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A Comprehensive Framework for Halal-Endorsed Advertising Processing

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study examines the significance and effectiveness of halal-endorsed advertisements within the Muslim market and addresses the lack of a comprehensive model for assessing their impact. Specifically, it aims to develop and validate a model focused on key factors, such as endorser-audience congruency, familiarity, trustworthiness, and likability, to understand their influence on consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. **Design/Methodology/Approach:** A survey-based quantitative approach was used to collect data from a sample of Iranian students. The model was tested and validated using structural equation modeling (SEM) within the context of the halal fashion industry to assess the effectiveness of these advertisements. **Findings:** The study confirms the role of congruency, familiarity, trustworthiness, and likability as crucial factors in halal endorsements, significantly impacting Muslim consumers' attitudes and intentions. The model reveals that well-aligned endorsers enhance advertising effectiveness, particularly collectible when values and cultural expectations resonate with the audience. **Originality/value:** This study is a pioneering effort in the halal market, providing a validated model tailored to halal-endorsed advertising. It fills a theoretical gap in Islamic marketing literature and offers practical insights for marketers seeking to engage the expanding Muslim consumer base with culturally aligned and effective endorsements.

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1. Introduction

Organizations are increasingly leveraging advertising strategies that emphasize emotional and non-reflective elements. Recent studies highlight a shift towards non-informative and motivational advertising tools (Muela-Molina et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2016). Brand endorsements have emerged as an effective method for shaping consumer attitudes, utilizing celebrities, athletes, and social media influencers to create emotional connections with audiences (Abou-Moghli et al., 2023; Catharina Clara, 2023). This trend is particularly pronounced in social media, where brand ambassadors serve as extensions of the brand's identity and values, strengthening consumer-brand relationships (Teresa Borges-Tiago et al., 2023).

Companies may invest large sums in endorsements, yet the results can vary widely. Studies such as those by Novianti and Rachmawati (2023) and Chin et al. (2019) note that success often comes down to how well the spokesperson seems to “fit” with the brand, something tied to traits like credibility, trust, and likability. Putri and Haryanto (2021) point out that these qualities do more than influence a single purchase; they can shape loyalty and even create a sense of personal connection between buyer and brand. In Islamic marketing, this alignment becomes especially critical. If individuals sense that the endorser shares their values, trust tends to grow, and positive associations with the brand are much easier to form (Hicken et al., 2024; Moidin et al., 2023; Wahidah & Dolah, 2021). However, in the literature, comprehensive models that evaluate the effectiveness of halal-endorsed advertisements, specifically regarding factors in the Muslim market, are lacking.

The halal market, driven by the growing demand from Muslims for culturally and religiously aligned products, is rapidly growing. The predicted 70% growth in the Muslim population by 2060 (Khan & Rashid, 2023) highlights a burgeoning consumer base prioritizing halal compliance and ethical considerations in their purchasing. This expansion is not limited to food products but extends to various industries, including fashion, cosmetics, and finance. The halal fashion industry has witnessed significant evolution, presenting unique challenges for marketers. The main challenge is creating advertising strategies that align with Islamic principles while appealing to Muslim consumer's diverse preferences (Hassan et al., 2021).

While previous studies have explored the impact of religiosity and trustworthiness on consumer behavior (Bhutto et al., 2023; Hicken et al., 2024; Ramli et al., 2024; Waqas et al., 2023), few have examined how congruency, familiarity, trustworthiness, and likability influence the effectiveness of halal endorsements. This gap in the literature presents an opportunity to explore the nuanced dynamics of halal marketing and endorsement effectiveness. Understanding the factors that contribute to effective halal endorsements is critical for brands seeking to establish trust and credibility in a competitive marketplace.

This study addresses the gap by examining halal endorsement in the halal fashion industry and developing a model evaluating the impact of endorser-audience congruency, familiarity, trustworthiness, and likability on advertising effectiveness. The research has three objectives: first, to develop a model assessing the effectiveness of halal-endorsed advertisements; second, to examine the impact of endorser-audience congruency and likability as key factors influencing consumer attitudes; and third, to validate this model within a sample of Muslim consumers in Iran. This research identifies when halal endorsers resonate most effectively with Muslim audiences, contributing to Islamic marketing.

Addressing the complexities of the halal market involves challenges that may arise when studying halal-endorsed advertisements. A key challenge is balancing between maintaining religious authenticity and delivering a commercially appealing message. In the halal market, overly religious messaging may not resonate with all segments of Muslim consumers, especially younger generations prioritizing values over symbols (Nickerson et al., 2023). Diverse Muslim demographics require attention to cultural and regional variations. What appeals to consumers in one region may not have the same effect in another, complicating the development of a one-size-fits-all marketing strategy.

Moreover, the existing literature does not present a nuanced understanding of endorsers' effectiveness attributes, such as familiarity and perceived sincerity, in consumer attitudes in the halal context. This study provides insight into congruency, familiarity, trustworthiness, and likability to enhance the effectiveness of halal endorsements and ultimately influence consumer behavior.

Theoretically, this study adapts traditional endorsement theories—such as the Match-Up Hypothesis and the Meaning Transfer Model—within halal marketing, fills an existing gap, and offers a refined understanding of the success factors of halal endorsements. Practically, this study provides actionable insights for marketers seeking to engage Muslim audiences. By identifying the key attributes of effective halal endorsements, brands can make informed decisions about selecting endorsers.

Overlooking key traits in halal-related endorsements can weaken the message and lead to a poor fit with the intended audience. When values alignment is central to consumer decisions, even subtle mismatches may gradually reduce trust in a brand. If marketers fail to grasp which endorser attributes matter most to Muslim buyers, they risk harming brand reputation in ways that may not be easy to fix. In fact, several well-known global companies have already faced criticism for selecting figures seen as incompatible with cultural or religious expectations in Islamic markets. These cases highlight why a more deliberate and context-aware process is needed when choosing endorsers. The model offered in this study aims to support that need, primarily for halal fashion, though the approach could be adapted to other sectors within the broader halal economy.

In conclusion, this study highlights the importance of congruency, familiarity, trustworthiness, and likability in halal endorsements. It sets the stage for future research into consumer behavior in the halal market. As the demand for halal products continues to grow, it is crucial to understand the intricacies of effective marketing for brands seeking to establish themselves in this evolving landscape. This study, by addressing the unique needs and values of Muslim consumers, contributes to the broader discourse on ethical marketing and provides a framework for future exploration in the halal advertising domain.

