

Communication Identity Formation of Shariah-Compliant Make-Up Artists as Micro-Entrepreneurs

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Abstract

This study examines the communication identity formation of Shariah-compliant Make-Up Artists (MUAs) as micro-entrepreneurs in West Java, Indonesia. It aims to understand how MUAs negotiate personal religious values with professional demands in the beauty industry, and how such negotiation shapes their communication practices and professional identity. The study contributes to communication scholarship by exploring religiously-informed professional identity, providing insights for micro-entrepreneurs and digital marketing strategies in creative sectors. A qualitative phenomenological approach was adopted to capture the subjective experiences of ten female MUAs who implement Shariah principles in their services and social media promotion. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, digital observations, and documentation, and analyzed using thematic analysis supported by NVivo 12 Plus. Data validity was ensured through triangulation and member checking. Findings indicate that MUA Shariah identity is structured across four interconnected layers, personal, enacted, relational, and communal, forming a dynamic yet coherent communication identity. Personal identity is dominated by religiosity, reflection, and adaptation; enacted identity reflects discipline, consistency, and situational flexibility; relational identity emphasizes professionalism, empathy, and persuasive communication with clients; and communal identity is reinforced through social recognition, collaboration, and moderation in practice. The integration of these layers generates adaptive, collaborative, reliable, and visionary communicative traits, allowing MUAs to maintain religious integrity while achieving professional credibility and sustainable business practices. These results extend the Communication Theory of Identity (CTI) framework to contexts of religiously-informed micro-

entrepreneurship, demonstrating the strategic role of personal and communal values in shaping professional communication.

Keywords: *Communication Identity, Micro-Entrepreneurship, Religious Professionalism, Shariah Make-Up Artist.*

1. Introduction

The global beauty industry is often associated with aesthetic standards that emphasize visual expression, creativity, and market-driven trends. Previous studies have suggested that such standards are frequently shaped by dominant cultural narratives, including Western-oriented ideals (Irma et al., 2015). However, rather than assuming a uniform global influence, recent scholarship highlights the coexistence and contestation of multiple value systems, including the growing incorporation of religious principles into consumption and professional practices. In Muslim-majority contexts, this development is reflected in the increasing visibility of religious identity within economic activities and professional domains (Muty, 2016).

In Indonesia, one manifestation of this phenomenon is the emergence of Shariah Make-Up Artists (MUA), professionals who integrate Islamic principles into beauty practices (Maulida et al., 2023). These practitioners adapt makeup techniques in accordance with religious considerations, such as the use of halal-certified cosmetics, avoidance of excessive embellishment, and adherence to gender interaction norms (Mu'awanah, 2022). Beyond technical practices, Shariah MUAs (predominantly women operating within micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs)) also utilize digital platforms as spaces for self-presentation, branding, and client engagement. This indicates that their professional activities are not merely technical but are embedded within broader communicative processes of identity construction.

The expansion of this profession is closely linked to the broader growth of the halal economy. Reports such as the State of the Global Islamic Economy 2024/2025 indicate Indonesia's leading position in modest fashion and its strong performance in halal cosmetics, alongside the significant contribution of MSMEs to the national beauty market, it has been said that the market value of the national cosmetics industry is estimated to reach around US\$9.17 billion by 2024, with around 83% of industry players coming from the micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) sector. These developments suggest that the beauty industry functions not only as an aesthetic domain but also as a site where economic, cultural, and religious values intersect. This intersection is important to examine because it reflects broader socio-cultural

transformations in which religious values are increasingly articulated within professional and digital spaces, particularly among women entrepreneurs in MSMEs. Understanding how these actors operate within such hybrid contexts is therefore essential for explaining how faith-based principles are maintained, adapted, or negotiated in contemporary market environments. Nevertheless, the increasing integration of religious values into a highly visual and trend-driven industry raises critical questions about how professionals navigate potentially competing demands.

Shariah MUAs operate within a complex communicative environment where professional expectations, such as creativity, trend adaptation, and client satisfaction, may not always align with religious commitments. This condition creates a context in which identity is not fixed but continuously negotiated. Prior claims regarding such tensions (Scott, 2025; Rizal, 2025) are retained here as indicative references, yet this study does not rely on unverifiable future-dated sources; instead, it frames the issue as an empirical question requiring systematic investigation. Specifically, the problem addressed in this study is: how do Shariah MUAs construct and negotiate their professional identity across different communicative contexts when confronted with potentially conflicting religious and industry expectations?

From a theoretical perspective, this study draws on the Communication Theory of Identity (CTI), which conceptualizes identity as constituted through four interrelated layers: personal, enacted, relational, and communal (Hecht, 1993). Importantly, CTI does not assume harmony among these layers; rather, it emphasizes that tension, dissonance, and negotiation are inherent to identity processes. In this regard, the experiences of Shariah MUAs provide a relevant empirical context to examine how such inter-layer dynamics are communicatively managed in professional settings.

