Furthermore, the organism reflects the internalization process within the consumer, including perceptions of spirituality, affection for the brand, and compatibility with personal values. The response appears in the form of a purchase decision that is not solely driven by functional benefits, but also by factors of trust, value alignment, and emotional attachment between consumers and brands.

This model asserts that consumer responses to products or brands cannot be understood solely in terms of economic rationality, but must also be seen as the result of complex symbolic and emotional experiences. In the context of spiritual marketing, the interaction between spiritual stimuli - whether through religious messages, cultural symbols or organizational values - and consumers' inner perceptions results in more meaningful and sustainable decisions. The S-O-R approach provides a comprehensive conceptual framework to explain how spiritual values and local culture can influence consumer behavior in a deep and holistic manner.

### **Integration of Religious, Cultural and Organizational Values**

The development of this model places religious values as the primary source of moral and ethical norms that guide business behavior and shape consumer expectations of brand integrity. In societies with a high attachment to religion, such as Indonesia, brand messages that emphasize the values of honesty, sincerity, and blessings are more easily accepted and create a strong spiritual resonance. These religious values not only strengthen brand credibility, but also build trust and deep emotional affinity with consumers. Therefore, the integration of religious values into marketing strategies is an important cornerstone in creating meaningful experiences for consumers who uphold spirituality in their daily lives.

Meanwhile, local cultural values serve as a symbolic and social framework in translating spirituality into concrete practices. In Javanese culture, for example, the values of harmony, gratitude, and harmony have important meanings that can be used as a basis in crafting a relevant and contextualized spiritual marketing narrative. These values serve as a bridge between the abstract concept of spirituality and the social reality experienced by consumers. Furthermore,

organizational values ensure that spiritual messages are not merely cosmetic in external communication, but are actually implemented in the internal behaviour of the company. This is reflected in humanistic leadership styles, empathetic service patterns, and company policies that uphold the principles of justice, social responsibility, and shared prosperity, which ultimately strengthen the authenticity and integrity of spiritual marketing.

### Visualization of the Conceptual Model

This conceptual model can be visualized as an interrelated three-layer system:

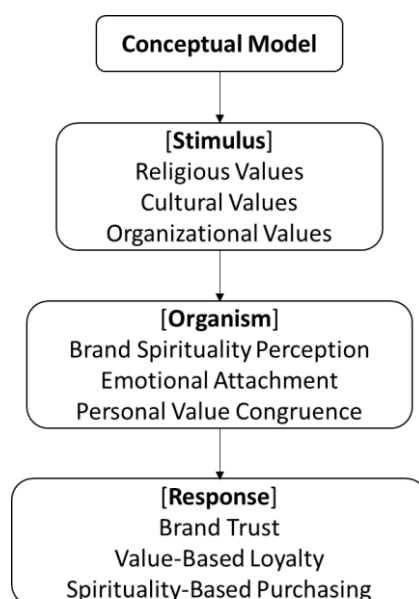


Figure 1. Conceptual Model

The three stimulus elements above reinforce each other and form a complete consumer experience, so that purchasing decisions are not only oriented towards function and price, but also towards value alignment. This model emphasizes that in spiritual marketing, consumers do not just buy products, but also buy meaning, value and emotional closeness.

### Contribution of the Conceptual Model

This conceptual model makes a theoretical contribution in broadening the scope of spiritual marketing from normative to more applicable and contextual. By incorporating values from three main dimensions-religious values, local culture, and organizational values-the model provides a basis for developing marketing strategies that are aligned with local community values, encourages more ethical and sustainable business practices, and provides an initial framework for empirical research on the influence of spiritual values on brand loyalty and consumer purchase intentions.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Paradigmatic Approach in Spiritual Marketing Studies

The study of spiritual marketing occupies a unique position in marketing literature, as it encompasses the realm of values, meanings and inner experiences of consumers that cannot always be measured objectively. Therefore, the paradigmatic approach in this study needs to be flexible and multidimensional. In general, there are three paradigm approaches that can be used:

**Table 1.** Paradigm Approach

| Approach                       | Description   | Methods Used  |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Positivistic</b>            | Emphasizes the measurement of observable variables, such as the effect of religious values on purchase intention or the relationship between organizational spirituality and consumer loyalty.                                      | Quantitative methods: SEM (Structural Equation Modeling), regression      |
| <b>Interpretive</b>            | Understand the meanings that consumers construct for spiritual messages in specific cultural and religious contexts; consumers are seen as active agents in subjectively interpreting spiritual symbols and values.                 | Qualitative methods: in-depth interviews, ethnography, narrative analysis |
| <b>Constructive-Pragmatics</b> | Blends quantitative and qualitative approaches, with critical reflection on social, cultural and organizational contexts; enables the development of literature-based conceptual models and flexible empirical research strategies. | Mixed approaches: model development, case studies, mixed methods          |

### Methodological design and research objectives

Referring to the pragmatic approach, this study focused on developing a conceptual model based on a synthesis of relevant theories and literature. The methodological objectives of this study were to identify and systematize the key components of spiritual marketing, integrate religious values, local culture and organizational values into a unified framework, and provide a theoretical basis for future research, both in the form of hypothesis testing and qualitative exploration. Within this framework, a conceptual literature review approach was the main method, with literature sources including academic journals, textbooks, as well as relevant case studies from the Indonesian and global contexts. This approach was chosen as there are not many integrative models that explicitly map the relationship between the three dimensions-religion, culture and organization-in the framework of spiritual marketing.

