

Halal Branding Strategy: The Impact of Halal Labeling and Endorsement

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyse the influence of celebrity endorsement and halal labelling on Wardah cosmetics purchase decisions, with brand image serving as a mediating variable. This research addresses the limitations of previous studies, which generally examined celebrity promotion and halal legitimacy separately, thereby failing to comprehensively explain how both factors shape the purchasing behaviour of Muslim consumers. The novelty of this study lies in integrating promotional attractiveness and halal legitimacy into a unified consumer behaviour model within the context of halal branding and Islamic marketing. This study employed an explanatory quantitative approach involving Wardah consumers in Malang City selected through purposive sampling. Data were analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The findings indicate that celebrity endorsement did not significantly influence purchase decisions, either directly or indirectly through brand image. In contrast, halal labelling demonstrated a strong influence on both purchase decisions and brand image. Brand image also contributed positively to purchase decisions and mediated the relationship between halal labelling and purchasing behaviour. These findings confirm that Muslim consumers' purchasing decisions are driven more by halal credibility than by the attractiveness of celebrity figures. Therefore, halal labelling functions not only as a certification marker but also as a source of trust, brand legitimacy, and competitive differentiation in the halal cosmetics industry.

Keywords: *Celebrity Endorsement, Halal Labelling, Brand Image, Purchase Decision, Halal Cosmetics*

1. Introduction

The global halal industry has seen significant growth, driven by rising awareness of Shariah compliance among Muslim consumers, especially in sectors such as cosmetics. In Islamic consumption, products are chosen not just for economic reasons but also for their compliance with *halalan tayyiban*, accountability, and *maslahah*. Halal cosmetics now symbolise religious identity and ethical responsibility, making them a vital segment in Islamic marketing. Against this backdrop, the present study aims to clarify how halal labelling and celebrity endorsements influence consumer behaviour in the halal cosmetics sector, specifically focusing on their impact on brand image and purchasing decisions in Indonesia.

In predominantly Muslim countries such as Indonesia, halal certification serves not only as a regulatory requirement but also as a religious legitimacy mechanism that provides assurance regarding ingredients, production processes, and adherence to Shariah principles. Previous studies have shown that halal labelling enhances consumer trust by signalling adherence to Islamic values and reinforcing perceptions of product safety, credibility, and quality (Aziz & Chok, 2013; Setiawan et al., 2024; Susanty et al., 2025). In the cosmetics industry, where products are applied directly to the body and are associated with purity and spiritual cleanliness, halal certification is particularly significant. For Muslim consumers, the halal label serves not only as information but also as a signal of religious trust, reinforcing brand alignment with Islamic values and influencing purchasing decisions.

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However, despite a growing body of research on halal labelling, findings regarding its effect on consumer behaviour remain inconsistent. While some studies report a positive effect of halal labelling on consumer attitudes and purchase intentions (Aziz & Chok, 2013). Others find weaker or non-significant results (Setiawan et al., 2024). This inconsistency can be attributed to differences in cultural context, consumer perceptions, and varying levels of understanding of Islamic values. Thus, this study focuses on another critical aspect: how halal labelling strengthens brand image and influences purchasing decisions in the halal cosmetics market, particularly in the rapidly growing Indonesian market.

In addition to halal certification, companies often utilise celebrity endorsements as a marketing strategy to enhance brand appeal and influence consumer perceptions. Traditional marketing literature suggests that celebrity endorsement positively impacts consumer attitudes, brand evaluation, and purchase intentions through source attractiveness, credibility, expertise, and emotional persuasion (Alika et al., 2023; Yusnidar, 2022). However, in the Muslim market, the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement in promoting halal products shows divergent results. Some studies find a positive relationship between celebrity endorsement and purchase behaviour (Hidayat, 2023), while others report weak or non-significant effects (Yenni & Sugiyanto, 2023). These inconsistent findings likely stem from the misalignment between the celebrity's image or the promotional message and Islamic norms or consumer expectations. Therefore, the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements in the halal market may depend on how consumers perceive the fit between the celebrity and Islamic values.

To understand the relationship between halal labelling, celebrity endorsement, and purchase decisions, this study employs the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework. In this framework, halal labelling and celebrity endorsement serve as external stimuli that influence consumers' internal evaluations, as reflected in brand image, which, in turn, affects behavioural responses, such as purchase decisions (Hati et al., 2025; Madiawati & Pradana, 2016). In the context of halal cosmetics, brand image is not only about functional quality but also about ethical perceptions, reliability, and Shariah alignment, which are crucial to Muslim consumers.

