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The Transformation of Halal Awareness in the Social Media Era: A Netnographic Study of Instagram Content in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Amid Indonesia's ambition to become a global halal hub, this study examines how halal awareness among Indonesian Muslims is transformed in the digital era through Instagram, addressing a gap in prior research that has treated social media's role in this process largely descriptively. Using a qualitative netnographic approach, the study traces interactions, narratives, and digital practices on the @halalcorner account, analyzing four high-engagement posts through the combined lenses of the Theory of Planned Behavior and Uses and Gratifications Theory. The findings show that Instagram functions not only as a communication medium but also as a space for digital da'wah, public education, and halal identity formation, with halal awareness unfolding across four stages — knowledge, attitude, practice, and lifestyle. Educational content, clarification of halal-related controversies, and two-way communication between account administrators and audiences strengthen Muslim consumers' halal literacy, while younger generations, digital communities, and influencers expand the halal value network and accelerate the modern internalization of sharia principles. The study confirms Instagram's significant role in shaping halal awareness amid Indonesia's digital culture, extending TPB and Uses and Gratifications Theory to naturally occurring audience discourse.

ABSTRAK

Di tengah ambisi Indonesia menjadi pusat industri halal dunia, penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana kesadaran halal masyarakat Muslim Indonesia mengalami transformasi di era digital melalui Instagram, mengisi celah penelitian terdahulu yang umumnya masih bersifat deskriptif. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif netnografi, penelitian ini menelusuri interaksi, narasi, dan praktik digital pada akun @halalcorner, dengan menganalisis empat unggahan berinteraksi tinggi melalui Theory of Planned Behavior dan Uses and Gratifications Theory secara bersamaan. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa Instagram tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai media komunikasi, tetapi juga sebagai ruang dakwah digital, edukasi publik, dan pembentukan identitas halal, dengan kesadaran halal yang berkembang melalui empat tahapan: pengetahuan, sikap, praktik, dan gaya hidup. Konten edukatif, klarifikasi isu halal, serta komunikasi dua arah antara admin dan audiens memperkuat literasi halal konsumen Muslim, sementara generasi muda, komunitas digital, dan influencer memperluas jejaring nilai halal dan mempercepat internalisasi prinsip syariah secara modern. Penelitian ini menegaskan peran signifikan Instagram dalam membentuk kesadaran halal di tengah budaya digital Indonesia, sekaligus memperluas penerapan TPB dan Uses and Gratifications Theory pada wacana audiens yang terjadi secara alami.

1. INTRODUCTION

The global halal industry has grown into a strategic sector of the world economy, driven by the increasing size of the global Muslim population and the substantial commercial opportunity it represents (Fathoni et al., 2023). Indonesia, home to the world's largest Muslim population — approximately 240.62 million people, or 13.1% of the global Muslim population — constitutes the single largest potential market for the global halal industry (Khasanah, 2020). This position makes strengthening Indonesian society's halal awareness a matter of strategic importance (Andina et al., 2024). Indonesia recorded halal product exports of USD 41.42 billion (approximately IDR 673.9 trillion) between January and October 2024, with a trade surplus of USD 29.09 billion; the processed food sector was the leading contributor (USD 33.61 billion), followed by Muslim fashion (USD 6.83 billion), pharmaceuticals, and cosmetics, with the United States, China, India, Pakistan, and Malaysia as the largest export destinations (Ministry of Trade of the Republic of Indonesia [Kemendag], 2024).

Understanding public perception of the halal industry is crucial, as social media sentiment analysis is increasingly used to extract public opinion from digital text, and prior research cautions that analyses relying solely on social media opinion without integrating other data sources carry inherent limitations. This suggests that social media functions not merely as a source of public opinion, but as part of a broader digital transformation reshaping the consumption patterns of Muslim communities.

