

Social media interaction of halal fashion brand in Indonesia: a netnographic study of image management

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ABSTRACT

Research on halal fashion has largely focused on consumer purchase decisions, with limited attention to how halal fashion brands interact with consumers and manage their brand image on social media platforms such as Instagram. This study addresses this gap by examining brand interaction patterns and image management strategies among leading halal fashion brands in Indonesia. Using a netnographic approach, it analyzed 1,321 Instagram posts from six halal fashion brands over six months (July–December 2022), applying content and image-management codes to classify post types (photos and videos) and representation strategies (personalized, contextual, and celebrity use). The findings show a slightly higher proportion of photo posts (51%, 674 posts) than video posts (49%, 647 posts), with hijab fashion brands more active than Muslim and sports fashion brands in producing content. Across all brands, image management relied predominantly on personal context and non-celebrity representation, while professional context and celebrity-based posts were used less frequently. These results suggest that halal fashion brands strategically emphasize relatable, personalized, and non-celebrity content to build brand image and engagement on Instagram, offering practical guidance for brand managers in designing effective social media strategies and contributing novel empirical evidence on brand interaction and image management in the halal fashion sector.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The halal fashion industry in Indonesia has become increasingly competitive, with numerous brands emerging and adapting to rapidly evolving digital communication media [1]. This expansion is driven in part by the growing Muslim population and heightened awareness of halal lifestyles, which stimulate demand for fashion products that comply with Islamic teachings [2]. In this context, halal fashion can be understood as clothing and accessories designed for Muslims that conform to Quranic and Sunnah-based guidelines on aurat coverage, permissible materials, and ethical production processes, thereby being legally permissible (halal) for everyday use [2].

Meanwhile, the development of halal fashion has the potential to revive the Indonesian economy, which has considerable potential in developing the halal fashion industry [3]. This prediction is based on Indonesia's growing demand for halal fashion among Muslim consumers. Bonus statistics on Indonesia, where millennials and generation-Z (gen-Z) members are proficient in technology. In addition, the growing

use of e-commerce in the country provides a significant gap for this sector to continue growing [4]–[6]. The use of social media has a positive, significant impact on consumer behavior when purchasing halal fashion products [7].

To analyze how brands construct their online presence, this study uses two key concepts: image management and netnography. Image management refers to the deliberate use of visual and textual elements to shape how stakeholders perceive an organization or brand, including decisions about who appears in images, which contexts are highlighted, and how products are framed in relation to lifestyles and values [8], [9]. In social media settings, image management is central to branding because posts, stories, and captions together build a recognizable identity that influences trust, engagement, and purchase behavior [10]. Netnography, adapted from traditional ethnography, is an online research method that systematically observes and interprets naturally occurring digital interactions such as posts, comments, and visual content to understand cultural meanings and practices in virtual communities [11], [12]. Applying netnography to the Instagram accounts of halal fashion brands enables this study to capture authentic patterns of interaction and image management in real time, providing a richer understanding of how these brands communicate halal values and fashion identities in the digital sphere.

Digital platforms have transformed how consumers search for information, evaluate products, and make purchase decisions, with social media playing a central role in shaping perceptions and shopping experiences [13], [14]. Prior studies indicate that online shopping motivations include hedonic and utilitarian dimensions such as adventure, enjoyment, value, and social interaction, and that well-designed social media marketing combined with strong customer relationships can significantly strengthen purchase intention by aligning with these motives [15]–[17]. In the context of halal fashion, experience and knowledge of a brand, along with repeated purchase interactions, foster stronger customer engagement and, ultimately, brand loyalty [18]. Social media supports this process by enabling continuous two-way communication, information sharing, and impulse buying in online environments [19]. Among various platforms, Instagram has become a leading channel for visual communication, information dissemination, and digital commerce in Indonesia, which has one of the world's largest Instagram user bases and increasingly uses the platform for business and promotional activities [20]–[22].

Although many studies have examined halal fashion from the perspectives of consumer purchase intention, halal awareness, and the role of social media in promoting halal lifestyles, they tend to focus on how consumers respond to brands rather than on how brands actively construct their online presence. Existing research emphasizes factors such as halal labels, product quality, price, and brand image in shaping purchase decisions. However, it provides limited insight into the day-to-day interaction patterns that emerge from brands' own posts and stories, or how these brands strategically manage visual and textual elements to shape their image on social media. Little is known about the balance between photos and videos, the use of personalized versus non-personalized content, or the choice between celebrity and non-celebrity representation in halal fashion communication, even though these choices are central to how brands position themselves and engage audiences in digital spaces. This study addresses that gap by focusing specifically on Instagram content from leading halal fashion brands in Indonesia and analyzing their interaction patterns and image management strategies, thereby shifting attention from consumer reactions alone to the branding practices that structure online engagement.

