

# Effects of Halal social media and customer engagement on brand satisfaction of Muslim customer Exploring the moderation of religiosity

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# Effects of Halal social media and customer engagement on brand satisfaction of Muslim customer

## Exploring the moderation of religiosity

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Exploration of  
the moderation  
of religiosity

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### Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this research is to examine the factors that affect brand satisfaction of a Muslim customer who is making purchases from selling outlets on social media.

**Design/methodology/approach** – This study used a new mechanism of sampling for research studies relating to social media which. Further, we used hierarchical regression to analyze the moderation effects of religiosity.

**Findings** – The authors' findings suggest that religiosity has moderation effects on the relationship between halal social media and brand satisfaction of a Muslim customer and even higher moderation effects on the relationship between customer engagement and brand satisfaction of a Muslim customer.

**Research limitations/implications** – The respondents of this research are completely unknown as the data has been collected from google-docs link sharing arrangement.

**Practical implications** – This study identifies factors that need to be focused on winning the brand loyalty of a Muslim customer.

**Originality/value** – This study provides a new sampling methodology to be used for the purpose of studies related to social media, which has been labeled as "social-media disguised snow ball sampling". Further, this study is one of the few studies in the area of "halal social media".

**Keywords** Moderation, Religiosity, Halal social media, Social-media disguised snow ball sampling

**Paper type** Research paper

### 1. Introduction

Arab countries were among the last to adopt the internet; the first was Tunisia in 1991 and the last two were Saudi Arabia and Iraq around 2000 (Allagui, 2017). From twenty-first



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century Islamic leaders and preachers started using the web to spread religion (Bunt, 2000; Ibahrine, 2007). Gräf (2007) explains the impact of web on spread of fatwas and points out that websites, e.g. "Ask the imam" have helped promote religious guidance.

Social media have helped to remove geographical boundaries for brands (De Mooij, 2013). They are vehicles for the globalization of brands where globalization is the flow of capital, media, technology and behavioral changes (De Mooij, 2013). Alongwith the global acceptability of brands, advertising helps diminish global cultural differences (Cimendag and Yalcin, 2012), which helps produce uniform global brand marketing strategies (Ford *et al.*, 2011). However, whatever the global marketing strategies, there are still differences based on the usability of products in different cultures and local values (De Mooij, 2013).

By 2017, about 33 per cent of global advertising was through digital channels that are expected to grow. Thus, a significant portion of future advertising is going to be in digital devices (Stephen, 2016). It is, therefore, necessary to examine various dimensions of consumer behavior in such an environment (Stephen, 2016).

The results of social media activities are often less than satisfactory (Zhu and Chen, 2015). A major reason is that social media threats and opportunities are not accounted for in their true sense. A Chinese philosopher Sub Tzu once said that "precise knowledge of self and precise knowledge of threat leads to victory," which still applies strongly in the modern age. Social media are new opportunities as well threats where, to be successful, one needs to have precise knowledge of one's product and platform (Zhu and Chen, 2015). This is because it helps in accumulating experience, search for and the acquisition of knowledge, guidance and knowledge transfer (Gupta *et al.*, 2010). This then leads to improved firm performance if synergized with optimum expertise (Alavi and Leidner, 2001). According to Rasmussen *et al.* (2011), the success of brand innovation depends on knowledge from external environments, such as social media, along with a range of internal factors.

In the Islamic context, religiosity is the belief that Allah guides Muslims through his final messenger Muhammad SAWWM through his book the Al-Quran. Allah's messenger SAWWM also guides Muslims through various explanations as mentioned in the books of hadith. Eid and El-Gohary (2015) find religiosity is a significant factor that can affect customer satisfaction, and hence, can moderate the relationship between customer value and satisfaction. For this reason, the interaction of religion and religiosity and its impact on consumer attitudes is becoming an area of growing concern in Islamic marketing (Wahyuni and Fitriani, 2017).

Humans receive the effects of religion in their beliefs, rituals, communal faith and values (Mathras *et al.*, 2016). The intensity varies for each individual, which causes differences in human behavior (Mathras *et al.*, 2016). Engelland (2014) uses this important relationship to find that more systematic and direct attention must be paid to the religiosity aspect of marketing in international marketing strategies. Kotler and Keller (2009) observe that such attention affects the secondary beliefs of target customers. Sardana *et al.* (2018) observe that Asia is the most promising arena to test the impact of religiosity because it has the greatest variety of religious faiths. Regarding the measurement of religion, however, an important aspect in various studies has been the "frequency of fraudulent behaviors" (Dehghanpour and Rezvani, 2015; Abou-Youssef *et al.*, 2015).