The Industry 5.0 era has intensified digitalization across everyday life, including Muslim consumption behavior. Data from We Are Social's Digital 2024 report indicate that 59.3% of Indonesian internet users shop online weekly, with 34.4% regularly using digital platforms for everyday purchases such as groceries (We Are Social, 2024; DataReportal, 2024). For Muslim consumers specifically, consumption decisions are shaped not only by technology but also by Islamic values such as halal compliance, justice, and sustainability. The Muslim consumer decision journey today typically begins with information search via social media and sharia-based product evaluation, continuing through digital transactions and post-purchase reviews. This shift underscores the growing importance of halal product assurance, positioning halal certification as a central factor in building consumer trust.

Despite this digitally reinforced halal consumption behavior, mandatory halal certification under Law No. 33 of 2014 continues to face implementation challenges. Halal certificate ownership among Indonesian businesses remains low relative to the total number of business actors, a gap attributed in national industry planning documents to high certification costs (Muneeza & Mustapha, 2021), limited business-owner understanding, and complex administrative procedures (Komite Nasional Ekonomi dan Keuangan Syariah [KNEKS], Masterplan Indonesia Halal Industry 2023–2029). In response, the Indonesian government introduced the SIHALAL application as a digital service innovation; however, this platform still faces digital-literacy and data-security barriers that affect user trust and adoption.

In this context, social media plays a strategic role as a public communication space capable of shaping societal halal awareness, functioning simultaneously as a medium of digital da'wah and a vehicle for disseminating Islamic values, as well as a site for identity formation, lifestyle construction, and religious value transmission (Saharani, 2025). Among available platforms, Instagram is particularly popular in Indonesia, with approximately 97.38 million Indonesian users as of October 2022 (Rizaty, 2022). This scale positions Instagram as a potentially powerful platform for advancing societal halal awareness (Maghfiroh et al., 2024), given that halal-related information on the platform is more easily accessible, spreads quickly, and exerts considerable influence on public opinion (Ilham et al., 2023).

Halal awareness itself is not confined to knowledge of a product's halal status; it undergoes a broader transformation encompassing four stages — knowledge, attitude, practice, and lifestyle (Deti, 2025).

Prior research on social media's role in the halal domain has examined several related but distinct angles, none of which fully overlaps with the present study's focus. Khasanah (2020) established, through netnography, the conceptual link between social media and halal socialization, but did not model halal awareness as a staged process moving from knowledge through attitude, practice, and lifestyle, nor did that study apply the Theory of Planned Behavior or Uses and Gratifications Theory to audience comments. Fathoni et al. (2023) and Ilham et al. (2023) each treat halal awareness quantitatively — as a mediating variable in halal food purchasing and as a driver of Gen-Z halal tourism decisions, respectively — which quantifies awareness as an outcome rather than tracing its qualitative, stage-by-stage formation through platform interaction. Deti's (2025) systematic literature review synthesizes existing findings on halal awareness, including the knowledge–attitude–practice–lifestyle framework, but does not generate new primary netnographic data. Maghfiroh et al. (2024) come closest in method, examining Instagram use by a halal-certification institution for brand-awareness building, yet their focus remains on an official certifying body's branding rather than on how audiences themselves undergo awareness transformation through sustained interaction with an independent halal-education community account.

Taken together, existing studies have examined social media's role in halal promotion, digital da'wah, and public-opinion formation largely in descriptive or quantitative-outcome terms. What remains underexamined is the discursive, stage-by-stage process through which halal awareness is transformed via sustained creator–audience interaction on a single platform. In the context of Indonesia's ambition to become a global halal-industry hub, this gap is increasingly consequential. This study addresses it by adopting a qualitative netnographic approach to trace the interactions, narratives, and digital practices that unfold on Instagram, and by jointly applying the Theory of Planned Behavior and Uses and Gratifications Theory to audience comments — demonstrating that Instagram operates not merely as a communication channel but as an active site of halal-awareness transformation among Indonesian society.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Theory of Planned Behavior

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) was developed from the earlier Theory of Reasoned Action by Ajzen (Putra et al., n.d.). TPB is widely used to understand human behavior, including consumption-related decision-making (Dewi et al., 2025). According to Ajzen (1991), an individual's intention to perform an action is shaped by attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (PBC). In the context of Islamic consumer behavior, attitude is reflected in how consumers evaluate a product's halal status and its material and spiritual benefits (Dewi et al., 2025).