2. Literature Review

2-1. Halal Endorser

Endorsement is a highly effective method for promoting products or services in advertising. An endorser or spokesperson recommends or confirms a product or service in advertisements (Han & Nam, 2021). Brand endorsers influence consumer attitudes by conveying their meanings to the endorsed brands (Borges-Tiago et al., 2023). Celebrities—such as actors, artists, athletes, and successful organizational managers—are regarded as "human brands" and are utilized by marketers (Chae & Lee, 2013). These individuals have crafted distinctive images through their elevated social status and professional prominence, which can be linked to brands and even used to innovate new products (Borges-Tiago et al., 2023).

How an audience reacts to a product endorsement often depends on who delivers the message. Kelman (1962) argued that a source's influence stems from factors like credibility and relatability. Later, McCracken (1989) suggested that people often link an endorser's traits to the product, and over time, may internalize those traits themselves. In such cases, the way the endorser is viewed can shape both attitude and behavior toward the product (Kamins & Gupta, 2020; Nasution et al., 2019). Kamins (1990) introduced the match-up hypothesis, arguing that endorsements work better when there is a clear connection between the endorser, the product, and the target audience (Erdogan, 1999; Kamins, 1990). Recent research has extended these classical frameworks to contemporary contexts such as peer endorsers and social media influencers (Jin, 2018; Munnukka et al., 2016). Recently, the use of peer endorsers in advertisements has gained popularity. These everyday consumers, satisfied with a product, serve as information sources, impacting advertisement acceptance through perceived credibility and audience similarity (Jin, 2018; Munnukka et al., 2016). Social media influencers (SMIs) also play a critical role in shaping consumer behavior, particularly within specific markets like halal products (Supriani et al., 2024).

In Islamic advertising, the concept of endorsing is termed a halal endorsement. "Halal" signifies what is permissible and lawful for Muslims, serving as a spiritual requirement. Halal knowledge is crucial for Muslim consumers (Rawung et al., 2023). The global rise in halal product consumption—spanning food, finance, fashion, and infotainment—is primarily attributed to economic and political stability in Southeast Asian and Gulf regions and the growth of the Muslim urban population due to intense religious focus and a focus on quality and halal standards (Khan & Rashid, 2023).

The Halal Industry Development Corporation (HDC) (2014) introduced the growing economic value of the halal market, which includes food, cosmetics, and pharmaceuticals, as a \$2.3 trillion industry globally. This expansive market underscores the importance of marketing strategies that emphasize religious alignment and trust, which are essential in appealing to Muslim consumers' values and cultural expectations.

In Islamic advertising, ethical practices are essential. Advertisers should build consumer trust through advertisements showcasing the brand's credibility as a halal brand and its expertise (Hicken et al., 2024; Moidin et al., 2023; Ramli et al., 2024; Wahidah & Dolah, 2021; Waqas et al., 2023). Islamic beliefs and physical attributes can influence the image of a halal brand and the Muslim consumer's satisfaction. Adherence to halal values—encompassing both physical and non-physical Islamic attributes—significantly impacts the Muslim consumer's satisfaction (Sodawan & Hsu, 2022).

Halal fashion aims to align one's appearance with Islamic teachings. This industry has seen rapid growth, and halal endorsers serve as effective role models (Kusumaningtyas et al., 2023). They influence Muslim consumers' attitudes toward halal brands, necessitating investments in endorsers to enhance brand equity and loyalty (Borges-Tiago et al., 2023).

Overall, the integration of halal endorsements in advertising not only aligns products with Islamic principles but also builds trust and loyalty among Muslim consumers. By leveraging endorsers who embody Islamic values, brands can effectively resonate with the audience. Several recent studies have shown that religious commitment, self-efficacy, and halal literacy positively influence consumer attitudes and purchase intentions (Bhutto et al., 2023; Hicken et al., 2024; Ramli et al., 2024), making halal endorsements an important tool for creating trust in brands.

Nickerson et al. (2023) found that in Dubai, Islamic endorsements do not consistently boost purchase intentions among highly religious consumers, which shows the importance of congruency and likability in halal-endorsed advertisements. Arifin et al. (2023) examined the role of brand awareness in high-quality content and religious awareness in influencing young Muslim consumers' loyalty toward halal products, which shows the importance of religious alignment and high-quality content in building brand loyalty and trust.

Zaki et al. (2023) explored Islamic brand personality in apparel, such as modesty and righteousness, that align with Muslim consumer expectations. These results emphasize brand trust and resonate with consumers' religious and cultural beliefs. Waqas et al. (2023) examined the use of religious cues, such as Islamic symbols and cultural music, in mutual fund advertising in Pakistan to enhance trust and purchase intentions, demonstrating the power of religiously aligned messaging in influencing consumer behavior.

Abdullahi (2023) found that in Nigeria, religiosity positively impacted the consumer loyalty of halal businesses, but traditional advertising had a moderate adverse effect. This highlights the importance of authentically integrating religious values to foster consumer trust in advertising.

Despite the wealth of literature on endorsement and Islamic advertising, few studies have offered a unified model capturing the multidimensional factors influencing halal endorsement effectiveness. The existing literature highlights the absence of a comprehensive model for assessing the effectiveness of halal-endorsed advertisements. This research aims to introduce and validate a conceptual framework derived from an extensive literature review. The components from the literature and the conceptual model will be detailed and rigorously examined.

2-2. Hypothesis Development

2-2-1. Audience Congruency and Advertisement Perceived Congruency

According to the similarity-attraction paradigm, people are naturally drawn to those who resemble them, leading to greater likability (Byrne et al., 1966). Studies reveal that congruence between endorsers and audiences in terms of gender, age, cultural background, nationality, and ethnicity enhances advertisement evaluations (Ahmad & Shaari, 2021; Khalid & Ali, 2021). To influence Muslim consumers, organizations should choose the endorser whose demographic traits align with the target audience's stereotypes (Zhou et al., 2024). Consumers will only embrace Halal products if they perceive similar benefits to other Halal brands and alignment with their religious beliefs (Khan & Rashid, 2023). Following the self-congruity theory, higher congruence between consumers' self-image and the endorser's image leads to more positive attitudes toward the endorsed advertisement and

brand. Studies also show that aligning audience beliefs and values with endorsers (Han & Nam, 2020;) positively affects advertisement effectiveness. In the context of halal fashion, audience congruence and perceived advertisement congruence are crucial when selecting a halal endorser. Therefore, this hypothesis can be proposed:

H1. Congruency between a halal endorser and an audience significantly affects the perceptual congruency between the halal endorser and the advertisement's message.

