

Halal Social Marketing: Building Attitude Toward Halal Portrayals Through Media Exposure

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ABSTRACT: This study investigates the effect of halal advertising exposure on consumer perceptions—specifically perceived authenticity, congruence, and trustworthiness—by introducing attitude toward halal portrayals as a mediating variable. Using a quantitative approach and data from 259 Muslim women in Jakarta who have engaged with Wardah's advertising, the research applies PLS-SEM analysis. Findings reveal that while advertising exposure positively influences congruence and trustworthiness, it does not directly affect authenticity. Instead, all three perceptual outcomes are significantly mediated by attitudes toward portrayal. These results underscore the role of identity-based media interpretation in shaping brand evaluations within halal markets. The study contributes to the theory of religious branding by integrating the SOR framework in understanding how values-based communication influences Muslim consumers.

Keywords: Halal Advertising Exposure, Attitude Toward Halal Portrayal, Perceived Authenticity, Perceived Congruence, Perceived Trustworthiness



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INTRODUCTION

The global beauty industry is experiencing rapid growth in ethical consumerism. Consumers are increasingly seeking products that are not only effective, but also safe, sustainable, and aligned with personal or religious values. Within this trend, halal cosmetics have become especially important in Muslim-majority countries such as Indonesia. Indonesia, with the world's largest Muslim population, plays a major role in the halal beauty market. In 2020, Indonesia was the world's second-largest consumer of halal cosmetics, spending US\$4.19 billion (Databoks, 2020). This reflects how faith-based identity and modern consumer preferences are becoming more closely linked, driving both global and local brands to adapt their strategies to Islamic values.

The halal cosmetic industry in Indonesia continues to grow rapidly, supported by rising consumer awareness and government regulations. The sector is projected to grow by 8% each year (Indonesia.go.id, 2023), especially among young Muslim consumers. This expansion is reinforced by the Halal Product Assurance Law (UU No. 33/2014), which will require all cosmetics in circulation to be halal certified by October 17, 2026 (HalalMUI.org, 2023). The regulation demands rigorous checks on ingredients, processes,

and packaging to ensure compliance with Islamic principles (LPH USK, 2023). As a result, halal branding has shifted from a niche appeal to a market requirement in Indonesia.

Modern Indonesian consumers—especially millennials and Gen Z Muslims—are becoming more discerning. They care about product ingredients, brand transparency, and the values reflected in advertising. Recent studies show that these consumers prefer products that are halal, safe, natural, and environmentally friendly (Liputan6, 2024). Brands have responded by innovating with new formulations, such as microbiome-friendly and fermentation-based ingredients, that address both health and religious needs (ITB, 2023). This cultural change means that halal certification alone is no longer enough; consumers are looking for brands that also match their spiritual, ethical, and aesthetic aspirations.

Wardah is a leading example of successful halal beauty branding in Indonesia. Since 1997, Wardah has pioneered halal-certified cosmetics, receiving the Halal Assurance System (SJH) certification in 2014 (Paragon Innovation, n.d.). The brand produces more than 135 million halal-certified products annually (SalaamGateway, 2021), and leads the market in facial cleansers and serums on major platforms like Tokopedia (Vritimes, 2024). Wardah's campaigns, such as "Menangkan Langkah Kebaikan" for Ramadan 2025, use spiritual storytelling and Islamic values in emotionally engaging media (ContentGrip, 2025). Taglines like #HalaldariAwal and partnerships with Muslim influencers allow Wardah to use halal social marketing not just to sell, but to promote narratives of faith, empowerment, and social good (SalaamGateway, 2024).

Despite the achievements of halal brands in Indonesia, fundamental questions remain about how their advertising shapes consumer psychology—particularly perceptions of authenticity, value alignment, and trust. Prior research offers mixed and sometimes conflicting evidence. For instance, certain advertising features and value-based narratives are shown to enhance perceived authenticity, congruence, and trustworthiness (Shoenberger et al., 2020; Weinberg, 2021; Ndasi & Akcay, 2020; Yang et al., 2023; Seo et al., 2024). However, the impact of these features is not uniform. Some studies reveal that such effects are highly contingent on the audience's pre-existing beliefs, cultural context, and the perceived sincerity of portrayals (Bailey & Levy, 2022; Luebke & Engelmann, 2022; Hallikainen & Laukkanen, 2020; Fait, 2025). In some cases, authenticity and trust are less a function of ad exposure than of internal attitudes and the congruence between a brand's narrative and personal values.

These contradictions highlight a critical research gap: the psychological mechanisms that connect halal advertising exposure to consumer perceptions are not yet fully understood, especially in dynamic Muslim markets like Indonesia. Recent literature points to the mediating role of audience attitudes—specifically, how consumers feel about the portrayal of Islamic values and identities in advertising—as a key variable that may resolve these inconsistencies (Yang et al., 2023; Germelmann et al., 2020; Oliveira et al., 2021). When consumers perceive advertising portrayals as relatable and empowering, they are more likely to ascribe authenticity and trust to the brand. Conversely, if portrayals are seen as inauthentic or culturally dissonant, even strong advertising exposure may fail to shift perceptions. This study addresses the unresolved issue by examining attitude toward halal portrayal as a mediator, offering a more nuanced understanding of how value-based advertising influences Muslim consumer responses.