Although much research has investigated the individual effects of halal labelling and celebrity endorsement, few studies have integrated both elements into a single comprehensive model. Additionally, while brand image is frequently explored as a predictor of purchase decisions, its mediating role in the halal cosmetics market, particularly in Indonesia, remains underexplored. Furthermore, the theoretical understanding of how external marketing stimuli, such as halal labelling and celebrity endorsement, influence consumer behaviour in the halal market warrants further examination. Therefore, this study specifically aims to: (1) examine the impact of halal labelling and celebrity endorsement on purchasing decisions for halal cosmetic products; (2) assess the mediating role of brand image in these relationships; and (3) contribute to a deeper theoretical understanding of consumer behaviour in the halal cosmetics market in Indonesia.

This research is significant for several reasons. First, it provides a critical synthesis of previous studies on halal labelling and celebrity endorsement, highlighting inconsistencies in prior findings and exploring the mechanisms underlying these effects. Second, it expands the application of the S-O-R framework by integrating both halal certification and celebrity endorsement into a unified model of consumer behaviour in the halal cosmetics sector. Third, it provides empirical insights into the dynamics of brand image as a mediating mechanism linking external marketing stimuli to consumer purchase decisions.

Wardah was selected as the empirical context for this study because it is one of the leading halal cosmetic brands in Indonesia, renowned for its strong Islamic brand image and wide consumer

recognition. Wardah's commitment to Shariah-compliant principles makes it an ideal case for examining the interaction between halal labelling, celebrity endorsement, and brand image. Malang, a city with a predominantly Muslim population and a growing consumer market focused on halal products, provides a relevant setting for investigating the consumption behaviour of halal cosmetics. The combination of Wardah's strong market position and Malang's socio-religious context makes this study highly relevant for understanding consumer behaviour in the halal cosmetics market.

Drawing upon the theoretical framework and the empirical context of halal cosmetic consumption, this study formulates four hypotheses to examine the interrelationships among halal labelling, celebrity endorsement, brand image, and consumer purchase decisions. First, halal labelling is expected to strengthen the brand image of halal cosmetic products by enhancing consumers' perceptions of product credibility, religious compliance, and trustworthiness. Second, celebrity endorsement is presumed to enhance brand image by increasing product visibility, attractiveness, and perceived credibility among consumers. Furthermore, brand image is positioned as a mediating construct that explains how halal labelling and celebrity endorsement influence consumer purchase decisions. Accordingly, the hypotheses proposed in this study are as follows:

H1: Celebrity endorsement has a positive effect on purchase decisions.

H2: Halal labelling has a positive effect on purchase decisions.

H3: Brand image has a positive effect on purchase decision.

H4: Celebrity endorsement has a positive effect on brand image.

H5: Halal labelling has a positive effect on brand image.

H6: Brand image mediates the relationship between celebrity endorsement and purchase decision.

H7: Brand image mediates the relationship between halal labelling and purchase decision.

This study makes several theoretical contributions to the literature on Islamic marketing and halal branding. First, it extends the application of the S-O-R framework by integrating both halal labelling and celebrity endorsement in a comprehensive model of consumer behaviour. Second, it clarifies the role of brand image as a psychological mediator connecting external marketing stimuli to consumer purchase decisions in the halal cosmetics market. Third, it provides empirical evidence on the relative influence of religious legitimacy and celebrity-driven promotions in shaping consumer behaviour in halal-oriented markets.

Practically, this study offers insights for halal cosmetic companies, highlighting the need to align promotions with religious credibility and ethical branding to build consumer trust and sustain brand equity.

2. Methods

Research Design

This study employs an explanatory quantitative research design to examine the causal relationships among celebrity endorsements, halal labels, brand image, and purchasing decisions in the context of halal cosmetics. The explanatory approach is appropriate because the purpose of this study is to test theory-grounded hypotheses and to evaluate the direct and indirect relationships among latent constructs. This design is consistent with previous research in halal marketing and consumer behaviour that investigated mediation mechanisms using survey-based empirical data. This study adopts a cross-sectional survey design, collecting data at a single point in time from consumers of halal cosmetic products. The proposed conceptual model is analysed using Partial

Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM), which is suitable for prediction-oriented research, mediation analysis, and latent variable modelling.

Research Context and Sample

The empirical context of this study is Malang, one of the major education and trade cities in Indonesia, known for its strong exposure to cosmetics retail channels, digital commerce, and a growing Muslim consumer market. Malang was chosen because of its strong socio-religious environment and its relevance as a Muslim-majority urban market where halal consumption behaviour is increasingly evident.