Existing research has explored themes such as halal consumption, Muslim entrepreneurship, and digital marketing in MSMEs. However, the integration of these strands remains limited, particularly in explaining how individuals actively construct and negotiate identity through communication practices in religiously grounded professions (Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016; Caza et al., 2018; Walther et al., 2015). More specifically, prior studies tend to examine these issues in isolation, focusing either on halal consumption (Mutty, 2016), women's entrepreneurship in Islamic contexts (Mu'awanah, 2022), or identity construction within organizational and digital communication settings (Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016; Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010). As a result, there is still limited empirical understanding of how identity is communicatively constructed and

negotiated across multiple identity layers within religiously grounded professions that operate in highly visual and market-driven industries such as beauty services.

While a preliminary bibliometric mapping (e.g., using VOSviewer) suggests a concentration of studies on halal lifestyle and modest fashion, this study acknowledges the limitation of such approaches when not accompanied by transparent search strategies and systematic review protocols. Therefore, instead of claiming novelty based solely on the absence of studies on Shariah MUAs, this research positions itself within broader discussions on religious identity negotiation, gendered digital entrepreneurship, and communicative identity construction. In this regard, the novelty of this study lies in its effort to integrate the Communication Theory of Identity (CTI) with the empirical context of Shariah-based beauty professionals, specifically by examining how multiple identity layers (personal, enacted, relational, and communal) are simultaneously constructed and negotiated within both digital and client-based interactions.

Based on this positioning, the objectives of this study are threefold: (1) to examine how Shariah MUAs construct personal, enacted, relational, and communal identities in their professional communication practices; (2) to analyze the forms of tension and negotiation that emerge across these identity layers; and (3) to understand how these processes are articulated within digital and client-based interactions. By addressing these objectives, this study seeks to contribute to the development of communication theory (particularly CTI) by providing empirical insights into identity negotiation in religiously grounded professional contexts, as well as enriching discussions on women's entrepreneurship in the digital era.

2. Method

2.1. Types and Approaches to Research

This study uses a qualitative method to understand the subjective experiences of Sharia Make Up Artists (MUAs) in forming communication identity based on religious values. The qualitative approach is chosen because the focus of the study lies in exploring social reality, subjective experience, communication strategies, and identity dynamics of Sharia MUAs in depth. While this study is informed by a phenomenological perspective, particularly in capturing participants' lived experiences and meanings, it does not strictly apply formal phenomenological procedures such as Husserlian analysis or Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Instead, the study utilizes thematic analysis to systematically explore patterns of meaning across participants' narratives. This approach

allows the study to retain sensitivity to lived experience while ensuring a structured and transparent analytical process. The research is guided by the Communication Theory of Identity (CTI), which views identity as a multi-layered construct formed through communication processes.

2.2. Units of Analysis

The unit of analysis of this research refers to the Communication Theory of Identity (CTI) proposed by Hecht, which views identity as a construction formed through communication. The analysis focuses on personal identity, namely, how Sharia MUAs interpret themselves as actors in a Sharia-based makeup business. In addition, the study also considers the layers of enacted identity, relational identity, and communal identity as reflected in professional practices, interactions with clients, and involvement in communities that share similar religious values. To enhance analytical clarity, these identity layers are examined as interrelated dimensions in understanding identity construction.

2.3. Characteristics of Informants and Informant Collection Techniques

The research informants are sharia women Make Up Artists (MUAs) who run sharia-based makeup businesses in West Java and actively use social media as a means of communication and promotion. Informants were selected using purposive sampling based on experience in sharia makeup practice and understanding of religious values in professional activities. To strengthen the sampling rigor, the inclusion criteria were further specified as follows:

- (1) having a minimum of two years of experience as a MUA;
- (2) actively providing sharia-compliant makeup services;
- (3) actively using at least one social media platform (e.g., Instagram or TikTok) for business purposes; and
- (4) having practical experience in interacting with clients in a professional context.

The process of collecting informants was further developed through snowball sampling, where initial informants recommended other informants with similar characteristics. To reduce potential bias from homogeneous networks, variation among informants (e.g., experience level and business scale) was considered, and reflexivity was maintained during the sampling process. A total of ten informants participated in this study. The number of informants was considered sufficient as the data had reached a point where no substantially new themes emerged.

2.4. Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews, digital observations, and documentation. Interviews were the primary method to access participants' lived experiences. Each interview lasted

approximately 45–90 minutes, conducted in one or two sessions, either face-to-face or via online platforms. An interview guide was used to explore identity construction, professional experiences, and religious values. Digital observation was conducted over a three-month period, focusing on participants' social media content, including visual posts, captions, and audience interactions. The selection of observed materials was based on their relevance to identity representation and communication practices. Documentation included screenshots and digital artifacts supporting the analysis of communication identity. All participants provided informed consent, including the use of publicly accessible social media data. Ethical principles such as confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained.

2.5. Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022), enriched with an interpretative and idiographic sensitivity inspired by phenomenological inquiry. The analysis followed several iterative stages:

- (1) repeated reading of transcripts for data familiarization;
- (2) initial coding of meaningful segments;
- (3) development of themes within individual cases;
- (4) cross-case comparison to identify patterns of convergence and divergence; and
- (5) interpretative synthesis using the CTI framework.

The analysis incorporated a double interpretative process, where the researcher engaged deeply with participants' meaning-making while constructing analytical interpretations. To enhance rigor, peer debriefing and intercoder discussion were conducted to ensure consistency in coding. Divergent or contradictory data were actively examined through negative case analysis to refine emerging interpretations. NVivo 12 Plus software was used as a data management tool to organize transcripts, codes, and analytic memos; however, interpretation remained a reflexive and researcher-driven process.

