

The Four Pillars of Islamic Marketing Communication Ethics: A Case Study of @jsrstore on Instagram

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ABSTRACT

Social media has become a space where brands express Islamic values to build trust and authenticity, raising new ethical questions about the boundary between sincere spirituality and commercial exploitation. This study investigates the ethical discourse of Islamic marketing communication on Instagram through a case study of @jsrstore, the official store of Dr. Zaidul Akbar, a prominent figure in Indonesia's Islamic wellness movement. Drawing on Kartajaya and Sula's four-pillar framework of Islamic marketing (teistic, ethical, realistic, and humanistic), the research analyzes how these principles are linguistically and discursively enacted in caption texts and audience interactions. Employing virtual ethnography and qualitative content analysis of 20 Instagram posts, complemented by interview data, the study reveals that @jsrstore consistently embeds spiritual intentionality (*niyyah*), truthfulness (*sidq*), transparency, and relational care into its digital narratives. This integration transforms commercial messaging into a form of digital da'wah, fostering trust, emotional resonance, and perceived authenticity among Muslim consumers. The findings advance Islamic communication theory by proposing a discourse-based model that transcends symbolic religiosity, demonstrating how ethical values can be performatively realized in social media branding while offering practical insights for marketers seeking to align digital engagement with Islamic ethics in Muslim-majority contexts.



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INTRODUCTION

The rapid rise of digital platforms has profoundly reshaped the landscape of marketing communication, particularly among religiously conscious communities. In Indonesia—the world's largest Muslim-majority nation—the intersection of faith and commerce has fostered a unique form of digital engagement known as *Islamic marketing communication* on social media (Rosário & Dias, 2023; Sandi et al., 2022; Tardin et al., 2020). Platforms such as Instagram have emerged as vital arenas where brands not only promote their products but also convey values grounded in Islamic ethics (Istiani & Islamy, 2020; Kramer, 2021; Saggaf et al., 2021). This trend reflects a growing consumer demand—particularly among Muslim millennials and Gen Z—for authenticity, transparency, and moral alignment in the brands they choose to support (Yang et al., 2022). The @jsrstore, the official store of Dr. Zaidul Akbar, a prominent figure in Indonesia's Islamic wellness movement, exemplifies this shift by integrating religious values with digital entrepreneurship. Its Instagram content blends product promotion with religious expressions such as *Bismillah* and *Insya Allah*, and references to health as a divine blessing (*ni'mah*), thereby positioning commercial activity within a framework of worship (*ibadah*) and public benefit (*maslahah*) (Fadhli et al., 2025; Yudaninggar & Damastuti, 2023). Therefore, this integration of spirituality and commerce signifies a more profound transformation in how Islamic values are linguistically and discursively performed in digital spaces. Understanding this phenomenon is crucial, as it reflects not only evolving consumer behavior but also the expanding role of social media as a platform for digital da'wah and identity construction (Bahrudin & Waehama, 2024; Nabilah et al., 2021; Sukayat, 2023).



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Consequently, a rigorous examination of digital media ethics is paramount, as the very strategies that foster trust and authenticity, such as the use of religious symbolism, communal testimonials, and curated displays of piety (Correia et al., 2021; Seyfi et al., 2023). This phenomenon inhabits an ethical grey zone in which spiritual influence and commercial incentive are inextricably fused. It necessitates critical questions about transparency, exploitation, and the potential for “halsal-washing,” where ethical Islamic principles are superficially invoked to mask standard profit-driven motives, thereby commodifying faith itself. Analyzing @jsrstore’s practices through an ethical lens thus illuminates the broader tensions between sincere religious representation and persuasive marketing tactics, challenging us to consider where spiritually resonant communication ends and manipulative endorsement begins in the algorithmically-driven attention economy.

Previous research on Islamic marketing communication has primarily focused on integrating religious values into branding and consumer behavior, emphasizing principles such as *rabbaniyyah* (theistic orientation), *akhlaqiyah* (ethical conduct), *insaniyyah* (humanism), and *maslahah* (public benefit) as core characteristics (Kartajaya & Sula, 2006). These foundational studies position Islamic marketing not merely as a commercial strategy but as a value-driven practice rooted in Qur’anic guidance and Prophetic traditions. Subsequent studies have examined how these values manifest in advertising, customer relations, and brand identity, particularly in Muslim-majority contexts such as Indonesia (Aria Wahyudi, 2020; Kusumawati et al., 2020; Manzoor et al., 2024). However, much of this research remains conceptual or survey-based, with limited analysis of actual linguistic and discursive practices in digital spaces.