Given these gaps, this study proposes that attitudes toward halal portrayals may play a critical mediating role between halal advertising exposure and consumer perceptions of authenticity, congruence, and trustworthiness. In markets where religious values, media, and identity intersect—such as Indonesian halal cosmetics—how audiences feel about Islamic portrayals in advertising could matter more than exposure alone. By focusing on this mediating variable, the research aims to provide a more nuanced understanding

of halal social marketing and address inconsistencies in the literature. This study thus offers new insights for theory development and for brands seeking to build deeper trust and alignment with Muslim consumers.

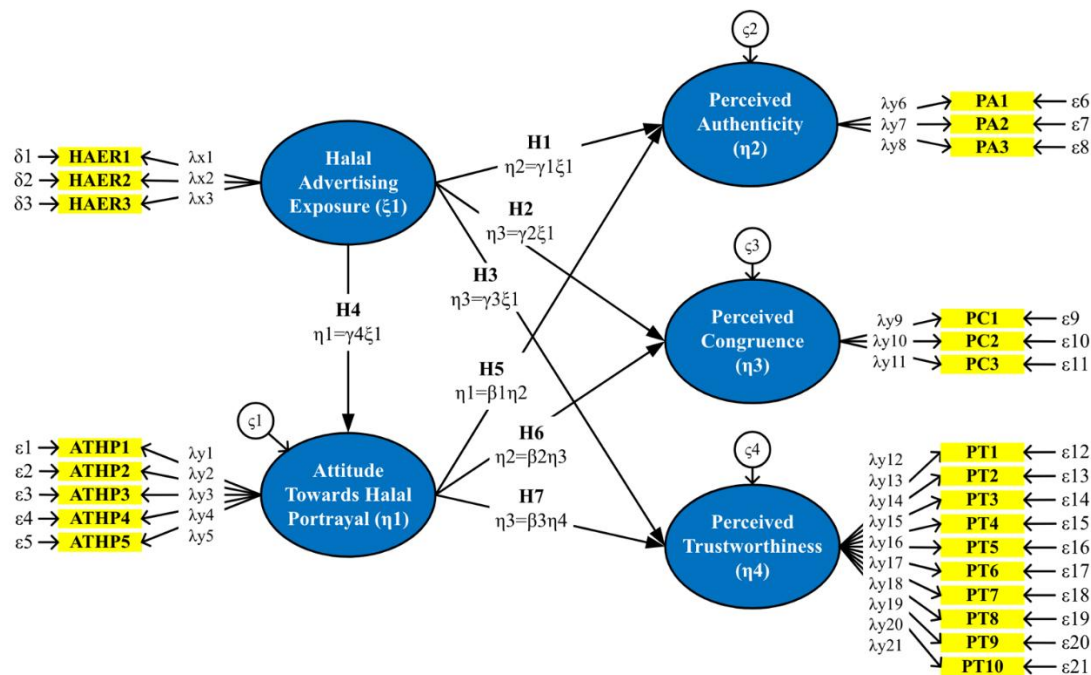
METHOD

This research employs a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional survey design to examine the influence of halal advertising exposure on three perceptual constructs—perceived authenticity, perceived congruence, and perceived trustworthiness—mediated by consumer attitude toward halal portrayal. This type of research is effective for testing causal relationships and mediation effects within consumer behaviour studies. Previous works have applied similar approaches in various domains, such as educational marketing (Perkasa & Putra, 2020), health campaigns (Kasmo et al., 2018), vocational intentions (Fahmi et al., 2022), and brand strategy (Andriani & Putra, 2019). Quantitative methods provide the precision needed to capture how exposure to value-laden advertising shapes consumer perception across socio-cultural contexts.

This approach is reinforced by the success of structured surveys in prior Indonesian studies. For example, El-Sa'ud et al. (2019) demonstrated how Instagram content contributed to media sustainability, while Fahmi et al. (2022) examined behavioural intentions using extended TAM and TPB frameworks. These methodologies underscore the appropriateness of survey-based instruments in evaluating perception-based outcomes. By applying a rigorous quantitative design, this study contributes to the broader discourse on identity-aligned advertising and its psychological outcomes, especially within Muslim-majority consumer markets.

The research model was assessed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), a technique particularly suitable for complex models that involve mediation and reflective constructs. As explained by Putra (2022), PLS-SEM is ideal for exploratory research where theory is still developing and normal distribution assumptions may not hold. It enables simultaneous analysis of both measurement and structural models, allowing for the validation of constructs through indicators such as factor loading (λ), composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), and Cronbach's alpha (α). This method has been applied in studies addressing consumer perception, system acceptability, and branding strategies (Fahmi et al., 2024; Fahmi et al., 2024; Rinaldi & Putra, 2022; Putra et al., 2024).

Figure 1. Structural Model and Conceptual



Note: ξ = exogenous latent variable, η = endogenous latent variable, λ = factor loading, ϵ = indicator error, γ = path coefficient from exogenous to endogenous, β = path coefficient between endogenous variables, H = hypothesis.