This research focuses on Wardah, one of the leading halal cosmetics brands in Indonesia, known for its strong Islamic brand position and extensive halal marketing strategy. Wardah is a relevant empirical case because the brand explicitly integrates halal certification, Islamic ethical values, and promotional communications in its marketing practices.

The target population in this study consisted of Wardah cosmetic users living in Malang. Since the exact population size is unknown, non-probability sampling is used purposively to ensure that respondents have relevant experience with the study's object. Participants are required to meet the following criteria: (1) reside in Malang City, (2) have purchased and used Wardah cosmetic products at least once in the last six months, and (3) are at least 17 years old.

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Although purposive sampling allows selecting respondents with relevant product experience, using non-probability sampling in a single city may limit the generalizability of the findings to a broader consumer population.

Data Collection Procedure

Key data were collected via a self-administered, structured questionnaire distributed online via Google Forms from December 2025 to February 2026. The online distribution method was chosen to facilitate respondents' access and increase participation among digitally active cosmetic consumers.

Before participating in the survey, respondents were informed of the research's academic objectives and the nature of voluntary participation. Only respondents who agreed to participate completed the questionnaire. To reduce potential response bias, anonymity and confidentiality are guaranteed throughout the data collection process.

All constructs were measured on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree").

Questionnaire Development and Translation Procedure

The questionnaire items were adapted from previously validated scales in the literature to ensure content validity and construct reliability. Some items are contextually modified to reflect the setting of halal cosmetics while still retaining their original conceptual meaning.

Before the main survey, a trial was conducted with 20 respondents from the target population in Malang to evaluate the clarity of the items, word selection, and contextual relevance. Based on respondents' feedback, minor revisions were made to improve comprehension and readability.

The questionnaire was initially prepared in English and then translated into Indonesian using a reverse translation procedure to ensure semantic equivalence between the original and the translation. Two bilingual academics with expertise in Islamic marketing and consumer research independently reviewed the translation process. This approach helps maintain the conceptual consistency of the measurement items between languages.

Ethical Considerations

This research follows the established research ethics standards. Informed consent is obtained from all respondents prior to participating. Participants are informed that their answers will remain anonymous and confidential and will be used only for academic purposes. Respondents also have the right to withdraw from the survey at any stage without being sanctioned.

Ethical approval for this study was given by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the Islamic University of Malang. This research adheres to ethical principles related to voluntary participation, confidentiality, transparency, and participants' privacy.

Measurement of Variables

All constructs in this study were operationalised as reflective latent variables, measured using multi-item scales adapted from the established literature. The following is an Operationalisation Table listing all variables, indicators, and measurement items to improve the transparency and replicability of this research.

Table 1. Operationalization Table

Variable	Indicator	Measurement Item	Reference
Purchase Decision	Product Choice	I choose Wardah products because of its quality and suitability for my needs.	Ganisasmara & Mani (2020)
	Brand Choice	I prefer Wardah to other brands because of its strong brand image.	
	Purchase Timing	I purchase Wardah products when I need them or when there is a promotion.	
	Payment Method	The payment method for purchasing Wardah products is convenient and easy to use.	
Celebrity Endorsement	Authenticity	The celebrity endorsing Wardah appears sincere in promoting the product.	Ilicic & Webster (2015)
	Attractiveness	The celebrity endorsing Wardah is attractive.	
	Expertise	The celebrity endorsing Wardah is knowledgeable about the product.	
	Perceived Success	The celebrity endorsing Wardah has a successful career and influence.	
Halal Labeling	Knowledge of Halal Labels	I know that the halal logo on Wardah products is an official certification.	Juliana et al. (2022)
	Trust in Halal Certification	I trust that the halal certification on Wardah products is valid and reliable.	

Variable	Indicator	Measurement Item	Reference
	Perceived Product Safety	I feel that products labeled as halal, like Wardah, are safe to use.	Ahamat et al. (2018)
	Attention to Halal Logos	I pay attention to the halal logo on Wardah product packaging when deciding to buy.	
Brand Image	Brand Name Recognition	Wardah’s brand name is easy to recognize.	
	Advertising Appeal	I find Wardah’s advertisements appealing and attractive.	
	Perceived Product Quality	I perceive Wardah products as high quality.	
	Price Perception	The price of Wardah products is reasonable for the quality offered.	