Furthermore, existing literature on digital da’wah acknowledges the transformation of social media into a space for religious expression. Yet few studies examine how commercial entities, such as @jsrstore, blend marketing with da’wah-like discourse. The account’s use of *Bismillah*, *Insya Allah*, and rhetorical questions (*erotesis*) reflects a communicative style grounded in Adair’s (2009) principles of effective communication, such as relevance, vividness, and cognitive engagement. Yet, this intersection of marketing rhetoric and Islamic ethics remains underexplored. Notably, there is a lack of qualitative, discourse-based research that examines how the four pillars of Islamic marketing (*teistis*, *etis*, *realistis*, *humanistis*) are linguistically enacted in real-time social media interactions.

Therefore, this study addresses these gaps by shifting focus from general branding strategies to the ethical structure of communication in digital Islamic marketing. It moves beyond politeness theory to center on Islamic communication ethics, analyzing how @jsrstore embeds *teistis* (theistic), *etis* (ethical), *realistis* (realistic), and *humanistis* (humanistic) into its Instagram captions. By doing so, the research contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how faith-based brands can operationalize Islamic values not only symbolically but also rhetorically and ethically in everyday digital discourse.

This integration of spirituality and commerce signifies a more profound transformation in how Islamic values are linguistically and discursively performed in digital spaces. Understanding this phenomenon is crucial, as it reflects not only evolving consumer behavior but also the expanding role of social media as a platform for digital da’wah and identity construction (Bahrudin & Waehama, 2024; Nabilah et al., 2021; Sukayat, 2023). To provide analytical focus, this study is guided by the following research question: How are the four pillars of Islamic marketing—*teistis*, *etis*, *realistis*, and *humanistis*—discursively enacted in @jsrstore’s Instagram communication? Accordingly, the study aims to: (1) analyze the linguistic and rhetorical strategies through which Islamic ethical principles are constructed in the brand’s captions, and (2) conceptualize how this integration reconfigures commercial promotion into a form of value-based digital engagement. By centering on these objectives, the research moves beyond descriptive accounts of religious symbolism toward a focused examination of the ethical performativity inherent in Islamic marketing on social media, offering timely insight into the moral dimensions of digital branding in Muslim-majority contexts where credibility is increasingly tied to ethical and spiritual alignment.

In addition, this study theoretically strengthens the application of Kartajaya and Sula’s Islamic marketing framework in communication studies, particularly in social media contexts where faith, language, and consumer culture intersect. In practice, it offers a clear model for Islamic brands to evaluate their content not only for market appeal but also for moral coherence.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research approach to explore the discursive construction of Islamic marketing communication on the Instagram account @jsrstore. The research is guided by the principles of virtual ethnography, a methodological framework that enables the investigation of social interactions, cultural practices, and communication patterns within digital environments (Hine, 2000). Virtual ethnography is particularly suitable for this study, as it enables the researcher to immerse themselves in the online world of @jsrstore and observe how linguistic choices, rhetorical strategies, and Islamic values are integrated into everyday digital communication (Nair et al., 2024; Patel, 2025; Silva et al., 2024). The primary object of this research is the textual content of Instagram captions posted by @jsrstore between January and June 2024, which serves as the primary data source for analyzing how the four pillars of Islamic marketing, namely *teistis* (theistic), *etis* (ethical), *realistis* (realistic), and *humanistis* (humanistic), are linguistically enacted. These

captions were selected because they exemplify the brand's core communicative strategy by blending product promotion with religious and moral discourse, thereby offering rich data for understanding the ethical dimensions of digital Islamic branding.

The primary data source consists of Instagram captions posted by @jsrstore between January and June 2024. Captions were purposively sampled based on the following criteria: (1) inclusion of explicit Islamic lexical markers (e.g., *Bismillah*, *Insya Allah*, *barakah*), (2) representation of key product categories (health supplements, skincare, wellness items), and (3) variation in post types (product launches, educational content, promotional announcements). A total of 20 captions were selected for in-depth analysis, ensuring thematic diversity and sufficiency for qualitative saturation, as they contribute to the overall meaning-making process in digital communication (Haltmayer & Gierl, 2021; Kaye et al., 2021; Reelfs et al., 2022). Visual elements (images, emojis) were documented as contextual supplements but were not the primary unit of analysis.

The analysis employed a multistage qualitative content analysis to identify linguistic patterns and thematic categories aligned with the four pillars of Islamic marketing. The first stage involved open coding, where each caption was read thoroughly to identify recurring phrases, rhetorical devices, and religious markers. The second stage, axial coding, organized these initial codes into broader categories corresponding to the four pillars. This categorization allowed for a structured interpretation of how Islamic ethical principles are embedded in the communication strategy. The third stage involved selective coding, where the core theme, Islamic communication ethics in digital marketing, was developed by integrating all categories into a coherent narrative (Czerny, 2020). Throughout the analysis, the researcher maintained a reflexive journal to document interpretive decisions and minimize bias, ensuring confirmability. The findings were further validated through member checking with the expert informants, who reviewed preliminary interpretations and provided feedback. This iterative process of coding, validation, and interpretation ensured the study's rigor and depth. By combining virtual ethnography with qualitative content analysis, the research not only describes what is communicated but also interprets how and why specific linguistic and ethical strategies are employed, offering a nuanced understanding of Islamic marketing communication in the digital age.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of @jsrstore's Instagram content elucidates the interplay between linguistic construction and ethical articulation within Islamic marketing communication. Religious values are not merely represented as symbolic identifiers but are discursively produced through intentional rhetorical and linguistic choices that embed ethical meaning within commercial narratives. Viewed through the lens of Islamic communication ethics, the textual and stylistic features of @jsrstore's captions demonstrate how faith-based principles are operationalized in digital discourse.