2-2-2. Expertise and Advertisement Perceived Congruency

Expertise in endorsing refers to the perceived possession of necessary knowledge, experience, or skills (AlFarraj et al., 2021) and has positive impacts on consumers' purchase intentions (Priyankara et al., 2017). Expertise includes the ability to make valid claims, knowledge and experience in a specific field, and provide precise information (McCracken, 1989). Studies suggest that employing a relevant expert endorser can enhance the perceived congruence between the endorser and the advertisement (Braunstein-Minkove et al., 2011).

Several studies have explored the effects of expert endorsers on various aspects, including the endorser's perceived credibility, audience attitudes toward the endorser and advertisement, and purchase intention (Bergkvist et al., 2016; Dwivedi et al., 2015; Kim et al., 2018; Munnukka et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2016; Winterich et al., 2018). In the context of Halal fashion, utilizing a suitable Halal endorser with relevant expertise positively influences the perceived congruence between the endorser and the advertisement. It has a positive impact on audience attitudes toward the endorser, Halal fashion brand, and their intention to purchase. Considering this research, one could propose the hypothesis that:

H2. The halal endorser's appropriate expertise aligned with the brand significantly affects the perceptual congruency between the halal endorser and the advertisement's message.

2-2-3. Attractiveness and Advertisement Perceived Congruency

Attractiveness is the perception of an individual's desirability based on their appearance, personality, or behavior. Studies show that attractive endorsers enhance advertisement persuasiveness (Kamins, 1990). Nowadays, attractiveness extends beyond physical traits, with hijab-wearing Muslim women being featured in advertising. An attractive endorser is more effective for appearance-related products, such as fashion (Till & Busler, 2000).

A face resembling the audience creates trustworthiness. Studies generalize that an endorser's physical attractiveness positively impacts audience attitudes toward the advertisement, the endorser's perceived credibility, and buying intention (Dwivedi et al., 2015; Haleem et al., 2020; Halder et al., 2021; Munnukka et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2016; Winterich et al., 2018). In the Halal fashion concept, a normal-looking face aligned with Islamic values may be preferable to a beautiful face, especially for products related to fashion (Bower & Landreth, 2001). This aligns with the trend of featuring hijab-wearing Muslim women as advertising models in Halal fashion. While an attractive endorser still influences appearance-related Halal fashion, a normal-looking face may enhance trustworthiness and align better with the target audience's values. A hypothesis based on this research could be:

H3. The attractive appearance of a halal endorser significantly affects the perceptual congruency between the halal endorser and the advertisement's message.

2-2-4. Advertisement Perceived Congruency and Attitude Toward the Advertisement

Extensive research has explored the impact of congruence between endorsers, brand, products, and advertising themes on advertising effectiveness. Endorsers' alignment with a fashion brand facilitates a positive cognitive connection and leads to favorable attitudes, advertisements, and brand satisfaction (Bergkvist & Zhou, 2016; Kim et al., 2018; Saldanha et al. (2018); Schimmelpfennig & Hunt, 2020; Zhou et al., 2024), and ultimately, positive product attitudes and purchase intentions (Ilicic & Webster, 2013; Till & Busler, 2000). This underscores the importance of matching appropriate endorsers with trustworthy brands for effective communication (Amos et al., 2008; Bergkvist & Zhou, 2016; Bergkvist et al., 2016; Schimmelpfennig & Hunt, 2020).

These principles are relevant to the halal fashion industry because congruence between endorsers, brand features, products, and advertising themes is essential for effective communication and positive perceptions among Muslim audiences. Aligning halal endorsers with trustworthy fashion brands can result in favorable attitudes, brand perceptions, and purchase intentions. Hence, the hypothesis could be proposed:

H4. Perceived congruency between a halal endorser and an advertisement's message significantly affects a Muslim audience's attitude towards the advertisement.

2-2-5. Familiarity, Trustworthiness, and Likability

Source attractiveness in endorsements depends on the receiver's evaluation of the endorser's similarity and familiarity. When consumers see an endorser as similar and hold a favorable opinion of them, they find them attractive (Keller, 2021). The trustworthiness and familiarity of the endorser also impact message effectiveness (Erdogan, 2019). Well-known endorsers enhance attention, brand awareness, retention, and acceptance (Chatterjee & Lala, 2021; Erdogan, 2019). Familiarity with the spokesperson streamlines mental processing, making them more effective compared to new endorsers (Liu & Chen, 2019).

Likability, influenced by source appearance and behavior, reflects a fondness for the source. Consumers tend to favor brands endorsed by those they like (Jin et al., 2019). This applies to halal fashion, where well-known endorsers can boost brand awareness and consumer attraction. Consumers who perceive endorsers as similar and likable develop a preference for endorsed halal fashion brands. Furthermore, trustworthy endorsers enhance retention and acceptance, particularly among those familiar with the spokesperson. Therefore, using endorsers in halal fashion marketing may effectively enhance brand awareness and consumer appeal. Hypotheses arising from this research include:

H5. The halal endorser's familiarity significantly affects their trustworthiness among Muslim audiences.

H6. The halal endorser's familiarity significantly affects their likability among Muslim audiences.

2-2-6. Trustworthiness and Attitude Towards the Advertisement

Trustworthiness, a critical factor in influencer marketing, correlates with attractiveness in changing consumer attitudes and aligning endorsers with reliable brands (AlFarraj et al., 2021). It denotes the endorser's honesty, integrity, and believability, influencing consumers' perception of reliability and credibility (AlFarraj et al., 2021). In the Credibility Model (Ohanian, 1990), trustworthiness reflects the communicator's intent to convey valid statements. Past research has consistently demonstrated its positive effects on perceived source credibility, attitude toward advertisements, and buying intention (Ahmed, 2015; Akbari et al., 2014; Dwivedi et al., 2015; Hani et al., 2018; Kim & Lee, 2012; Kim et al., 2018; Ibidunni et al., 2018; Mansour & Diab, 2013; Mishra et al., 2015; Munnukka et al., 2016; Priyankara et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2016; Winterich et al., 2018).