Source: Data processed

Data Analysis Technique

The data was analysed using WarpPLS. PLS-SEM was chosen because it is suitable for predictive research, mediation analysis, and modelling complex latent variables, especially when the research objectives place greater emphasis on theory development and prediction rather than on reproducing covariances (Hair et al., 2017). In addition, PLS-SEM is robust enough for relatively small sample sizes and does not require strict multivariate normality assumptions.

The analysis was carried out in two stages. First, the measurement model is evaluated by assessing convergent validity, discriminant validity, and internal consistency reliability. Convergent validity was assessed using loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE), while internal consistency was evaluated using Composite Reliability and Cronbach's alpha. Discriminant validity was tested using the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). Second, the structural model was evaluated by examining path coefficients, coefficients of determination (R^2), effect sizes (f^2), and predictive relevance. Bootstrapping procedures with resampling techniques were employed to test the significance of direct and indirect effects and evaluate the proposed mediation relationships.

To address potential bias in common methods used with self-reported survey data, several procedural and statistical measures are implemented. Procedurally, respondents' anonymity and confidentiality are guaranteed, reducing concerns about evaluations. Statistically, Harman's single-factor test indicated that no single factor accounted for most of the total variance, suggesting that general method bias was not a serious issue in this study.

3. Results and Discussion

Measurement Model Evaluation

The measurement model was assessed to evaluate convergent validity and internal consistency reliability before analysing the structural relationships between the constructs. Convergent validity was assessed using outer loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE), while reliability was evaluated through Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach’s Alpha.

Table 2 presents the results of the measurement model evaluation. As shown, all outer loadings exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating that the indicator reliability is adequate (Solimun et al., 2017). The Composite Reliability (CR) values range from 0.796 to 0.862

and exceed the minimum threshold of 0.70, confirming sufficient internal consistency. Similarly, all Cronbach’s alpha values exceed 0.70, further supporting the reliability of the measurement scales.

Convergent validity is also confirmed, as all AVE values exceed the recommended threshold of 0.50 (Solimun et al., 2017). The Purchase Decision construct exhibits the highest AVE (0.758), followed by Brand Image (0.588), Celebrity Endorsement (0.587), and Halal Labelling (0.567). These findings suggest that each latent construct sufficiently explains the variance in its associated indicators.

Table 2. Measurement Model Evaluation

Construct	Indicator	Outer Loading	Cronbach’s Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	AVE
Celebrity Endorsement	CE1	0.741	0.765	0.809	0.587
	CE2	0.782			
	CE3	0.801			
	CE4	0.739			
Halal Labeling	HL1	0.733	0.742	0.796	0.567
	HL2	0.771			
	HL3	0.759			
	HL4	0.742			
Brand Image	BI1	0.768	0.761	0.810	0.588
	BI2	0.782			
	BI3	0.801			
	BI4	0.734			
Purchase Decision	PD1	0.861	0.839	0.862	0.758
	PD2	0.883			
	PD3	0.847			
	PD4	0.872			

Source: Primary data processed using WarpPLS

Discriminant Validity Assessment

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT), which is considered a robust criterion for evaluating the distinctiveness of constructs in PLS-SEM. Table 3 presents the HTMT values, all of which are below the recommended threshold of 0.90. This indicates that discriminant validity is adequate and each construct is empirically distinct, capturing unique conceptual dimensions within the model.

Table 3. HTMT Discriminant Validity Matrix

Construct	CE	HL	BI	PD
Celebrity Endorsement (CE)	—			
Halal Labeling (HL)	0.521	—		
Brand Image (BI)	0.684	0.741	—	
Purchase Decision (PD)	0.412	0.693	0.588	—

Source: Primary data processed using WarpPLS

Structural Model Assessment

The structural model was assessed by analysing the coefficient of determination (R^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and effect size (f^2). In addition, model fit and multicollinearity diagnostics were evaluated to ensure the appropriateness of the structural model.

Table 4 shows the coefficient of determination (R^2) and predictive relevance (Q^2) values. The model explains 45.2% of the variance in Brand Image and 35.2% of the variance in Purchase Decision. The positive Q^2 values for both endogenous constructs indicate that the model has adequate predictive relevance.

Table 4. Coefficient of Determination and Predictive Relevance

Endogenous Construct	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Q^2
Brand Image	0.452	0.442	0.453
Purchase Decision	0.352	0.334	0.442

Source: Primary data processed using WarpPLS

Table 5 presents the model fit and collinearity assessment indices. All indices meet the recommended thresholds, confirming the model's overall fit. The Average Path Coefficient (APC), Average R-squared (ARS), and Average Adjusted R-squared (AARS) are statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), indicating adequate model fit. Furthermore, the Average Block VIF (AVIF) and Average Full Collinearity VIF (AFVIF) values are well below the maximum recommended threshold of 5.00, confirming that multicollinearity is not an issue.