Analytical interpretation is anchored in the four foundational dimensions of Islamic marketing—*teistis* (theistic), *etis* (ethical), *realistis* (realistic), and *humanistis* (humanistic)—which collectively frame the integration of spirituality, truthfulness, pragmatism, and relational care into brand communication. Linguistic realizations such as the invocation of *Bismillah*, the use of rhetorical questions (*erotesis*), hyperbole (*hiperbola*), climax (*klimaks*), and understatement (*litotes*) function as semiotic resources that reinforce Islamic ethical orientation while enhancing persuasive resonance.

This discursive configuration exemplifies a shift from politeness-oriented communication toward an ethically performative mode that embodies sincerity, humility, and moral accountability. In contrast to prior studies that emphasize surface-level politeness or identity signaling, this analysis foregrounds the ethical depth of linguistic practice as a site of value transmission. To ensure analytical rigor, recurrent textual patterns are synthesized in tabular form and substantiated with excerpts from original captions, demonstrating how @jsrstore reconfigures commercial messaging into an ethically inflected narrative that aligns with the moral and affective sensibilities of Muslim audiences.

A. Teistis: Framing Commerce as Worship

Based on Table 1, the findings reveal that @jsrstore consistently employs a theistic orientation (*teistis* or *rabbaniyyah*) by embedding religious expressions into its marketing discourse, thereby framing commercial activity as an act of worship (*ibadah*). A prominent feature across the analyzed captions is the frequent use of Islamic invocations such as "*Bismillah*" and "*Insya Allah*", which are not used merely as decorative phrases but as intentional markers of divine reliance. For instance, the caption "*Bismillah... mulai hari ini Flip tersedia kembali!*" demonstrates how the brand initiates a business-related announcement with a religious invocation, signaling that the product's availability is not just a commercial event but a spiritually grounded action. This practice aligns with the Qur'anic principle in Surah Al-Nahl (16:125), which calls for inviting others to the path of God with wisdom and good instruction. By beginning with *Bismillah*, @jsrstore positions its communication within a sacred framework, suggesting that even mundane transactions are imbued with religious significance.

Table 1. Manifestations of Teistis in @jsrstore's Instagram Communication

No.	Theistic Element	Caption	Quranic Basis	Communicative Function
1	<i>Bismillah</i>	"Bismillah... mulai hari ini Flip tersedia kembali!"	Qur'an 24:31	Sanctifies the transaction, frames commerce as worship
2	<i>Insya Allah</i>	"InsyaAllah, manfaatnya dirasakan oleh yang membutuhkan."	Qur'an 18:24	Expresses <i>tawakal</i> , avoids overpromising, respects divine will
3	<i>Biidznillah</i>	"biidznillah insyaAllah berhasiill..."	Qur'an 18:24	Acknowledges divine permission as prerequisite for success
4	<i>Mujarab</i>	"mujarab banget buat yang lagi promil"	Qur'an 10:57	Links product efficacy to divine blessing (<i>barakah</i>), not just material quality

Source: Researcher (2025)

The account consistently links product benefits to divine will and blessing (*ni'mah*), reinforcing the idea that health and well-being are gifts from Allah. In one caption, the phrase "*InsyaAllah, manfaatnya dirasakan oleh yang membutuhkan*" (Hopefully, the benefits will be felt by those in need) reflects a deep acknowledgment of God's ultimate control over outcomes. This expression does not merely serve as a linguistic habit; it functions as a rhetorical device that distances the brand from self-promotion and instead attributes efficacy to divine permission. Similarly, the use of "*mujarab*" (effective, often with a divine connotation) in describing product benefits suggests that the results are not solely due to material qualities but are also attributable to God's will. This discursive strategy transforms the product from a mere commodity into a medium of *barakah* (blessing), aligning with the Islamic worldview, in which all good comes from Allah.