In the emerging industry of halal fashion, ethical and moral principles govern the products' production and distribution, and trustworthiness is important to consumers. Consumers expect transparency, honesty, and authenticity from halal fashion brands and influencers. Trustworthiness helps these brands and influencers build credibility and gain consumers' trust, positively influencing attitudes toward halal fashion products and purchase intentions. Thus, trustworthiness plays a critical role in the success of halal fashion brands and influencers. This leads to the hypothesis that:

H7. The halal endorser's trustworthiness significantly affects the Muslim audience's attitude towards the advertisement.

2-2-7. Likability and Attitude towards the Advertisement

Recent studies have examined the influence of endorser likability and attitudes on consumer behavior. Positive attitudes towards endorsers can affect brand perception and buying intentions. However, overreliance on endorsements may have drawbacks, including negative associations and brand image damage. In the halal fashion context, these factors are especially crucial. Muslim consumers, selective

in clothing choices and brand support, are sensitive to endorser likability. Brands must select endorsers carefully to avoid negative associations and damage their brand image. The research suggests a hypothesis that:

H8. The halal endorser's likability among Muslim audiences significantly affects a Muslim audience's attitude towards the advertisement.

2-2-8. Attitude towards Advertisements and Brand, and Buying Intention

Advertisement effectiveness relies on congruence and likability, which in turn influence brand attitude and purchase intent through beliefs about the brand. Positive advertising attitudes correlate with positive brand attitudes, affecting purchase intentions (Akbari et al., 2014). These principles extend to halal fashion, where effective advertising should establish congruence and likability, influencing brand attitude and purchase intention. Endorser likability positively impacts purchase intentions, and positive advertising attitudes lead to positive brand attitudes and increased purchase intention. Building a positive brand image and credibility can effectively drive purchase intention for halal fashion. The research suggests these hypotheses:

H9. A Muslim audience's attitude towards advertisements significantly affects their attitude toward the brand.

H10. A Muslim audience's attitude towards a brand significantly affects their buying intention.

3. Research Methodology

In this research, first, we conducted a comprehensive review of the literature to identify the relevant factors that impact the effectiveness of halal-endorsed advertisements and develop a theoretical model. Then we focus on exploring the connections among the variables in the conceptual model (see Figure 1), obtained from the literature review and consisted of the hypotheses described in the Hypothesis development section. Next, we designed a survey instrument to collect data on these factors and their relationships. The survey was administered to a random sample of Muslim participants, and the data were analyzed using statistical methods to test the validity of the model and its relationships.

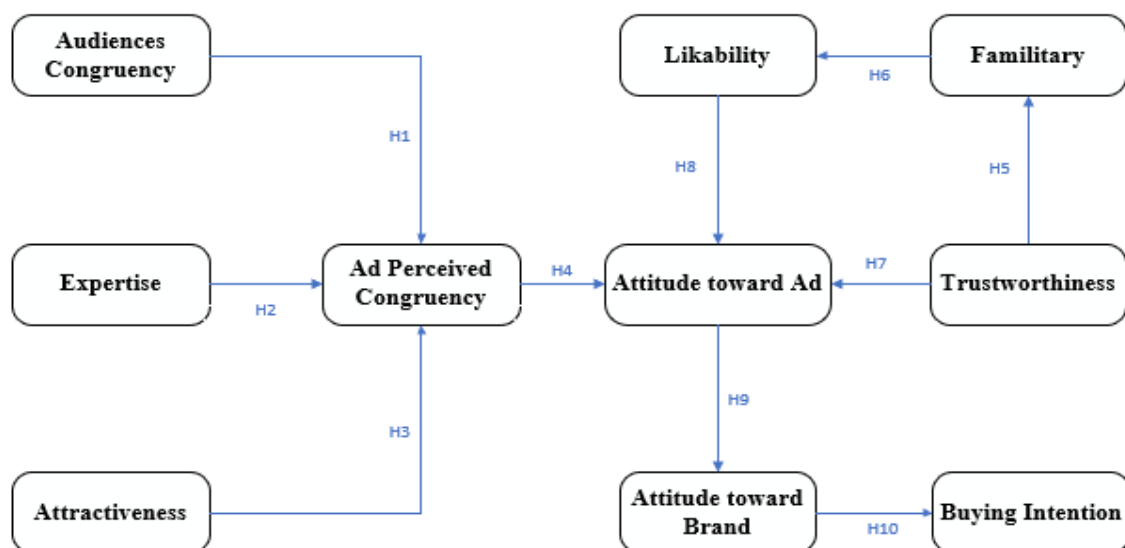


Fig. 1. Research Model

The results of the survey were used to refine the model, including modifying or removing factors that were not statistically significant, as well as adding new factors that were identified from the survey data. The final model was then validated using additional surveys or by comparing the predicted outcomes from the model with actual outcomes. Overall, this approach enabled us to develop a robust model based on the literature and validate its relationships using empirical data, providing a strong foundation for future research and practical applications.

A preliminary study was conducted to select an appropriate industry and brand for evaluating the halal endorser model, to assess the content validity of the questionnaire, and to identify the factors that affect the effectiveness of endorsed advertisements. Based on the opinions of our expert panel and the prevalence of endorsed advertisements, we chose to focus on the cosmetics, apparel, luxury, and fashion industries. Ultimately, we decided to study advertisements in the leather fashion industry, targeting individuals aged 20 to 35 to respond to the questionnaire. At the time of this research, billboards in Tehran, the capital of Iran, one of the countries that has a broad spectrum of Muslim target audience, and several other highly populated cities in Iran were loaded with halal-endorsed advertisements for two specific leather brands, Novin and Dorsa.

We chose the three most effective advertisement pieces from the pool of halal-endorsed advertisements based on the business performance measures of the company after administering them to the media and city billboards, based on the CEOs' personal opinions. The endorsers were cinema and theatre stars. Each student was asked to review one of these three real advertisements and answer the questionnaire based on their observation.

In the quantitative part, we used the quantitative survey method and structural equation modeling (SEM). Data is analyzed using descriptive tests and exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with SPSS 20 software. Additionally, considering abnormal research data, PLS Smart 2 software is used for structural equation modeling. In other words, to analyze the hypotheses and test the relationships between the research variables, a structural equation modeling approach based on partial least squares (PLS) is used.