2.6. Data Validation Techniques

The validity and trustworthiness of the data were ensured through data source triangulation, member checking, and the provision of rich and thick descriptions. This study specifically applies data source triangulation, in which multiple qualitative data sources (namely, in-depth interviews, digital observations, and documentation) are systematically compared and integrated to enhance the credibility of the findings, rather than to achieve cross-method validation. The triangulation process was conducted through iterative comparison across data sources by identifying patterns of convergence, complementarity, and divergence. Interview data were cross-

checked with participants' social media representations and digital artifacts to examine the consistency between narrated identities and enacted communication practices. Observational data further enriched the contextual interpretation by capturing naturally occurring interactions and visual representations. This integrative process enabled a more comprehensive understanding of identity construction and reduced the risk of relying on a single source of interpretation. Member checking was conducted by inviting participants to review and confirm the researcher's initial interpretations to ensure that the findings accurately reflected their lived experiences. In addition, reflexive journaling and an audit trail were maintained to document analytical decisions, enhance transparency, and strengthen the confirmability of the study.

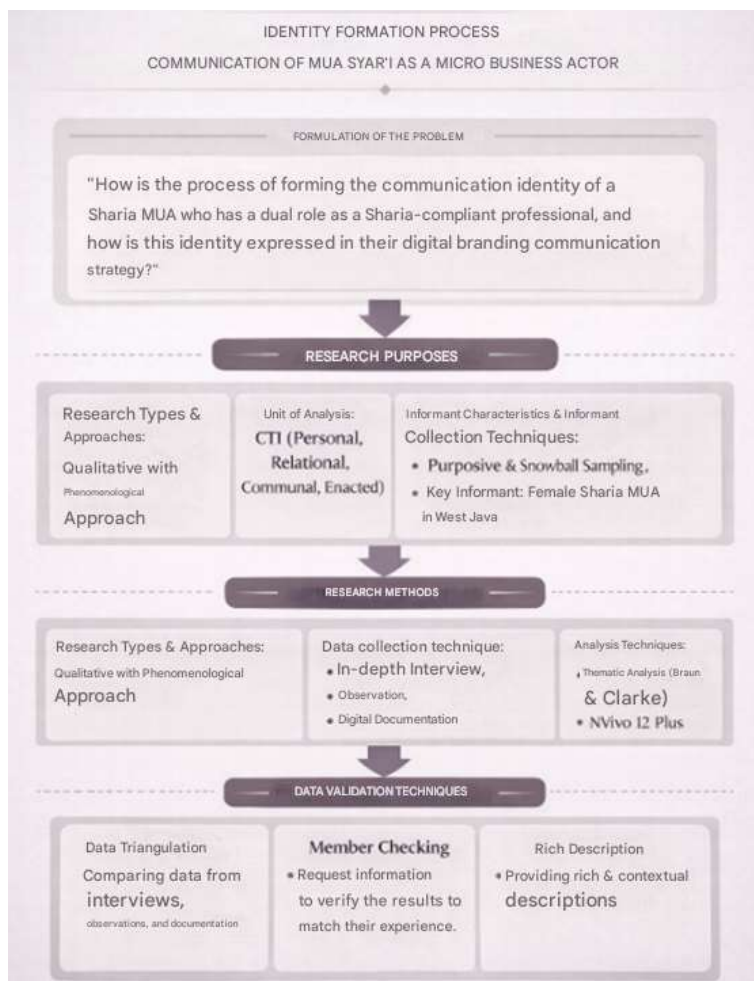


Figure 1. Research Flow Diagram

3. Results

3.1. Personal Identity

Table 1. Personal Identity Coding Results

Codes	Number of coding references	Percentage
Nodes\\01.Personal Identity\Religious	148	48%
Nodes\\01.Personal Identity\Reflective	85	28%
Nodes\\01.Personal Identity\Inconsistent	76	25%
	309	100%

Table 1 presents the distribution of thematic coding across the dataset. The data show that personal identity among Shariah MUAs is categorized into three themes: religious (48%), reflective (28%), and inconsistent (25%). These frequencies indicate the relative prominence of each theme within the dataset, with religious identity appearing most frequently, followed by reflective and inconsistency.

3.1.1. Religious



Figure 2. Religious Personal Identity Coding Results



Figure 3. Wordcloud Religious

The religious theme consists of expressions related to religious values identified in the dataset. The data include references to intention (niat), worship, blessings, and adherence to sharia principles. The data also include references to maintaining boundaries in makeup practices, such as avoiding prohibited elements and ensuring modesty.

As one informant stated:

"I always intend this work as an act of worship, so from the start I have to maintain both the product and the way I serve clients."

This excerpt contains expressions related to intention and adherence to religious values. Figure 2 and Figure 3 present the coding results and frequently used terms within this theme. Overall, the religious theme contains recurring references to religious values in the dataset.