Based on this background, this study aims to explore how halal fashion brands interact with customers online through social media. This study collected and analyzed Instagram posts. This study analyzed Instagram posts from 6 halal fashion brands. This study used the netnographic method to see halal fashion brands interact with customers on social media. Kozinets [23] explained that netnography is a method that combines the internet and ethnography. Therefore, spontaneously generated content in information sources such as social media enables access to richer, deeper information. One is about how halal fashion brands interact with customers, including dimensions related to the context of halal fashion [24]. The results of this study were expected to help advance science in the field of Sharia economic law. In addition, this study provided readers with scientific insight into the experience of buying halal fashion in Indonesia, using the netnographic method.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Ramadhani *et al.* [25] studied the influence of halal fashion, understanding that someone from a typical lifestyle will use it to create an identity or certificate for himself. That person will become more prominent, in this case, in the fashion industry; it is imperative to create differentiation in their brand to attract more customers. Candraningrat *et al.* [26] explained the indicator of halal fashion. First, how halal fashion can influence and compete with other fashion brands. Second, it guarantees that only halal materials are used. Third, it must be completed in a location close to halal goods. Fourth, production marketing must be

based on the principles of beneficence and justice. Millatina *et al.* [27] described the effect of the halal label variable on the purchasing decision of halal food products in Indonesia, and the effect of the halal label variable on how buying interest is on the purchasing decision of a product. The result was that using product packaging can raise awareness about halal in Indonesia, which has begun to increase and make halal a lifestyle or consumption in daily life.

Zainudin *et al.* [28] explained that the emergence of various types of halal fashion brands that continue to develop in society has caused Muslims to experience much guidance in following current fashion developments. Using the halal logo, product quality, and brand experience can significantly influence consumer perceptions of halal fashion products. Hanifah and Sari [29] revealed that the influence of brand ideals, prices, and halal certification has a significant effect on brand loyalty and has a significant effect on consumer buying interest. Prices can influence consumers' low desire to buy halal fashion, affecting their attitudes and interest in buying it. In contrast, product knowledge can influence consumers' interest in halal fashion [30]. The latest news and journals have explained in detail the phenomenon and trend of the halal lifestyle in Indonesia. It can be seen from the amount of media interest in the "halal lifestyle," such as halallifestyle.com, Republika.co.id, economist.kompas.com, marketeers.com, and mysalaam.com. Besides, many seminars are held with the theme "halal lifestyle" [31].

Indrawati [5] examined how understanding consumer perceptions of buying interest in marketplace-based fashion among young muslims in Indonesia can be achieved through understanding and evaluating policies. Khasanah [32] studied how social media functions as a socialization agent and can spread knowledge about halal products and understanding. Information that is currently quite extensive can affect how products are posted, making it hard to find the truth and leading consumers to change their opinions about purchasing products from a brand. Giving a 'halal' label to a product can be a significant factor in consumers' decisions to buy and use halal products. Consumer decisions are based on two factors: internal factors that give rise to Islamic identity in products, and external factors, such as a strong brand image, that categorize them as halal products [33]. Forms of endorsement and paid promotion practices in analyzing the suitability of practices used in marketing the halal fashion business under Islamic law. Data analysis in this study uses content analysis, interviews, and a literature review to analyze the suitability of current practices with Islamic law [34].

Instagram promotional content is now classified as social media content. Instagram has become an effective tool for exchanging information about economic and political industries, including the Muslim fashion industry [35]. Noor [36] stated that the speed of internet access is currently matched by industries that operate at a high level of efficiency, and using smartphones makes it easier for the general public to access information from various fields related to marketing. This phenomenon has an impact on how product promotion can be done. Indika and Jovita [24] stated that using social media as an online interpersonal communication tool, including in the business world, to market products, is intended to facilitate social interaction between individuals. Surniandari [37] confirmed the superiority of social media users with the information they can engage with various news information and entertainment online [38]. Taufani *et al.* [39] also stated that customers can find various existing information about a product.