Chang (2006) states that responding to cultural context is essential in any advertising strategy. This is regarded as a congruency, which actually means agreement and compatibility (Ha *et al.*, 2014). To apply the analogy of understanding culture in Muslim countries, marketing experts need to grasp Muslim Sharī'ah-compliant practices. To achieve that, Khasakal and Bodur (2002) emphasize the importance of the Holy Quran as a pivotal factor in all Muslim cultures.



Religion and culture are two sides of a coin in the Muslim world (Luqmani *et al.*, 1989). As a Muslim is governed by Shariah law, Muslim culture is its by product (Anastos *et al.*, 1980). The same applies to marketing. For instance, in 2005, Saudi Arabia boycotted products from a country that was disgracing Holy Prophet SAWWM (Mahajan, 2013). However, the degree of adherence to Islamic values changes across Muslim countries with Lebanon regarded as the most liberal and Saudi Arabia as the most conservative (Kalliny *et al.*, 2008).

Shari'ah-compliant marketing in social media has become important as is compliance with Shari'ah in any other business activity. There are problems that are very similar to the problems that exist in the tourism industry. These problems include Shari'ah-compliant surfing and actions, halal tourism and halal hotels and attractions (Pariwisata, 2017).

Though it is believed that Shari'ah-compliant social media can increase the number of Muslim customers it still has the potential to be affected by religiosity (Eid and El-Gohary, 2015). With this background in mind this study sets the following objectives:

- to examine the relationship between "halal social media," customer engagement and brand satisfaction; and
- to examine the role of religiosity as a moderating variable between "halal social media" customer engagement and brand satisfaction.

In meeting those objectives this study will make the following contributions to knowledge:

- identify the perceived value of products in the "halal social media" and the brand satisfaction of Muslim customers;
- determine the relationship between customer engagement, "halal social media" and brand satisfaction of Muslim customers; and
- help organizations devise marketing strategies based on "halal social media" content for Muslim customers.

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## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 Social media

Social media have become a part of life of the "masses" (Boyd, 2015). With use of social media taking many dimensions and initiatives, its definition is evolving (McCoy-Peet and Quan-Haase, 2017). However, after reviewing the definitions of many scholars, McCoy-Peet and Quan-Haase (2017) define social media as:

Social media are web-based services that allow individuals, communities, and organizations to collaborate, connect, interact, and build community by enabling them create, co-create, modify, share and engage with user-generated contents that are easily accessible.

Yara (2012) identifies the boundaries of social media culture in following dimensions: utilitarian-driven; aesthetic-driven; context-driven; play-driven and value-driven. Grahl (2013) identifies six social media applications as follows: social networking; bookmarking; social news; media sharing; microblogging; and blogs and forums.

The impact of social media on consumer behavior is an evolving theme (Stephen, 2016). Its consequences have taken two dimensions, namely, environmental-integral (the digital environment influences the behavior of customers in digital environments) and environmental-incident (the digital environment influences the behavior of the customers in other environments). Lamberton *et al.* (2015) analyze the influences of digital environments and explain their impact on consumer decisions. Wilcox and Stephen (2013) worked on environmental-incident scenarios and find that interaction with closer friends

on Facebook improves consumer choices of healthy snacks. Wilson *et al.* (2013) highlight the significance of increased use of social media on consumer behavior and stress its use in research in marketing and branding.

Social media have altered the traditional marketing communication information flow. At present, consumers are now better able to provide feedback to marketers making them more in command than a decade ago. Kohli *et al.* (2015) compare the communication models between marketers and consumers as in Figure 1.