3.1.2. Reflective

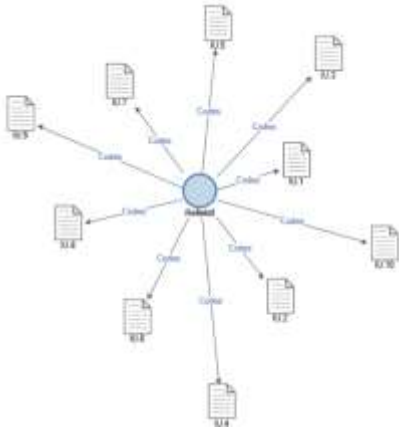


Figure 4. Reflective Personal Identity Coding Results



Figure 5. Wordcloud Reflective

This excerpt contains expressions related to intention and adherence to religious values. Figure 2 and Figure 3 present the coding results and frequently used terms within this theme. Overall, the religious theme contains recurring references to religious values in the dataset.

As one participant explained:

"I used to do just ordinary makeup, but after learning and understanding its limitations, I started to change the way I work."

This excerpt contains expressions related to changes in practice following increased knowledge. Figure 4 and Figure 5 present the coding results and commonly used terms within this theme. Overall, the reflective theme contains references to processes of learning and adjustment in the dataset.

3.1.3. Inconsistency

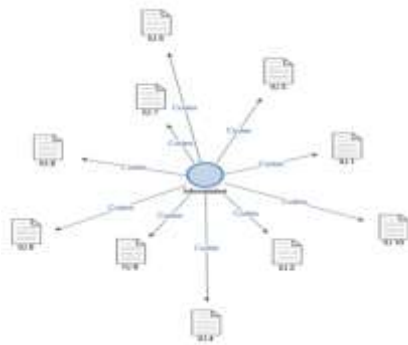


Figure 6. Inconsistent Personal Identity Coding Results



Figure 7. Wordcloud Inconsistency

The inconsistency theme consists of expressions related to doubt, hesitation, and adjustment identified in the dataset. The data include references to situations where personal considerations do not fully align with client requests.

As one informant noted:

“Sometimes I still have doubts, especially if the client's request is not appropriate, so I have to choose and adjust.”

This excerpt contains expressions related to doubt and decision-making in response to client requests. Figures 6 and 7 present the coding distribution and frequently used terms in this theme. Overall, the inconsistency theme contains recurring references to doubt and adjustment in the dataset.

3.2. Enactment Identity

Table 2. Results of Coding Enactment Identity

Codes	Number of coding references	Percentage
Nodes\02. Enactment Identity\Discipline	80	35%
Nodes\02. Enactment Identity\Consistent	81	35%
Nodes\02. Enactment Identity\Situational	70	30%
	231	100%

Table 2 presents the distribution of coding across enactment identity

The situational theme consists of expressions related to adaptation in different conditions identified in the dataset. The data include references to adjusting communication and practices based on client needs while considering Sharia principles.

As one informant noted:

"If there is a specific request, I will explain it first, then look for a solution that is still in accordance with sharia."

This excerpt contains expressions related to adaptation in response to specific situations. Figures 12 and 13 present the coding results and commonly used terms within this theme. Overall, the situational theme contains recurring references to adaptive practices in the dataset.

3.3. Relational Identity

Table 3. Relational Identity Coding Results

Codes	Number of coding references	Percentage
Nodes\\03. Relational Identity\Professional	77	35%
Nodes\\03. Relational Identity\Persuasive	74	34%
Nodes\\03. Relational Identity\Empathy	68	31%
	219	100%

Table 3 presents the distribution of coding across relational identity themes. The data show that relational identity among Shariah MUAs is categorized into three: professional (35%), persuasive (34%), and empathy (31%). These frequencies indicate the relative occurrence of each theme within the dataset, with professional appearing slightly more frequently, followed by persuasive and empathy.

3.3.1. Professional



Figure 14. Professional Relational Identity Coding Results



Figure 15. Wordcloud Professional

The professional theme consists of expressions related to professional conduct identified in the dataset. The data include references to structured work practices, adherence to agreements, and communication of boundaries in accordance with Sharia principles.

As one informant stated:

“I still explain the boundaries in a polite manner, so that the client remains comfortable but also understands.”

This excerpt contains expressions related to communication of boundaries and professional conduct. Figure 14 and Figure 15 present the coding results and commonly used terms within this theme. Overall, the professional theme contains recurring references to structured practices and communication in the dataset.

3.3.2. Persuasive

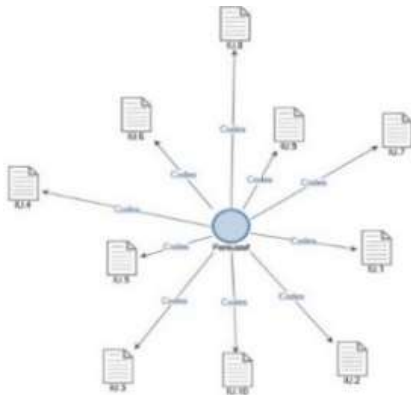


Figure 16. Persuasive Relational Identity Coding Results



Figure 17. Wordcloud Persuasive

The persuasive theme consists of expressions related to communication strategies identified in the dataset. The data includes references to explaining information gradually and providing understanding to clients in relation to Sharia principles.

As one informant explained:

“I usually explain it slowly first, so that the client can understand without feeling forced.”

This excerpt contains expressions related to gradual explanation and communication approaches. Figure 16 and Figure 17 present the coding results and commonly used terms within this theme. Overall, the

persuasive theme contains recurring references to communication strategies in the dataset.