Many studies on halal fashion have focused on customer decision-making in purchasing and marketing halal fashion via social media. However, only a few studies examine how halal fashion brands interact with their customers through social media. In addition, the study of image management in halal fashion posts has received little attention. This study was expected to serve as a reference for managers of halal fashion brands and as a basis for implementing marketing policies.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1. Data collection

This study aimed to determine the interactions of halal fashion brands in Indonesia on Instagram. This study used a netnographic data collection method developed by [40], a particular type of ethnography that examines conditions in social media using computer tools today. Dumitricia [41] defined netnography as a collection of attitudes and research practices steeped in historical trajectories, networks of theoretical conceptions, and networks of quotations that become specific performances of cultural studies followed by certain types of understanding representations. The object of this study was posted on social media for halal fashion brands. This study aimed to reveal how halal fashion brands introduce products or posts using social media. The subject of this study used halal fashion brands in Indonesia on Instagram. Considering the many halal fashion brands in Indonesia that allow products to use social media, this study-imposed limitations within a specific scope.

Data were collected from July to December 2022 using a netnographic approach. Kozinets [11] argued that netnography is an observational research method based on online fieldwork using network communication to obtain data sources as a fulfillment of ethnographic understanding and representation of

culture or phenomena that occur in social media. Netnography is often described as a marketing research technique for identifying and understanding the needs of highly motivated online consumers. It uses information freely available in online forums. This study utilized five main steps. The first step was to define the problem and develop a halal fashion brand. The second step took the information that social networking sites are excellent examples of online platforms for implementing a netnographic approach because they incorporate web pages, personal email, blogs, forums, and access to chat rooms. Determining the data source from the online community that is most relevant to this research interest: Instagram is an application that makes it easy for users to share photos and videos with other users, and it can influence consumer interest in purchasing products [24].

Data collection and analysis were carried out in the third step from July to December 2022. A total of 6 halal fashion brands were selected from the search results for halal fashion in Indonesia. In collecting data from Instagram posts, this study selected six halal fashion brands for analysis: Rabbani, Zoya, BIA by Zaskia, Ria Miranda, MedianaWearSport, and NooreSpot. These brands were chosen because they are in high demand among Muslims, as evidenced by many online sites that categorize fashion brands in popularity. The author also considered the global halal fashion brand's Instagram social media accounts. The fourth step was for the authors to match brands according to their fashion category to allow comparison; Rabbani and Zoya will be compared in terms of halal fashion hijab brands, BIA by Zaskia and Ria Miranda in halal Muslim fashion, and NooreSpot and MedianaWearspot on halal sports fashion brands, and then analyze posts on Instagram accounts of halal fashion brands, such as photos and videos.

3.2. Brand selection criteria

The object of this study was Instagram posts from halal fashion brands in Indonesia, focusing on how these brands introduce and promote their products through social media. Six brands (Rabbani, Zoya, BIA by Zaskia, Ria Miranda, MedianaWearSport, and NooreSpot) were purposively selected because they represent three key halal fashion categories (hijab, Muslim fashion, and sports fashion), are widely recognized in online listings of popular brands among Muslim consumers, and maintain active, public Instagram accounts with consistent posting activity during the study period.

3.3. Coding framework

This study used the theory proposed by [8]. Four clusters. The types of information to be analyzed are perception, image management, integration, and interactivity. This study used image management. Regarding Image Management, brand communication depends on it because images influence how individuals perceive products and services, shaping brand image and identification [42]. Russmann and Svensson's image management framework was chosen because it offers a systematic set of categories for examining how organizations construct visual and textual self-representations on social media, which fits the study's focus on Instagram-based brand communication.

3.4. Image management dimensions

This study used netnographic data collection techniques, or, as [41] put in, online or virtual ethnography. This study also used the image management theory formulated by [8] to analyze data. Netnography and image management can be combined and methodological complements in a combined study [38]. Moreover, [40] stated that ethnography and image management in social media posts can provide an overview of messages to customers. Neuendorf [41] stated that although some practical mechanisms of each research methodology may differ, they form a strategy for collecting research on social media post content to conduct more in-depth research. Image management and ethnography, as described [40], align with social media views, while social media image management can provide an overview of products or services.