Figure 1 visually presents the study's structural model, illustrating hypothesised relationships between the exogenous variable *Halal Advertising Exposure* (ξ_1) and three endogenous variables: *Perceived Authenticity* (η_2), *Perceived Congruence* (η_3), and *Perceived Trustworthiness* (η_4). It includes *Attitude Towards Halal Portrayal* (η_1) as a mediating construct, providing a deeper lens to evaluate how consumers process Islamic-themed advertising. Figure 1 presents the structural model designed to answer the study's main research questions, namely whether exposure to halal advertising directly shapes consumers' perceptions of authenticity, congruence, and trustworthiness, and whether attitude toward halal portrayal mediates the effects of advertising exposure on these perceptual outcomes. In this framework, halal advertising exposure is positioned as the exogenous variable, attitude toward halal portrayal serves as the mediating construct, and perceived authenticity, congruence, and trustworthiness are treated as outcome variables. This model structure enables a rigorous assessment of both the direct and indirect pathways hypothesised in the study, ensuring that the chosen methods directly align with and address the research objectives set out in the introduction.

In the diagram, measurement items are linked to their respective latent variables via factor loadings (λ), while directional paths (γ and β) represent structural hypotheses H1 to H10. Error terms (ϵ) denote measurement residuals. The inclusion of this model is in line with contemporary applications of SEM in strategic marketing and behavioural modelling, as seen in studies on tone of voice effectiveness (Putra et al., 2024), warehouse system sustainability (Kunaifi et al., 2023), and operational innovation (Fahmi et al., 2024). By applying this comprehensive SEM framework, the study ensures methodological robustness while contributing to the growing body of empirical research in Indonesia that links strategic communication, consumer psychology, and behavioural response (Putra & Ardianto, 2022).

Perceived authenticity has emerged as a pivotal factor in consumer evaluations of advertising, particularly within identity-driven domains like halal marketing. Advertising that resonates with audiences' beliefs and

values is often judged to be more honest, real, and meaningful. Shoenberger et al. (2020) found that unedited and relatable portrayals significantly enhanced perceptions of authenticity, especially on platforms like Instagram. In parallel, Yang et al. (2023) demonstrated that emotionally authentic advertising during uncertain times fostered positive brand warmth and engagement. Within halal campaigns, authenticity is not merely about visual representation but also about value transparency and alignment with Islamic ethical principles. When advertising evokes sincerity, spirituality, and moral coherence, it becomes more likely to be perceived as authentic (Weinberg, 2021; Ndasi & Akcay, 2020).

Beyond authenticity, perceived congruence plays a crucial role in how consumers interpret advertising relevance. Congruence refers to the degree of fit between the advertisement's content and the overall brand image or expectations. Lee et al. (2022) illustrated that congruent celebrity endorsements significantly strengthen brand–consumer trust, while Seo et al. (2024) confirmed that the match between product type and advertising appeal enhances ad effectiveness. In the context of halal advertising, congruence is reflected in how well the message aligns with religious, cultural, and ethical expectations. Germelmann et al. (2020) noted that thematic alignment between media and brand message boosts fluency and persuasiveness. Thus, when halal advertising is presented in ways that reinforce the brand's spiritual identity and values, it tends to generate higher congruence in consumer perception.

Perceived trustworthiness, often seen as a cornerstone of consumer-brand relationships, is shaped not only by message clarity but also by the perceived moral intent behind the ad. Baskaran et al. (2021) observed that in digital advertising, perceived informativeness and sincerity were key determinants of trust. Similarly, Gokmenoglu and Amir (2020) found that fairness and transparency strongly influenced trust formation within the banking sector. In advertising contexts, multimodal cues such as facial expressions, consistent tone, and empathetic delivery have also been shown to enhance trustworthiness (Huynh et al., 2020; Lutfi et al., 2023). However, the absence of alignment or perceived manipulation—especially in AI-generated or shock-based advertising—may erode trust (Bisconti et al., 2024; Hallikainen & Laukkanen, 2020). For halal advertising, trustworthiness is likely to be reinforced when the campaign exhibits ethical clarity, commitment to consumer welfare, and respect for religious values. Based on these theoretical foundations and empirical findings, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Halal advertising exposure positively influences perceived authenticity.

H2: Halal advertising exposure positively influences perceived congruence.

H3: Halal advertising exposure positively influences perceived trustworthiness.

Attitude toward advertisement portrayals serves as a critical mediator in the relationship between advertising exposure and consumer perception. In halal advertising, this refers to the extent to which audiences positively interpret how Islamic values, roles, and cultural identities are represented. Prior studies such as Shoenberger et al. (2020) and Can et al. (2024) highlight that when consumers perceive portrayals as respectful, relatable, and empowering, it leads to more favourable cognitive and emotional responses. The inclusion of spiritual or ethical portrayals often strengthens identification and improves overall message reception. Thus, halal advertising that reinforces positive portrayals of faith-aligned values can significantly enhance attitudes toward the message and its messenger, thereby serving as a foundation for further perceptual evaluations.