Additionally, the brand's communication reflects *tawakal* (trust in God) by refraining from absolute claims and instead deferring outcomes to divine decree. For example, when promoting a product for fertility, the caption reads "*insya Allah berhasiill...*", subtly reminding the audience that success depends on God's will, not just the product's quality. This linguistic choice prevents the commodification of hope and maintains ethical humility. Experts interviewed in the study, such as Putra and Senijati, noted that this approach is strategically effective because it respects the audience's spiritual autonomy and fosters a sense of shared faith. The integration of these theistic elements, namely *Bismillah*, *Insya Allah*, *mujarab*, and *tawakal*, demonstrates that @jsrstore's communication is not transactional but devotional, constructing a narrative where purchasing and using products are framed as part of a faithful, purpose-driven lifestyle.

The discussion of the *teistis* (theistic) dimension in @jsrstore's communication reveals that the integration of religious language is not merely performative but functions as a deliberate ethical and spiritual strategy to sanctify commercial activity. By consistently using invocations such as *Bismillah* and *InsyaAllah*, the brand aligns its messaging with the Qur'anic directive in Surah An-Nahl (16:125) to invite others "with wisdom, good instruction, and the best argument." This linguistic choice transforms a product announcement into an act of *da'wah*, where consumption is framed not as a material transaction but as a spiritually conscious decision. The use of *Bismillah* at the beginning of captions signifies that the act of selling and buying is initiated in the name of God, reinforcing the principle of *rabbaniyyah*—that all human endeavors, including business, must be grounded in divine guidance. This practice moves beyond symbolic religiosity and reflects a deeper intentionality (*niyyah*) that positions marketing as a form of worship (*ibadah*), a concept emphasized in Islamic ethics, in which the moral value of an action is determined by its underlying intention.

Furthermore, the invocation of *tawakal* (trust in God) through phrases like "*InsyaAllah berhasiill...*" and "*InsyaAllah, manfaatnya dirasakan oleh yang membutuhkan*" demonstrates a communicative humility that respects divine will over commercial certainty. Unlike conventional marketing, which often relies on absolute promises ("guaranteed results"), @jsrstore acknowledges that outcomes are ultimately in God's hands. This rhetorical restraint prevents the commodification of hope and aligns with the Islamic prohibition of *gharar* (excessive uncertainty or deception) in transactions. As noted by Putra in the expert interview, this approach is not only ethically sound but also strategically effective, as it builds trust by showing that the brand does not overpromise. Senijati further emphasizes that this reflects *rabbaniyyah* in practice, in which the brand honors the audience's autonomy and spiritual agency by refraining from manipulation and instead inviting reflection and personal responsibility.

This finding contributes to the broader discourse on digital Islamic ethics by showing how religious values can be embedded in everyday commercial discourse without becoming superficial or instrumental. Compared with Zaid et al.'s (2022) study, which observes that many Islamic influencers use religious language decoratively, @jsrstore's communication is distinctive in its consistency, contextual integration, and functional purpose. Each religious phrase serves a narrative and ethical role. It also advances the work of Kartajaya & Sula (2006) by illustrating that *teistis* is not an abstract principle but a lived communicative practice. The brand's success lies in its ability to balance commercial goals with spiritual authenticity, creating a discourse in which faith and commerce are not in tension but mutually reinforcing. It defines the brand's role from a mere seller to a moral companion, guiding its audience toward healthier, more conscious living as an extension of their faith.

B. Etis: Truthfulness and Humility in Persuasion

As shown in Table 2, the findings indicate that @jsrstore consistently demonstrates ethical conduct (*etis*) through a communication style rooted in truthfulness (*sidq*) and transparency, even when acknowledging product limitations. A salient example is the use of the phrase “*kurg enak menurut mimin*” (“not very tasty in my opinion”) in a caption discussing Royal Jelly. Rather than concealing potential drawbacks, the brand openly admits a subjective negative aspect, which contrasts sharply with conventional marketing practices that often emphasize only the positive. This candidness is not presented defensively but as a matter-of-fact statement, reinforcing the brand’s commitment to honesty. As noted in the thesis, this aligns with the principle of *akhlaqiyah*, where moral values such as integrity and responsibility are prioritized over aggressive sales tactics. This practice reflects a strategic choice to build long-term trust rather than pursue short-term gains through exaggeration or omission.

Table 2. Manifestations of *Etis* in @jsrstore’s Instagram Communication

No.	Ethical Element	Caption	Quranic Basis	Communicative Function
1	<i>Sidq</i> (Truthfulness)	“ <i>kurg enak menurut mimin</i> ”	Qur'an 9:119	Builds trust by admitting product limitations; avoids <i>gharar</i> (deception)
2	<i>Amanah</i> (Trustworthiness)	“ <i>Mohon maaf sebesar-besarnya... padahal tinggi qualitinya,</i> ”	Qur'an 8:27	Demonstrates accountability and transparency in pricing
3	<i>Adl</i> (Justice)	“ <i>dipilihkan yang paling mantab, bergizi dan penuh kebaikan didalamnya.... kebayang ya sulitnya dan mengapa jd super mahal harga Royal Jelly di pasaran?</i> ”	Qur'an 4:58	Ensures fairness and prevents exploitation of consumers
4	<i>Tawadhu'</i> (Humility)	Use of “pleading face” emojis and apologetic tone	Qur'an 31:19	Humanizes the brand and shows respect for audience sentiment
5	<i>Avoidance of fakhr</i> (Boasting)	No miraculous claims (e.g., “ <i>cures cancer</i> ”)	Qur'an 28:76	Maintains ethical integrity and prevents manipulation