The image-management coding followed Russmann and Svensson's framework, which distinguishes between personalization, privatization (context), and celebrity use in organizational Instagram communication. A post was coded as personalized when it was visually carried by a single clearly identifiable individual (for example, one model presenting a hijab style), and as not personalized when it showed groups, crowds, or did not focus on a specific person (for example, runway shots or store-interior scenes); posts that did not show any person or for which this distinction was unclear were categorized as balanced/ambivalent. For context, posts were classified into personal context when the main focus was on the product and its everyday use (for instance, a user wearing halal sport fashion in daily activities) and into professional context when they foregrounded brand-level or institutional messages without displaying the product directly (such as posts about corporate social responsibility, disaster relief, or holiday greetings unrelated to a specific item); if the visual cues did not clearly indicate one of these, they were coded as balanced. Finally, each post was coded as celebrity if a recognizable public figure (e.g., actress, athlete, or influencer) endorsed or appeared with the brand, and as non-celebrity when only ordinary consumers, staff, or anonymous models were shown.

3.5. Reliability and validation

This study involved more than one researcher in the coding process to maintain clarity, consistency, and objectivity in the coding process. The purpose of involving more than one researcher was to ensure the reliability of the coding process, particularly important in netnography, given the large amount of data to be analyzed, coded, and sorted into themes. During the coding process, the coding system was continually revised and refined, including the identification of subcodes in resolve conflicting viewpoints. The overall stages of the netnographical data analysis adopted in this study are illustrated in Figure 1.

First Step: Problem Definition and Brand Scoping	
I	The first step was to define the research problem and specify the analytical focus on halal fashion brands operating in Indonesia's Instagram ecosystem. At this stage, the study clarified how brand-consumer interaction and social media image management would be examined in relation to halal fashion positioning and market development.
Second Step: Selection Procedures of Data	
II	The second step involved delineating the online field and selecting the most relevant platforms and accounts as data sources. Instagram was deliberately chosen as the primary site for netnographic observation because it integrates visual and textual content (photos, videos, captions, and comments) and serves as a key space for halal fashion marketing. From this platform, official accounts of leading halal fashion brands were identified as the focal online communities.
Third Step: Data Collection and Reduction	
III	In the third step, data were collected and reduced by systematically documenting Instagram posts over six months (July–December 2022). A total of six halal fashion brands (Rabbani, Zoya, BiaByZaskia, Ria Miranda, MedianaWearSport, and NooreSport) were selected based on their prominence and relevance, and 1,321 posts (photos and videos) were compiled, screened, and organized into an analyzable corpus in accordance with the study's inclusion criteria.
Fourth Step: Analysing and Interpreting Data	
IV	The fourth step comprised qualitative coding and interpretive analysis of the post content. Using content and thematic analysis informed by Image Management theory, posts were coded into categories such as personalized versus non-personalized representation, personal versus professional context, and celebrity versus non-celebrity use, enabling the researchers to interpret how brands construct and manage their social media image.
Fifth Step: Presenting Results	
V	The fifth step focused on synthesizing the coded material into coherent empirical findings and presenting them in the manuscript. Patterns of interaction and image-management strategies across the six brands were summarized in descriptive statistics, tables, and narrative explanations, highlighting similarities and differences in how halal fashion brands engage audiences on Instagram.

Figure 1. Steps for data analysis with the Netnographical method (adopted and modified)

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Research results

The halal fashion brand in the hijab category, with the Instagram account name “rabbaniprofesorke and rudung,” has 333 thousand followers, follows 93, and has 508 posts. The halal hijab fashion brand Zoya, with the “zoyalovers” account, has 799 thousand followers and follows 142 in 203 posts. The second category is brand Muslim halal fashion, including “Ria Miranda,” with the “Inforiamiranda” Instagram account, which has 166 thousand followers and 5 followers on Instagram over the past 6 months. There are 316 photo and video posts.

Meanwhile, the halal fashion brand owned by artist Zaskia, with the Instagram account “biabyzaskiamecca,” has 166 thousand followers and has followed 5 posts over the last 6 months, totaling 105 posts. The sports fashion brands NoreeSport and MedianaSportWear, with the “motorsport” Instagram account, have 115 thousand followers. It follows 68, and the number of posts uploaded during 6 months is 49, while the “medinasportwear” Instagram account has 13.8 thousand followers and follows 1,626 with 140 posts in 6 months. This study obtained data from 6 social media sources from halal fashion brands.