3-1. Statistical Population and Sampling

The statistical population for this study comprises approximately 30,000 members of the official Telegram channel for the University of Tehran's students (@Kooyestan). An initial sample of 30 respondents was used to estimate the population mean and variance for sample size calculation. Based on the standard deviation ($S = 1.3$), a relative error of 0.05, and a 95% confidence level, the required sample size was calculated to be 238.

A simple random sampling method was employed to select participants. To ensure alignment with the study's objectives, a precondition was included in the questionnaire asking respondents to self-identify as individuals who adhere to Islamic values. Out of 500 distributed questionnaires, 245 were completed and returned accurately. The final sample consisted of 54.2% females and 45.8% males, with a mean age of 25 years. Sample adequacy was verified using the Bartlett's test and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure, supporting the suitability of the data for factor analysis (see Table 1).

Table 1. Bartlett and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Test
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of
Sampling Adequacy **0.915**

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	7122.089
	Df	1035
	Sig.	0.000

The relationship between variables is significant since $KMO = 0.915$ in the adequacy test of the sample, and it is higher than 0.7 with a significance level lower than 0.05. The relationship between variables is significant, and it is possible to explore the new structure in the data and carry out factor analysis on it. Factor analysis also shows that related questions to each variable measure it precisely. In other words, variables are highly correlated with corresponding variables, and their correlation with other variables in the model is the lowest. The final results of factor analysis, i.e., the Rotated Component Matrix, are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Rotated Component Matrix

Criteria	Questions	Component							
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Familiarity	Fam1	.214	.148	.160	.885	.135	.118	-.052	.115
	Fam2	.169	.105	.115	.876	.051	.111	-.002	.090
	Fam3	.176	.114	.161	.882	.174	.175	.000	.119
Likability	Like1	.754	.152	.244	.112	.273	.197	-.072	.045
	Like2	.751	.073	.166	.162	.240	.276	-.031	.193
	Like3	.690	.038	.249	.006	.233	.325	.094	.059
Audiences Congruency	Audcon1	.079	.238	.669	.278	.240	.061	-.004	.138
	Audcon2	.166	.233	.663	.232	.269	.281	-.154	-.031
	Audcon3	.432	-.040	.387	.108	.328	.370	.008	.018
	Audcon4	.378	-.010	.565	-.056	.210	.279	.033	-.166
Ad's Perceived congruency	Adscon1	.424	.232	.624	.171	.264	.076	.015	-.013
	Adscon2	.480	.246	.579	.154	.326	.073	.164	.056
	Adscon3	.397	.278	.562	.177	.410	.031	.031	-.010
Attractiveness	Att1	.772	.183	.078	.330	.247	.006	.005	-.059
	Att2	.746	.308	.016	.213	.137	.055	-.020	-.039
	Att3	.753	.379	.054	.104	.014	-.034	.056	-.094
	Att4	.662	.131	.280	.008	.277	.282	.070	.324
	Att5	.627	.147	.227	.125	.240	.258	-.117	.339
Expertise	Exp1	.212	.199	.180	.139	.744	.147	.075	.019
	Exp2	.251	.095	.194	.135	.821	.136	-.148	.001
	Exp3	.355	.121	.308	.128	.764	.052	-.041	.000
Trustworthiness	Trust1	.439	.085	.270	.464	.429	.061	.116	-.139
	Trust2	.421	.067	.222	.561	.419	.073	.172	-.136
	Trsut3	.355	.127	.336	.330	.483	.184	.179	.013
Attitude toward Ads	Adsat1	.637	.366	.375	.204	.095	.006	-.126	-.185
	Adsat2	.675	.306	.347	.265	.113	.079	.020	-.157
	Adsat3	.495	.239	.447	.106	.097	.133	-.117	-.282
	Adsat4	.393	.411	.466	.220	-.032	-.006	-.114	-.058
Attitude toward Brand	Br1	.114	.609	.230	.136	.060	.567	.129	.010
	Br2	.090	.698	.201	.160	-.001	.492	.117	.053
	Br3	.050	.766	.255	.198	-.014	.350	.008	.044
	Br4	.170	.844	.110	.074	.100	.232	.053	.008
	Br5	.231	.877	.095	.067	.164	.068	.055	.036
	Br6	.219	.874	.128	.050	.103	-.011	-.013	.024
	Br7	.191	.863	.086	.060	.085	.146	-.027	.113
	Br8	.269	.691	.062	.016	.196	.280	.066	-.038
Intention to buy	Int1	.176	.302	.038	.178	.059	.743	.101	.018
	Int2	.195	.315	.065	.193	.149	.744	.081	-.023
	Int3	.159	.341	.184	.029	.159	.779	-.035	-.057

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 8 iterations.

3-2. Research Tools

We used halal-endorsed advertisements for two popular leather brands. We chose the advertisements based on the CEOs' recommendation and their understanding of the dramatic increase in performance measures after administering them. The halal endorsers were popular Iranian movie and theatre actors. The prerequisite for participation in the survey is adherence to Islam and Islamic values. The questionnaire for data collection included the following sections: 1. a brief explanation about the research objectives; 2. the importance of participants' good cooperation; 3. the secrecy of the provided data; and 4. the possibility of sharing the results with participants after data analysis, in case they are interested; 5. demographic questions; and 6. main questions (questions about variables and related relationships based on the research model) (see Table 3). The main questions are measured on a seven-point Likert-type scale.

