



## From Content to Connectivity: Exploring #HalalLifestyle Networks on Instagram through Social Network Analysis

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** This study aims to examine the structural characteristics of the #HalalLifestyle social network on Instagram and to understand how interaction patterns and key actors shape the dissemination of halal lifestyle discourse in digital spaces.

**Design/methodology/approach:** This research adopts a quantitative descriptive approach using Social Network Analysis (SNA). Data were collected from 1,842 public Instagram posts containing the hashtag #HalalLifestyle over a three-month period, involving 1,127 actors and 9,486 interactions. Network density, modularity, and centrality measures were employed to analyze network structure and identify key actors.

**Findings:** The results indicate that the #HalalLifestyle network is broad but fragmented, characterized by low density and high modularity. The network exhibits a core-periphery structure, where a small number of influencers, halal brands, and Muslim digital communities dominate information flows and connect thematic clusters such as halal food, modest fashion, and Muslim-friendly travel. This structure reflects an unequal distribution of influence within the network.

**Practical implications:** These findings highlight the importance of collaborative strategies to strengthen cross-cluster connectivity in the digital halal ecosystem. Understanding network structures can support more inclusive communication strategies and reinforce the ethical values of halal lifestyle discourse in social media.

**Originality/value:** This study contributes to the literature by applying Social Network Analysis to halal lifestyle discourse on Instagram and integrating network findings with Islamic value perspectives, offering empirical insights into the dynamics of halal lifestyle construction in digital environments.

**Keyword:** Social network analysis; destination image; destination branding; user generated content; Indonesia; HalalLifestyle; Instagram.

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## A. INTRODUCTION

The development of the global halal industry demonstrates a fundamental transformation from a system primarily based on religious regulatory compliance into a modern lifestyle construct that is transnational, aesthetic, and value driven (Al Ariqi, 2022; Islam & Prastiwi, 2025). The concept of halal lifestyle no longer merely represents product compliance with halal standards, but also encompasses social identity, visual preferences, and cultural expressions that are produced and reproduced within digital spaces (Mufidah & Rasyid, 2024). This shift aligns with the growth of strategic sectors such as Muslim-friendly tourism, modest fashion, halal cosmetics, and halal culinary industries, all of which increasingly rely on social media as a primary medium for meaning-making and the global legitimation of halal lifestyles (Surbakti et al., 2025).

Within the context of social media, Instagram occupies a central position as a visual-based platform with one of the highest levels of user engagement for lifestyle-related content (Az Zahra & Ira Wirasari, 2023). Unlike text-based platforms, Instagram facilitates communication through the visualization of values, symbols, and aesthetics, making it particularly effective in shaping audience perceptions, aspirations, and preferences (Darajatun, 2023). Through features such as image posts, carousels, Reels, and Stories, the hashtag #halallifestyle functions not merely as a topical marker but also as a social mechanism that connects individuals, influencers, and brands within a complex and multilayered digital interaction ecosystem (Maysyaroh & Akbar, 2025). Instagram, therefore, serves not only as a promotional medium but also as a collective space for the production of halal lifestyle meanings (Susilowati et al., 2023; Wajdi et al., 2020).

Despite the growing recognition of Instagram's strategic role in halal communication and marketing, a major challenge in the academic literature lies in the limitations of the analytical approaches employed (Naumi, 2023; Sulaiman et al., 2023). Most previous studies have focused on descriptive visual content analysis, consumer perception studies, or the influence of influencers on purchase intentions (Arsiati & Eri Puspita, 2023). Such approaches tend to conceptualize Instagram as a collection of individual content items rather than as a structured social network (Fadiyah Cahya Amelia et al., 2025). Consequently, scholarly understanding of how the #halallifestyle community is formed, how relationships among actors are constructed, and how influence is distributed within Instagram networks remains limited. Furthermore, it remains unclear whether halal lifestyle narratives on Instagram are centralized around a small number of dominant actors or dispersed across thematically and geographically fragmented community clusters.

This limitation is further exacerbated by the scarcity of studies that systematically apply Social Network Analysis (SNA) to Instagram, particularly within the context of halal economy and lifestyle studies (Casanueva et al., 2016). Most SNA research continues to concentrate on text-based platforms due to easier data accessibility and more explicit interaction structures (Casado-Montilla & Pulido-Fernández, 2025). However, interactions on Instagram such as likes, comments, mentions, and co-tagging generate relational patterns that are equally complex and arguably more relevant for understanding visually driven lifestyle dynamics (Mawardi et al., 2024). The absence of such network

mapping has resulted in a knowledge gap regarding which actors function as opinion leaders, bridges, or gatekeepers in disseminating #halallifestyle narratives on Instagram.

Addressing this gap, the present study aims to conduct an in-depth analysis of the social network structure surrounding the #halallifestyle hashtag on Instagram using a Social Network Analysis approach. This study not only maps relational patterns among users but also identifies levels of network cohesiveness, community fragmentation, and the strategic positions of key actors through network metrics such as density, modularity, and eigenvector centrality (Saeidi & Baradari, 2023). Accordingly, this research seeks to answer fundamental questions regarding how halal lifestyles are collectively produced, circulated, and legitimized within visually oriented digital spaces.