Figure 2 shows the percentage of posts uploaded over 6 months, with a total of 1321 photo and video posts from halal fashion brands: 51% photo posts and 49% video posts, totaling 647 and 674, respectively.

Table 1 compares the 6 halal fashion brands across three categories: hijab, Muslim fashion, and sports. This classification facilitated this study regarding content uploaded by halal fashion brands. Figure 3 illustrates that posts on the Rabbani Instagram account tend to feature more videos, while the hijab brand Zoya was more active in posting photos. Posts by Zoya and Rabbani Hijab fashion brands. These two hijab fashion brands have pretty different numbers of photos and videos, but show good interaction with Instagram accounts. Rabbani and Zoya were positive because consumers can find the information they seek in existing Instagram products. Zoya used photos and videos to showcase hijabs with artist models, enabling greater interaction between consumers and its Instagram account. Instead, Rabbani used more ambassador videos selected by students to introduce their products.

Table 1. Data source 6 halal fashion brands

Brand halal fashion	Instagram account name	Number of social media posts for 6 months	Number of followers
Rabbani	rabbani professorveil	508	333 K
Zoya	zoyalovers	203	799 K
Ria Miranda	Inforiamiranda	316	295 K
BIA by Zaskia Mecca	biabyzaskiamecca	105	166 K
Medina Sport Wear	mediasportswear	49	13.8 K
NooreSport	Nooresport	140	115 K

Source: processed by authors

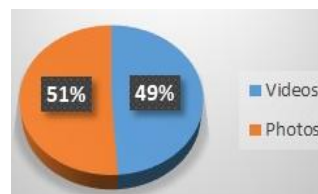


Figure 2. Comparison of the percentage of post types between videos and photos

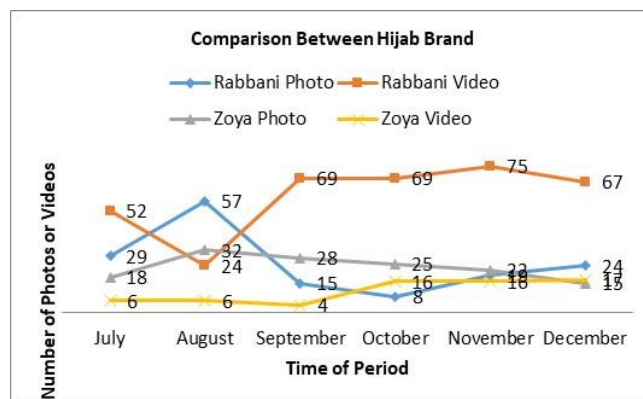


Figure 3. Rabbani and Zoya's photo and video posts in the hijab brand category

Figure 4 posts of Muslim fashion brands Ria Miranda and BIA by Zaskia Mecca Ria Miranda's brand posts have been active for the last 6 months, from July to December 2022. Ria Miranda posted activities from participating in fashion show brands and presenting dresses, using models' photos and videos. Unlike the fashion brand BIA by Zaskia, it was more active in showcasing its products, using many photos featuring model artists. Fashion brands Ria Miranda and BiaBayZaskia have different numbers of photos and videos, but have shown good interaction with Instagram accounts. The Ria Miranda fashion brand held more events in various regions where its fashion products are marketed.

Figure 5 illustrates posts from halal fashion brands, including NooreSport and MedinaSport. Halal fashion brands in sports are still hard to find when interacting on social media. Looking at the contents

uploaded by the NooreSport account, there were more photos for 6 months from July to December 2022. Meanwhile, the MedinaSport brand still needs to be more active on Instagram in posting more photos of its products.

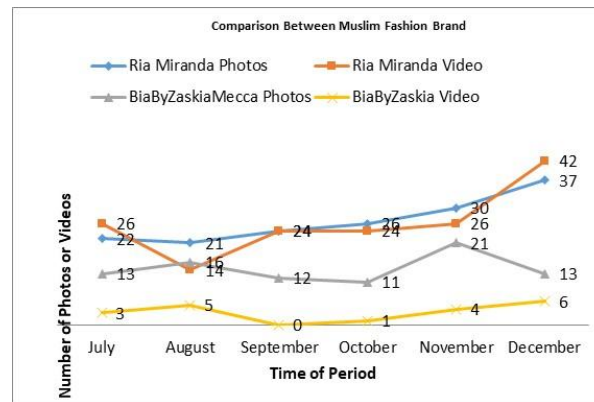


Figure 4. Post by Ria Miranda and BIA by Zaskia Mecca in the muslim fashion category

