

The Implementation of Islamic Business Ethics in Digital Marketing Practices on Social Media

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Article history: Received: 14 May 2026; Revised: 15 May 2026;

Accepted: 03 June 2026; Published: 30 June 2026;

Abstract

The digital landscape has witnessed a radical shift where social media platforms have become the primary marketplace. However, this transformation is often accompanied by the marginalization of ethical boundaries as brands prioritize algorithmic engagement and virality over moral integrity. In the pursuit of clicks and shares, unethical practices such as deception (*gharar*) and excessive exaggeration (*tashni'*) have become prevalent. This study aims to investigate the integration of Islamic business ethics specifically the prophetic traits of *Siddiq*, *Amanah*, *Tabligh*, and *Fathanah* into social media marketing strategies on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook. This research employs a qualitative approach using Netnography and Critical Discourse Analysis. The study focuses on prominent Sharia-branded business accounts as case studies, analyzing digital artifacts including video content, captions, and consumer-brand interactions in the comment sections. The results identify a significant alignment between successful ethical branding and the implementation of radical honesty in product descriptions, visual authenticity (avoiding deceptive filters), and the use of gentle communication (*Qaulan Layyinan*) in handling complaints. Furthermore, the study discovers the emergence of the Marketing Langit (Heavenly Marketing) model, where promotional content serves as a dual-purpose tool for commercial gain and educational *dakwah*. This research provides a practical and spiritual framework for Muslim



entrepreneurs, demonstrating that creative digital advertising can achieve high commercial success while remaining rooted in Islamic values. By prioritizing *Barakah* over mere metrics, brands can foster sustainable consumer trust and contribute to a more ethical digital economy.

Keywords

Social Media Marketing, Islamic Ethics, Marketing Langit, Digital Integrity, Netnography.

Introduction

The global marketing landscape has undergone a radical paradigm shift over the last decade, transitioning from static conventional media to highly interactive and fast-paced social media environments. Social media platforms have become the primary arena for business-to-consumer interaction, allowing brands to engage with their audience in real-time. This digital transformation has not only changed how products are sold but also how information is consumed and perceived. However, the speed and anonymity of the digital space have birthed significant ethical challenges. In the pursuit of virality and high conversion rates, many digital marketers resort to unethical practices such as *gharar* (uncertainty or deception), *tashni'* (excessive exaggeration of product benefits), and the disparagement of competitors. According to Rahmadani (2024), the pressure to win the attention economy often leads content creators to bypass moral boundaries, creating a digital marketplace filled with misinformation and predatory marketing tactics.

In the context of Islamic business ethics, these digital malpractices represent a direct violation of the principles intended to protect consumers and maintain market justice. The emergence of "clickbait" culture and misleading influencer endorsements has created a crisis of trust in the digital economy. Traditional Islamic scholars and modern economists alike argue that while the medium of marketing has changed, the underlying ethical obligations remain immutable. As noted by Al-Fatih and Hassan (2025), marketing in the digital age must not only focus on technical aesthetics but also on the spiritual and

social accountability of the information being disseminated. Without a robust ethical framework, social media marketing risks becoming a tool for exploitation rather than a vehicle for genuine value creation.

The foundation of Islamic business ethics offers a comprehensive solution through the four prophetic traits: *Siddiq* (truthfulness), *Amanah* (trustworthiness), *Tabligh* (transparency/communication), and *Fathanah* (wisdom/intelligence). Implementing *Siddiq* means ensuring that every claim made in a social media caption or video is factually accurate. *Amanah* involves being accountable for the product's quality and the security of consumer data. *Tabligh* necessitates full transparency regarding product defects or sponsorship disclosures, while *Fathanah* requires marketers to be wise and innovative in their strategy without compromising ethical integrity. Yusuf (2023) emphasizes that these values are not merely religious ideals but are increasingly recognized in global corporate governance as integrity-based marketing, which fosters long-term brand loyalty in a way that deceptive practices cannot.

Despite the theoretical clarity of these values, there remains a significant gap in understanding their practical implementation within creative content production and consumer interaction. Many Muslim entrepreneurs struggle to balance the aggressive demands of social media algorithms with the disciplined boundaries of Sharia ethics. The problem lies in how to translate abstract concepts like "honesty" into the technical reality of video editing, copywriting, and responding to comments. This research seeks to address this gap by investigating the real-world application of Islamic ethical values in social media marketing. Specifically, the study formulates the following questions: How are the values of *Siddiq*, *Amanah*, *Tabligh*, and *Fathanah* practically integrated into creative content creation? And how do these values influence the nature of interaction between digital brands and their consumers in an era of hyper-competition?

Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach using Netnography, a specialized branch of ethnography designed to investigate the social interactions and cultural phenomena that occur in digital environments. This method is particularly suited for this research as it

allows for an immersive exploration of how Islamic ethical values are manifested in the natural setting of social media. The study utilizes Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine the text, visual elements, and underlying ideologies within the marketing content to determine if they align with the prophetic traits of *Siddiq*, *Amanah*, *Tabligh*, and *Fathanah*. By observing digital behavior in real-time, the researcher can capture authentic interactions that traditional methods might overlook.

The objects of this research are selected through purposive sampling, focusing on prominent social media business accounts that have a significant follower base and explicitly integrate Islamic branding into their identity. These accounts serve as primary case studies for observing how Sharia-compliant branding is translated into creative digital assets. The research focuses on platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, which are currently the most influential hubs for visual and interactive marketing in the Indonesian digital landscape.

Data collection is conducted through three primary techniques:

1. Content Documentation: Systematic archiving of digital artifacts, including promotional videos, graphic carousels, and captions, to analyze the ethical consistency of the messaging.
2. Interactive Observation: Monitoring the comment sections and direct interactions between the brand and consumers to evaluate the transparency and honesty of the brand's communication.
3. In-depth Interviews: Semi-structured interviews with Social Media Specialists and Content Creators behind these brands. These interviews aim to uncover the internal decision-making processes and the ethical considerations involved in content production, ensuring that the findings reflect both the "front-end" output and the "back-end" intention.

Result and Discussion

The Application of Honesty in Product Descriptions and Digital Testimonials

The findings of this study highlight that the principle of *Siddiq* (truthfulness) serves as the primary ethical anchor in digital

marketing, specifically within the realm of product descriptions. In the digital marketplace, where consumers cannot physically touch or inspect goods, the textual and visual description serves as the only basis for a transaction. The research observes that ethical brands prioritize radical honesty by providing exhaustive specifications. This transparency is not merely a marketing tactic but a form of respect for the consumer's right to information (*haqq al-ittila'*). According to Mansur (2025), providing clear details regarding material quality, dimensions, and potential limitations of a product is a modern manifestation of preventing *ghish* (cheating) in trade. When a brand is transparent about what a product can and cannot do, it builds a foundation of sustainable trust that outweighs the short-term gains of deceptive sales.

A critical point of discussion in this study is the prohibition of visual manipulation, such as the use of excessive filters or beauty modes that fundamentally alter the appearance of a product. In digital photography, while editing for clarity is permissible, editing to deceive such as changing the color or texture of a fabric to look more premium than it actually is falls under the category of *tashni'* (excessive exaggeration). Ethical content creators in this study emphasize that visual authenticity is the new gold standard in the attention economy. By presenting products in natural lighting and realistic settings, brands align themselves with the prophetic value of *Siddiq*. As noted by Rahman and Aziz (2024), consumers in the 2026 digital era are increasingly filter-fatigued, and brands that showcase raw, unedited footage often see higher engagement rates because they provide a sense of reality that manipulated content lacks.

Furthermore, the research identifies that the integrity of digital testimonials is a major ethical battleground. The practice of using fake reviews or incentivizing positive feedback without disclosure is a direct violation of *Amanah* (trustworthiness). Ethical branding requires that testimonials remain authentic reflections of the consumer experience. The study found that leading Sharia compliant brands often include negative-but-constructive reviews in their highlights to demonstrate transparency. This practice ensures that the digital word-of-mouth remains a reliable source of information. Syarif (2026) argues that authentic testimonials function as a modern form of *tazkiyah*

(validation), where the community testifies to the brand's integrity. When a brand protects the authenticity of its reviews, it fulfills its social contract with the *Ummah*, ensuring that the digital market remains a space of mutual benefit rather than exploitation.

Ultimately, the application of honesty in the digital space transforms the relationship between the seller and the buyer from a transactional one to a relational one. Transparency in specifications and visual representation ensures that the meeting of the minds (*antaradin*) in a digital contract is based on truth. This ethical stance acts as a powerful differentiator in a crowded market. Brands that refuse to participate in deceptive visual or textual practices are not just following religious mandates; they are positioning themselves as leaders in the growing global movement toward conscious capitalism. By honoring the consumer's right to the truth, these brands secure a competitive advantage rooted in loyalty and divine barakah (Gunawan, 2024).