The primary novelty of this study lies in three key aspects. First, it represents one of the early studies to explicitly integrate Social Network Analysis within the context of Instagram as a visual-based platform, rather than treating social media as a homogeneous category, in halal lifestyle research (Alshehri, 2024). Second, the study shifts the analytical focus from individual content to the architecture of social networks, thereby revealing hidden dynamics of power, influence, and community formation behind visual interactions (Ghefira Nurfadhila, 2024). Third, it extends the discourse on the halal economy by introducing an objective, data-driven network perspective, which remains underutilized in halal-related social media studies (Shah et al., 2020).

Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of literature on social media, halal economy, and social network theory by emphasizing the importance of structural dimensions in understanding digital lifestyle phenomena. Practically, the findings provide an empirical foundation for halal industry stakeholders, digital marketers, and policymakers to design more effective communication strategies based on the mapping of key actors and real digital communities on Instagram. Thus, this study is not only academically relevant but also carries strategic implications for the development of the global halal ecosystem in the era of visual and digital economies.

## **B. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **1. Halal Lifestyle as a Religious–Social Construct in the Digital Era**

Halal lifestyle represents a conceptual extension of the Islamic principle of halal, which regulates not only the permissibility of consumption but also encompasses a comprehensive way of life aligned with Sharia values (Amir Abdullah et al., 2020; Radjab, Enny Jam'an, 2017). In Islamic thought, halal is inherently linked to the principle of tayyib that which is good, clean, healthy, and beneficial as emphasized in Qur'anic verses such as QS. Al-Baqarah: 168 and QS. Al-Ma'idah: 88 (Muhammad Nizar & Antin Rakhmawati, 2022). This principle indicates that halal embodies integrated ethical, social, and spiritual dimensions within human life, extending beyond food consumption to include finance, fashion, tourism, media, and everyday lifestyle practices (Darojatun, 2023; Nizar et al., 2025).

Conceptually, halal lifestyle can be defined as a pattern of consumption and social practices among Muslims that is grounded in adherence to Sharia values while simultaneously being shaped by contemporary cultural, economic, and technological dynamics (Surbakti et al., 2025). Noviyanti & Albab, (2024) describe halal lifestyle as a

component of Islamic branding that represents a system of values, identity, and Islamic symbolism within the global market. Meanwhile, Purnama Sariati, (2020) views halal lifestyle as a socio economic phenomenon that extends beyond religiosity and functions as a strategy for identity differentiation in the context of globalization.

In the digital era, halal lifestyle increasingly undergoes processes of social construction through interactions within social media spaces (Mingka et al., 2024). Drawing on social construction theory (Zakiah, 2022), social reality including the meaning of halal is shaped through processes of externalization, objectivation, and internalization (Hamdi, 2022). Social media serves as an arena in which halal values are expressed, represented, and negotiated through visual content, narratives, symbols, and user interactions (Nusran et al., 2023). Consequently, halal lifestyle is not merely practiced on an individual level but is collectively constructed as a socio-religious identity within digital spaces.

Previous studies indicate that halal lifestyle has transformed into a symbolic and identity-based global lifestyle, particularly among younger Muslim generations (Jailani & Adinugraha, 2022). Fernando et al., (2023) argue that halal has shifted from being solely a matter of religious compliance to a value proposition encompassing ethics, quality, and modern lifestyle orientations. Research by Ab Talib et al., (2016) further demonstrates that halal consumption among urban Muslims is driven not only by religious obligation but also by the pursuit of identity, social status, and self-expression.

Recent studies in the context of digital media reinforce the crucial role of social media in shaping halal lifestyle discourse. Durrani et al., (2014) found that Instagram functions as a primary medium for constructing halal lifestyle imagery through influencers, hashtags, and aesthetic visualizations. Similarly, Anwar, (2025) shows that halal self-branding practices on social media strengthen the relationship between religiosity, consumption, and Muslim digital identity (Jannah & Wijayanti, 2025). These findings highlight that halal lifestyle in the digital era emerges from complex interactions among religious values, media logic, and social network dynamics.

## **2. Instagram, Visual Culture, and the #HalalLifestyle Social Network**

As a visual-based social media platform, Instagram plays a strategic role in shaping representations, legitimization, and the circulation of halal lifestyle meanings in digital spaces (Kuehn, 2021). By prioritizing visual imagery, Instagram functions not only as a communication tool but also as a site of cultural production where values, identities, and social aspirations are exchanged. Peña-Acuña & Jaramillo, (2024) characterize Instagram as a form of visual social media that integrates aesthetics, algorithms, and social networks within a single digital ecosystem.

From a visual culture perspective, visuals are understood not merely as reflections of reality but as active agents in constructing social meaning. Rakhmawati et al., (2024) emphasize that visual culture concerns how societies see, represent, and make sense of the world through images. Within the context of halal lifestyle, visual representations of halal food, modest fashion, halal travel, and religious symbols on Instagram contribute to the construction of narratives about an “ideal Muslim life” that is simultaneously modern, aesthetic, and religious (Insani, 2020).