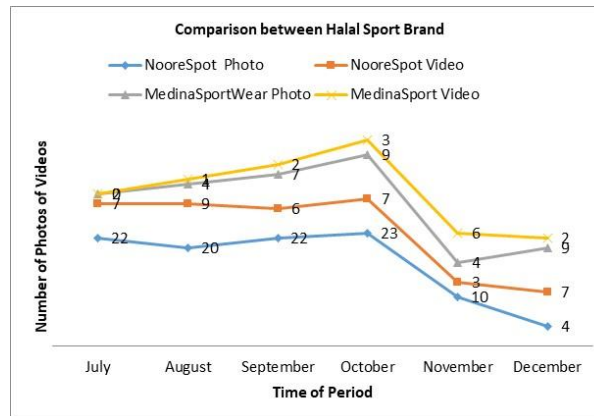


Figure 5. Nooresport and medina posts

Image Management: Brand of Halal Fashion. 6 Brands from July to December 2022 are shown in Table 2. This research also codes interactions related to halal fashion brand image management on social media for 6 halal fashion brands. There were 1321 posts in the 6 months from July to December 2022, with balanced coding, personalized, non-personalized, personal context, professional context, celebrity, and non-celebrity. The number of image management in the table of 6 halal fashion brands uses non-celebrities and personal context codes more frequently for 6 months from July to December 2022.

Table 2. Presentation image management 6 brands

Image management		Total 6 halal fashion brands
Amount		1321
Personalization	Balanced	5%
	Personalized	17%
	Not personalized	11%
Privacy	Professional context	30%
	Personal context	4%
Celebrity	Celebrity	3%
	Not celebrities	30%

Source: processed by authors

The study analyzed 1,321 image-management codes from six halal fashion brands over six months (July–December 2022). Of these codes, 5% were categorized as balanced, 17% as personalized, and 11% as not personalized. In terms of context, 30% reflected a personal context and 4% a professional context. For celebrity use, 3% of the codes involved celebrities and 30% involved non-celebrities.

Table 3 compares image management patterns across brands and highlights both similarities and distinctive emphases within each category. For the hijab segment, Rabbani and Zoya show broadly similar reliance on professional context posts (28% and 27%, respectively). However, they differ in their use of personalization and celebrity representation: Rabbani more frequently employs non-personalized content and non-celebrity imagery (18% and 33%), whereas Zoya combines a higher share of personalized content (19%) with more frequent celebrity appearances (8%).

In the Muslim fashion segment, both Ria Miranda and BIA by Zaskia Mecca place strong emphasis on personal-context posts (33% each), indicating a shared strategy of showcasing products in everyday settings. However, BIA by Zaskia Mecca uses celebrities (11%) and personalized content (28%) more actively. In comparison, Ria Miranda leans more toward non-celebrity representation (33%) and a lower proportion of personalized posts (17%), suggesting different approaches to balancing aspirational and relatable imagery.

In the sports fashion segment, MedianaSportWear and NooreSport both show high use of personal context posts (27% and 33%, respectively). However, MedianaSportWear stands out with a higher proportion of balanced codes (19%), suggesting more posts in which personalization or context cues are less clear. Both brands predominantly rely on non-celebrity imagery (26% for MedianaSportWear and 33% for NooreSport), reinforcing the overall pattern that sports-oriented halal fashion brands tend to foreground ordinary users rather than celebrity endorsers in their Instagram communication.

Table 3. Presentation image management brand

Image management	Personalization			Privacy		Celebrity		Number of posts
	Balanced	Personalized	Not personalized	Professional context	Personal context	Celebrity	Not celebrities	
Rabbani	3%	12%	18%	28%	5%	1%	33%	508
Zoya	7%	19%	8%	27%	8%	8%	23%	203
Ria Miranda	5%	17%	11%	33%	1%	1%	33%	316
BIA by Zaskia	3%	28%	2%	33%	1%	11%	22%	105
Medina SportWear	19%	13%	3%	27%	5%	6%	26%	49
NoreeSport	3%	26%	4%	33%	1%	0%	33%	140

4.2. Discussion

A study of the posts of 6 halal fashion brands found that more photos were uploaded than videos. This study's results align with [43], which found that uploading photos is the most common way to showcase the latest products on Instagram. Evelina and Handayani [44] added reasons for using photos more often because layouts are attractive and more cost-effective.