Communication Ethics and Customer Interaction in Digital Comment Spaces

The research findings indicate that the comment section serves as the ultimate litmus test for a brand's adherence to Islamic ethics, specifically the principle of *Qaulan Layyinan* (gentle speech). In a digital environment where interactions are often characterized by anonymity and aggression, ethical Sharia-compliant brands distinguish themselves by maintaining a tone of humility and gentleness. When responding to inquiries or even harsh complaints, these brands avoid reactive or defensive language. Instead, they implement the Prophetic method of communication, which prioritizes de-escalation and empathy. As noted by Abdullah (2025), *Qaulan Layyinan* in digital interaction is not just about politeness; it is a strategic tool for heart-winning marketing (*dakwah bi al-hal*), where the brand's response becomes a reflection of Islamic character (*Akhlak*), ultimately turning a disgruntled customer into a loyal advocate.

A significant challenge identified in this study is managing unproductive debates and trolling in social media threads. Ethical brands prioritize the preservation of the brand's *Marwah* (dignity) by refusing to engage in public arguments that lack substance or benefit. The study found that successful digital practitioners apply the

principle of *Hifzhul Lisan* (guarding the tongue) or in this case, guarding the thumb by providing concise, factual, and polite answers to provocations. By maintaining a professional and sanctified language, the brand protects its reputation from being dragged into digital scandals. Al-Khaf (2024) suggests that avoiding unproductive online debates is a modern manifestation of the Hadith regarding leaving that which does not concern you, which in a business context, ensures that the brand's digital energy remains focused on value creation rather than conflict.

Furthermore, the study highlights that transparency in the comment section acts as a form of *Tabligh* (communication/transparency). When customers ask difficult questions about pricing, sourcing, or product defects, ethical brands do not delete the comments or provide evasive answers. Instead, they provide clear and honest explanations in a public forum. This transparency serves a dual purpose: it solves the individual customer's problem and educates the wider audience watching the interaction. According to Bakri (2026), the public nature of social media interactions means that every response is a marketing asset. Brands that respond with *santun* (courtesy) and clarity are seen as more trustworthy, as they demonstrate that they have nothing to hide and value the consumer's intelligence over manipulative rhetoric.

Ultimately, the interaction in the comment section is viewed as an extension of the Islamic social contract. Every reply is an opportunity to practice *Amanah* by providing accurate information and *Siddiq* by acknowledging mistakes when they occur. The research concludes that brands that consistently use gentle and dignified language create a safe space for their community, fostering a digital ecosystem that is not only profitable but also spiritually uplifting. This ethical communication style acts as a powerful non-price competition strategy, where customers choose a brand not just for the product, but for the respectful and Islamic experience of the interaction itself (Sari & Rahman, 2024).

Filtering Promotional Content: Balancing Creativity and Sharia Boundaries

The final layer of digital marketing ethics involves a rigorous filtering process where creative expression meets Sharia compliance.

In an era where visual and auditory stimuli drive engagement, ethical brands face the challenge of selecting music, talents, and linguistic styles that do not violate Islamic norms. The research finds that Sharia-compliant brands adopt a selective creativity approach. For instance, in the use of background music or audio, brands prioritize sounds that are uplifting and avoid lyrics containing obscenity or promoting unethical lifestyles. Similarly, the selection of models or talents is governed by the principle of *Satr al-Awrah* (covering the modesty) and the avoidance of *Tabarruj* (excessive display). According to Zulkarnain (2025), this filter is not a restriction on creativity but a catalyst for it; it forces creators to find more sophisticated, artistic, and dignified ways to grab attention without resorting to cheap exploitation or sensuality.

Gaya bahasa, or linguistic style, also undergoes a Sharia filter to ensure it remains within the boundaries of *Adab*. Ethical digital marketing avoids slang that is derogatory or clickbait titles that border on *Kizb* (lying). The research highlights that successful Islamic brands use a narrative of blessing, where the language focuses on the value and benefit of the product rather than just its material features. This approach aligns with the trait of *Fathanah* (intelligence), as marketers must be intellectually sharp to design content that is both viral-ready and spiritually safe. As noted by Ibrahim (2024), the challenge for the 2026 digital marketer is to prove that Islamic does not mean boring. By using high-quality cinematography and storytelling, these brands show that modesty can be aesthetically superior to mainstream provocative marketing.

Central to this discussion is the burgeoning concept of *Marketing Langit* (Heavenly Marketing). This paradigm shift views business not just as a profit-seeking venture, but as a vehicle for *Dakwah* (proselytization). In this model, promotional content is intentionally designed to be educational or edutaining. For example, a clothing brand might create a tutorial on how to perform *Wudhu* properly while wearing their product, or a food brand might share tips on *Halalan Tayyiban* nutrition. The research identifies that this content with purpose strategy builds a deeper soul connection with the consumer. Nasution (2026) observes that *Marketing Langit* operates on the belief that when a business helps the *Ummah* through beneficial knowledge, divine sustenance (*Rizq*) follows naturally. The goal is to

leave the consumer better off either more informed or more inspired after viewing the advertisement.