The use of features such as image posts, Reels, Stories, and hashtags like #halallifestyle, #halalfood, and #muslimfashion positions Instagram as a primary arena for individuals, influencers, and brands to display and negotiate halal values through visual aesthetics. Hashtags function as mechanisms for discursive clustering and as connectors among users who share similar interests and values. Thus, hashtags operate not only as technical tools but also as social devices that facilitate community formation and digital networking (Situmorang, 2024).

Previous research on halal content on Instagram generally falls into three main approaches. First, content and representation analysis examines how halal values are visually represented (Sahira et al., 2024). Second, halal branding and marketing studies focus on Instagram's role in shaping halal brand images and influencing Muslim consumers' purchase intentions (Risdiyani, 2023). Third, influencer and micro-celebrity studies emphasize the role of Muslim influencers in shaping opinions, trust, and audience preferences (Ade Irma, 2019).

Despite their contributions, these studies tend to treat content as individual and linear units, thereby overlooking the relational dimension among users. In reality, digital interactions on Instagram such as likes, comments, mentions, reposts, and co tagging intrinsically form dynamic and interconnected social networks (Durrani et al., 2014). Within this framework, the meaning of halal lifestyle is shaped not only by content producers but also by relational patterns, key actors, and the network structures that sustain them.

The Social Network Analysis (SNA) approach is particularly relevant for addressing this gap. SNA conceptualizes social media as a relational system in which accounts (nodes) and interactions (edges) form network structures that can be analyzed quantitatively and visually. Rodríguez-Herrera et al., (2025) argue that understanding network structures enables researchers to identify central actors, influence patterns, and community clusters within a given social discourse. In the context of #HalalLifestyle, SNA facilitates analysis of dominant actors (influencers, brands, communities), information diffusion processes, and the collective construction of halal visual culture within Instagram networks.

### **3. Social Network Analysis (SNA) and the Integration of Islamic Values in Network Analysis**

Social Network Analysis (SNA) is an analytical approach that focuses on patterns of relationships among actors (nodes) and connections (edges) within a social network (Altuntas et al., 2022). Unlike individualistic approaches, SNA emphasizes that behavior, influence, and social meaning emerge through relational structures that connect individuals or groups. Seok et al., (2021) define SNA as a method for analyzing social structures by mapping actors and relationships that form specific network systems.

In the context of Instagram, user accounts function as network actors, while digital interactions such as likes, comments, mentions, reposts, and co-tagging serve as relational ties connecting these actors (Blanco-Moreno et al., 2024). Through this approach, SNA enables researchers to map the network structure of #halallifestyle discourse, identify emerging communities, and determine key actors occupying strategic positions in the production and dissemination of halal narratives in digital spaces. Consequently,

influence is not solely determined by follower counts but by an actor's structural position within the network.

Previous research indicates that SNA has been widely applied in studies of digital politics, social movements, and crisis communication, particularly on text-based platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. For instance, Oktapiani et al., (2025) demonstrate that network based hashtag analysis can reveal discourse dynamics and dominant actors in digital public spheres. However, the application of SNA to visual-based platforms such as Instagram remains relatively limited, especially within studies of halal lifestyle and Muslim digital identity. Most halal-related Instagram research continues to focus on visual content analysis and individual performativity without linking these elements to the underlying social network structures.

By employing network metrics such as density to measure community cohesiveness, modularity to detect fragmentation and cluster formation, and eigenvector centrality to identify influential actors, SNA offers a more objective structural approach than popularity-based analysis alone (Rodríguez-Herrera et al., 2025). This approach enables a deeper understanding of how halal values are collectively produced, how symbolic authority is established, and how halal information flows within Instagram networks.

From an Islamic perspective, digital social networks can be understood as extensions of the concepts of *ukhuwwah Islamiyah* (Islamic brotherhood) and *ta'awun* (mutual cooperation in righteousness) within modern society (Musthofa et al., 2023). The Qur'an emphasizes the importance of cooperation and social solidarity in QS. Al-Ma'idah: 2, which serves as a normative foundation for collective interactions oriented toward goodness. In the context of #halallifestyle, user interactions such as sharing information, recommending halal products, and reinforcing religious narratives reflect collective practices rooted in Islamic values of togetherness, ethics, and mutual support.

### C. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a descriptive quantitative approach with an exploratory design based on Social Network Analysis (SNA) to examine the structure of the digital social network formed around the #halallifestyle hashtag on Instagram (Casanueva et al., 2016). Quantitative data were collected from publicly available Instagram posts over a three-month observation period. During this period, a total of 1,842 posts consistently using the #halallifestyle hashtag were identified, involving 1,127 unique accounts as network actors (nodes) (Sun et al., 2025). From interactions among these accounts, 9,486 relational ties (edges) were formed through activities such as likes, comments, mentions, and co-tagging, enabling the construction of a dense and measurable digital social network.