Attitudinal responses do not merely stand alone—they often serve as precursors to deeper evaluations, including perceived authenticity, congruence, and trustworthiness. For example, Yang et al. (2023) found that positive emotional reactions to ad portrayals influenced perceptions of brand warmth and credibility. Oliveira et al. (2021) further emphasised that trustworthiness in media advertising is often mediated by attitudes formed during content consumption. Similarly, Germelmann et al. (2020) and Yang & Jiang (2021) underscored that when consumers resonate with portrayals in native and social media advertising, it fosters

higher congruence and authenticity perceptions. Hence, in the context of halal marketing, it is plausible that a favourable attitude toward Islamic portrayals in advertising mediates the impact of exposure on core consumer perceptions.

Furthermore, empirical literature supports the role of mediators in reinforcing or filtering the influence of ad exposure. For instance, Bailey and Levy (2022) demonstrated that authenticity judgments are not formed in a vacuum but are filtered through internal attitudes and expectations. Luebke and Engelmann (2022) also confirmed that even highly authentic content may be perceived differently depending on audience predispositions. In halal advertising, where spiritual meaning and cultural identity are deeply interwoven, attitudinal mediation offers a meaningful path to understanding perceptual outcomes. Consumers who develop positive attitudes toward how Islamic identities are portrayed are more likely to view the brand as authentic, congruent, and trustworthy. Based on the above reasoning, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H4: Halal advertising exposure positively influences attitude toward halal portrayal.

H5: Attitude toward halal portrayal positively influences perceived authenticity.

H6: Attitude toward halal portrayal positively influences perceived congruence.

H7: Attitude toward halal portrayal positively influences perceived trustworthiness.

H8: Attitude toward halal portrayal mediates the effect of halal advertising exposure on perceived authenticity.

H9: Attitude toward halal portrayal mediates the effect of halal advertising exposure on perceived congruence.

H10: Attitude toward halal portrayal mediates the effect of halal advertising exposure on perceived trustworthiness.

The unit of analysis in this study comprises individual consumers of the Wardah halal cosmetic brand who reside in DKI Jakarta. A total of 259 valid responses were collected out of 328 distributed questionnaires using a non-probability purposive sampling technique. The selection of respondents was based on three inclusion criteria: (1) they have purchased or used Wardah cosmetic products in the last six months, (2) they are Muslim women aged 18 years and above, and (3) they are active users of social media platforms such as Instagram or YouTube where Wardah advertising is frequently featured. This unit of analysis is appropriate for assessing the psychological and perceptual responses to halal-themed advertising within an urban Muslim consumer context.

All constructs in this study were measured using multi-item scales adapted from previously validated instruments and evaluated using SmartPLS 4. The measurement items for Halal Advertising Exposure were adapted from Kim et al. (1998), capturing emotional and affective responses to halal-themed advertisements. Attitude Toward Halal Portrayal was measured using items from Ford and Michael (1993), reflecting how individuals perceive portrayals in terms of strength, independence, and societal role relevance. Perceived Authenticity was operationalised based on the work of Schallehn et al. (2014), focusing on message sincerity and alignment with brand values. Perceived Congruence was measured using items from Fleck and Quester (2007), assessing the degree of fit between the ad message and brand identity. Lastly, Perceived Trustworthiness was measured using an extended 10-item scale from McKnight et al. (2002), which captures the brand's competence, honesty, and benevolence.

All items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). As shown in Table 1, all indicator loadings (λ) exceeded 0.70, indicating adequate convergent validity. Reliability and internal consistency were confirmed by Cronbach's alpha (α) and composite reliability (CR) values exceeding 0.70. Furthermore, all constructs demonstrated sufficient average variance extracted (AVE

> 0.50), meeting the recommended criteria by Hair et al. (2021). These results support the robustness of the measurement model for subsequent structural analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The measurement model in this study was rigorously evaluated using criteria proposed by Hair et al. (2021), including indicator reliability (λ), internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability), convergent validity (average variance extracted/AVE), and discriminant validity. All constructs showed satisfactory indicator reliability, with factor loadings (λ) well above the threshold of 0.70, suggesting that each observed variable adequately represents its latent construct (Table 1).

The construct Halal Advertising Exposure, adapted from Kim et al. (1998), consisted of three items with loadings between 0.894 and 0.936. This construct achieved Cronbach's alpha (α) of 0.895, composite reliability (CR) of 0.935, and AVE of 0.827—indicating excellent reliability and convergent validity. Similarly, Attitude Towards Halal Portrayal, measured using four items from Ford and Michael (1993), showed loadings from 0.805 to 0.902, $\alpha = 0.875$, CR = 0.914, and AVE = 0.728, confirming strong internal consistency and sufficient shared variance among indicators.

Perceived Authenticity, using three items from Schallehn et al. (2014), displayed loadings from 0.886 to 0.911, $\alpha = 0.880$, CR = 0.926, and AVE = 0.806. Perceived Congruence, adapted from Fleck and Quester (2007), had three items with loadings between 0.744 and 0.863, $\alpha = 0.763$, CR = 0.863, and AVE = 0.679—demonstrating acceptable convergent validity. The construct Perceived Trustworthiness, comprising ten items from McKnight et al. (2002), showed loadings ranging from 0.704 to 0.871, $\alpha = 0.926$, CR = 0.938, and AVE = 0.603. Although the AVE is slightly lower, it still surpasses the minimum threshold of 0.50, thus confirming convergent validity.