3.3.3. Empathic

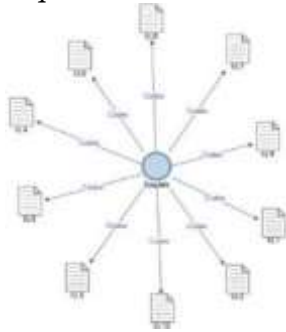


Figure 18. Results of *Empathic* Relational Identity Coding



Figure 19. Wordcloud Empatik

The empathy theme consists of expressions related to understanding client conditions identified in the dataset. The data include references to considering client backgrounds, levels of understanding, and responses during interaction.

As one informant noted:

“I understand that not all clients understand straight away, so it has to be conveyed in a good way.”

This excerpt contains expressions related to understanding and adjusting communication to client conditions. Figure 18 and Figure 19 present the coding results and commonly used terms within this theme. Overall, the empathy theme contains recurring references to understanding and adjustment in the dataset.

3.4. Communal Identity

Table 4. Communal Identity Coding Results

Codes	Number of coding references	Percentage
Nodes\\04. Communal Identity\ Legitimative	54	35%
Nodes\\04. Communal Identity\ Dependency	51	33%
Nodes\\04. Communal Identity\ Moderate	50	32%
	155	100%

3.4.2. Dependency



Figure 22. Results of Coding *Communal Identity Dependent*



Figure 23. Wordcloud *Dependency*

The dependency theme consists of expressions related to community support identified in the dataset. The data include references to sharing experiences, receiving guidance, and maintaining interaction within the community.

As one participant noted:

“In the community, we share experiences and support each other.”

This excerpt contains expressions related to shared experiences and support. Figure 22 and Figure 23 present the coding results and commonly used terms within this theme. Overall, the dependency theme contains recurring references to community support in the dataset.

3.4.3. Moderate

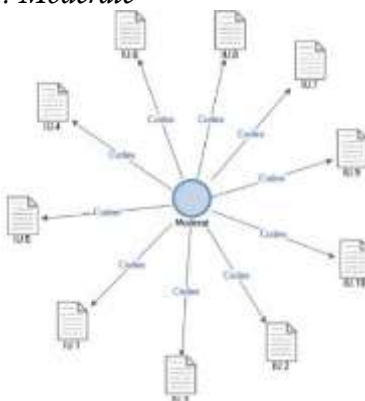


Figure 24. *Moderate Communal Identity Coding Results*



Figure 25. Wordcloud *Moderate*

The moderate theme consists of expressions related to balance in practice identified in the dataset. The data include references to applying sharia principles while adjusting to professional and social conditions.

As one informant explained:

"Makeup can still be used as long as it is not excessive and still complies with Sharia limits."

This excerpt contains expressions related to balance in applying principles. Figures 24 and 25 present the coding results and commonly used terms within this theme. Overall, the moderate theme contains recurring references to balanced practices in the dataset.

3.5. Summary of Communication Identity Dimensions

This section summarizes the main findings across personal, enactment, relational, and communal identity. The findings show that personal identity is described by informants through religious values, reflective processes, and moments of inconsistency, which are reflected in how they talk about their beliefs, learning experiences, and internal considerations in their work. These aspects are further expressed in enactment identity, where informants describe their practices through discipline, consistency, and situational adjustments, particularly in applying sharia principles in their daily makeup activities, maintaining boundaries, and adapting to client needs. In relational contexts, the findings show that informants describe their interactions with clients through professionalism, persuasive communication, and empathy, as reflected in how they explain boundaries, adjust communication styles, and maintain client comfort. At the communal level, the findings indicate that informants describe their involvement in professional communities through experiences related to legitimacy, dependency, and moderation, including participation in shared activities, knowledge exchange, and maintaining a balance between religious values and professional demands. Overall, the findings show that communication identity is described by informants through personal experiences, professional practices, interactions with clients, and involvement in communities.

4. Discussion

4.1 Integration of Shariah MUA Communication Identity

Items clustered by word similarity

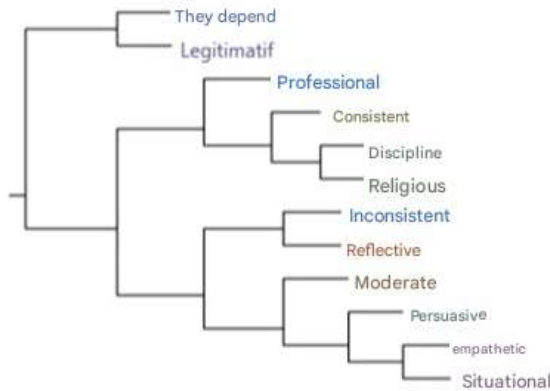


Figure 26. Cluster Analysis

The NVivo cluster analysis (Figure 26) shows that the communication identity of Shariah Makeup Artists (Shariah MUA) is formed through the integration of personal, relational, enacted, and communal identity layers. This is reflected in the consistent narratives across informants, particularly in how they balance religious values, client expectations, and professional standards in delivering makeup services. The similarity in expressions indicates that identity is shaped not only individually but also through shared professional experiences. This finding supports the Communication Theory of Identity (CTI), which conceptualizes identity as an interplay of interconnected layers (Hecht, 1993; Jung & Hecht, 2004). However, compared to earlier applications of CTI that focus on individual negotiation, this study highlights the role of collective reinforcement in stabilizing identity. A similar emphasis on social interaction can be found in (Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016) and further elaborated by (Caza et al., 2018), who view identity as continuously constructed through social processes. The stronger convergence observed in this study may be explained by the normative nature of sharia-based practice, where religious guidelines limit interpretive variation and encourage shared understanding among practitioners. More recent work by J. Brown also highlights how religious communities reinforce shared meanings, particularly in contexts where belief systems guide everyday practices. In line with this, the findings suggest that Shariah MUA do not merely negotiate identity individually, but reproduce it collectively through recurring communication patterns, especially in interactions with clients.