Table 5. Model Fit and Collinearity Assessment

Index	Value	Recommended Threshold	Interpretation
Average Path Coefficient (APC)	0.283 ($p < 0.001$)	$p < 0.05$	Acceptable
Average R-squared (ARS)	0.402 ($p < 0.001$)	$p < 0.05$	Acceptable
Average Adjusted R-squared (AARS)	0.388 ($p < 0.001$)	$p < 0.05$	Acceptable
Average Block VIF (AVIF)	1.717	≤ 5.00	No multicollinearity
Average Full Collinearity VIF (AFVIF)	1.862	≤ 5.00	No multicollinearity

Source: Primary data processed using WarpPLS

Hypothesis Testing: Direct Effects

Direct relationships between constructs were evaluated by analysing path coefficients (β), t-values, p-values, and effect sizes (f^2). The results are summarised in Table 6 and visualised in Figure 1.

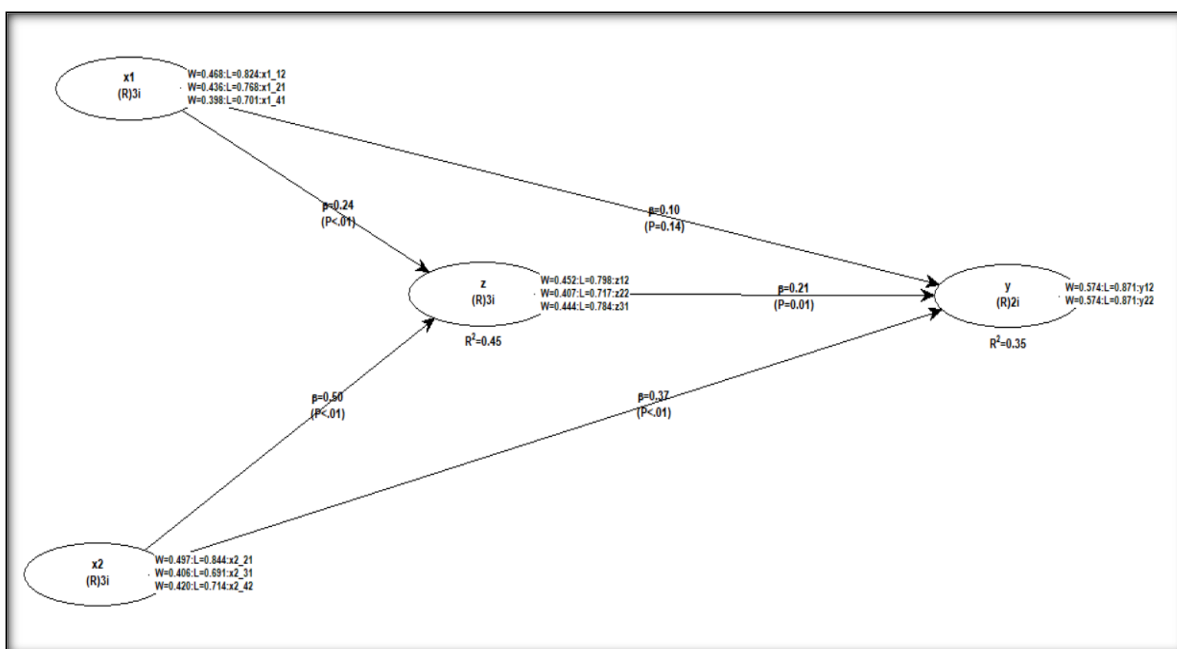


Figure 1. Structural Model

Source: Primary data processed using WarpPLS

Table 5 presents the results of the hypothesis testing for direct effects. Celebrity Endorsement was found to have an insignificant effect on Purchase Decision ($\beta = 0.100$, $p = 0.140$), leading to the rejection of H1. This suggests that celebrity endorsement alone does not directly influence consumer purchase decisions in the halal cosmetics market.

In contrast, Halal Labelling had a significant positive effect on Purchase Decision ($\beta = 0.371$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H2. The effect size ($f^2 = 0.172$) indicates a moderate practical effect.

Brand Image also had a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decision ($\beta = 0.211$, $p = 0.010$), supporting H3, although the effect size is relatively small ($f^2 = 0.064$).