The unit of analysis in this study consists of network actors and network ties. Actors are defined as Instagram accounts including individuals, influencers, brands, and communities while ties are quantitatively represented through the frequency of interactions. On average, each actor exhibits a degree centrality of 16.8, indicating a moderate level of interconnectedness within the network. This finding suggests that halal lifestyle narratives on Instagram are not produced in isolation, but rather disseminated through interconnected patterns of collective interaction.

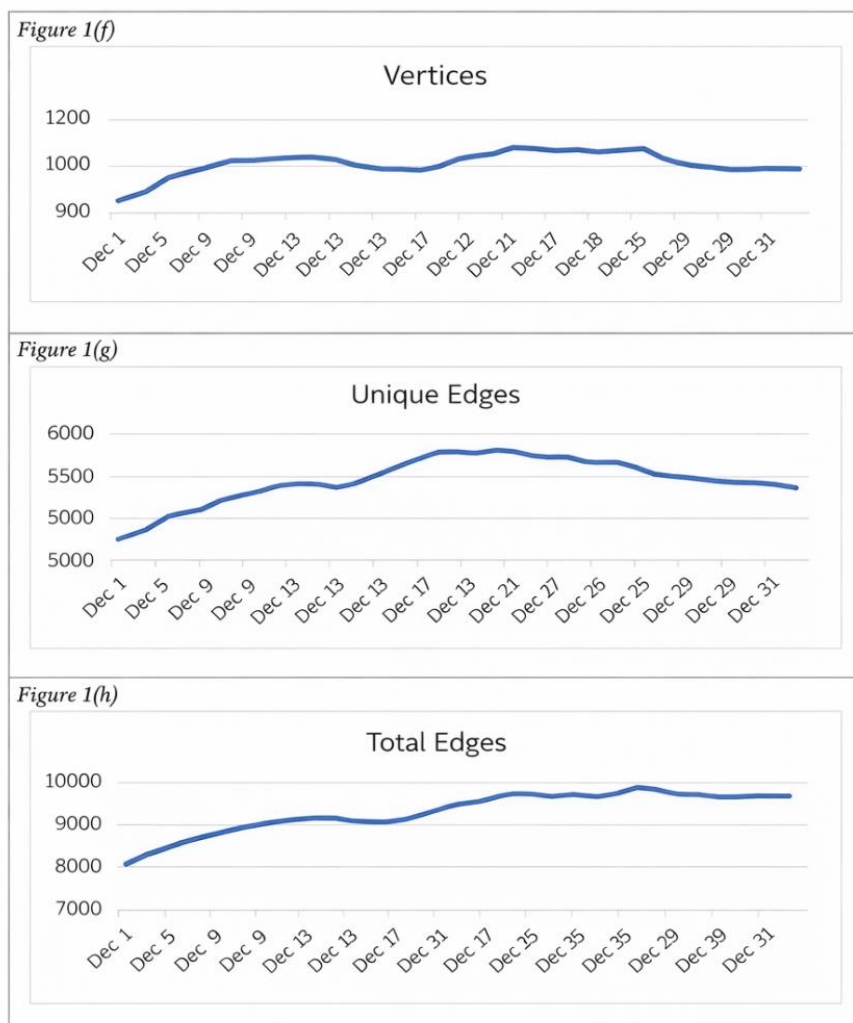


Figure 1. Evolution of the #halallifestyle Social Network over One Month

Network structure analysis was conducted by calculating several key quantitative metrics. The network density was recorded at 0.015, indicating that although the number of actors is relatively large, the network remains selective and not fully interconnected. Meanwhile, the modularity score reached 0.62, signaling a high degree of community fragmentation into several thematic clusters, such as modest fashion, halal food, and Muslim-friendly travel. These results demonstrate that #halallifestyle on Instagram does not form a single homogeneous community, but is instead distributed across relatively autonomous sub-communities organized around specific themes.

To identify key actors within the network, this study employed eigenvector centrality analysis (Tahalea et al., 2022). The results reveal that the top 10% of actors account for more than 43% of the total network connectivity, indicating a significant concentration of influence among a small number of strategic accounts. These actors function as opinion leaders and gatekeepers in the distribution of halal lifestyle narratives, as they maintain strong connections with other highly influential actors. This approach provides a more objective assessment of influence compared to popularity-based measures such as follower counts alone. Detailed visual representations of these findings are presented in Figure 1 above.

All data were analyzed using social network analysis software, with datasets structured in the form of adjacency matrices and edge lists to ensure analytical validity and replicability (Hernández et al., 2025). From an ethical standpoint, this study exclusively utilizes publicly accessible data and does not disclose users' personal identities. Conceptually, the quantitative network findings are interpreted by integrating Islamic values particularly ukhuwwah Islamiyah (Islamic brotherhood) and ta'awun (mutual cooperation) thereby framing the network structure as a reflection of collective practices of connectivity, cooperation, and mutual reinforcement within the digital halal lifestyle space.