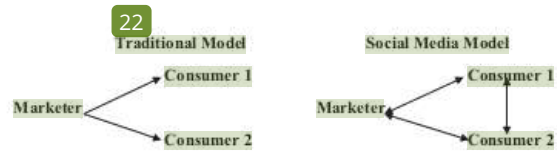
2.1.1 Theories of social media. Social media have been the subject of a number of theories to study the socio-psychological behavior of its users and stakeholders (Ngai *et al.*, 2015). These theories have been clubbed into three groups: personal behavior, social behavior and mass communication (Ngai *et al.*, 2015). Personal behavior theories consist of the personal trait theory (Digman, 1990), technology acceptance theory (Davis, 1989), theory of reasoned action (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980; Ajzen, 1985) and the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1985). Social behavior theories consist of the social aspect theory, which is based on factors such as influence (Kelman, 1958) and social capital (Portes, 1998; Chang and Chuang, 2011), social loafing theory (Latané *et al.*, 1979) and the social power theory (French and Raven, 1959). Mass communication theories comprise the para-social interaction theory (Eighmey and McCord, 1998) and the uses and gratification theory (Eighmey and McCord, 1998), the use of which is the most popular in social media studies, particularly works on satisfying the needs of customers. Using theories and models Ngai *et al.* (2015) present the following framework of social media research (Figure 2).

Research involving the different uses and aspects of social media has increased during the past five years. Table I details the major studies involving social media.

2.2 Halal social media

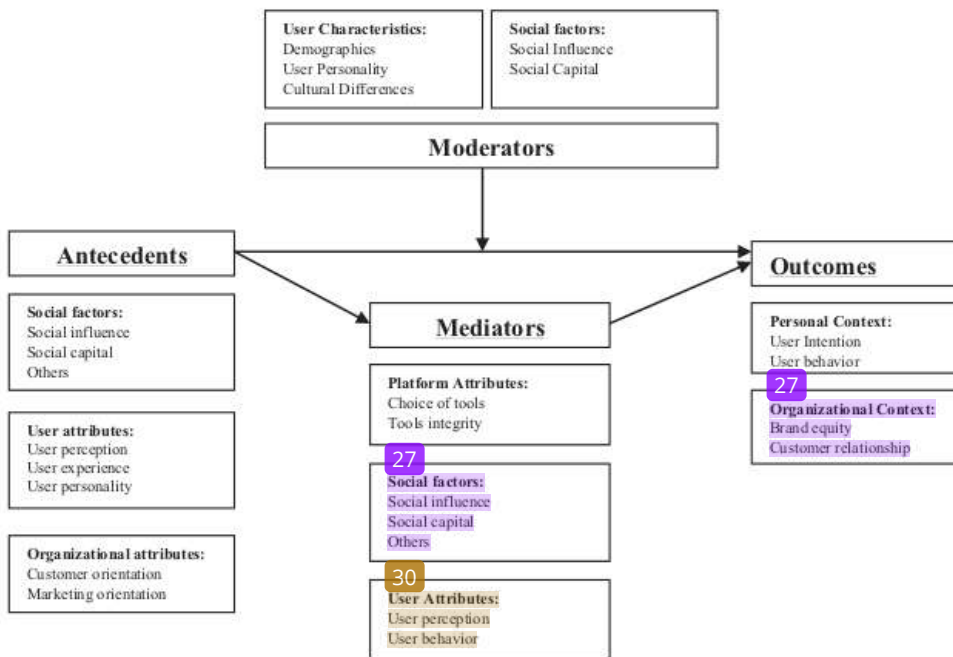
Al-Qardawi (1997) narrates the term halal as an activity that is allowed according to Sharī'ah; there are no restrictions on its occurrence. Wilson and Liu (2010) identify the importance of reconciling the relationships between theories of branding and the Muslim faith by proposing a paradigm of halal branding. Wilson and Liu (2011) and Wilson and Grant (2013) present the “halal decision-making paradigm” of a Muslim customer and recommend that branding for Muslims should take account of the Sharī'ah-compliant practices of modern Muslims along with Islamic fundamental beliefs. Wilson (2014) presents a “hierarchy of Islamic marketing approaches” and argues that the term halal offers huge opportunities for product extensions and evolution and, at the same time, presents a new paradigm for businesses and academics. Sisler (2011) coins the term “A twenty-first century Muslim,” which, according to him, is a Muslim who interacts with fellow Muslims across the boundaries, irrespective of language and geography. Social media have made it possible for Muslims and non-Muslims to be in profound relationships that may yield better harmony (Sisler, 2011). In a more comprehensive context, it may mean Muslims can use digital technologies to spread Islamic spirituality and rituals (Šisler, 2008, 2009; Ibahrine, 2016). A common argument has been developed that digital technologies are changing the religiosity and piety of people (Ibahrine, 2013). It more affects societies that had conservatism and traditionalism than ones that had plurality and openness (Ibahrine, 2013). Social media have