Source: Researcher (2025)

Another key manifestation of ethical conduct is the brand’s response to price increases. In a caption addressing a product re-pricing, @jsrstore states: “*Mohon maaf sebesar-besarnya... padahal tinggi qualitinya ...*”. This statement combines an apology with a factual justification, emphasizing the product’s high quality as the reason for the rise. The emotional tone, reinforced by the use of “pleading face”, conveys humility and accountability. Rather than presenting the price change as a unilateral business decision, the brand frames it as a shared challenge, thereby demonstrating respect for the audience’s financial sensitivity. This approach exemplifies *adil* (justice) and *amanah* (trustworthiness), core tenets of Islamic business ethics, by ensuring that consumers are not misled and are given a fair explanation for the change.

The brand avoids making absolute or miraculous claims about product efficacy, which is a common pitfall in health and wellness marketing. While promoting benefits, the captions consistently use conditional and modest language, often paired with “*InsyaAllah*” (if God wills), which serves to temper expectations and acknowledge divine will over outcomes. For instance, claims about energy restoration or fertility support are presented as potential benefits rather than guaranteed results. This rhetorical restraint prevents *gharar* (deception or uncertainty) and *fakhr* (boasting), both of which are discouraged in Islamic teachings. The communication, therefore, does not manipulate hope but instead fosters realistic expectations grounded in ethical responsibility. As one expert noted in the thesis, this approach is not only morally sound but also strategically effective, as it enhances the brand’s credibility and fosters a relationship of mutual respect with its audience.

The discussion of the *etis* (ethical conduct) dimension in @jsrstore’s communication reveals that the brand’s use of honest, transparent, and humble language is not merely a stylistic choice but a deliberate embodiment of Islamic ethical principles in digital marketing. The candid admission of product limitations—such as stating “*kurg enak menurut mimin*”—directly reflects the Islamic virtues of *sidq* (truthfulness) and *amanah* (trustworthiness), which are foundational to Islamic business ethics. As emphasized in the hadith, “*The truthful and trustworthy merchant will be with the prophets, the truthful, and the martyrs*” (Tirmidhi), truth in commerce is not just encouraged but elevated as a spiritual act. By openly acknowledging that a product may not suit everyone’s taste, @jsrstore avoids *gharar* (deception) and *fakhr* (boasting), thereby fulfilling its moral responsibility to the consumer. This practice aligns with the *akhlaqiyah* principle, which demands that marketing communication be guided by universal moral values such as honesty, justice, and accountability.

Furthermore, the brand’s response to price increases exemplifies *adil* (justice) and humility (*tawadhu'*), reinforcing its ethical stance. The phrase “*Mohon maaf sebesar-besarnya... padahal tinggi qualitinya ...*” is not just an apology; it is a rhetorical act of moral positioning. It acknowledges the audience’s financial sensitivity while justifying the change with a factual claim about product quality. This balanced approach prevents exploitation and reflects the Islamic principle of fair exchange. Unlike conventional brands that often conceal cost adjustments or justify them with vague marketing

language, @jsrstore treats its audience as moral partners in a shared value system. These findings resonate with Frima & Ardiyanti (2022), who argue that transparency in acknowledging product flaws reduces consumer anxiety and enhances brand credibility. However, this study advances their finding by showing that such transparency is not just a trust-building tactic but a religious-ethical imperative when framed within Islamic communication.

This ethical communication strategy also redefines the role of persuasion in Islamic marketing. Rather than relying on hyperbole or emotional manipulation, @jsrstore uses restraint and humility as persuasive tools, aligning with the Qur'anic ideal of *al-jidāl al-ladhi hiya aḥsan* (the best argument) (Qur'an 16:125). The brand does not promise miraculous results but presents benefits conditionally, often paired with "*InsyaAllah*", which acknowledges divine will over outcomes. This linguistic humility prevents the commodification of hope, which is a common ethical pitfall in health and wellness marketing. Compared with general marketing studies (Borah et al., 2020; Rosário & Dias, 2023) that view persuasion as a means of maximizing conversion, @jsrstore's approach demonstrates that ethical persuasion can be more effective in building long-term loyalty, particularly within religiously conscious communities. Thus, the *etis* pillar is not a constraint on marketing effectiveness but a moral foundation that enhances authenticity, trust, and spiritual alignment.