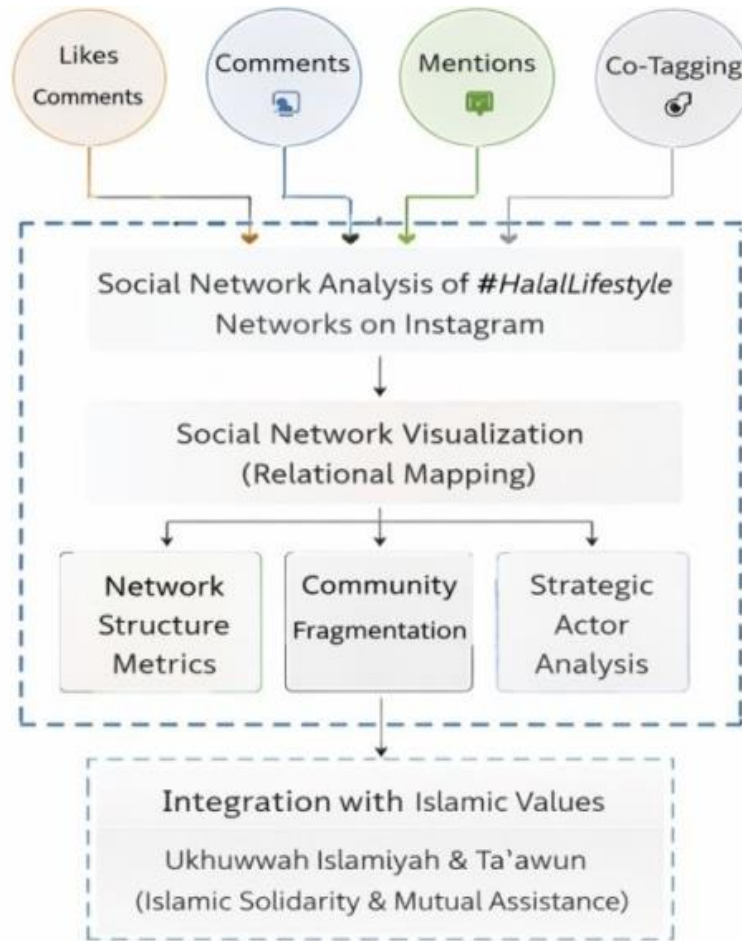


Figure 2. Conceptual framework of the research

## D. RESULTS

### 1. Overview of the #HalalLifestyle Network Structure

The Social Network Analysis (SNA) of the #halallifestyle hashtag on Instagram reveals that the resulting network is extensive yet not fully integrated, as illustrated in Figure 2. The network consists of 1,127 actors (nodes) interconnected through 9,486 relational ties (edges) derived from likes, comments, mentions, and co tagging activities, based on a total of 1,842 public posts collected over a three-month observation period. Network visualization demonstrates a core periphery structure, in which the #HalalLifestyle hashtag occupies the central core as the primary integrative hub of interaction, while several relatively autonomous thematic clusters emerge around it.

The main clusters identified include the Modest Fashion Cluster, Halal Food Cluster, and Muslim Travel Cluster, each characterized by high internal density but selective inter cluster connectivity. In addition, the visualization reveals the presence of peripheral communities, comprising accounts with low connectivity located at the margins of the network and contributing only marginally to the main flow of interactions. These structural patterns are presented in Figure 2.