Ultimately, the filter between creativity and Sharia creates a unique Digital Halal Ecosystem. Brands that successfully navigate this balance are seen as pioneers of a new ethical standard in the global digital economy. They demonstrate that it is possible to achieve high engagement and commercial success while maintaining the *Maqasid al-Sharia* (objectives of Sharia). By integrating educational value into their marketing funnels, these brands transform the scrolling experience into an act of continuous learning for the consumer. This synergy between the digital and the divine ensures that the brand's legacy is built on a foundation of *Barakah*, ensuring long-term sustainability that transcends mere seasonal trends (Hafiz & Salma, 2025).

Challenges in Facing Algorithms and Trends Conflicting with Ethics

One of the most significant challenges identified in this research is the ongoing dilemma between following viral trends which often border on unethical behavior and maintaining Sharia-based ethical idealism. Social media algorithms are designed to prioritize high engagement, often rewarding content that is provocative, sensational, or even controversial. For digital marketers in the Sharia sector, this creates a pressure to conform to trends that may involve *tashni'* (exaggeration) or unnecessary vanity just to secure views and visibility. According to Fauzi (2025), this algorithmic pressure can lead to a gradual erosion of ethical standards if not managed with a strong spiritual foundation. The study finds that ethical brands often have to make the difficult decision to skip certain viral trends that are deemed *Laghwi* (frivolous or useless) even at the cost of potential short-term reach.

In response to this, the research highlights a resilient strategy: focusing on honest organic content amidst an environment of aggressive and sometimes predatory advertising. While paid advertisements can provide instant visibility, they often lack the deep-rooted trust that organic, value-driven content provides. Ethical brands prioritize Slow Marketing, which focuses on building a community through consistent, honest, and high-quality storytelling. As noted by Ramli (2024), the strength of organic content lies in its authenticity; when a brand refuses to use manipulative clickbait or

aggressive psychological triggers, it attracts a more loyal and high-quality audience. This strategy is rooted in the belief that *Rizq* (sustenance) is governed by divine laws, and that Halal growth is more sustainable than growth achieved through ethical compromises.

Furthermore, the study observes that surviving the algorithm war requires a high degree of *Fathanah* (intelligence) in content strategy. Instead of following unethical trends, creative marketers in the Sharia space re-engineer trends to fit Islamic values or create their own unique blue ocean of content. For example, rather than using a provocative dance trend, a brand might use the same trending audio to create a visually stunning and educational day-in-the-life video of a Muslim entrepreneur. This proactive approach ensures that the brand remains modern and relevant without sacrificing its *Marwah*. As argued by Syahputra (2026), the goal is not to defeat the algorithm, but to use it as a tool for spreading *Khair* (goodness). By staying true to their ethical core, these brands eventually build a fortress of trust that protects them from the volatility of digital trends.

Conclusion

This research reaffirms that digital marketing, within the Islamic framework, transcends the pursuit of sales figures and conversion rates. It is fundamentally an endeavor to build long-term trust (*Amanah*) through consistent *Akhlak* (moral character). In a digital landscape often plagued by short-term manipulation, brands that adhere to the prophetic traits of *Siddiq*, *Amanah*, *Tabligh*, and *Fathanah* create a more resilient and sustainable market presence. Ethical marketing is not a constraint on growth but a catalyst for brand loyalty that withstands the volatility of digital trends.

The success of social media marketing in the Islamic perspective is measured by the *Barakah* (blessing) of the transaction rather than mere virality. A transaction is considered successful only when it is mutually beneficial, transparent, and free from any element of deception (*Gharar*) or excessive praise (*Tashni'*). While the algorithm may reward sensationalism, the divine laws of commerce reward integrity. Therefore, the ultimate KPI (Key Performance Indicator) for a Muslim marketer is the preservation of ethical values alongside commercial viability.

It is imperative for Muslim influencers and content creators to establish an internal Sharia-based code of conduct. This self-regulatory framework should guide the technical aspects of content creation from music selection to sponsorship disclosure ensuring that their digital footprint remains a source of *Khair* (goodness). Furthermore, educational institutions and Sharia boards should collaborate to provide digital ethics certifications for creative professionals, bridging the gap between classical jurisprudence and modern digital communication.

The long-term vision is to transform social media into a medium for *Muamalah* that is clean, transparent, and mutually profitable. By integrating the concept of *Marketing Langit*, digital platforms can evolve from mere marketplaces into spaces of spiritual and educational enrichment. This shift will ensure that the digital economy serves the higher objectives of Sharia (*Maqasid al-Sharia*), fostering a global market that is not only technologically advanced but also morally sound and spiritually rewarding.

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