Table 3. Questioner's Criteria Definitions and References

Criteria	Definition	Reference
Audience Congruency	Congruency between demographic characteristics of endorser and audiences; similarities between audiences and endorser; whether the endorser is a good example of audiences.	Mitchell & Olson, 1981; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980.
Expertise	Ability to provide a valid claim and correct information, having required knowledge and experience.	McCracken, 1989.
Attractiveness	Level of attracting audiences' attention; endorser's elegance, facial beauty, fitness, modern dressing, and audiences' inclination to have similar appearance.	
Advertisement Perceived Congruency	Congruency between demographic characteristics of endorser, brand, industry and product. Similarity of endorser and brand image in audiences' mind.	Mitchell & Olson, 1981; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980.
Familiarity	Being fame, reputation degree, and audiences' knowledge of the endorser.	
Trustworthiness	Respectability, reputability, and competency to claim.	
Likability	Creating positive feelings in audiences, influencing thought and behavior, and how much the audiences like him/her.	Tantiseneepong et al., 2012.
Attitude toward Advertisement	Evaluating advertisement based on indexes (good, likable, exciting, clarity, high quality, charm slogan).	Mitchell & Olson, 1981; Ducoffe, 1996.
Attitude toward Brand	Evaluating brand or product based on indexes (price, quality, trustworthiness, fashionable, loveliness, distinctive, social class, fame).	Mitchell & Olson, 1981; Keller, 2008.
Buying Intention	Feeling need and want to have the product, possibility of buying, and probability to recommend it to others.	Keller, 2008; Spears & Singh, 2004.

4. Data Analysis

4-1. Assessment of Reliability and Validity

To confirm content validity, five marketing professors reviewed the questionnaire, affirming that the questions accurately assess the effectiveness of halal-endorsed advertisements in the halal fashion industry. For construct validity, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used, with convergent and discriminant validity assessed through measures of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and shared variance between components.

Convergent Validity was confirmed as all factor loadings and AVE values for each construct exceeded 0.5 at a 95% confidence level (see Table 4), indicating that each variable correlates well with its respective construct.

Table 4. Convergent Validity, Factor Loadings, and AVE of the Corresponding Construct of the Model

Variable		Factor loading	AVE > 0/5
Familiarity	Fam1	.979	.925
	Fam2	.934	
	Fam3	.972	
Likability	Like1	.928	.842
	Like2	.941	
	Like3	.884	
Audiences Congruency	Aud Con1	.764	.621
	Aud Con2	.864	
	Aud Con3	.764	
	Aud Con4	.755	
Attractive appearance	Att1	.851	.712
	Att2	.856	
	Att3	.804	
	Att4	.856	
	Att5	.851	
Expertise	Expert1	.873	.825
	Expert2	.928	
	Expert3	.923	
Ads Perceived congruency	Ads Con1	.913	.837
	Ads Con2	.957	
	Ads Con3	.933	
Trustworthiness	Trust1	.927	.825
	Trust2	.951	
	Trust3	.843	
Attitude toward Ad	Adsat1	.927	.751
	Adsat2	.905	
	Adsat3	.829	
	Adsat4	.799	
Attitude toward Brand	Brat1	.844	.756
	Brat2	.886	
	Brat3	.886	
	Brat4	.905	
	Brat5	.888	
	Brat6	.845	
	Brat7	.891	
	Brat8	.806	
Intention to buy	Int1	.903	.822
	Int2	.925	
	Int3	.892	

Discriminant Validity was evaluated using the Fornell-Larcker criterion. Based on the Fornell-Larcker test results (see Table 5), the square root of AVE for each latent variable was higher than its correlation with other latent variables, confirming discriminant validity.

Table 5. Divergent Validity, Fornell-Larker Test

Variable	Familiarity	Likability	Audience Congruency	Attractive Appearance	Expertise	Advertisement Perceived Congruency	Trustworthiness	Attitude toward Advertisement	Attitude toward Brand	Intention to Buy
Familiarity	.9617									
Likability	.6712	.9176								
Audience Congruency	.7655	.6062	.788							
Attractive Appearance	.6117	.7949	.6811	.8438						
Expertise	.7495	.7560	.7173	.6765	.9082					
Advertisement Perceived Congruency	.7814	.7193	.7463	.7638	.6081	.9343				
Trustworthiness	.5169	.7394	.6123	.6141	.6020	.7902	.9082			
Attitude toward Advertisement	.6114	.7984	.6237	.7239	.6672	.7423	.8107	.8666		
Attitude toward Brand	.7411	.8257	.8180	.7822	.7199	.5945	.7989	.7522	.8694	
Intention to Buy	.8439	.6248	.7654	.6805	.7036	.7833	.7655	.7979	.6599	.9066

To ensure reliability, Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) scores were calculated. Cronbach's alpha values, obtained through SPSS, and CR values from Smart PLS, were both above 0.7 for all variables, indicating strong internal consistency (see Table 6).

Table 6. Reliability of Research Model

Variable	Cronbach's alpha	Composite Reliability
Familiarity	.926	.964
Likability	.887	.94
Audience Congruency	.882	.807
Attractive Appearance	.89	.902
Advertisement Perceived Congruency	.85	.906
Expertise	.829	.927
Trustworthiness	.875	.899
Attitude toward Advertisement	.978	.898
Attitude toward Brand	.922	.956
Intention to Buy	.92	.894

4-2. Structural Model Evaluation

Using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach, the coefficient of determination (R^2) was calculated to evaluate each independent variable's predictive power for dependent variables. R^2 values for each variable (see Table 7) were statistically significant except for the perceived trustworthiness variable, which had a moderate R^2 value, which may have weakened the model's overall strength. Based on the low predictive ability of this variable, it was evaluated for removal after initial model fitting.

Table 7. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

No.	Variable	R^2
1	Likability	0.762
2	Advertisement Perceived Congruency	0.681
3	Trustworthiness	0.370
4	Attitude toward Advertisement	0.735
5	Attitude toward Brand	0.683
6	Intention to Buy	0.748

4-3. Testing Primary Model

The path coefficients in the Structural Equation Model (SEM) indicate the strength of relationships between independent and dependent variables. At a 95% significance level, these coefficients determined which hypotheses were supported (see Table 8). Additionally, Goodness of Fit (GOF) was calculated to assess the model's overall predictive accuracy. With a GOF value of 0.357, the model performance was deemed moderately satisfactory.

Due to the underperformance of the perceived trustworthiness variable (with path coefficients below the 1.96 threshold and an unfavorable R^2), it was excluded, and the model was re-evaluated without this variable. The revised hypotheses were then tested based on the updated model structure.