C. Realistis: Balancing Faith and Factual Claims

Based on Table 3, the findings reveal that @jsrstore consistently applies the principle of *realistis* or realism (al-waqiyyah) by grounding its product claims in tangible, everyday realities rather than relying on exaggerated or miraculous promises. A key manifestation of this is the brand's transparent communication regarding price increases. In one caption, the team states: "*Mohon maaf sebesar-besarnya... padahal tinggi qualitinya...*" (We sincerely apologize... even though the quality is high). This statement acknowledges the audience's financial sensitivity while providing a factual justification rooted in real market conditions. Rather than concealing the reasons for price adjustments, the brand openly links them to ingredient costs and production standards, demonstrating a commitment to honesty and contextual relevance. This approach reflects a deep understanding of the audience's lived experiences, ensuring that the communication remains relatable and trustworthy.

Table 3. Manifestations of *Realistis* in @jsrstore's Instagram Communication

No.	Realistic Element	Caption	Quranic Basis	Communicative Function
1	Factual Product Claims	" <i>Kandungan EO Lemongrass dikenal sebagai anti bakteri & jamur</i> "	Qur'an 49:6	Builds credibility through scientific plausibility; avoids <i>gharar</i>
2	Transparency in Pricing	" <i>Mohon maaf sebesar-besarnya... padahal tinggi qualitinya ,</i> "	Qur'an 6:152	Demonstrates fairness (<i>adl</i>) and accountability
3	Use of Conditional Language	" <i>Jika diminum teratur, dapat menambah dan memulihkan energi kita</i> "	Qur'an 40:60	Prevents exaggeration (<i>mubalaghah</i>); respects individual experience
4	Acknowledging Limitations	" <i>Less Foam, karena shampoo sehat Non SLES/SLES karakternya memang begitu</i> "	Qur'an 33:70	Educes consumers; reframes perceived flaws as natural traits

Source: Researcher (2025)

The account emphasizes factual and scientifically plausible benefits of its products, avoiding hyperbolic or unfounded claims. For instance, in promoting a health supplement, the caption reads: "*Kandungan EO Lemongrass dikenal sebagai anti bakteri & jamur*" (Lemongrass essential oil content is known as antibacterial and antifungal). This phrasing relies on established knowledge rather than making absolute assertions about curing diseases. Similarly, when discussing honey, the caption states: "*minum madu sebelum atau setelah olahraga dapat menambah dan memulihkan energi kita*" (drinking honey before or after exercise can add and restore our energy). The use of "*dapat*" (can) rather than "*pasti*" (definitely) conveys a realistic tone that acknowledges scientific uncertainty and individual variation. This careful wording aligns with the Islamic principle of *tabyīn* (clarity) and avoids *gharar* (deception), reinforcing the brand's credibility.

Another significant finding is the use of litotes, a rhetorical device of understatement, to present product characteristics in a humble and honest manner. For example, the caption "*Less Foam, karena shampoo sehat Non SLES/SLES karakternya memang begitu*" (Less foam, because healthy non-SLES/SLES shampoo is naturally like that) reframes a potential consumer concern (low lather) as a natural and healthy trait. Rather than dismissing or exaggerating the feature, the brand educates the audience about the product's composition, turning a perceived weakness into a value proposition grounded in truth. This strategy not only enhances transparency but also positions the brand as an educator, guiding consumers toward informed choices. As noted in the thesis, this honest and educational approach reduces consumer resistance and builds long-term trust, illustrating how *realistis* functions as both an ethical and strategic communication pillar.

The discussion of the *realistis* (realism) dimension in @jsrstore's communication reveals that the brand's effectiveness stems from its ability to harmonize religious discourse with factual, everyday realities, thereby avoiding

the pitfalls of either excessive mysticism or purely secular marketing. Unlike some Islamic wellness brands that make unfounded claims (e.g., “cures all diseases”), @jsrstore grounds its messaging in observable benefits and plausible scientific references, such as noting that “*Kandungan EO Lemongrass dikenal sebagai anti bakteri & jamur*” (Lemongrass essential oil content is known as antibacterial and antifungal). These findings align with the principle of *al-waqiyah* (realism) in Islamic marketing, which emphasizes flexibility and relevance to daily life without compromising religious values. As Kartajaya & Sula (2006) argue, Islamic marketing must be *realistik*, adapting to market conditions and consumer needs while remaining within the bounds of *syariah*. @jsrstore exemplifies this by presenting health products not as miraculous solutions, but as natural, beneficial tools that support a holistic, faith-informed lifestyle.