Figure 1. Comparison of communication models





## Exploration of the moderation of religiosity



30 **Figure 2.**  
Framework of social  
media research

S #	Authors	Application of social media
1	Turcotte <i>et al.</i> (2015)	1 media and information seeking
2	Houston <i>et al.</i> (2015)	Use of social media in disaster planning
3	Sarker <i>et al.</i> (2015)	Use of social media in bioinformatics
4	Nguyen <i>et al.</i> (2015)	49 k movement analysis using social media
5	Sigala and Chalkiti (2015)	Use of social media in hospitality management
6	Kaplan, Haenlein (2016)	73 of social media in higher education
7	Skoric <i>et al.</i> (2016)	Social media and citizen engagement
8	Roth <i>et al.</i> (2016)	Role of social media in employee selection
9	Mallik and Anderson (2016)	Use of social media in crime rate calculation
10	King <i>et al.</i> (2017)	Use of social media in government planning
11	Hausmann <i>et al.</i> (2018)	7 e of social media to understand tourist preferences
12	Moghavvemi <i>et al.</i> (2018)	7 e of social media in school teaching
13	Thoma <i>et al.</i> (2018)	42 of social media in research dissemination in medicine
14	Kasemsap (2019)	role of social media in social entrepreneurship

**Table I.**  
An analysis of recent  
social media studies

become important sources of Dawa and Quranic dissemination (Gräf, 2007). In the modern era, more Muslim countries that adopted access to Web have also adopted access to social media (We Are Social, 2017).

The acceptability of social media in the religious corners of a Muslim society is mixed. For instance, a few scholars have issued fatwas against social media because of its use in trade accusations and the promotion of lies (Ibahrine, 2014). Pak (2012) points out that some scholars recommend the use of Shari'ah-compliant social media that can filter pornography, terrorist activities and the promotion of Shari'ah non-compliant products and services.

Ibahrine (2018) coins the term “Shari’ah-compliant halal social media” for social media that are Shari’ah-compliant. However, for the purpose of this study we use the concise term “halal social media”.

“Halal social media” is very similar to halal tourism in that both relate to recreational, leisure and social purposes (Mohsin *et al.*, 2016; Ryan, 2016). The halal context does not apply only to food and tourism but also to products and services relating to all walks of life (Ryan, 2016). Battour *et al.* (2012) say that halal is related to availability of Shari’ah-compliant contents and facilities. There are general Islamic guidelines that must be followed such as the prevalence of the Islamic dress code, banning of gambling and the prohibition of alcohol-related content.

Satisfaction with “halal social media” can be referred to as a cognitive and effective state as is referred to for tourism (Iniesta-Bonillo *et al.*, 2016). Eid and El-Gohary (2015) point out that satisfaction is of two types, transaction-specific and overall. Transaction specific refers to satisfaction from the results of products and services, whereas overall satisfaction compares the perception of products and services with their results. For “halal social media,” both types of satisfaction are relevant in real time because a user can perceive and compare the products and can search for them on the Web simultaneously. This enables customers to gain experience about products even if they see them for the first time on social media. However, as with tourism, a social media user may be affected by service quality, customer values and religiosity (Battour *et al.*, 2014; Eid and El-Gohary, 2015). In this regard, Han and Hyun (2017) add some demographic characteristics such as gender, usage frequency and expenditure.

Izberk-Bilgin and Nakata (2016) in their work on halal marketing explain the true sense of halal in five lessons. Firstly, they recommend having a holistic meaning of halal, i.e. halal not only means abstinence from pork, alcohol, etc., but also to be responsible and conscientious in the true sense. Secondly, rulings on halal change from country to country, therefore, it is very important to understand halal dynamics, such as specific country and certifying authorities, before engaging into multinational halal trade. Thirdly, certification of halal products needs to be product to product rather than period to period. The halal regulatory authorities need to exercise their control to ensure that each and every product and process of the halal producer is certified before the product leaves. Fourthly, avoid the backlash from Muslim and non-Muslim customers on halal products for following vested interests. Finally, in an organization claiming to be a halal manufacturer, halal practices should be followed in R&D, sourcing, production, logistics, marketing, sales and customer services.

On the significance of halal, Battour *et al.* (2014) find that Islamic attributes have a significant link with the satisfaction of a Muslim customer. Wardi *et al.* (2018) state that being halal is a key factor for the loyalty of a Muslim customer. Zailani *et al.* (2016) state that in the case of Muslim customers, even the perception of halal contents lead to customer satisfaction. Yeo *et al.* (2016) regard halal value as a conditional value under the theory of consumption value, having an impact on the satisfaction of Muslim customers. This leads to the development of our first hypothesis:

*H1.* “Halal social media” marketing has a significant, positive impact on brand satisfaction for a Muslim customer.