Uses and Gratifications Theory

Uses and Gratifications Theory was developed by Elihu Katz, Jay G. Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch. The theory centers on the reception process in communication, emphasizing how individuals actively use media to meet their needs, on the assumption that users select among available media alternatives to gratify specific needs (Karunia H et al., 2021).

Halal Awareness

Khasanah (2020) defines halal awareness as an individual's cognitive perception and response in recognizing, understanding, sensing, and selecting halal products — whether food or beverages — based on halal-related information obtained consciously. Halal awareness can also be understood as the degree of Muslim consumers' understanding of issues related to the halal concept, including knowledge of halal definitions and production processes that conform to Islamic standards (Vergian & Jadmiko Purbo, 2023).

The literature identifies several core indicators of halal awareness: attentiveness to halal raw materials (avoiding pork, blood, and alcohol, and ensuring sharia-compliant slaughter methods); adherence to religious obligation, whereby choosing halal products constitutes part of a Muslim's religious compliance; product cleanliness, covering packaging and presentation according to Islamic standards; halal production processes free of prohibited elements; and awareness of international halal standards, which helps consumers evaluate imported products from non-Muslim countries more selectively (Khasanah, 2020; Triana, 2021).

Halal Knowledge

Product knowledge encompasses consumer understanding of a product's benefits, attributes, purchasing process, and appropriate use so that it functions optimally. Halal knowledge specifically is formed through experience with, and information about, halal products (Simanjuntak & Dewantara, 2014). Wilson and Liu, as cited in Syafitri and Prasetyo (2022), further argue that the halal paradigm is a domain in which cognitive, affective, and conative decision-making processes are shaped by risk-minimization efforts. This paradigm underscores the centrality of halal considerations in Muslim consciousness, such that halal knowledge shapes how consumers evaluate products and form attitudes toward halal awareness.

Halal Certification

A halal certificate is an official recognition of a product's halal status, issued by BPJPH (the Halal Product Assurance Organizing Body) based on a fatwa from the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), as regulated under Article 1, Paragraph 10 of Law No. 33 of 2014 on Halal Product Assurance (Larasati et al., 2023). The certification process involves BPJPH, the Halal Inspection Agency (LPH), and MUI's Fatwa Commission, which determines a product's halal status based on audit results (Fuadi et al., 2022). For consumers, halal certification provides protective assurance against non-halal products alongside psychological reassurance and legal protection; for producers, it strengthens consumer trust, enhances business reputation, and functions as a marketing and network-expansion tool (Ritonga et al., 2025).

Consumer awareness indicators for halal certification include understanding of the halal logo, preference for officially certified products, use of certified raw materials, and awareness of the importance of halal labeling (Triana, 2021). Halal certification also reflects producers' moral responsibility in alignment with sharia values such as honesty, trustworthiness, and transparency (Fuadi et al., 2022), functioning not merely as an administrative requirement but as an expression of ethical and social awareness that protects Muslim consumers from haram or doubtful (syubhat) products while building an integrity-based, sustainable business ecosystem.

Social Media

Social media is a digital platform enabling two-way interaction and information exchange, positioning users not merely as recipients but as content producers who shape public opinion. In halal education, social media effectively conveys information through accessible text, images, and video, while also serving as a digital marketing channel that helps small and medium enterprises (SMEs/UMKM) expand their market reach and build closeness with consumers (Camelia et al., 2024). Social media further functions as an agent of halal socialization, transmitting halal-related values and education, encouraging greater selectivity among Muslim consumers, and strengthening trust in certified halal products. Its impact extends beyond economic gains for SMEs to social and network effects, fostering collaboration among halal communities, certification bodies, and businesses at both national and global levels.