Table 8. Primary Model's Path and Significant Coefficients, Significance level of 95%

Hypothesis No	Path Coefficient	Significance Coefficients	Result
1	.436	5.887	Approved
2	.618	9.937	Approved
3	.321	4.601	Approved
4	.399	4.858	Approved
5	.189	1.300	Rejected
6	.396	5.076	Approved
7	.113	1.246	Rejected
8	.358	4.569	Approved
9	.562	8.659	Approved
10	.635	9.990	Approved

4-4. Testing the Final Model

The final research model, excluding the perceived trustworthiness variable, was tested to confirm the revised hypotheses. SEM path coefficients and significance values were calculated at a 95% confidence level. According to the PLS output diagrams and coefficients (see Table 9 and Figure 2), all remaining hypotheses were supported in the final model. The Goodness of Fit (GOF) for the final model was recalculated, yielding a GOF value of 0.578, indicating a robust model fit.

Table 9. Final Model's Path and Significant Coefficients, Significance level of 95%

Hypothesis No	Path Coefficients	Significance Coefficients	Result
1	.436	6.168	Approved
2	.618	9.937	Approved
3	.321	4.774	Approved
4	.454	6.939	Approved
6	.396	5.529	Approved
8	.393	5.868	Approved
9	.562	8.364	Approved
10	.635	9.912	Approved

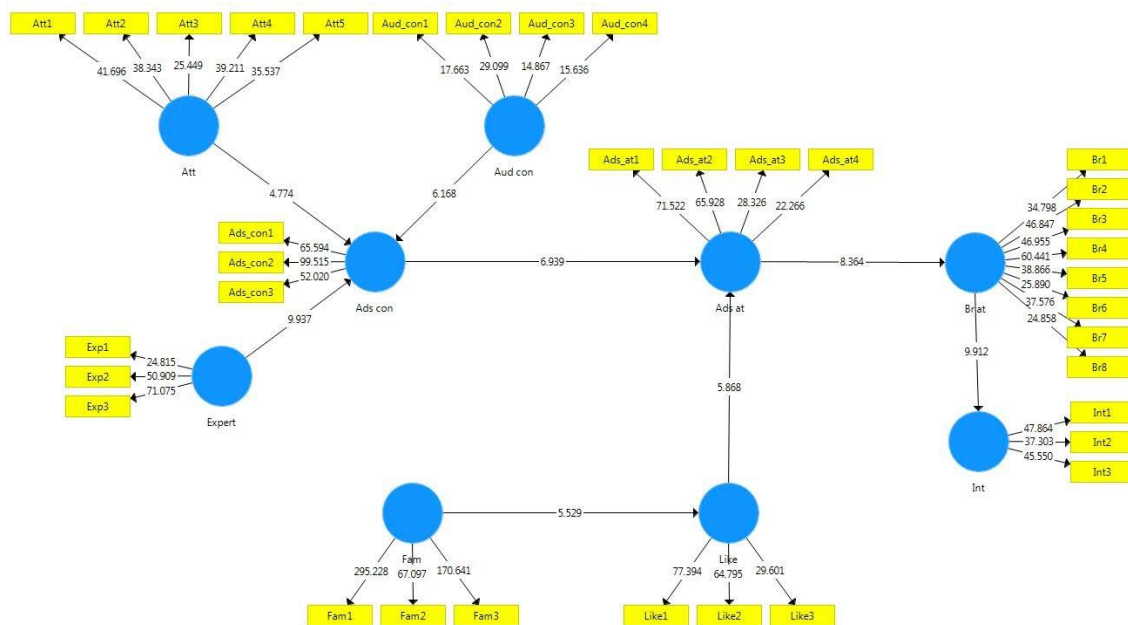


Fig. 2. PLS Output Diagrams, Final Model

5. Discussion

The present study explores the role of halal endorsers in influencing consumer attitudes and purchase intentions, focusing on perceived congruency, familiarity, trustworthiness, and likability within the context of Islamic advertising. By developing and validating a model specific to halal-endorsed advertisements, this study addresses the gaps in Islamic advertising literature regarding effective endorsement practices in halal markets. Using quantitative survey data from a Muslim student sample and structural equation modeling (SEM), we evaluated the effectiveness of halal-endorsed advertisements within the halal fashion industry, yielding a strong model fit (GOF = 0.578). Our findings hold several theoretical and practical implications, each contributing to a richer understanding of halal endorsement in Islamic marketing.

5-1. Theoretical Implications

This study enhances existing research on endorsement in advertising by providing a unique focus on halal endorsement within Islamic marketing. This study represents a pioneering effort, as no previous research or model has systematically examined the specific factors influencing endorsement effectiveness within the halal market. Specifically, the findings confirm eight hypotheses related to the halal endorsement model, emphasizing the importance of congruency between endorsers and the target Muslim audience. This congruency significantly influences consumer attitudes, supported by previous literature on the Match-Up Hypothesis (Kamins, 1990). This posits that endorsement effectiveness is enhanced when there is a strong alignment between the endorser, the brand, and the target audience. The impact of congruency observed in this study also supports the findings of Bhutto et al. (2023) and Ramli et al. (2024) who noted that congruency fosters trust and positively impacts Muslim consumer attitudes toward halal cosmetics.

Additionally, our study adds to the self-congruity theory, which suggests that consumers prefer endorsers whose attributes align with their self-image. By confirming that congruency between the halal endorser's image and a consumer's self-image enhances advertisement acceptance, this study builds on the findings of Saleem et al. (2021) and Han and Nam (2020). These scholars emphasized the role of congruency in fostering positive consumer attitudes in conventional endorsement settings; however, our research validates this alignment within Islamic advertising. The emphasis on congruency in halal-endorsed advertising advances the understanding of how Islamic values and cultural factors impact consumer attitudes in halal contexts, filling an essential gap in Islamic marketing literature.

Moreover, this study contributes to the Meaning Transfer Model (McCracken, 1989), which asserts that an endorser's attributes and values are transferred to the brand, shaping consumer perceptions and attitudes. In halal-endorsed advertisements, this transfer of attributes is particularly significant, as endorsers embody religious and cultural values important to Muslim consumers, making the halal endorsement more credible. Our findings align with Waqas et al. (2023) and Moidin et al. (2023) who emphasized that religious symbols and cues foster trust and brand credibility among Muslim consumers, a factor that resonates in this study, as well. The transfer of an endorser's Islamic values to the brand strengthens consumer attitudes toward the advertisement, as supported by Nickerson et al. (2023), who found that Islamic appeals in advertising increase advertisement credibility among moderately religious consumers.