### 2.3 Brand satisfaction for a Muslim customer

Social media interaction refers to consumers’ proactive experiences about brands after their Web interaction by replying, tweeting, sharing, liking, and participating (Hollebeek, 2011). The marketing strategy of a modern organization is to use the relationships between their



46 ends and customers (Fournier, 1998; Fournier *et al.*, 1998; Fournier and Avery, 2011). It is a win-win situation between organizations and their customers because customers enhance their brand attachment and organizations enhance their ability to understand customers, which ultimately helps to improve brand loyalty and profitability. 26

Ekinici *et al.* (2005), while testing Fournier's model, find four dimensions of brand relationships: partner quality, nostalgic connection, self-concept connection and intimacy. They find strong correlations with self-connected attachments. In their work, they also compare the brand commitments of products and services and find in that for products "commitment" plays a major role, whereas for services "trust" was dominant.

Research on brand relationship quality in customer-brand relationships stemming from social media is sparse. Rothschild (2011) worked on some service groups who were using social media marketing as a strategy to make significant revenue enhancements. In a study on hotels, Hertzfeld (2015) finds that the strategy of active social media marketing produced more customers than their competitors' strategy. Cruz and Mendelsohn (2010) show that customer purchases and recommendations rise when they see brands on social media. Finally, Neff (2012) states that a research drive for GE found social media left more positive effects than other means such as advertisements.

The role of social media in brand building is rising. Marketing thoughts have changed from superficial social media to in-depth interaction that reflects brand proactive engagement. Hollebeek (2011) argues that a higher level of customer interaction with specific brands leads to an increase in customers' levels of cognition, emotional attachment and behavioral investment. De Wulf *et al.* (2001) find strong positive correlations between customer relationship investment and commitment as time spent on social media increased. They argue that social media interaction increases trust and knowledge and reduces risk. Porter and Donthu (2008) discover that organizations can increase trust by taking little steps in the online community. 47

According to Harrigan *et al.* (2017), customer engagement means repeated interaction between an organization and its customers in terms of emotional and psychological attachments to its brands, insensitive to the product price. In this regard, switching behavior helps in product development and also serves as a feedback system (Dessart *et al.*, 2016; Roy *et al.*, 2018). Hapsari *et al.* (2017) point to some additional dimensions of customer engagement such as absorption, identification and interaction. 23

In summary, just as interaction increases interdependence Altman and Taylor (1973), interaction with a brand through social media has potential for emotional attachment and intimacy. This connectivity, by replying to comments, solving problems and getting feedback, leads to experience and connection, which strengthens relationships. When two people come close, it always creates win-win situation and togetherness. This increases interpersonal interaction, which helps to get emotional attachment and reduces feelings of intimacy. From the above discussion, we propose a second hypothesis for this study:

H2. Customer engagement through social media has a positive relationship with the brand satisfaction of a Muslim customer. 5

#### 2.4 Religiosity

Religiosity is a cultural factor that affects human behavior (Eid and El-Gohary, 2015). It is a way of living that reflects the values and attitudes of individuals in society (Eid and El-Gohary, 2015). Research on this topic in social media studies is almost negligible. El-Gohary (2016) divides Islamic religiosity in two, beliefs and practices. Beliefs, according to him, are the importance a person attributes to Islam and practices are the performance of 13



Islamic rituals. It is, in fact, the adoption of religion in daily routines (Zamani-Farahani and Musa, 2012).

Zamani-Farahani and Musa (2012) discuss religiosity as having socio-cultural impact on customers. Eid and El-Gohary (2015) work on religiosity as a moderator on the relationship between perceived value by customers and their satisfaction. They find religiosity has a positive moderating effect on the relationship between perceived value and customer satisfaction. In summary, the higher the level of religiosity, the higher the satisfaction level for a religious customer. This leads us to propose the two final hypotheses for the purpose of our research:

- H3. Religiosity has a significant and positive moderating effect on the relationship between "halal social media" and brand satisfaction of a Muslim customer.
- H4. Religiosity has a significant and positive moderating effect on the relationship between customer engagement on social media and brand satisfaction of a Muslim customer.

Based on the literature review and the hypotheses, the model for our study is shown in Figure 3.