Instagram

Instagram plays a significant role in transforming halal awareness in Indonesia by functioning as a space for education, promotion, socialization, and interaction among certification bodies, businesses, influencers, and the public (Maghfiroh et al., 2024). The platform effectively communicates halal/haram information through interactive features such as comments, Q&A, and Stories, supporting two-way communication — although features such as Live and public discussion remain underutilized, and challenges persist around information detail and verification (Maghfiroh et al., 2024). Instagram is favored over other platforms for its visual character, which showcases halal lifestyles and products aesthetically through photos, carousels, and short videos, and for its high penetration among SMEs and younger generations, the primary segment in halal-awareness formation (Afrianti et al., 2024). Features such as Feed, Reels, Stories, Highlights, hashtags, and influencer collaborations enable certification bodies to deliver consistent, two-way education, supported by long-form captions and carousel content alongside marketing functions that encourage behaviors such as SME certification uptake (Pramonoputri et al., 2024). Hashtag- and Highlight-based discoverability further accelerates public access to halal information (Maulani et al., 2024); and while TikTok excels at rapid engagement, Instagram is regarded as more credible and better suited to serious educational messaging, particularly for younger audiences (Octafia et al., 2024).

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This is a qualitative study focused on understanding the complexity of individuals, groups, and situations through narrative, descriptive, and interpretive data (Neuman, 2014). The study adopts a netnographic approach, following Kozinets' (2010) framework for conducting ethnographic-style research within online communities by directly observing and engaging with the interactions and conversations that form within them.

Data Sources and Sampling

Primary data were obtained through observation of content, comments, hashtags, and user interactions on Instagram accounts addressing halal-related issues, including food and beverage products, fashion, and halal-lifestyle education. Account and content selection followed purposive sampling, based on three criteria: (1) active engagement with halal issues, (2) high audience engagement, and (3) relevance to the Indonesian context. Secondary data were drawn from journal articles, halal-industry reports, and relevant regulations. Data were collected through non-participatory observation — documenting posts, captions, comments, and user interactions over several months in 2025 — focused on the @halalcorner account, from which four high-engagement posts addressing distinct halal issues were selected as units of analysis.

Coding and Analytical Procedure

Data analysis followed a two-cycle thematic coding procedure. In the first cycle, open coding was applied to post captions and audience comments to identify recurring concepts related to halal information-seeking, evaluative statements, and behavioral cues. In the second cycle, axial coding grouped these open codes into the four a priori stages of halal-awareness transformation — knowledge, attitude, practice, and lifestyle — as well as into the theoretical constructs of the Theory of Planned Behavior (attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control) and Uses and Gratifications Theory (informational needs, personal identity, social interaction, entertainment). Coding was conducted manually and cross-checked among the research team to reduce individual interpretive bias,

with disagreements resolved through discussion and re-reading of the original post-comment threads. Analytic memos were kept throughout to document interpretive decisions and maintain an audit trail consistent with qualitative trustworthiness criteria.

Research Ethics

As the data consisted of publicly accessible Instagram posts and comments rather than private communications, this study followed standard netnographic ethical practice: no direct interaction with account holders or commenters occurred (non-participatory observation), and individual commenters are referred to without identifying usernames or personal details in this manuscript. Verbatim comments are quoted only where necessary to preserve the authenticity of audience voice and are presented without attribution to specific individuals.

Research Subject and Object

The subjects of this study are Indonesian Instagram users engaged in interactions, conversations, and practices related to halal issues — whether concerning products, certification, or lifestyle — with the @halalcorner account as the focal research site. The object of the study is the transformation of societal halal awareness in the digital era through social media, specifically Instagram, encompassing the stages of knowledge, attitude, practice, and lifestyle. The data analyzed comprise posts, comments, hashtags, and digital narratives on Instagram related to halal issues, illustrating how social media shapes and transforms halal awareness among Indonesian society.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study examines the role of social media as an agent of halal socialization using the Instagram account @halalcorner as the research site. As of September 2025, @halalcorner had 351,000 followers and a total of 4,119 posts. The account's followers are generally drawn to currently trending issues, prompting @halalcorner to package current news from an Islamic perspective — a strategy that shapes followers' thinking while reinforcing the account's brand identity and appeal.

The account shares a wide range of content responsive to prevailing public discourse — for example, the halal status of specific food products, entertainment trends, product ingredients, and other topical issues — functioning as a public-awareness campaign that highlights critical halal checkpoints in products currently popular with the public.