The study analyzed Instagram content from an image management perspective, based on the criteria formulated by [8]. Brand communication depends on image management because images influence how individuals see products and services, which affects the brand image and identification-many people (not personalized). The code is set to balance if it is unclear or if no one shows up. Privatization codes focus on a professional context or in a privatized/private context, only on products. If it is unclear, the code is set to balance/ambivalent. Celebrities are significant in marketing; many organizations use them to gain consumer attention when a celebrity is identified [42].

The use of personalization code has a significant effect on customer purchase intention; personalization is significantly related to advertising value, advertising value is significantly related to purchase intention, and the relationship between personalization and purchase intention is fully mediated by advertising value [43]. Users post high-quality photos on social media. However, even though more and more young people with influencers desire to be informed, a review of past data reveals that the general public's perception of influencers on social media when promoting products still needs to be higher [45].

Hassim *et al.* [46] stated that using an endorsement occurs due to the agreed-upon time between the endorser and the person using the endorsement service. Influential celebrities can influence others to be interested in what they have to say on social media platforms like Instagram. Ramadhan *et al.* [47], [48] stated that, in this research, fashion brands also use the role of ambassadors in promote products that must be further improved, namely by collaborating with artists or celebrities and creating or designing creative promotional programs that utilize existing marketing strategies. Argued that using celebrities does not affect advertising attitudes [49]. Ishak [50] stated that using celebrities may not have much apparent significance at

the time of purchase for individual products, but successfully using Instagram celebrities may still benefit more prominent brands. Nugraha and Listiani [51] stated that the quality of Islamic products in consumer marketing has a positive relationship and can significantly influence purchasing decisions in large quantities. [52] stated that a celebrity's credibility is more in line with the desired product with celebrity involvement, which is determined by the product's attractiveness. The product's value is more in line with the desired product, with celebrity involvement driven by its attractiveness.

Content shared via social media also plays a vital role in product marketing. Personal context codes include how fashion brands introduce personal products, while professional content images or videos do not display the product. Instagram's social media content aims to capture current trends by combining products, modern design, and content that follows current and future trends. Using the constraints of the current trend-setting tensor, whether or not it is by Audience viewing and by the concept and accepted by the audience, is an excellent method [48].

4.2.1. Strategic implications for halal fashion branding

The predominance of non-celebrity representation and personal-context imagery in halal fashion posts has important strategic implications for branding, as these choices closely reflect key Islamic values such as modesty, honesty, and authenticity. Islamic advertising guidelines emphasize that promotion should avoid excessive self-display, deception, and the instrumentalization of celebrity status when it is not aligned with real product use. They should instead foreground truthful communication and moral responsibility toward consumers [53]. By featuring relatable Muslim consumers and everyday situations rather than highly glamorous or provocative celebrity figures, halal fashion brands signal humility and sincerity, reduce concerns about *tabarruj*, and present fashion as part of an integrated halal lifestyle rather than as a vehicle for conspicuous status consumption [2], [54]. This approach also resonates with discussions in Islamic business ethics on endorsements, which argue that endorsers should cover the *aurat*, avoid exaggeration, and ensure that promoted products genuinely deliver benefits in line with *maqasid al-shariah* (the higher objectives of Islamic law) [55], [56].

From a managerial standpoint, the findings suggest that halal fashion brands can strengthen brand equity and long-term loyalty by intentionally aligning their image management strategies with Muslim consumer expectations for ethical, faith-consistent communication. Instead of overrelying on celebrity endorsements, managers can prioritize microinfluencers and user-generated content that foreground credibility, piety, and everyday wearability, thereby leveraging the higher trust and perceived authenticity associated with such figures among Muslim audiences [56], [57]. At the same time, brands should complement personal context visuals with clear signals of halal integrity to build confidence in halal fashion supply chains [2]. Strategically integrating these elements allows halal fashion brands to differentiate themselves in a crowded modest-fashion market, meet rising expectations for ethical and value-driven marketing on social media, and maintain coherence between visual branding, Islamic principles, and the lived religiosity of their target consumers [55], [57].