## Further Research Agenda: From Conceptual to Empirical

The conceptual model developed from this study can be the basis for further research with a more empirical approach. Some alternative methodological directions for further research are:

**Table 2.** Research Agenda

| Research Focus  | Paradigm     | Approach            | Suggested Method                             |
|---|--------------|---------------------|--|
| <b>The influence of religious values on brand loyalty</b>                                     | Positivistic | Deductive           | Survey, SEM                                  |
| <b>Local cultural interpretation of brand spiritual messages</b>                              | Interpretive | Inductive           | In-depth interviews, narrative analysis      |
| <b>Organizational spirituality and its impact on consumer behavior</b>                        | Constructive | Mixed               | Case studies, FGDs, and triangulated surveys |
| <b>Experimentation of religious/cultural symbols in advertisements on emotional responses</b> | Positivistic | Experimental        | Laboratory experimental design               |
| <b>Brand spiritual community netnography</b>  | Interpretive | Digital ethnography | Netnography, content analysis                |

These methodological approaches allow researchers and practitioners to delve deeper into the affective, normative and contextual dimensions of spiritual marketing.

## Theoretical Implications

This study makes an important contribution to the marketing literature, particularly in enriching the understanding of value-based marketing and spirituality. Theoretically, the development of a spiritual marketing model that integrates religious dimensions, local culture and organizational values creates a new approach that goes beyond the conventional marketing paradigm. The main theoretical contributions of this study include the strengthening of the multidisciplinary approach to marketing, which not only relies on economic theory and consumer behaviour, but also incorporates perspectives from the sociology of religion, cultural anthropology, and organizational psychology; the development of the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework adapted for the context of spiritual marketing, with the stimulus being religious values, cultural symbols, and organizational spirituality; organism as spiritual perceptions and consumer attachment; and response in the form of loyalty and value purchase decisions; and a re-conception of consumer value, that value is not only utilitarian or hedonistic, but also transcendental and affective, as consumers increasingly seek brands that reflect their personal and spiritual values. As such, this study provides a theoretical basis for designing further research on the relationship between spirituality and consumer behavior, and the formation of deeper and more meaningful loyalties.

## **Practical Implications**

Practically, the findings of this study offer strategic guidance for marketers, entrepreneurs and organizations that want to build emotional closeness and long-term trust with their consumers. Some of the practical implications include: firstly, the design of marketing communications based on spiritual values and local culture, where brands can build emotional closeness by customizing narratives and visuals to align with the religious and cultural values of target consumers. Second, the integration of spiritual values into organizational culture and customer service, by building internal consistency so that the values communicated are reflected in the company's behavior, such as in fair service and a humanist work environment. Third, the application of spirituality-based value co-creation principles, where organizations actively involve consumers in the creation of meaning and value through brand communities, social activities, and empathy-based campaigns. Fourth, a value and spirituality-based market segmentation approach, which allows companies to categorize consumers not only by demographics, but also by value orientation, depth of religiosity, and cultural affiliation.

In an era where consumers are increasingly critical of corporate ethics and seek authentic brands, consistently executed and meaningful spiritual marketing can be a strategic differentiator as well as a long-term competitive advantage. Brands that are able to reflect spiritual values that match consumers' inner aspirations have a greater chance of building deep loyalty and long-term relationships. As such, the practical implications of this study are not only relevant for the business world, but are also important for social and religious organizations that want to strengthen value ties with their communities through a more humane and transcendental marketing approach.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study confirms that spiritual marketing is an increasingly relevant approach in the contemporary business landscape, especially in a strongly religious and cultured society like Indonesia. It goes beyond transactional strategies by integrating religious values, local cultural norms and organizational spirituality into the entire marketing process. Through the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework, these values act as a stimulus that triggers an emotional and spiritual response in consumers, ultimately forming a valuable and meaningful purchase decision. The main contribution of this study is the development of a conceptual model that incorporates three main dimensions-religion, culture and organization-into a unified spiritual marketing framework. This model not only enriches the academic literature, but also provides practical guidance for organizations in building brands that are authentic, ethical and emotionally close to their consumers. In an increasingly competitive and value-sensitive market, spiritual marketing offers a more humane and sustainable approach. For further development, empirical research is needed to test the validity of this model, both through quantitative (e.g. the influence of religious values on brand loyalty) and qualitative (e.g. an exploration of the meaning of spirituality in consumer perceptions) approaches. Thus, this study can serve as a conceptual and strategic basis for the development of marketing theory and practice that not only sells products, but also presents more noble life values.

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