Regarding the factors influencing Brand Image, Celebrity Endorsement had a significant effect ($\beta = 0.238$, $p = 0.004$), supporting H4. Similarly, Halal Labelling showed the strongest structural effect on Brand Image ($\beta = 0.497$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H5. The corresponding effect size ($f^2 = 0.287$) indicates a substantial contribution.

Table 6. Direct Effects Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Structural Path	β	t-value	p-value	f^2	Decision
H1	Celebrity Endorsement → Purchase Decision	0.100	1.476	0.140	0.018	Not Supported
H2	Halal Labeling → Purchase Decision	0.371	4.522	< 0.001	0.172	Supported
H3	Brand Image → Purchase Decision	0.211	2.592	0.010	0.064	Supported
H4	Celebrity Endorsement → Brand Image	0.238	2.915	0.004	0.081	Supported
H5	Halal Labeling → Brand Image	0.497	6.381	< 0.001	0.287	Supported

Source: Primary data processed using WarpPLS

Mediation Analysis

The mediating role of Brand Image was analysed using the bootstrapping method to assess the significance of the indirect effects.

Table 7 shows the results of the mediation analysis. The indirect effect of Celebrity Endorsement on Purchase Decision through Brand Image was not significant ($\beta = 0.050$, $p = 0.224$), so Brand Image does not mediate this relationship.

In contrast, the indirect effect of Halal Labelling on Purchase Decision through Brand Image was marginally significant ($\beta = 0.105$, $p = 0.055$). While the p-value slightly exceeds the conventional significance threshold of 0.05, the effect size and confidence interval suggest a potential partial mediation or a marginal tendency toward mediation, warranting cautious interpretation.

Table 7. Indirect Effects and Mediation Analysis

Indirect Path	β	t-value	p-value	95% Confidence Interval	f^2	Interpretation
Celebrity Endorsement → Brand Image → Purchase Decision	0.050	1.217	0.224	[-0.021, 0.118]	0.021	No mediation
Halal Labeling → Brand Image → Purchase Decision	0.105	1.920	0.055	[-0.002, 0.186]	0.050	Marginal mediation tendency

Source: Primary data processed using WarpPLS

Discussion

Contribution to Islamic Marketing and Halal Branding Literature

This study provides a significant contribution to the field of Islamic marketing and the growing literature on halal branding by empirically examining how symbolic marketing cues and religious legitimacy signals influence Muslim consumer purchase behaviour in the halal cosmetics industry. Specifically, the findings suggest that celebrity endorsement and halal labelling operate through distinct psychological and evaluative mechanisms to shape purchase decisions and brand perceptions. These results have meaningful implications for halal branding strategies and refine the application of the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework in the context of Islamic consumption behaviour.

Differential Effects of Celebrity Endorsement and Halal Labeling

This study's key theoretical finding is that celebrity endorsement does not directly affect purchase decisions, even though it positively impacts brand image. This contradicts much existing celebrity endorsement research, which claims a direct influence on consumer attitudes, purchase intentions, and buying behaviour (Moodley & Tsepou, 2022; Salere et al., 2019). This discrepancy indicates that the effects of celebrity endorsement are highly context-dependent, possibly shaped by consumer value orientations—especially in halal-oriented markets.

Several factors may explain why the influence of celebrity endorsement is weaker in this study. First, contemporary consumers are increasingly exposed to intense influencer marketing and paid promotional content across social media platforms. The saturation of celebrity-driven promotions may gradually reduce their persuasive effectiveness, as perceptions of authenticity decline and scepticism toward commercial endorsements rises. Consumers may view celebrity endorsements as a transactional marketing practice rather than genuine product advocacy, thereby diminishing their effect on actual purchase behaviour. Previous research has also highlighted that

perceived authenticity and credibility are key factors determining the success of celebrity endorsement in digital marketing environments (Audrezet et al., 2018; Lou & Yuan, 2019).

Second, the context of halal cosmetics involves purchase considerations that extend beyond symbolic appeal or aspirational identity formation. Muslim consumers evaluate products not only on functional and aesthetic grounds but also on moral, ethical, and religious considerations. Those with higher religiosity are more likely to prioritise halal assurances, ingredient safety, ethical integrity, and Shariah compliance over celebrity popularity or attractiveness. Thus, celebrity endorsement mainly enhances visibility and brand awareness, reinforcing recognition and positive associations, rather than driving purchase behaviour. Islamic consumption theory highlights that Muslim consumers prioritise ethical and religious values over hedonistic or symbolic desires (Mukhtar & Mohsin Butt, 2012; Wilson & Liu, 2011). This means their purchase decisions are closely linked to moral accountability and religious responsibility. As a result, symbolic persuasion may be insufficient to motivate purchase behaviour when religious legitimacy outweighs promotional appeal.