### 3. Research methodology

#### 3.1 Population and sampling

This study was primarily initiated by adapting the questionnaires and recommendations of Battour *et al.* (2014), Battour and Ismail (2016) and Battour *et al.* (2017) amended to include the recommendations and extensions of Abror *et al.* (2019). The instruments were combined and amended for our study and then converted to google-docs. We contacted various universities to spread the link to our google-docs based questionnaire in various WhatsApp groups of their students. Members of the groups were asked to spread the questionnaire link among their fellow students. The purpose of this activity was to get the questionnaire filled only by expert users of smart phones. This type of sampling is an extension of snow ball sampling. Snow ball sampling is a sampling technique where each respondent is asked a lead for the next respondent with a similar profile. The administrator then contacts the next respondent to fill in the questionnaire (Elfil and Negida, 2017). However, filling in the questionnaire through forwarding on WhatsApp groups is different because the administrator never knows all the respondents. This type of sampling can, therefore, be regarded as "Web-disguised snow ball sampling". An advantage of the google-doc questionnaire is that it stops respondents from filing incomplete and/or inadequately filled questionnaires by having adequate "checks".

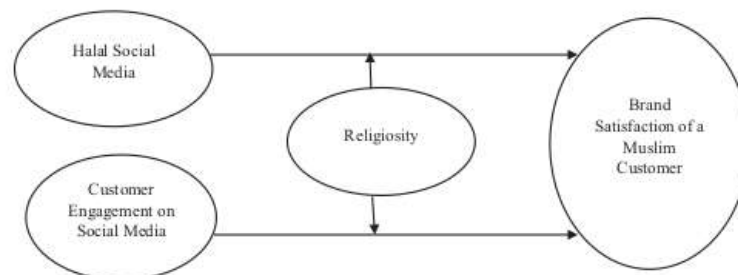


Figure 3.  
Conceptual  
framework

We targeted 300 respondents from which to elicit information. It took about two months to get the required number of google-doc questionnaires filled in. Furthermore, as in this type of questionnaire sampling link is spread by sharing in social media groups, we do not know the exact profiles of respondents with respect to ethnicity, nationality, age, etc. Thus, the respondents' profiles are completely anonymous. For the purposes of our study, the process made one aspect certain that respondents have adequate social media usage expertise to fill in our questionnaire. We included two-point criteria in the questionnaire before respondents started. Firstly, the respondent should be a Muslim using social media. Secondly, the respondent should have made a buy and/or sell transaction on social media.

#### 4. Data analysis

With the objectives of this study in mind, a hierarchical regression model was applied in accordance with the recommendations of Byrne (2010), Hair *et al.* (2010), Patrisia and Dastgir (2017) and Wardi *et al.* (2018). It is a method that explains if a certain variable reflects significant variance in the dependent variable after controlling all other variables (Gelman and Hill, 2006). We conducted some preliminary tests as recommended by Abror *et al.* (2019) that included outlier, normality, multicollinearity and heteroscedasticity tests. We controlled for the effects of three variables: gender, Web usage frequency and average web shopping expenditure, which may affect the brand satisfaction of a Muslim customer as per the recommendations in a similar study by Han and Hyun (2017). We have also used recommendations of Cohen *et al.* (1983) and Erkutlu and Chafra (2016) to address the multicollinearity problem. To check the reliability of data and constructs, we used Cronbach's alpha and the average variance extracted tests. Following Hair *et al.* (2010), Cronbach's alpha's value should be more than 0.7 and the value of average variance extracted should be above 0.5 (Abror and Akamavi, 2016). From Hair *et al.* (2013), a construct is valid when its correlation is less than square root of average value extracted in the diagonal (Tables II and III).

#### 5. Discussion

For this study, we sought responses from only persons of Muslim belief; 53 per cent of our respondents were female and 47 per cent were male. Our respondents, on average, spent Rs. 45,000/month on online shopping and spent on average 7 h per day on social media. The students amongst our respondents had an average 22 years of education and working persons were on average 31 years of age. Tables IV and V present the results of the hierarchical multiple regressions. We used 10 models to test our four hypotheses. Each model has three control variables. Of the 10 models, Models 5 and 10 are full models with three control variables, three independent variables and religiosity as a moderating variable. Models 3 and 4 show that "halal social media" and customer engagement have a significantly positive impact on the brand satisfaction of a Muslim customer; the coefficients extracted from hierarchical regression are highly significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). These results conform with Nguyen *et al.* (2015) and Agnihotri *et al.* (2016) to find social media have a positive impact on customer behavior. This finding means we "fail to reject" our H1 and H2 that "halal social media" and customer engagement significantly affect the brand satisfaction of a Muslim customer. Model 5 shows that religiosity has a significant, positive moderating effect on the relationship between "halal social media" and the brand satisfaction of a Muslim customer ( $p < 0.05$ ). These results agree with Abou-Youssef *et al.* (2015) and Abror *et al.* (2019), who find that religiosity affects the choices of a Muslim customer.