Based on observation, four posts from the @halalcorner account were selected as units of analysis on the basis of high audience engagement: (1) the "S-Line" viral-trend controversy; (2) halal matcha recommendations; (3) pig-skin lining in footwear; and (4) FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) around socializing at non-halal cafés. These posts are thematically interconnected and trending, as reflected in cross-referencing patterns observed in their comment sections.

Table 1. Cross-Case Summary

Post / Issue	Engagement	Dominant KAPL Stage	TPB Construct(s)	UGT Construct(s)
S-Line trend	6,419 likes / 125 comments	Attitude	Attitude toward the behavior; perceived behavioral control	Personal identity; entertainment
Halal matcha recommendation	4,556 likes / 59 comments	Knowledge	Perceived behavioral control	Informational needs; social interaction; entertainment
Pig-skin shoe lining	High engagement (exact figures not tracked)	Attitude → Practice	Subjective norms; perceived behavioral control	Informational needs
FOMO at non-halal cafés	23,300 likes / 321 comments	Practice → Lifestyle	Attitude toward the behavior; perceived behavioral control	Personal identity; social interaction

Case 1: The "S-Line" Viral Trend

Figure 1. "S-Line" trend post on @halalcorner

This post received 6,419 likes and 125 comments. The analysis of @halalcorner's post on the "S-Line" trend shows social media functioning as both an educational space and a channel for digital da'wah. The caption — "MUSLIM ITU BUKAN FOMO DRAKOR, TAPI FOMO IKUT MENJAGA YANG HALAL💪🏻" ["A Muslim isn't FOMO about Korean dramas, but FOMO about upholding what is halal"] — delivers a normative call for Muslims to more enthusiastically embrace halal-preserving trends, framing jokes about zina (illicit sexual conduct) as incompatible with Islamic principles and urging the Muslim community to safeguard modesty and conduct.

Audience responses in the comments section also reflected a transformation in halal awareness. One comment read: "Ada yang berdalih 'kan cuman jokes'. atau 'seru2an doang', atau semacamnya.. Yg ngingetin begini dikatain 'gak open minded' loh:)" ["Some people excuse it as 'just jokes' or 'just for fun' or similar... yet those who point this out get called 'not open-minded'"]. This comment illustrates a tension between religious values and a more permissive cultural climate, though other commenters affirmed positive attitudes toward halal values. Within the TPB framework, this exchange illustrates how attitudinal positioning can motivate Muslim consumers to reject content inconsistent with sharia.

A further comment took a firm stance against excessive engagement with entertainment trends: "begitulah kaum fomo, tontonlah drakor sbg hiburan aja gausah ikut2an budayanya..." ["that's how the FOMO crowd is — just watch Korean dramas for entertainment, no need to adopt the culture that comes with it"]. This reflects Muslim consumers' awareness of setting boundaries against external cultural influence, retaining only the entertainment value while rejecting elements at odds with Islam — consistent with the TPB construct of perceived behavioral control, wherein consumers judge themselves capable of regulating their behavior in line with halal values.

This analysis shows that Instagram functions not merely as an entertainment medium but as a site where halal-awareness transformation is actively negotiated. Halal values are produced, debated, and reaffirmed through digital interaction between creators and audiences, reinforcing halal lifestyle practices among Indonesian Muslim communities. It is worth noting, however, that the comment section also documents open resistance to the account's normative framing (the "not open-minded" pushback) — indicating that audience reception is contested rather than uniformly affirming, a pattern that recurs, to varying degrees, across the other cases below.

Case 2: Halal Matcha Recommendation

Figure 2. Halal matcha recommendation post on @halalcorner

This post received 4,556 likes and 59 comments, indicating substantial audience attention to halal-themed content. The post addresses halal matcha recommendations, emphasizing that both matcha and coffee are inherently halal provided no haram additives are introduced, while noting that matcha has a more stable caffeine profile than coffee. Through this simple yet relevant framing, the post serves a dual function: halal education and digital da'wah adapted to youth-oriented communication styles.