Table 1. Measurement Model Evaluation

Construct(s)	Item(s)	λ	α	CR (rho_a)	CR (rho_c)	AVE
Halal Advertising Exposure (x) Adapted from Kim et al. (1998)	HAER 1 I like this halal advertising campaign.	0.894	0.895	0.897	0.935	0.827
	HAER 2 This campaign leaves a positive impression on me.	0.897				
	HAER 3 This campaign feels emotionally appealing.	0.936				
Attitude Towards Halal Portrayal (m) Adapted from Ford & Michael (1993)	ATHP 1 The advertisement portrays individuals as strong and capable.	0.902	0.875	0.880	0.914	0.728
	ATHP 2 The advertisement reflects a modern and empowered societal role.	0.848				
	ATHP 3 The individuals in the advertisement appear independent and confident.	0.805				
	ATHP 4 I support how people are portrayed in this advertisement.	0.853				
Perceived Authenticity (y1) Adapted from Schallehn et al. (2014)	PA1 This halal advertising feels authentic.	0.911	0.880	0.882	0.926	0.806
	PA2 This halal advertising communicates an honest message.	0.897				
	PA3 This halal advertising reflects the brand's true values.	0.886				
Perceived Congruence	PC1 The halal advertising aligns with the brand's core values.	0.863	0.763	0.780	0.863	0.679

Construct(s)	Item(s)		λ	α	CR (rho_a)	CR (rho_c)	AVE
(y2) Adapted from Fleck & Questaer (2007)	PC2	The halal advertising matches the image I associate with the brand.	0.859				
	PC3	The message in this halal advertising is consistent with other brand activities.	0.744				
Perceived Trustworthiness (y3) Adapted from McKnight et al. (2002)	PT1	The company is competent and effective.	0.719	0.926	0.930	0.938	0.603
	PT2	The company performs its role very well.	0.704				
	PT3	Overall, the company is a capable and proficient entity.	0.718				
	PT4	In general, the company is very knowledgeable.	0.718				
	PT5	The company is truthful in its dealings with me.	0.871				
	PT6	I would characterize the company as honest.	0.823				
	PT7	The company would keep its commitments.	0.846				
	PT8	I believe the company would act in my best interest.	0.721				
	PT9	If I required help, the company would do its best to assist me.	0.805				
	PT10	The company is interested in my well-being, not just its own.	0.814				

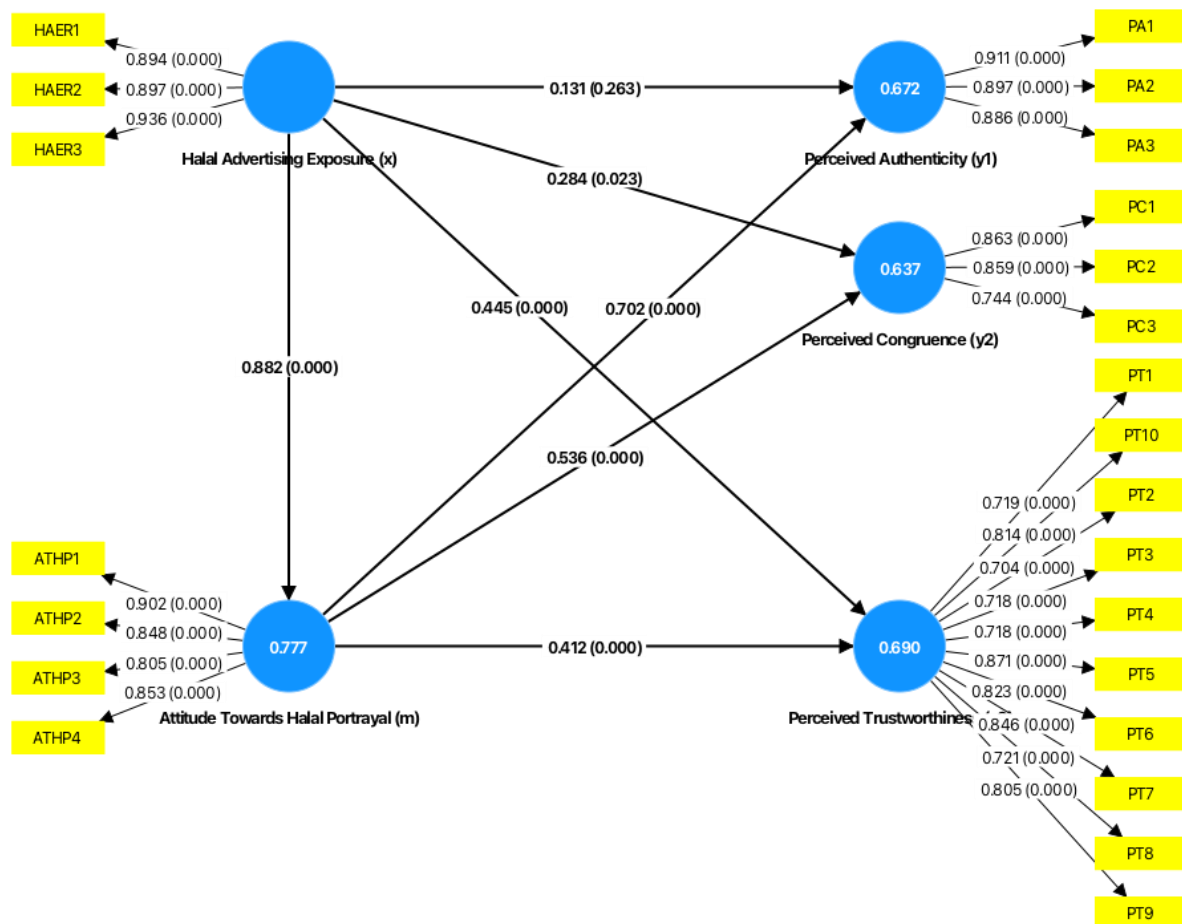
Note: λ = factor loading, α = Cronbach's alpha, CR (rho_a) = construct reliability (alternative), CR (rho_c) = composite reliability, AVE = average variance extracted.