To find the moderating effect of religiosity on the relationship between customer engagement on social media and brand satisfaction of Muslim customers we applied Models



JIMA

Constructs	Items	Mean	SD	Loading	a	CR	AVE	
Halal social media Islamic facility	Placement of Kaba/other Islamic pictures/availability of qibla direction point toward Makkah city, on social media sites	4.36	1.16	0.79	0.71	0.90	0.72	
	Availability of Islamic ritual timing schedules	4.21	0.81	0.91				
	Provision of a copy of popular Surahs of Holy Quran	4.07	1.14	0.60				
	Halalness	Availability of halal consumables ads on social media	4.13	0.67				0.63
		Availability of halal and haram distinction checklist	4.25	0.91				0.84
	GIM	Non availability of prostitution contents	4.09	1.17				0.75
		Non availability of kissing or other intimation contents	4.06	0.92				0.88
	Free	Non availability of unethical media content promotion	4.34	0.98				0.74
		Non availability of alcoholic drinks promotion	4.12	1.08				0.85
	Satisfaction	Banning of gambling activities promotion	4.41	0.93				0.95
I am satisfied with the Islamic facilities on social media		4.25	0.79	0.77				
I am satisfied with the halalness of social media		4.14	0.81	0.79				
Customer engagement	I am satisfied with the Islamic morality on social media	4.13	0.77	0.75	0.83	0.79	0.72	
	I find it difficult to detach from social media interaction	3.99	1.23	0.71				
	I am immersed in my interaction with social media site	4.14	0.87	0.92				
	I enjoy interacting with like-minded others on social media	4.13	0.86	0.91				
	In general, I thoroughly enjoy exchanging ideas with other people that visit social media site	4.17	1.06	0.85				
Religiosity	In my personal life, religion is very important	4.95	0.22	0.71	0.83	0.81	0.62	
	Islam helps me to have a better life	4.81	0.41	0.70				
	The dua' (supplication) supports me	4.86	0.23	0.73				
	Prophet Muhammad (sawwm) is the role model for me	4.94	0.29	0.75				
	Performing Hajj is one of my main priorities	4.83	0.33	0.77				
	I believe that Allah (God) helps me	4.96	0.31	0.85				

**Table II.**  
Reliability and convergent validity

6 to 10 with three control variables. On the combined results of moderation, we “fail to reject”  $H3$  and  $H4$  ( $p < 0.05$ ) that religiosity moderates the relationship between “halal social media” and brand satisfaction of a Muslim customer on one hand, and customer engagement on social media and brand satisfaction of a Muslim customer on the other. These results agree with those of Agnihotri *et al.* (2016).

## 6. Conclusions

“Halal social media” and customer engagement on social media positively impact brand satisfaction of a Muslim customer with moderating effects of religiosity. This study makes

Variables	Mean	SD	Avg exp	Use freq	Gender	Halal	Religiosity	CustEngag	Satisfaction
Avg exp (monthly)	45,315	17,488	1	1					
Use Freq (daily hrs)	7.13	3.19	0.697*	0.478*	1				
Gender	139 m 161 f	-	0.531*	0.315	0.231	1			
Halal	4.13	0.67	0.444**	0.065	0.061	0.913*	1		
Religiosity	4.91	0.23	0.345*	0.666**	0.257*	0.633*	0.389**	1	
CustEngagement	4.17	0.31	0.712**	0.235*	0.311*	0.611**	0.414**	0.714*	1
Satisfaction	4.23	0.83	0.417*						

Notes: \*Correlation is significant at 0.05; \*\*correlation is significant at 0.01

**Table III.**  
Mean, standard deviation and correlation



Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3 H1	Model 4 H2	Model 5 H3
Intercept	0.317	0.235	0.179	0.314	0.219
<i>Control variables</i>					
Gender	0.125	0.176	0.047	0.016	0.112
SM visit frequency	0.234	0.147	0.211	0.115	0.016
Avg SM exp	0.017*	0.111	0.015*	0.127*	0.127
<i>Main variables</i>					
Religiosity		0.365*	0.418***	0.318**	0.418**
Halal social media			0.352**	0.337***	0.471***
Customer engagement				0.435**	0.515***
<i>Interaction</i>					
Religiosity × HSMM					0.212**
$R^2$	0.11	0.071	0.38	0.47	0.51
$R^2$ change	0.11	0.069	0.35	0.45	0.48
F-test (sig)	0.317	0.067	0.001	0.000	0.000

Table IV.