Furthermore, the brand’s transparency in discussing price increases, with “*Mohon maaf sebesar-besarnya... padahal tinggi qualitinya ...*”, demonstrates a deep understanding of audience realities: consumers are sensitive to cost, and trust is built through honesty rather than concealment. This practice reflects not only *amanah* (trustworthiness) but also *adl* (justice), as it provides a fair rationale for pricing. The emotional tone, reinforced by “pleading face” emoji, does not manipulate but validates the audience’s lived experience, making the message more relatable and credible. This finding supports the assertion that acknowledging product flaws or limitations reduces consumer scepticism and enhances brand authenticity (Frima & Ardiyanti, 2022). However, this study extends that insight by showing how such realism is ethically and spiritually framed—the apology is not just a PR tactic, but a reflection of humility (*tawadhu’*) and recognition that all provision ultimately comes from Allah (*niyyah* and *tawakal*).

This balanced approach positions @jsrstore as a credible educator and ethical guide, rather than a manipulative seller. By using conditional language such as “*dapat menambah dan memulihkan energi kita*” (“can add and restore our energy”), the brand avoids *gharar* (deception). It respects individual variation, thereby aligning with Islamic prohibitions against exaggeration (*mubalaghah*) in speech. Compared with general marketing studies that prioritize persuasion over truth, @jsrstore’s communication reflects a virtue-based model in which realism is not a limitation but a moral imperative. The integration of *realistik* with *teistik* and *etik* shows that Islamic marketing is not about choosing between faith and facts, but about synthesizing them into a coherent ethical narrative. These findings contribute to the field by demonstrating that digital Islamic branding can be both spiritually uplifting and factually responsible, offering a replicable model for halal brands seeking authenticity in a skeptical digital landscape.

D. Humanistis: Building Relational Care and Community

As shown in Table 4, the findings reveal that @jsrstore consistently embodies the humanistis (human-centered) principle by crafting a communication style that is inclusive, relatable, and emotionally resonant across diverse audience segments. A key feature is the use of informal, conversational language and affectionate address terms such as “*Min*” and “*kak*”, which create a sense of familiarity and warmth. For example, captions like “*Udah minum madu belum kak hari ini?*” do not merely promote a product but simulate a caring interpersonal exchange, positioning the brand as a friendly companion rather than a distant seller. This linguistic choice fosters *ukhuwah* (brotherhood/solidarity), a core Islamic value, by minimizing social hierarchy and emphasizing shared human experiences such as health, family, and daily routines. The use of first-person plural pronouns such as “*kita*” further reinforces inclusivity, constructing a collective identity in which the brand and its audience share the same journey.

Table 4. Manifestations of *Humanistis* in @jsrstore’s Instagram Communication

No.	Humanistic Element	Caption	Quranic Basis	Communicative Function
1	Inclusive Address	“ <i>Udah minum madu belum kak hari ini?</i> ”	Qur'an 49:13	Creates warmth, reduces hierarchy, fosters <i>ukhuwah</i> (brotherhood)
2	Use of “ <i>Kita</i> ” (We/ Us)	“ <i>minum madu sebelum atau setelah olahraga dapat menambah dan memulihkan energi kita</i> ”	Qur'an 3:103	Builds collective identity and shared experience
4	Emotional Nuance (Emojis)	The use of “smiling cat face with heart-eyes”, “folded hand”, and “pleading face” emojis to express joy, gratitude, empathy.	Qur'an 19:96	Adds affective layer to text, conveys sincerity and care
5	Universal Relevance	“ <i>Yang mau liburan udah siapin belum...?</i> ”	Qur'an 4:26	Connects product to universal human needs (health, family, travel)

Source: Researcher (2025)

Another significant finding is the brand’s strategic use of storytelling and personification to humanize its products and make them part of the audience’s lived reality. In one caption, the account states: “*Beeuh ada barisan rapi menyambut akhir taun menjelang niihh...*”, personifying products as if they are actively participating in the audience’s seasonal celebrations. This narrative technique transforms functional items into companions in everyday life, enhancing emotional engagement. Similarly, the phrase “*menghalau datangnya negara api*” (warding off the arrival of the fire nation) creatively

frames the use of Eucalyptus Drop as a heroic, relatable act, drawing on pop culture references to create shared meaning. These imaginative expressions reflect a deep understanding of audience psychology and align with Adair's (2009) concept of emotional transfer, whereby messages are more effective when they evoke feelings and tell stories.

The account fosters a sense of community by using language that invites participation and shared experience. Captions such as "Yang mau liburan udah siapin belum...?" and "suruh baris maakkk mulai suami- anak- bapak-..." depict the product as central to family bonding and social rituals, appealing to universal human desires for connection and belonging. The use of "smiling cat face with heart-eyes", "folded hand", and "pleading face" emojis adds emotional nuance, expressing joy, gratitude, and empathy in ways that transcend textual limitations. Rather than targeting a specific demographic, the brand's messaging is universally accessible, avoiding exclusivity based on race, gender, or status, thereby reflecting the Islamic principle of *insaniyyah*, which emphasizes the inherent dignity and equality of all people. This human-centered approach not only enhances relatability but also positions the brand as a facilitator of shared values, care, and collective well-being.