Source: Primary Data

Discriminant validity was also established using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and cross-loading analysis. According to Fornell-Larcker, the square root of AVE for each construct was greater than the correlations with other constructs, indicating adequate discriminant validity. Additionally, all items loaded higher on their respective constructs than on any other construct, as confirmed by cross-loading inspection. These results suggest that each construct is empirically distinct and measures a unique dimension of consumer perception.

Overall, the measurement model satisfies all reliability and validity requirements for structural equation modelling using PLS-SEM. The consistency of item loadings, robust composite reliability scores, and evidence of both convergent and discriminant validity confirm the soundness of the construct measurement. This establishes a strong foundation for the structural model analysis and hypothesis testing in the subsequent stage of this study.

Figure 2. Bootstrapping Results



Note: The model shows good fit (SRMR = 0.072, NFI = 0.943) with high R^2 values for Attitude Towards Halal Portrayal (0.777), Perceived Authenticity (0.672), Perceived Congruence (0.637), and Perceived Trustworthiness (0.690); strong predictive relevance is confirmed by Q^2 values for Attitude (0.556), Authenticity (0.531), Congruence (0.420), and Trustworthiness (0.408).

The structural model was evaluated to test the hypothesised relationships between halal advertising exposure, attitude toward halal portrayal, and the perceptual outcomes of authenticity, congruence, and trustworthiness. The model's overall fit was assessed using the Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) and the Normed Fit Index (NFI). The SRMR value of 0.072 is below the recommended threshold of 0.08, indicating a good fit between the proposed model and the observed data. Additionally, the NFI score of 0.943 exceeds the 0.90 benchmark, further confirming model adequacy (Hair et al., 2021).

The coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to examine the explanatory power of the structural model for each endogenous latent construct. The R^2 value for Attitude Towards Halal Portrayal is 0.777, indicating that halal advertising exposure accounts for a substantial portion of the variance in consumer attitude. For the outcome variables, Perceived Authenticity has an R^2 of 0.672, Perceived Congruence records 0.637, and Perceived Trustworthiness stands at 0.690. According to Chin (1998), R^2 values above 0.67 are considered substantial, and values between 0.33 and 0.67 are moderate. Thus, the model demonstrates strong explanatory capability across constructs.

Predictive relevance (Q^2) was assessed using the blindfolding procedure to examine the model's out-of-sample prediction capability. All endogenous variables report Q^2 values above 0, indicating that the model

has predictive relevance (Geisser, 1974; Stone, 1974). Specifically, Q^2 for Attitude Towards Halal Portrayal is 0.556, Perceived Authenticity is 0.531, Perceived Congruence is 0.420, and Perceived Trustworthiness is 0.408. These values exceed the minimum threshold of 0.35 suggested by Hair et al. (2021) for large predictive relevance in PLS models.

The exogenous variable Halal Advertising Exposure, as expected, has a Q^2 value of 0.000 because it is not predicted by any latent construct in the model. However, its significant role is reflected in the strength of its paths and its contribution to explaining the variance in attitude and subsequent outcomes. The structural paths between variables were further validated using bootstrapping procedures with 5,000 resamples, and the results confirmed several statistically significant relationships ($p < 0.05$), as discussed in the hypothesis testing section.

In summary, the structural model meets all the key criteria for model fit, explanatory power, and predictive relevance. The combination of strong R^2 values and high Q^2 scores suggests that the model performs well both in-sample and out-of-sample. These findings support the robustness of the theoretical framework, positioning attitude toward halal portrayals as a central mediating construct in the influence of halal advertising exposure on consumer perception within the Muslim market segment.

The hypothesis testing was conducted using the bootstrapping technique with 5,000 subsamples to assess the significance of the direct and indirect relationships among the variables. The results are evaluated based on the path coefficient (β), t-statistics (t), and p-values (p), with a significance threshold set at $p < 0.05$. Out of the ten hypotheses proposed, nine were supported by statistically significant results, while one hypothesis (H1) was not supported.

The analysis revealed that halal-themed advertising exposure does not directly enhance consumers' perceptions of authenticity ($\beta = 0.131$, $t = 1.120$, $p = 0.263$). This suggests that authenticity is not simply driven by message exposure, but rather shaped by deeper emotional or attitudinal mechanisms, aligning with earlier findings by Bailey and Levy (2022). In contrast, exposure to halal advertising significantly reinforces the perceived congruence between the brand and its messaging ($\beta = 0.284$, $t = 2.267$, $p = 0.023$). Additionally, it exerts a strong and positive influence on perceived trustworthiness ($\beta = 0.445$, $t = 4.319$, $p = 0.000$), indicating that such advertising effectively builds consumer trust in the brand.