This explains why similar strategies, such as moderating makeup styles or reframing client requests, emerge consistently across informants. In practice, this integrated identity becomes visible when Shariah MUA respond to diverse client demands while maintaining adherence to Shariah principles. Their communication reflects both adaptability and consistency, indicating that identity is continuously negotiated but remains anchored in collectively shared values.

4.2. Religious and Disciplinary Relations

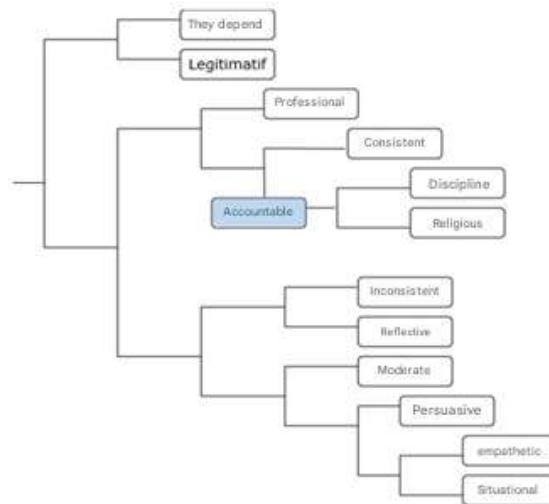


Figure 27. Results of Accountable Analysis (Relationship of Discipline and Religion)

The findings indicate that religiosity and discipline are closely interconnected in shaping how Shariah MUA communicate and perform their roles (Figure 27). Religiosity provides the ethical foundation that guides decision-making, while discipline ensures that these values are consistently enacted in makeup practices and client interactions. This relationship aligns with identity theory, which emphasizes congruence between identity standards and behavior (Brown, 2020; Burke & Stets, 2009). However, this study extends the framework by showing that discipline functions as a mechanism that operationalizes religious values, translating them into structured and repeatable communication practices. While Men (associates consistency with organizational communication systems, the present findings indicate that, in this context, consistency is driven more by internalized moral commitment than by formal structures. A similar emphasis on Islamic communication practices can be found in (Irma et al., 2015), yet their focus remains at the institutional level. In

contrast, this study highlights how discipline operates in micro-level interactions, particularly when Shariah MUA negotiate with clients whose preferences may not fully align with Shariah guidelines. This micro-level emphasis is also consistent with recent studies on Islamic-based professional practices, such as Rizal, which show that adherence to Islamic business ethics influences not only strategic decisions but also day-to-day interactions with clients. The interplay between religiosity and discipline becomes especially evident in situations of tension, where practitioners must balance client satisfaction with religious compliance. Rather than rejecting requests outright, Shariah MUA tend to redirect or adjust them within acceptable boundaries. This pattern reflects how discipline supports not only consistency but also controlled flexibility, enabling practitioners to maintain professional relationships without compromising their value framework.

4.3. Accountable and Consistent Relationships

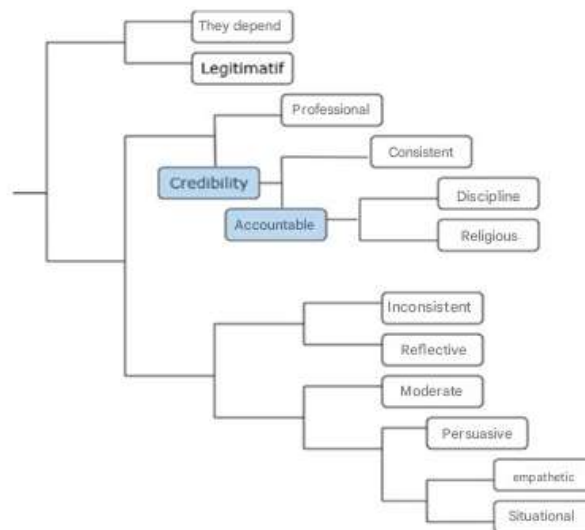


Figure 28. Credibility Analysis Results

The findings show that accountability and consistency are closely related in shaping the credibility of Shariah Makeup Artists (Shariah MUA) (Figure 28). Consistency is reflected in the repeated application of sharia principles in makeup practices, while accountability appears in the conscious responsibility taken in each client interaction, particularly when explaining limitations or making professional decisions. This pattern aligns with classical credibility theory, which emphasizes expertise and trustworthiness as key components of credibility (Hovland & Weiss, 1951), as well as more recent studies highlighting the role of consistent

communication in building trust (Men, 2015; Walden et al., 2017). However, the present findings extend this perspective by showing that credibility in this context is not only based on technical consistency, but also on moral accountability rooted in religious values. A different perspective is offered by (Bolino et al., 2016), where credibility may be shaped through impression management strategies. In contrast, the findings here indicate that Shariah MUA tend to maintain credibility through value adherence rather than strategic self-presentation. This difference may be explained by the normative expectations within religious-based professions, where authenticity is closely monitored and deviations may reduce trust. Similar patterns are also reflected in (Rizal, 2025), which shows that Islamic business practices emphasize ethical consistency in maintaining customer trust. In practice, this relationship becomes evident when Shariah MUA handles client expectations that may not fully align with Shariah guidelines. Their consistent communication, combined with a sense of responsibility in decision-making, reinforces client trust, indicating that credibility is sustained through the alignment between repeated behavior and ethical commitment.