Audience responses in the comments were varied. Some offered supportive engagement by sharing favorite matcha recommendations, while others raised critical questions, such as: "Adakah titik kritis minuman/bubuk matcha?" ["Are there any halal-critical points in matcha drinks/powder?"]. Notably, this critical comment received a direct response from the @halalcorner administrator: "kalau daun teh hijau sudah diekstraksi melalui proses pengolahan dan ada tambahan bahan lain, itu yang harus diperhatikan kehalalannya." ["If the green tea leaves have been extracted through a processing method and other ingredients are added, that is what needs to be checked for halal compliance."]. This exchange demonstrates that social media functions not merely as a one-way information channel but as an interactive forum that strengthens halal literacy. The question-and-answer process illustrates how halal-knowledge authority is constructed through digital communication, plausibly increasing audience perceived behavioral control as they gain confidence in identifying halal-critical points after receiving clarification from a credible source.

This post aligns with Uses and Gratifications Theory across several dimensions: informational needs, by providing practical knowledge about halal beverages; personal identity, by reinforcing the identity of halal-conscious Muslim consumers; integration and social interaction, evident in audience members sharing experiences and recommendations in the comments; and entertainment, through the post's casual, youth-oriented tone. Instagram here functions simultaneously as an entertainment medium and a vehicle that strengthens halal literacy and shapes halal lifestyle practices among Muslim communities in the digital era.

Case 3: Pig-Skin Lining in Footwear

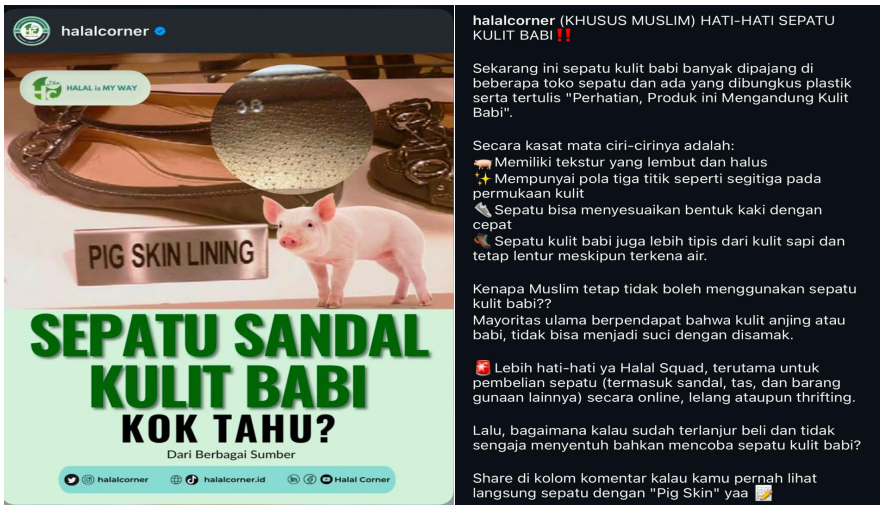

Figure 3. Pig-skin lining footwear post on @halalcorner

@halalcorner's content addressing pig-skin lining in shoes and sandals also drew substantial audience engagement and functions as both an educational and digital da'wah medium, providing information on identifying non-halal product characteristics and affirming the sharia ruling that pig skin cannot be rendered pure (suci) even through tanning. This information shapes Muslim consumers' attitudes toward greater selectivity in fashion product choices, as they become aware of the religious and ethical consequences of using haram materials. Audience responses reflected an emerging dynamic of halal awareness, with commenters expressing gratitude for the added knowledge and vigilance the content provided — evidence of a positive attitudinal shift toward avoiding haram products.

Within the Theory of Planned Behavior, this relates to subjective norms — the social influence shaping acceptance of halal-education content — and to perceived behavioral control, as consumers gain confidence in their ability to identify and avoid non-halal products after understanding the characteristics of pig-derived leather. The post thus does more than inform: it empowers Muslim consumers to act in accordance with sharia values, reinforcing halal-awareness transformation in the digital sphere as interaction on social media drives value internalization, debate, and the shaping of halal consumption behavior.