An additional explanation may lie in the maturity and saturation of competition within the cosmetics industry. Celebrity endorsement has become a standardised marketing strategy, reducing brand differentiation. As consumers encounter similar endorsement across brands, its persuasive value may diminish over time. While celebrity endorsement still helps capture attention and boost visibility, its direct influence on consumer behaviour may weaken in an oversaturated market.

In contrast, halal labelling demonstrated a strong and significant direct effect on both purchase decisions and brand image. This finding reinforces the argument that halal labelling functions not only as an informational cue but also as a signal of religious legitimacy, ethical credibility, and trust in the product. Previous research has consistently emphasised the importance of halal certification in influencing Muslim consumer behaviour (Aziz & Chok, 2013; Setiawan et al., 2024; Susanty et al., 2025). In halal cosmetics, halal labelling reduces perceived uncertainty regarding product suitability, ingredient safety, and adherence to Islamic principles.

Halal labelling, from a signalling-theory perspective, serves as a trusted external signal that reduces information asymmetry regarding the ethical integrity and Shariah compliance of cosmetic products.

These findings suggest that religious legitimacy signals may have a stronger influence on consumer behaviour than symbolic promotional appeals in the context of Islamic consumption. This observation challenges assumptions in conventional endorsement theory, which posits that symbolic appeal always translates into purchase behaviour. In halal-oriented markets, persuasive effectiveness appears to depend more on perceived ethical legitimacy than on symbolic attractiveness.

The Mediating Role of Brand Image in Islamic Consumption

The mediation analysis shows how brand image influences halal consumer behaviour. Celebrity endorsement does not always lead to actual purchases, as its impact on brand image does not always persuade halal consumers to buy. Not all aspects of brand image are equally persuasive in the halal market.

In conventional marketing literature, brand image is often linked to prestige, symbolism, emotional bonds, and social identity

(Keller, 2013). However, this study finds that, in the context of halal consumption, brand image extends beyond aesthetic and symbolic associations. Muslim consumers may judge a brand's image through moral and religious dimensions, such as honesty, ethical responsibility,

trustworthiness, and compliance with Shariah. Therefore, enhancing brand image through celebrity endorsement alone may not sway purchase decisions when religious legitimacy and ethical alignment take precedence over symbolic appeal.

These findings suggest that consumers may distinguish between “commercial appeal” and “ethical credibility” when evaluating halal cosmetic brands. Celebrity endorsement may shape views of modernity, popularity, or visibility. Yet, these associations may not always build enough trust to influence buying in a morally sensitive market. This may explain why brand image did not strongly mediate the link between celebrity endorsement and buying behaviour.

In contrast, the mediation path from halal labelling to purchase decisions via brand image shows that halal certification contributes to the development of positive brand perceptions, which, in turn, influence consumer purchase behaviour. Although this indirect effect should be interpreted cautiously, given its marginal significance, the findings still suggest a meaningful mediation effect. Halal labelling appears to strengthen consumer trust and emotional reassurance by shaping a credible, morally aligned brand image.

Contribution to Islamic Marketing Theory and the S–O–R Framework

This study contributes to the Islamic marketing literature by refining the application of the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework within the context of halal consumption. In this model, celebrity endorsement and halal labelling serve as external stimuli, brand image represents the organism component, and purchase decisions are the behavioural responses generated.

However, the findings suggest that not all external stimuli elicit consumer responses through the same psychological mechanisms. Symbolic stimuli, such as celebrity endorsements, appear to increase consumer awareness and brand recognition but have a relatively weaker transformative effect at the organism level. In contrast, religious legitimacy cues, such as halal labelling, stimulate deeper cognitive, ethical, and moral evaluations that significantly shape brand image and purchase behaviour.

Thus, this study extends the S–O–R framework by proposing that the “organism” dimension in Islamic consumption contexts cannot be interpreted solely as emotional or cognitive reactions. Instead, it also encompasses moral-religious judgment processes rooted in consumers' spiritual beliefs, ethical commitments, and perceptions of Shariah legitimacy. This refinement is theoretically significant because it demonstrates that consumer behaviour in halal markets differs from that in conventional consumption settings, where purchase decisions are often driven primarily by utilitarian or hedonistic motivations.