4.4. Credibility and Professional Relationship

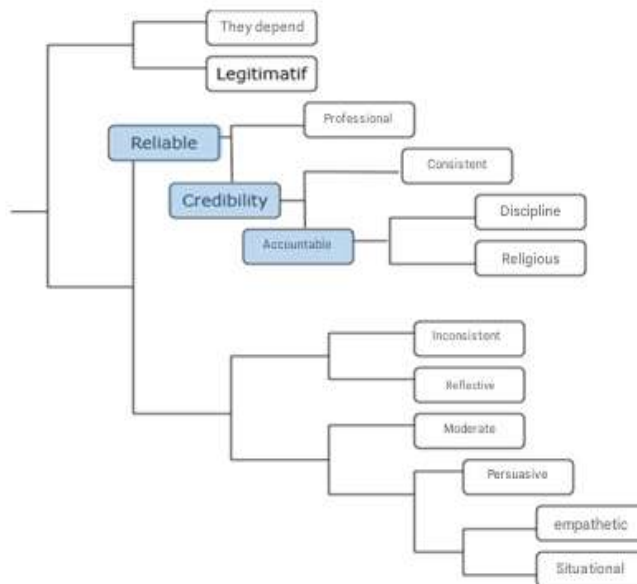


Figure 29. Reliable Analysis Results

The findings indicate that credibility and professionalism interact to form a reliable communication identity among Shariah MUA (Figure 29). Credibility establishes moral trust, while professionalism is reflected in technical competence, structured service delivery, and consistent work

standards. This relationship is consistent with the concept of legitimacy, which integrates normative (moral) and cognitive (competence-based) dimensions (Suddaby et al., 2017). Similarly, Ashforth & Schinoff (highlight that professional identity is shaped through the alignment of values and role performance. However, the present findings suggest that, in the context of Shariah MUA, professionalism is not neutral but embedded in religious values, influencing how services are delivered and evaluated. Compared to broader organizational contexts, where professionalism is often defined in technical terms, the findings here indicate that technical skills alone are insufficient. This is also supported by recent discussions in Islamic business contexts (Rizal, 2025), where professional conduct is closely tied to ethical and religious compliance. In practice, this relationship is reflected in how Shariah MUA maintains service quality while adhering to Sharia principles, even when facing diverse client expectations. Reliability, therefore, emerges from the integration of competence and moral trust, allowing practitioners to sustain both performance standards and ethical consistency.

4.5. Empathetic and Situational Relationships

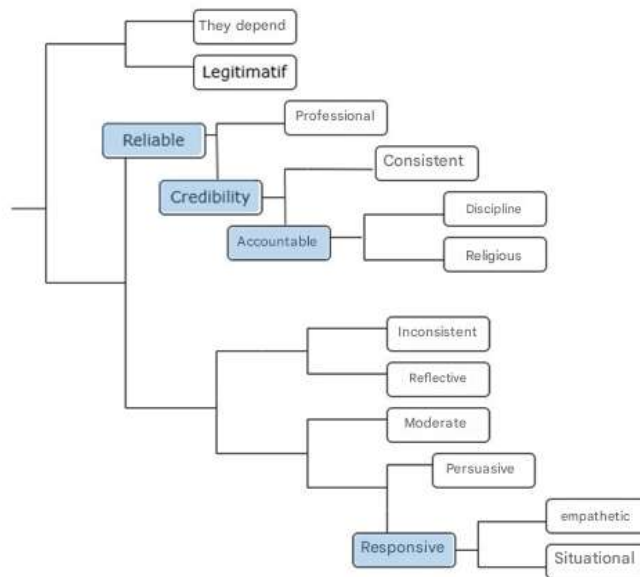


Figure 30. Responsive Analysis Results

The findings show that empathy and situational adaptability jointly shape responsive communication practices among Shariah MUA (Figure 30). Empathy enables practitioners to understand clients' emotional conditions and preferences, while adaptability allows them to adjust

communication strategies based on situational needs. This pattern aligns with interpersonal communication theory, which emphasizes sensitivity and adaptability as key components of effective interaction (DeVito, 2016). However, the present findings indicate that adaptability is not applied freely but is bounded by sharia principles, limiting how far adjustments can be made. This differs from (Ibarra, 1999), where identity adaptation is described as more flexible and exploratory. A similar emphasis on contextual responsiveness can be found in Brown (2023), particularly in how religious communities adjust practices while maintaining core beliefs. In the context of Shariah MUA, this balance becomes visible in client interactions, where practitioners may adjust communication style, tone, or explanation, but not the underlying principles guiding their services. This relationship is particularly evident when dealing with clients who have varying levels of understanding of sharia-compliant makeup. Empathy allows practitioners to engage effectively, while situational adaptability ensures that communication remains appropriate without compromising values, resulting in a form of responsiveness that is both relationally sensitive and normatively grounded.