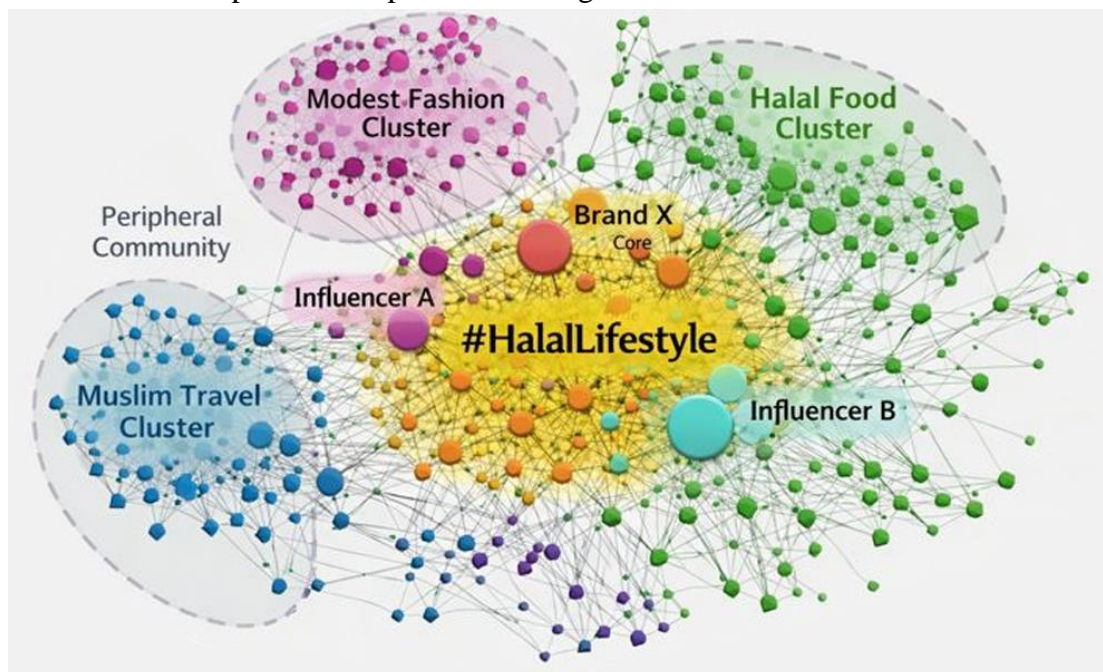


Figure 2. Social Network Analysis of “#halallifestyle” on December 31, 2025

The network density value of 0.015 indicates a relatively low overall level of interconnectedness among actors, confirming that the #halallifestyle network is not homogeneous but segmented according to thematic similarity, interests, and community affiliations. Nevertheless, the average degree value of 16.8 suggests that actors generally maintain a moderately active level of connectivity. The network visualization further highlights the role of central actors such as specific influencers and brands (e.g., Influencer A, Influencer B, and destination/product X) which occupy strategic positions in the network core and function as bridges between clusters. These actors facilitate the circulation of halal lifestyle narratives across communities, enabling the collective production and legitimation of halal lifestyles through recurring interactions rather than isolated individual practices (Smith et al., 2014).

## 2. Community Fragmentation and the Formation of Thematic Clusters

The calculated modularity score of 0.62 confirms a high level of network fragmentation. This relatively high modularity value indicates that the #halallifestyle network on Instagram is divided into several community clusters with stronger internal ties than external connections.

Further analysis of cluster structures identifies at least three dominant thematic clusters. The first cluster is dominated by halal food content, encompassing halal culinary posts, restaurant recommendations, and halal certified food and beverage MSMEs. The second cluster focuses on modest fashion, characterized by Muslimah influencers, Sharia-compliant fashion brands, and narratives of Islamic fashion

aesthetics. The third cluster relates to Muslim-friendly travel, featuring halal travel experiences, Muslim-friendly hotels, and tourism destinations grounded in Islamic values.

Table 1. Identified Groups and Clusters and Their Main Characteristics

Cluster	Dominant Theme	Approx. Size	Network Role	Main Characteristics
1	Halal Food	Large	Broadcast community hybrid	Halal culinary accounts and MSMEs; focus on food visuals and recommendations
2	Modest Fashion	Large	Community cluster	Dominated by influencers and modest fashion brands; high interaction via co-tagging and reposts
3	Muslim Friendly Travel	Medium	Community cluster	Halal travel content, Muslim-friendly hotels, and Islamic tourism destinations
4	Halal Beauty & Cosmetics	Medium	Broadcast network	Brands and beauty influencers; relatively one-way communication
5	Lifestyle Education & Da'wah	Small	Ring crowd	Educational and personal accounts; discourse on halal values and ethical consumption
6	Personal Muslim Lifestyle	Small	Peripheral cluster	Individual accounts with limited connectivity and narrow reach

This fragmentation indicates that although all clusters employ the same hashtag (#halallifestyle), the practices and narratives constructed within each cluster are highly specific and contextual. Consequently, halal lifestyle on Instagram is not produced as a single unified discourse, but rather as a collection of parallel sub-discourses operating within relatively autonomous thematic communities. This pattern is further supported by hashtag distribution patterns shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Top Hashtags in the Social Graph

Rank	Hashtag	Frequency	Interpretation
1	#halallifestyle	Highest	Core hashtag integrating all communities
2	#halalfood	High	Dominance of halal culinary discourse
3	#modestfashion	High	Representation of Muslim fashion as lifestyle
4	#halaltravel	Medium	Connectivity of Muslim friendly tourism sector
5	#muslimlifestyle	Medium	Global Muslim lifestyle identity
6	#halalbeauty	Low medium	Segmentation of halal cosmetics market

### 3. Identification of Key Actors and Influence Distribution

To identify actors occupying strategic positions within the #halallifestyle network on Instagram, this study employs eigenvector centrality, a metric that captures not only the extent of an actor's connections but also the quality of those connections namely, ties to other influential actors. This approach enables the identification of actors with high structural influence in digital social networks (Kane et al., 2014).

The results indicate that approximately the top 10% of actors account for more than 43% of total network connectivity, reflecting a significant concentration of influence

among a small number of accounts, while the majority of actors occupy relatively marginal positions. This pattern confirms the asymmetrical nature of the #halallifestyle network, in which symbolic power and visibility are unevenly distributed.

Actors with high eigenvector centrality primarily fall into three categories: halal influencers, halal fashion and culinary brands, and community accounts. These actors function not only as content producers but also as opinion leaders, gatekeepers, and bridges connecting different community clusters. Through their structural positions, they exert greater capacity to shape dominant narratives, direct visual trends, and confer symbolic legitimacy on representations of halal lifestyle on Instagram. These findings are reinforced by betweenness centrality analysis, which identifies actors playing critical roles in information flow across clusters. Table 3 presents the top ten actors ranked by this metric, along with their actor types and network roles.