Further analysis demonstrated that halal advertising significantly shapes consumer attitude toward halal portrayal ($\beta = 0.882$, $t = 36.372$, $p = 0.000$), emphasising its powerful role in influencing how Muslim audiences interpret religious and cultural representations. This finding reinforces the strength of Wardah's communication strategies in delivering relevant and resonant portrayals to its audience.

Moreover, when examining the influence of attitude toward halal portrayal on perceptual outcomes, the study found significant positive effects on perceived authenticity ($\beta = 0.702$, $t = 6.157$, $p = 0.000$), perceived congruence ($\beta = 0.536$, $t = 4.438$, $p = 0.000$), and perceived trustworthiness ($\beta = 0.412$, $t = 4.028$, $p = 0.000$). These results suggest that a favourable attitude toward how Islamic values are depicted strongly enhances consumer evaluations across all three dimensions.

Table 2. Hypotesis Testing

	β	t	p
H1: Halal Advertising Exposure (x) -> Perceived Authenticity (y1)	0.131	1.120	0.263
H2: Halal Advertising Exposure (x) -> Perceived Congruence (y2)	0.284	2.267	0.023
H3: Halal Advertising Exposure (x) -> Perceived Trustworthiness (y3)	0.445	4.319	0.000

	β	t	p
H4: Halal Advertising Exposure (x) -> Attitude Towards Halal Portrayal (m)	0.882	36.372	0.000
H5: Attitude Towards Halal Portrayal (m) -> Perceived Authenticity (y1)	0.702	6.157	0.000
H6: Attitude Towards Halal Portrayal (m) -> Perceived Congruence (y2)	0.536	4.438	0.000
H7: Attitude Towards Halal Portrayal (m) -> Perceived Trustworthiness (y3)	0.412	4.028	0.000
H8: Halal Advertising Exposure (x) -> Attitude Towards Halal Portrayal (m) -> Perceived Authenticity (y1)	0.619	6.128	0.000
H9: Halal Advertising Exposure (x) -> Attitude Towards Halal Portrayal (m) -> Perceived Congruence (y2)	0.473	4.282	0.000
H10: Halal Advertising Exposure (x) -> Attitude Towards Halal Portrayal (m) -> Perceived Trustworthiness (y3)	0.363	3.923	0.000

Source: Primary Data

Finally, the indirect effects of halal advertising exposure through attitude toward portrayal were also significant. Attitude served as a mediating variable that transformed exposure into stronger perceptions of authenticity ($\beta = 0.619$, $t = 6.128$, $p = 0.000$), congruence ($\beta = 0.473$, $t = 4.282$, $p = 0.000$), and trustworthiness ($\beta = 0.363$, $t = 3.923$, $p = 0.000$). These findings confirm the proposed theoretical model, illustrating that consumer attitudes play a central cognitive role in shaping how value-based advertising is ultimately perceived.

In conclusion, the results support the theoretical proposition that attitude towards portrayal is a critical mediator in value-based advertising. Halal advertising, particularly in the context of culturally and religiously resonant brands like Wardah, exerts the strongest influence not through direct persuasion, but by shaping positive attitudinal responses. This mediational insight enhances the understanding of how Muslim consumers interpret advertising in ways that go beyond surface-level exposure, reinforcing the value of strategic portrayals in halal social marketing.

The findings of this study reaffirm the applicability of the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) theory in explaining how halal advertising affects consumer perception. Within this theoretical framework, halal advertising exposure serves as the stimulus (S), attitude toward halal portrayal represents the internal cognitive-affective state or organism (O), and perceptions of authenticity, congruence, and trustworthiness comprise the response (R). Rather than operating through a direct route, the data clearly show that halal advertising exerts its greatest influence when mediated by consumers' attitudinal evaluations. This supports the proposition that cognitive and emotional reactions are essential interpretive filters in the advertising–perception linkage.

One of the key findings is that direct exposure to halal-themed advertising does not automatically result in perceived authenticity. This challenges the assumption that religious branding alone can project sincerity. Instead, the results echo Bailey and Levy (2022), who argue that perceived authenticity is shaped by internal schemas, beliefs, and identity alignment. Especially in religiously infused markets like halal cosmetics, sincerity must be felt—not just seen. The advertising message, no matter how technically "halal", needs to emotionally resonate with consumers and align with their lived values to be considered authentic.

Conversely, the study confirms that halal advertising directly influences perceptions of congruence and trustworthiness. These results are in line with Seo et al. (2024) and Oliveira et al. (2021), who found that message–brand harmony and ethical consistency are key drivers of consumer trust. This suggests that when advertising portrays values, roles, and narratives that reinforce the brand's identity—such as modesty,

empowerment, or spiritual reflection—consumers interpret them as consistent and credible. Thus, congruent visual and narrative content in advertising, even simple taglines like #HalaldariAwal or emotionally driven campaigns as seen in *Figure 3*, serve as illustrative examples of value alignment that fosters trust and coherence.