The strategic implications of these findings align closely with the broader Islamic advertising and branding literature, which emphasizes truthfulness, modesty, and authenticity as core principles of persuasive communication [8], [58]. By prioritizing non-celebrity, personal-context visuals, and limiting the use of highly glamourized celebrity imagery, halal fashion brands not only reduce concerns about *tabarruj* and deceptive promotion but also position themselves as honest, trustworthy companions in consumers' everyday religious lives [57]. Empirical work on Islamic endorsement further suggests that when influencers or ambassadors demonstrably share the values and lifestyle of the target audience, their presence can strengthen perceived credibility and purchase intention, provided that exaggeration, uncovering *awrah*, and other haram elements are avoided [59]. At the same time, studies on halal marketing and consumer behavior indicate that clearly communicated halal certification and brand integrity are key drivers of trust and loyalty, meaning that lifestyle-oriented Instagram content is most effective when combined with transparent cues about a product's halal status and ethical production [60]. Finally, research on fashion marketing and user-generated content shows that encouraging followers to share their own modest fashion looks and everyday outfits can deepen identification, engagement, and brand loyalty, because such content is perceived as more authentic and relatable than purely top-down brand messaging [60].

4.2.2. Limitations of the study

This study also has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the analysis focused exclusively on Instagram, which may introduce platform bias because posting cultures and interaction patterns can differ substantially across platforms such as TikTok, Facebook, or X, thereby limiting the generalizability of the findings to the broader digital ecosystem. Second, the coding focused on brands' visual and textual self-presentation in posts and did not systematically analyze follower comments or conduct sentiment analysis, so the study cannot capture how audiences emotionally respond to or evaluate the

observed image-management strategies. Future research could extend this work by incorporating multi-platform data, examining comment threads and engagement metrics in more depth, and combining netnographic content analysis with quantitative sentiment analysis to provide a more comprehensive picture of halal fashion branding and consumer reactions in digital environments.

5. CONCLUSION

This study used a netnographic, image management lens to show that leading halal fashion brands on Instagram predominantly rely on photo-based, non-celebrity, and personal-context content when communicating with consumers in Indonesia. Rather than merely describing posting frequencies, the findings deepen theoretical understanding by illustrating how Islamic values such as modesty, honesty, and everyday piety are translated into specific visual branding choices, thereby extending image management and halal marketing literature from consumer-side attitudes to brand-side communication practices. Theoretically, this suggests that halal brand identity on social media is co-constructed through a conscious de-emphasis on celebrity glamour and a stronger focus on relatable Muslim subjects and everyday contexts, which can be interpreted as a platform-specific operationalization of maqasid al-shariah in digital branding. From a managerial perspective, the results imply that halal fashion managers should not only “be present” on Instagram, but also strategically design their content mix around authentic, modest visuals, selective use of Sharia-compliant influencers, and transparent signals of halal integrity in supply chains to build long-term loyalty. Managers can, for example, prioritize micro-influencers and user-generated content that reflect real Muslim lifestyles, while complementing these with professional context posts that clearly communicate certification, quality, and social responsibility initiatives. Given the study’s limitations to a single platform and a post-only focus, future research is encouraged to incorporate other social media channels, analyze comment-level engagement and sentiment, and employ mixed-method approaches to capture how different audiences interpret and respond to these branding strategies across the wider halal fashion ecosystem.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

This journal uses the Contributor Roles Taxonomy (CRediT) to recognize individual author contributions, reduce authorship disputes, and facilitate collaboration.

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C : **C**onceptualization

M : **M**ethodology

So : **S**oftware

Va : **V**alidation

Fo : **F**ormal analysis

I : **I**nvestigation

R : **R**esources

D : **D**ata Curation

O : Writing - **O**riginal Draft

E : Writing - Review & **E**diting

Vi : **V**isualization

Su : **S**upervision

P : **P**roject administration

Fu : **F**unding acquisition

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare that any financial or personal relationships or conflicts of interest do not influence this work.

INFORMED CONSENT

This study used data exclusively from publicly available open-source content on social media platforms, without accessing any private or restricted information. All posts were analyzed in aggregate and anonymized so that no individual user could be personally identified. In accordance with these conditions and prevailing ethical guidelines for netnographic research on public online data, specific informed consent from individuals was not required.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

This study analyzed only publicly accessible social media content and did not involve any intervention or interaction with individuals. As the data were freely available online and fully anonymized, the research was conducted as non-intrusive observational work in accordance with relevant national regulations, institutional policies, and the tenets of the Helsinki Declaration.

DATA AVAILABILITY

This study did not entail the collection or analysis of new data, so data availability is not relevant.

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