Interestingly, while likability emerged as a crucial factor in shaping consumer attitudes, the findings indicate that perceived trustworthiness has a varying influence depending on the product category. In luxury segments of halal fashion, where appearance and quality are often prioritized, trustworthiness may not have the same level of impact. This finding aligns with Till and Busler (2000) and Kim and Na (2007), who noted that in visually driven product categories, attributes like likability and attractiveness may outweigh trust as influencers of consumer attitudes.

Theoretically, this study extends the body of knowledge on endorsement models by adapting traditional theories—such as the Match-Up Hypothesis, self-congruity theory, and the Meaning Transfer Model—within the specific context of halal marketing. Our findings confirm that congruency and likability are influential factors for Muslim consumers, emphasizing that endorsers must embody Islamic values to resonate effectively. This adaptation provides depth to the Meaning Transfer Model by illustrating that in halal advertising, endorsers not only convey positive traits to the brand but also reinforce its alignment with Islamic principles, establishing a deeper, values-based connection with consumers.

Moreover, this study addresses the underexplored relationship between religiosity and endorsement effectiveness in Islamic marketing. While previous research by Bhutto et al. (2023) and Nickerson et al. (2023) highlighted the influence of religiosity on consumer behavior, our findings suggest that congruency and likability may play a more critical role than religiosity alone, particularly among younger demographics. This insight indicates that while religious alignment is necessary, consumer attitudes may be more strongly shaped by a sense of shared values and connection to the endorser. This nuanced understanding of religious cues' role in consumer responses suggests that Islamic advertising may benefit more from values alignment than overt religiosity, enhancing relevance across varied consumer segments.

5-2. Practical Implications

For marketing practitioners in halal industries, the study's findings offer actionable insights into improving endorsement strategies. First, this research highlights the need for congruency between the endorser and the Muslim audience's demographic, values, and lifestyle to foster advertisement acceptance. Halal brands should prioritize selecting endorsers who authentically resonate with their audience's identity, as alignment enhances trust and promotes advertisement acceptance. This supports Kusumaningtyas and Ridwan (2023) and Zaki et al. (2023), who advocate for value congruency in Islamic branding as a key driver of positive consumer response.

Likability is another important factor, especially in the halal sector, where familiarity and perceived sincerity contribute to positive consumer attitudes. Brands targeting the halal market, especially in visually appealing segments such as fashion and cosmetics, should emphasize relatable, personable endorsers to build trust and loyalty. This strategy is consistent with the findings of Munnukka et al. (2016) and Winterich et al. (2018), who demonstrated that likability enhances retention and advertisement acceptance. For instance, relatable endorsers—particularly those who share cultural and religious values with the audience—can foster a more profound connection with consumers, ultimately boosting brand loyalty.

Another key takeaway for practitioners is the importance of pre-testing endorsers for congruency and likability within the target audience before launching campaigns. This practice ensures that the selected endorsers align with the values and self-concept of the audience, which is especially valuable for emerging halal brands seeking to establish credibility. Although popular endorsers may provide immediate visibility, overuse of highly recognizable figures across multiple campaigns can risk overexposure, potentially diminishing perceived trustworthiness (Mowen & Brown, 1981). For halal brands, balancing familiarity with perceived exclusivity may yield better long-term results, fostering sustained consumer loyalty.

Lastly, this study underscores the need for authentic religious alignment in halal advertising. Traditional advertising strategies, which sometimes lack religious relevance, may negatively impact consumer loyalty within the halal market. Abdullahi (2023) found that integrating Islamic values authentically within advertising efforts fosters greater trust and positive perceptions among Muslim consumers. This insight is vital for halal brands aiming to engage authentically with audiences in markets where adherence to Islamic principles is essential. Therefore, marketers in the halal industry should avoid generic messaging and instead highlight Islamic alignment in a way that resonates with consumers' religious and cultural values.

Brands operating in Iran—whether local or international—face a unique set of challenges when speaking to Muslim audiences. The findings here are not merely theoretical; they suggest several considerations on the ground. Endorsers need to do more than appear in advertisements—they should feel familiar, honest, and somehow connected to people's values and everyday experiences. It is not only about how famous someone is. Sometimes, using well-known figures repeatedly weakens the message. Sometimes it is worth trying a few different endorsers with the intended audience before committing to a campaign. The ones who quietly reflect shared beliefs—especially Islamic ones—often leave a stronger impression than you would expect. The model developed in this research is not rigid or meant to be copied as is. However, it does give a flexible outline that brands can adjust when thinking through halal advertising, especially in markets shaped by similar religious and cultural forces.

In summary, this study's findings provide both theoretical insights and practical recommendations that can guide halal advertising practices in fostering consumer trust, satisfaction, and loyalty. By understanding the unique dynamics of halal endorsement, marketers can strategically utilize endorsers who not only align with the brand's religious principles but also connect with consumers on a personal level. This focus on congruency, familiarity, trustworthiness, and likability in endorsement contributes to an increasingly nuanced understanding of consumer behavior within the expanding halal market.

6. Limitations and Future Research

This study was conducted with a homogeneous sample of Iranian students, which may limit the generalizability of findings across the broader, diverse Muslim population. Future research should aim to include varied demographic and geographic samples, such as Muslims from Indonesia, Pakistan, and other regions, to capture more diverse consumer insights. It appears that replicating this study

among various segments of Muslim audiences with diverse demographic characteristics—including age, gender, geographical location, job category, cultural factors, race, and ethnicity—could influence the effectiveness of the factors presented in the model. Each of these demographic variables may interact differently with the endorsement elements, such as congruency and likability, depending on audience-specific expectations and preferences. Exploring these factors across diverse segments would provide a more nuanced understanding of how demographic characteristics shape consumer responses to halal-endorsed advertising, further refining the model's applicability across the broader Muslim population. The model developed here may also yield different results across various halal product categories, such as food, finance, or cosmetics, where factors like congruency and trustworthiness might hold varying levels of importance. Examining these variables in distinct product contexts and competitive markets could reveal tailored strategies for halal-endorsed advertising.

Additionally, as this model is novel in the halal advertising context, further refinement could include variables like religiosity levels and ethical considerations. Mixed-methods approaches, combining surveys with qualitative insights, could provide a deeper understanding of consumer perceptions, enabling better alignment with diverse Muslim audiences. Addressing these limitations in future research will expand the understanding of halal endorsement effectiveness and offer actionable insights for Islamic marketing strategies across different consumer segments.

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