Case 4: FOMO Around Non-Halal Café Socializing

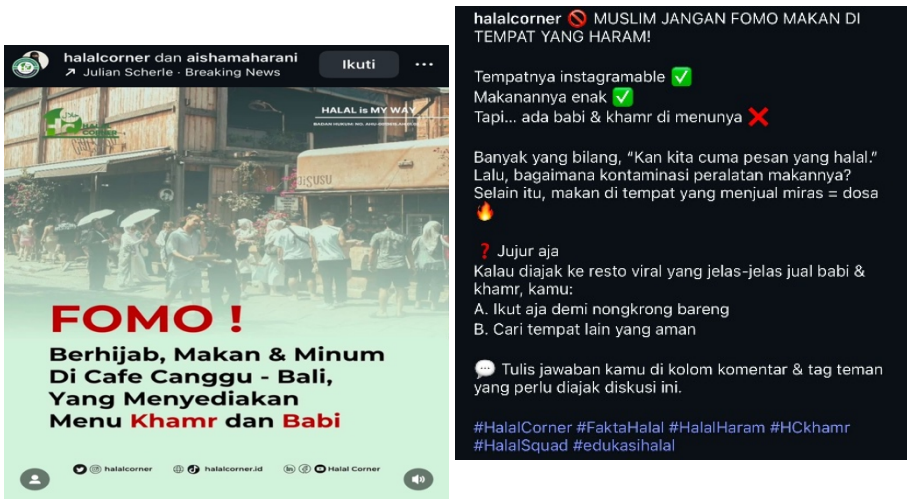

Figure 4. FOMO non-halal café post on @halalcorner

This post received 23,300 likes and 321 comments on the @halalcorner Instagram account. The post addresses the phenomenon of FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) around socializing at cafés serving pork-based menu items and

alcoholic beverages, functioning as both an educational tool and a form of digital da'wah. Through visual messaging emphasizing "Muslim jangan FOMO makan di tempat haram" ["Muslims shouldn't FOMO about eating at haram venues"], the account reminds audiences that lifestyle trends should not displace the halal–haram principle in Islam. In its caption, @halalcorner reframes FOMO itself — typically understood as fear of missing out on entertainment trends — as, instead, a motivation to avoid "missing out" on maintaining a halal life.

Audience responses likewise reflected the dynamics of halal awareness. One comment read: "Pernah direkomendasiin cafe ini oleh teman, tp lihat menunya ga jadi deh. Memang sbg Muslim/ah kudu pinter2 mengelola dirimu yg namanya penasaran jangan selalu dituruti. Cukupkan hati dgn yg hala sebisa mungkin" ["A friend once recommended this café to me, but after seeing the menu I decided against it. As Muslims, we really need to manage our curiosity wisely and not always give in to it. Try to be content with what is halal as much as possible"], underscoring the importance of self-regulation against the pull of viral cafés. This comment represents a concrete form of resistance to FOMO through deliberate self-management of curiosity — theoretically reflecting a positive attitude toward halal values, self-efficacy, and resistance to social pressure. It reinforces the broader pattern that @halalcorner's content encourages audiences not merely to know about halal principles but to internalize and practice them in daily life.

Across all four cases, content from @halalcorner traces halal-awareness transformation through four stages: knowledge, attitude, practice, and lifestyle. The account's content conveys information about halal products and religious issues while also functioning as digital da'wah that shapes consumption behavior and halal lifestyle practices. Interaction between creators and audiences in the comments constitutes a two-way educational process that strengthens halal literacy, heightens sensitivity to sharia values, and encourages decision-making more consistent with Islamic principles.

Analysis through the Theory of Planned Behavior shows that halal-educational content can shape positive attitudes toward halal values, construct subjective norms through social influence, and reinforce perceived behavioral control. Through Uses and Gratifications Theory, audiences actively use Instagram content to meet informational needs, reinforce personal identity, build social interaction, and access religiously inflected entertainment. Instagram thus functions not only as a communication tool but as a cultural space for the modern internalization of halal values — one in which audiences, particularly younger generations, are not merely message recipients but active participants in expanding the halal value network and shaping halal lifestyles amid global digital culture.