Model application

Notes: \*Significant at 0.10; \*\*significant at 0.05; \*\*\*significant at 0.01

Variables	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10	Model 12 H4
Intercept	0.237	0.331	0.231	0.314	0.217
<i>Control variables</i>					
Gender	0.012	0.222*	0.056	0.128	0.091
SM visit frequency	0.111	0.019	0.098	0.214	0.075
Avg SM exp	0.216	0.231	0.014	0.325	0.081
<i>Main variables</i>					
Religiosity		0.317*	0.513***	0.374***	0.525***
Halal social media			0.451***	0.327***	0.591***
Customer engagement				0.534***	0.571***
<i>Interaction</i>					
Religiosity × customer eng					0.276***
$R^2$	0.17	0.34	0.41	0.53	0.59
$R^2$ change	0.16	0.32	0.38	0.49	0.56
F-test (Sig)	0.251	0.037	0.000	0.000	0.000

Table V.

Model application

Notes: \*Significant at 0.10; \*\*significant at 0.05; \*\*\*significant at 0.01

various contributions to knowledge. Firstly, it proposes a new method of sampling for research related to social media studies that we have called “web-disguised snow ball sampling”. Secondly, this study identifies its factors by tracing the similarities with halal tourism. We have also tried to set out the process of brand satisfaction of Muslim customers who use social media for shopping. The factors include the display of holy shrines/places in the content, the availability of schedules of Islamic rituals and the non-availability of pop-ups or content about things strictly prohibited in Islam. Our results on the moderating effect of religiosity on social media agree with similar effects reported in earlier studies such as Battour and Ismail (2016), Al Abdulrazak and Gbadamosi (2017) and Abror *et al.* (2019).

## 7. Limitations, future research direction, implications and theoretical contributions

Exploration of  
the moderation  
of religiosity

Like other studies, this study has several limitations. First, the focus of this study was only on Muslim customers, therefore, the results may not be generalized to other social media studies. Further studies may test the hypotheses about Muslim customers in specific market niches, e.g. Muslims living in various Muslim and non-Muslim countries and Muslim users of different products. Further studies could be carried out of specific demographic groups and cultures to examine the specific dynamics of religiosity and “halal social media” better devise and implement marketing strategies for Muslim social media customers. It may also be fruitful to examine the effects of social media as a moderating variable on the choices of Muslim customers. This study uses a new sampling technique, therefore, further robust qualitative and quantitative studies are required to examine its usability and dynamics. Factors such as product or brand knowledge, degree of use and strength of the brand/product can be explained in what conditions “halal social media” affects the most. Finally, there are various types of social media; future studies could investigate the types of social media that are the most beneficial and most effective in the halal regime.

We limited the sample in this study to explore various dynamics of “halal social media”. Future research could be conducted on the perceptions and behaviors of Muslim customers with a larger sample. Social media are dynamic platforms that change direction periodically, therefore, longitudinal studies are also required to address patterns of social media usage and its characteristics over a longer time.

Despite its limitations, this is a very significant study. Our intention was to examine how “religiosity” moderates “halal social media” and “customer engagement on social media” and its interaction with the “brand satisfaction of a Muslim customer”. This study finds evidence that “religiosity” makes a difference in the choices of a Muslim customer. Muslim customers comprise one group of opinion makers on social media; halal makes a difference on their choices of brand. Investment in social media to make it Shari’ah-compliant can, therefore, yield benefits in facilitating customers choosing brands.

This study is a useful contribution toward social media marketing theory on the grounds that it augments the theory of social media marketing by examining the role of religiosity and Shari’ah-compliance in the choices of Muslim customers on social media. Finally, as collective cultural domains are based on coherence amongst members of the group, the preferences of opinion from peers always suffer from cultural traits. Hence, a similar study in developed countries where individualistic behavior is quite evident could bring profound results.

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