Table 3. Top Ten Users Ranked by Betweenness Centrality

Rank	Actor Type	Account Category	Betweenness Centrality	Network Role
1	Influencer	Modest fashion influencer	Very high	Opinion leader and inter-cluster bridge
2	Brand	Halal fashion brand	High	Visual trend gatekeeper
3	Community	Halal community account	High	Connector across sub-communities
4	Influencer	Halal food reviewer	Medium–high	Recommendation dissemination
5	Brand	Halal culinary MSME	Medium	Limited broadcast
6	Influencer	Muslim travel creator	Medium	Halal travel narrative
7	Community	Lifestyle da‘wah account	Medium	Religious value legitimization
8	Influencer	Halal beauty reviewer	Low–medium	Audience segmentation
9	Personal	Muslim lifestyle account	Low	Active participant
10	Personal	Individual content creator	Low	Peripheral actor

Conversely, the majority of other actors occupy peripheral positions with lower connectivity. These actors primarily function as active audiences or community participants who reinforce halal lifestyle narratives through limited interactions such as likes and comments, without exerting significant structural influence.

#### 4. Interaction Patterns and Network Cohesiveness

Analysis of interaction patterns within the #halallifestyle network indicates that ties are predominantly formed through likes and co-tagging, rather than comments and mentions. This pattern reflects Instagram’s nature as a visual platform, where symbolic affiliation, aesthetics, and social recognition are expressed through low-cost interactions, rather than through deliberative and text-intensive discourse.

Although overall network density is relatively low, cohesiveness analysis reveals that internal ties within each cluster are relatively strong. This indicates that interactions are not evenly distributed across the entire network but are concentrated within thematic sub-communities such as modest fashion, halal food, halal beauty, and halal travel. Consequently, the #halallifestyle network exhibits a fragmented yet cohesive structure, where social solidarity is stronger at the cluster level than at the macro-network level.

From an Islamic values perspective, this pattern of cohesiveness can be interpreted as a manifestation of *ukhuwwah Islamiyah* at a thematic scale social bonds formed on the basis of shared values, practices, and halal lifestyle preferences. More intensive intra-cluster interactions reflect a sense of belonging and symbolic support among actors with similar religious and cultural orientations, even though cross-cluster connectivity remains limited. The relationship between network size, actor type, and interaction structure is further illustrated in Table 4, which shows that follower count and in-degree significantly influence network scale and determine the structural impact generated by different types of actors.

Table 4. Impact of the Number of Followers and In-Degree on Network Size

Network Size	Actor Type	Followers	In-Degree	Out-Degree	Structural Impact
Large	Major influencer	Very high	High	Medium	Formation of large and stable clusters
Large	Major brand	High	High	Low	Strong broadcast, limited interaction
Medium	Niche influencer	Medium	Medium	Medium	Strengthening thematic sub-communities
Small	MSMEs/ personal	Low	Low	Low	Narrow reach and peripheral position

### 5. Network Visualization and Structural Implications

Network visualization reveals a clear core periphery structure, with central actors occupying the network core and peripheral actors connected indirectly at the margins. This structure underscores that the legitimation and circulation of halal lifestyle information on Instagram are strongly influenced by actors' structural positions, rather than by follower counts alone. Overall, the findings demonstrate that #halallifestyle on Instagram constitutes a complex, fragmented, and hierarchical social network phenomenon. Halal lifestyle is not produced solely through individual visual content, but is collectively constructed through network structures, inter-actor relationships, and uneven distributions of influence within digital spaces.

## E. DISCUSSION

The results of the Social Network Analysis (SNA) of the #HalalLifestyle hashtag network on Instagram indicate that the network formed is extensive yet not fully integrated (Altuntas et al., 2022). This finding confirms that the growth of halal lifestyle conversations in digital spaces is not necessarily accompanied by strong network cohesion (Blanco-Moreno et al., 2024). Although the number of actors (nodes) and relationships (edges) increased significantly during the observation period, the overall

network density remained relatively low. This condition suggests that user interactions tend to be sporadic, fragmented, and concentrated within specific thematic clusters rather than characterized by intensive cross-community communication (Rodríguez-Herrera et al., 2025).

Structurally, the network exhibits a clear core–periphery pattern. A limited number of actors with high follower counts and substantial in-degree values occupy the network core and function as primary connectors between clusters (Jannah & Wijayanti, 2025). This finding reinforces social network theory, which posits that actors possessing high social capital and visibility have greater capacity to control information flows and shape network structures (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). In the context of this study, influencers, halal brand accounts, and digital Muslim communities act as opinion leaders, facilitating the diffusion of halal lifestyle discourse to peripheral actors, consistent with earlier findings by Durrani et al., (2014).

The relationship between follower count, in-degree centrality, and network size indicates that actor popularity not only enhances content exposure but also directly contributes to the expansion of interaction networks (Darajatun, 2023; Nizar et al., 2025). The higher an actor’s follower base and incoming connectivity, the greater their potential to attract user participation and broaden the reach of halal lifestyle discourse (Amir Abdullah et al., 2020; Radjab, Enny Jam’an, 2017). These results align with diffusion of innovations theory and the two-step flow of communication model, which position opinion leaders as key mediators in the dissemination of ideas, values, and social practices within digital public spheres.