At the same time, the comment sections analyzed here also contain dissenting or resistant voices (e.g., the "not open-minded" pushback in Case 1), indicating that audience reception of halal-education content on Instagram is not uniform. Future analyses with larger comment samples could usefully quantify the relative proportion of supportive, neutral, and resistant responses to characterize this contestation more precisely.

5. CONCLUSION

This study shows that social media — specifically Instagram, through the @halalcorner account — plays an important role in transforming halal awareness among Indonesian society in the digital era. This transformation is evident across changing stages of halal awareness: knowledge, attitude, practice, and lifestyle. The content shared by @halalcorner does more than convey information about halal products and religious issues; it functions as a digital da'wah tool that shapes halal-consistent consumption behavior and lifestyle practices. Through interaction between creators and audiences in the comments section, a two-way educational process unfolds that strengthens halal literacy, increases sensitivity to sharia values, and encourages decision-making more aligned with Islamic principles.

Analysis through the Theory of Planned Behavior shows that halal-educational content can shape positive attitudes toward halal values, construct subjective norms through social influence, and reinforce perceived behavioral control. Analysis through Uses and Gratifications Theory shows that audiences actively use Instagram content to meet informational needs, reinforce personal identity, build social interaction, and access religiously inflected entertainment. Instagram thus functions as both a communication tool and a cultural space for the internalization of halal values in a modern form. Through narrative, discussion, and digital participation, Indonesian society — particularly younger generations — acts not merely as a recipient of messages but as an active participant in expanding the halal value network and shaping halal lifestyles amid the currents of global digital culture.

Research Implications

This study extends the application of the Theory of Planned Behavior and Uses and Gratifications Theory from their conventional survey-based use to a netnographic, comment-level analysis of naturally occurring audience discourse. This contributes a qualitative complement to the largely quantitative halal-awareness literature (cf. Fathoni et al., 2023; Ilham et al., 2023) by showing how TPB constructs and UGT motivations manifest in authentic, unprompted audience language rather than in responses to structured survey items.

For halal-focused content creators, certification bodies, and SME brand accounts, the findings suggest that content combining concrete, checkable halal information (e.g., specific processing steps that determine halal status) with direct administrator responses to audience questions is particularly effective at building perceived behavioral control — audiences' confidence in their own ability to identify halal-critical points. This suggests a replicable content strategy: pairing educational posts with active, credible moderation of the comments section, rather than one-way informational posting alone.

Given that Indonesia's halal-certification rate among businesses remains comparatively low and that digital certification services continue to face digital-literacy barriers, the findings suggest that public-facing, community-run halal-education accounts such as @halalcorner may complement formal certification-outreach efforts by BPJPH and the Ministry of Trade. Policymakers could consider partnering with, or drawing lessons from, high-engagement halal-education accounts when designing digital literacy campaigns aimed at SME halal-certification uptake.

The findings point to Instagram's role in strengthening halal literacy and Muslim identity among Indonesian audiences, particularly younger users. At the same time, the presence of resistant commentary (Case 1) suggests that such content can also surface social friction between religious norms and permissive cultural trends. This dual dynamic — reinforcement of halal identity alongside visible normative contestation — is itself a socially relevant finding, suggesting that digital da'wah content functions as a site of ongoing negotiation rather than one-directional persuasion.

Limitations and Future Research

This study is based on four posts from a single Instagram account, which limits the generalizability of findings to the broader landscape of halal-themed content on Instagram or other platforms. Future research could apply the same KAPL/TPB/UGT framework across multiple accounts and platforms (e.g., TikTok, YouTube Shorts) for comparative analysis. The analysis is qualitative and interpretive; it does not quantify the proportion of supportive versus resistant audience responses. Future work could combine netnographic coding with computational content analysis (e.g., sentiment analysis) to complement the interpretive account presented here.

As a netnographic study relying on publicly available data, the research cannot verify the demographic characteristics or religious background of individual commenters, which limits claims about which audience segments are most affected by the observed awareness transformation.

Future studies could also examine the durability of the attitude and practice changes suggested by audience comments — for instance, through longitudinal tracking of the same commenters' subsequent posts or purchasing behavior, going beyond the single-point-in-time snapshot offered by comment-section analysis.

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