The discussion of the *humanistis* (human-centered) dimension in @jsrstore's communication reveals that the brand's success lies in its ability to foster a sense of shared humanity and emotional belonging through inclusive and relatable discourse. By using affectionate address terms like "Min" and "kak", the brand dissolves the formal boundaries between seller and consumer, fostering a relationship that feels personal and caring rather than transactional. This linguistic choice reflects the Islamic principle of *insaniyyah*, which holds that all human beings possess inherent dignity and equality, regardless of background. As emphasized in the thesis, this approach aligns with the Qur'anic value of *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) and the Prophetic model of gentle, compassionate speech. Unlike conventional marketing that often targets segmented demographics, @jsrstore's messaging is universally accessible, inviting all audiences into a shared narrative of health, family, and well-being. This universality strengthens its ethical positioning as a brand that neither excludes nor commodifies identity, but rather celebrates everyday human experiences.

Furthermore, the brand's use of storytelling and personification transforms functional products into companions in everyday life, enhancing emotional engagement and community building. Phrases like "Beeuh ada barisan rapi menyambut akhir taun menjelang niihh..." animate the products, making them active participants in seasonal celebrations and personal milestones. This narrative technique, rooted in Adair's (2009) concept of *emotional transfer*, allows the audience to project their own feelings and experiences onto the brand. Similarly, the caption "menghalau datangnya negara api" creatively frames Eucalyptus Drop as a heroic protector, drawing on pop culture to create shared meaning and humor. These imaginative expressions do not trivialize the product but embed it within a relational context in which consumption becomes an act of care for oneself, one's family, and one's home. As noted in the thesis, this reflects *social proof* theory, where the product is positioned at the center of family rituals ("suruh baris maakkk mulai suami- anak- bapak-..."), reinforcing its role in strengthening social bonds.

This human-centered strategy significantly advances existing research on Islamic marketing communication. While studies like Setiawati & Makkuraga (2021) highlight the symbolic use of religious language, @jsrstore demonstrates how empathy and inclusivity can be systematically woven into digital discourse to build trust and loyalty. The brand's communication does not merely inform or persuade; it *accompanies* the audience through their daily lives. These findings align with Olyvia & Darwanto's (2023) finding that consumer care enhances brand credibility, but go further by grounding care in *Islamic humanism*, a worldview that sees service to people as service to God. Compared to generic customer engagement models, @jsrstore's approach is distinctive in its moral framing: warmth is not a tactic, but a reflection of *adab* (ethical conduct) and *rahmah* (mercy). Thus, the *humanistis* pillar is not an add-on to marketing strategy. Still, its emotional and ethical core demonstrates that, in Islamic digital communication, relational care is a form of *da'wah*.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate how the four pillars of Islamic marketing communication, *teistis*, *etis*, *realistik*, and *humanistis*, are discursively enacted in the Instagram communication of @jsrstore. The analysis reveals that these principles are actively embedded in the brand's linguistic and rhetorical practices: through the use of *Bismillah*, *Insya Allah*, and *niyyah*-driven framing (*teistis*); a commitment to *sidq*, transparency, and humility (*etis*); factual claims and conditional language grounded in reality (*realistik*); and an inclusive, relational tone that fosters *ukhuwah* (*humanistis*). Collectively, these strategies reconfigure commercial promotion as a form of value-based digital engagement, aligning with the study's objective of examining the ethical performativity of Islamic branding on social media.

However, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations of this research. The study focuses on a single, influential case (@jsrstore) within the Indonesian Islamic wellness market, which may limit the direct transferability of findings to other cultural, linguistic, or commercial contexts. The analysis is also confined to caption texts and does not incorporate systematic audience-reception data, leaving the perceived effectiveness or ethical resonance of these strategies from the consumer perspective as an area for further inquiry. Additionally, the time-bound sample (January–June 2024) captures a specific communicative phase and may not reflect longitudinal shifts in branding strategy.

Despite these constraints, the study makes a meaningful contribution to the field of Islamic communication by offering a discourse-based model that moves beyond symbolic religiosity to examine how ethical values are linguistically operationalized in digital branding. The four-pillar framework may serve as a valuable heuristic for researchers and practitioners interested in ethical marketing in Muslim-majority digital spaces, particularly on visually oriented platforms such as Instagram. Future research could productively extend this work through comparative case studies across platforms (e.g., TikTok, YouTube). These experimental designs assess consumer trust and employ longitudinal analyses to track the evolution of Islamic branding rhetoric. Ultimately, this study underscores the potential of digital communication to embody Islamic ethics, while also highlighting the need for continued critical inquiry into the intersection of faith, commerce, and digital culture.

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