Nevertheless, despite the dominant role of core actors, the overall network demonstrates high modularity, characterized by the emergence of distinct thematic clusters such as halal culinary, modest fashion, Muslim-friendly tourism, and Islamic lifestyle practices (Al Ariqi, 2022; Islam & Prastiwi, 2025). This finding indicates that halal lifestyle on social media is not understood as a single homogeneous concept, but rather as a multidimensional social construct produced and reproduced through diverse sub-communities with varying interests and visual preferences (Az Zahra & Ira Wirasari, 2023). Such conditions reinforce the view of social media as a space for identity articulation, rather than merely an information dissemination channel.

From the perspective of Islamic studies, these findings reflect the dynamics of da‘wah and the dissemination of Islamic values in the digital era (Darajatun, 2023). The concept of halal lifestyle emerging within the network extends beyond normative compliance with halal–haram regulations and undergoes processes of aestheticization and commodification. In Islamic ethics, halal is inseparable from the principle of *tayyib* that which is good, wholesome, and beneficial. However, a fragmented network structure combined with the dominance of certain actors carries the risk of shifting halal from an ethical–spiritual value toward a lifestyle symbol and branding strategy (Susilowati et al., 2023; Wajdi et al., 2020). Therefore, core actors should not merely function as drivers of popularity, but also as custodians of Islamic values, ensuring that halal discourse is not reduced to a purely visual or commercial trend.

Theoretically, this study strengthens the relevance of Social Network Analysis as an analytical approach for examining halal lifestyle as a digital social practice. Findings

related to low density, high modularity, and core actor dominance support the conceptual framework that network strength is not determined solely by size, but by relational patterns and the distribution of influence within the network. Accordingly, halal lifestyle on Instagram can be understood as a dynamic networked ecosystem, where social interaction, economic interests, and Islamic values intersect and collectively shape a complex network configuration.

## F. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the #HalalLifestyle social network on Instagram forms a structure that is expansive yet fragmented, characterized by low network density and high modularity. These findings indicate that increased user participation does not automatically translate into strong network integration. Interactions among actors tend to be concentrated within specific thematic clusters, while cross-cluster connectivity remains limited. Structurally, the network exhibits a pronounced core–periphery pattern, in which a small number of actors with high follower counts and substantial in-degree values play a dominant role in connecting the network and directing information flows. Consequently, network size and growth are influenced more by core actors than by the participation of peripheral actors.

These findings reaffirm key assumptions of social network theory and influence diffusion, which emphasize that follower count and in-degree centrality exert a significant influence on network expansion and interaction intensity. Opinion leaders therefore hold a strategic role in shaping discourse on social media. Within the context of halal lifestyle, influencers, halal brand accounts, and digital Muslim communities function not only as content producers, but also as central nodes that determine the direction, visibility, and reach of halal lifestyle discourse. However, the dominance of core actors also implies an unequal distribution of influence, which may limit the diversity of halal lifestyle narratives circulating in digital spaces.

From an Islamic perspective, this study reveals that halal lifestyle representations on social media have shifted from purely normative halal–haram principles toward a lifestyle construct that is increasingly visual, symbolic, and economically driven. Nevertheless, foundational Islamic values particularly halal and *ṭayyib* remain essential normative frameworks shaping interactions within the network. The segmented network structure highlights ongoing challenges in preserving the substantive ethical and spiritual dimensions of Islamic values amid the logic of popularity and commodification. Accordingly, core actors within the network carry a moral and social responsibility to ensure that the dissemination of halal lifestyle content prioritizes education and collective benefit (*maṣlahah*), rather than engagement metrics alone.

The practical implications of this study suggest that the development of a sustainable digital halal ecosystem requires collaborative strategies that enhance cross-cluster connectivity. For halal industry stakeholders and Muslim community managers, insights into network structure can inform more inclusive communication strategies that do not rely solely on major influencers, but also empower peripheral actors to participate meaningfully. Meanwhile, for policymakers and Islamic institutions, these findings provide an empirical basis for designing digital halal literacy policies aimed at strengthening public understanding of halal values in a comprehensive and balanced manner.

This study is subject to several limitations. First, the relatively short observation period and the focus on a single social media platform limit the generalizability of the findings to the broader digital halal ecosystem. Second, the analysis emphasizes network

structure and quantitative SNA metrics, without deeply exploring the subjective meanings and motivations of actors involved in producing and consuming halal lifestyle content.

Based on these limitations, future research is encouraged to extend the observation period, conduct cross-platform comparative analyses, and integrate SNA with qualitative approaches such as discourse analysis or in-depth interviews. Such mixed-method designs are expected to provide a more holistic understanding of halal lifestyle dynamics as a social, economic, and religious phenomenon in the digital era, while further strengthening the theoretical and practical contributions of research in the fields of Islamic economics and communication studies.

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