Figure 3. Examples of Halal Advertising



The study's strongest theoretical contribution lies in confirming the mediating role of attitude toward halal portrayal. Consistent with the *organism* component in the SOR framework, consumers do not react passively to media stimuli; they actively assess, feel, and interpret them. This reinforces prior work by Shoenberger et al. (2020) and Can et al. (2024), who showed that favourable attitudes toward portrayal—especially those that reflect identity, spirituality, or empowerment—enhance downstream responses to the brand. In this study, such attitudinal alignment proved central in shaping how authenticity, congruence, and trust were ultimately perceived.

This mediating mechanism is particularly important because it explains why some ads resonate while others do not, despite similar themes or values. When consumers feel emotionally validated or culturally represented, they are more likely to assign positive meaning to the brand itself. This dynamic aligns with research by Yang et al. (2023) and Germelmann et al. (2020), who showed that consumers' emotional engagement with portrayal—not just ad design—determines their interpretation of brand sincerity and reliability. In halal contexts, where identity and values are inseparable, representation becomes a strategic pathway to influence.

Instead of merely confirming whether the findings align or diverge from previous research, this study provides a deeper explanation of the mechanisms at work. The results show that halal advertising is most effective when it connects emotionally and culturally with its audience, not just when it meets formal religious requirements. The lack of direct influence on perceived authenticity suggests that Indonesian

Muslim consumers are sophisticated—they look for advertising that resonates with their personal values and spiritual identity, not just outward labels. The strong mediation effect of attitude toward portrayal indicates that consumer interpretation, emotional validation, and cultural fit are central to the impact of halal social marketing. Theoretically, these findings advance the SOR framework by demonstrating that the “organism” (attitude) is an active, meaning-making filter, rather than a passive receiver. Practically, this means brands must prioritise authentic representation, storytelling, and value alignment to foster trust and loyalty in increasingly discerning halal markets.

In conclusion, the findings reveal that effective halal advertising is not defined by religious claims alone, but by how meaningfully it portrays identity and values. *Figure 3* provides examples of such portrayals—not as statistical proof, but as visual representations of how Wardah emotionally connects with its audience. Campaigns that integrate spiritual aesthetics, relatable narratives, and moral clarity are more likely to activate attitudinal responses that lead to positive brand perceptions. For halal brands, this means shifting from transactional messaging to transformational storytelling rooted in consumer belief systems.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated how halal advertising exposure influences consumer perceptions—specifically perceived authenticity, congruence, and trustworthiness—through the mediating role of attitude toward halal portrayal. The research aimed to explore whether exposure to value-driven advertising can directly shape consumer evaluations or whether these perceptions are primarily constructed through internal attitudinal processes. The findings demonstrated that while halal advertising directly affects perceived congruence and trustworthiness, it does not directly enhance authenticity. Instead, attitude toward portrayal emerged as a critical mediator, reinforcing the idea that psychological processing plays a central role in shaping consumer responses to culturally and religiously embedded advertising.

Notably, the study reveals that authenticity is not automatically derived from halal labelling or religious symbols; it is earned through emotional and representational alignment. This insight contributes to the growing literature on identity-based marketing by demonstrating that in Muslim-majority contexts like Indonesia, consumers interpret advertising through spiritual, cultural, and ethical lenses. The model, grounded in the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) framework, provides a refined theoretical pathway explaining how external messages translate into internal judgments. This presents a novel contribution by positioning attitude toward portrayal not just as an affective variable but as a cognitive gateway to perceived brand sincerity and ethical alignment.

These results underscore the importance of strategic representation in halal social marketing. Brands cannot rely on halal certification alone; they must also craft narratives that resonate with consumers’ values and lived experiences. Practically, this suggests that marketers should invest in storytelling that reflects empowerment, spirituality, and authenticity—elements that strengthen both consumer trust and brand loyalty. Theoretically, the study reinforces the importance of attitudinal mediation in media effects research and extends the SOR model within religious branding contexts.

In summary, this study demonstrates that while halal advertising exposure directly enhances consumer perceptions of congruence and trustworthiness, its effect on authenticity is realised only through the mediating role of attitude toward halal portrayal. By clarifying this mechanism, the research extends the SOR framework and highlights the importance of attitudinal and cultural resonance in value-based branding. Future research should examine these relationships across broader contexts and isolate specific advertising elements or consumer characteristics that strengthen the impact of attitudinal mediation.

While this study provides valuable insights into consumer responses to halal advertising, certain limitations should be acknowledged. The research focused exclusively on one brand (Wardah) and was limited to urban Muslim women in DKI Jakarta, which may constrain generalisability to other demographic or geographic groups. Moreover, the study relied on self-reported measures, which may be subject to social desirability bias, especially in religion-related topics.

Future research should consider comparative studies across multiple halal brands or across regions with varying levels of religiosity. Experimental designs could also be used to isolate the specific ad elements (e.g., imagery, tone, spokesperson) that drive attitudinal shifts. Additionally, integrating variables such as religiosity, self-construal, or media scepticism could enrich the explanatory power of the model. Such efforts would deepen our understanding of how identity, media, and value alignment interact to shape consumer behaviour and inform more culturally nuanced communication strategies.

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