Managerial Implications for Halal Brands

From a managerial perspective, the findings suggest that halal cosmetic brands should carefully align their marketing communications with the ethical expectations and religious values of Muslim consumers. While celebrity endorsement remains useful for enhancing brand visibility, attracting consumer attention, and reinforcing positive brand associations, companies should avoid relying solely on celebrity endorsements as the primary driver of purchase behaviour, especially in markets where consumers exhibit strong religious orientations and increased scepticism toward commercial influencers.

Instead, halal labelling should be positioned as a core strategic asset in halal branding strategies. Given its significant influence on brand image and purchase decisions, companies should prioritise transparent halal certification processes, credible communication regarding Shariah compliance, and consistent product quality assurances. Integrating halal credentials into brand

storytelling and corporate communication can further strengthen long-term consumer trust and brand equity.

Additionally, halal cosmetic brands should prioritise authenticity and ethical consistency in their promotional strategies. Consumers in halal markets tend to evaluate not only product quality but also the integrity and sincerity of brand communication practices. Therefore, aligning promotional messages with Islamic ethical principles can enhance consumer trust and provide a competitive advantage.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

Although this study makes valuable contributions, there are several limitations. First, the use of purposive sampling within a single geographic region limits the generalisability of the findings to a broader Muslim consumer population. Future research could employ larger, geographically diverse samples to improve external validity.

Second, the cross-sectional design cannot establish causal relationships over time. Longitudinal or experimental approaches could offer better insights into dynamic consumer responses.

Third, this study relies on self-reported survey data, which may be subject to social desirability or common method bias, although procedural measures were taken to mitigate these biases during data collection. Future research could use mixed-methods approaches or behavioural data to strengthen the empirical reliability of the findings.

Finally, this study did not explicitly consider individual-level psychological factors that may moderate halal consumer behaviour. Future studies could investigate the moderating roles of religiosity, halal awareness, perceptions of influencer authenticity, consumer scepticism toward celebrity endorsement, brand trust, and involvement in digital word-of-mouth. These factors may offer further insights into why symbolic marketing cues exhibit varying levels of effectiveness across different Muslim consumer segments.

Future research could also compare halal consumption behaviour across different countries or cultural contexts to investigate whether religious legitimacy cues continue to dominate in more secular or religiously heterogeneous markets. Such comparative research would significantly enrich the development of Islamic marketing theory in a global context.

4. Conclusion

This study investigates the impact of celebrity endorsement and halal labelling on consumer purchase decisions for halal cosmetic products, with brand image serving as a mediating mechanism. PLS-SEM analysis of data from Muslim consumers in Malang reveals that both symbolic marketing cues and religious legitimacy signals influence consumer behaviour through distinct evaluative processes. Halal labelling emerges as the strongest predictor of brand image and purchase decisions, while celebrity endorsement primarily enhances brand visibility and positive brand associations, without exerting a significant direct effect on purchase behaviour. These findings suggest that Muslim consumers prioritise ethical legitimacy, halal assurances, and Shariah compliance over symbolic promotional appeal when evaluating halal cosmetic products.

This research makes several key contributions to the literature on Islamic marketing and halal branding. First, it refines the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework by demonstrating that consumer responses in halal markets involve not only cognitive and emotional reactions but also moral-religious judgment processes. Second, the study challenges conventional assumptions

about celebrity endorsement by showing that symbolic cues do not always translate into purchase behaviour in halal markets. Instead, persuasive effectiveness is driven more by perceptions of ethical legitimacy and religious assurances. Third, it positions halal labelling as a legitimacy-based signal, strengthening consumer trust and influencing brand perceptions and purchase behaviour—beyond its role as a mere regulatory attribute or informational cue.

From a managerial perspective, the findings suggest that halal cosmetic brands should prioritise halal certification as a core component of their branding strategy, emphasising transparent communication regarding halal certification, product safety, and Shariah compliance. While celebrity endorsement can help enhance brand visibility, brands should choose authentic, ethically credible celebrities who align with Islamic values. Combining symbolic promotions with credible halal legitimacy is likely to be a more effective strategy for building long-term consumer trust and driving purchase decisions in halal markets.

This study acknowledges several limitations, including the use of purposive sampling in a single geographic region and a cross-sectional design, which limits the ability to establish causal relationships over time. Future research should consider longitudinal or experimental designs to explore how consumer reactions to halal legitimacy cues and celebrity endorsements evolve in different purchase situations. Additionally, moderating variables such as religiosity, halal awareness, influencer authenticity, and consumer scepticism toward celebrity endorsements should be incorporated in future studies. Comparing halal consumption behaviour across majority-Muslim and minority-Muslim markets could provide valuable insights into the cultural and contextual dynamics of halal consumer behaviour.

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