4.6. Persuasive and Responsive Relationships

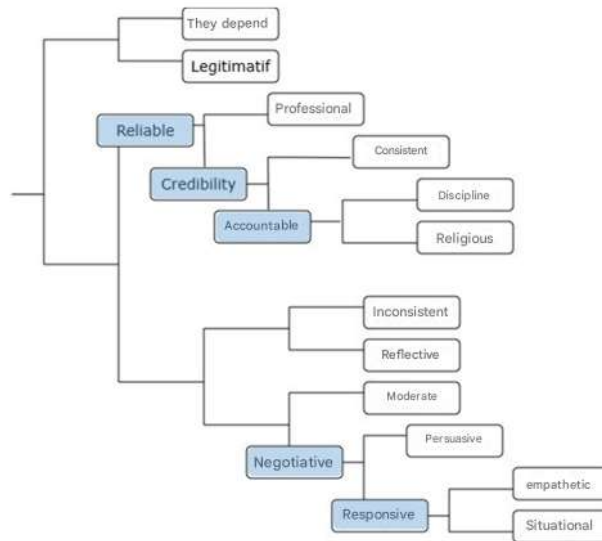


Figure 31. Results of Negotiable Analysis

The findings indicate that responsiveness and persuasiveness interact to form a negotiable communication character among Shariah MUA (Figure 31). Responsiveness allows practitioners to understand client expectations, while persuasiveness enables them to guide clients toward

accepting sharia-compliant practices. This relationship is consistent with (Perloff, 2017), who conceptualizes persuasion as a dialogical and audience-centered process. However, the present findings extend this perspective by showing that persuasion in this context functions as a form of value-based negotiation, rather than mere attitude change. Unlike (Bolino et al., 2016), where persuasion may involve impression management strategies, the findings here suggest that influence is achieved through alignment with shared understanding, rather than strategic manipulation. This pattern is also consistent with studies on professional identity, which highlight how individuals negotiate personal values with external expectations in everyday interactions (Caza et al., 2018; Ibarra, 1999). In the case of Shariah MUA, this negotiation becomes particularly visible when clients request styles that do not fully comply with Shariah guidelines. In practice, rather than rejecting such requests outright, practitioners tend to reframe or redirect them toward acceptable alternatives. This indicates that persuasion operates within clear value boundaries, allowing Shariah MUA to maintain both client relationships and adherence to religious principles through communicative negotiation.

4.7. Negotiable and Moderate Relations

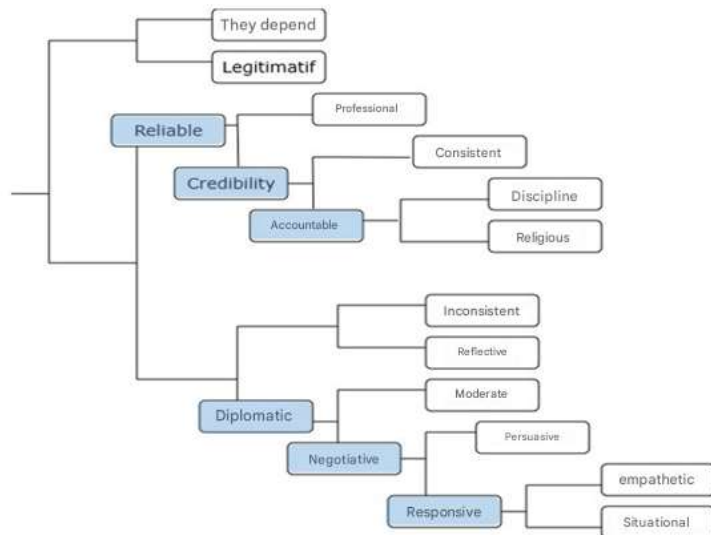


Figure 32. Results of Diplomatic Analysis

The findings indicate that negotiability and moderation jointly shape a diplomatic communication identity among Shariah Makeup Artists (Shariah MUA) (Figure 32). Negotiability is reflected in the willingness to engage in dialogue with clients, while moderation ensures that such

interaction remains within the boundaries of Sharia principles. This extends identity negotiation theory, which emphasizes flexibility in aligning identity with social expectations (Swann & Buhrmester, 2015). However, unlike general contexts where negotiation may be more open-ended, the present findings show that flexibility is regulated by value-based constraints. A similar balance between normative commitment and contextual responsiveness is discussed in legitimacy theory (Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016; Suddaby et al., 2017), which helps explain how individuals maintain value consistency while responding to situational demands. A comparable emphasis on balancing adaptation and value maintenance can be found in studies of religious identity (Peek, 2005; Verkuyten, 2018), where individuals navigate social demands while preserving core beliefs. Additionally, Caza et al. highlight that identity work involves ongoing adjustment between internal and external demands. The current findings align with these perspectives but demonstrate that, among Shariah MUA, such adjustment is more tightly bound due to religious norms. In practice, this becomes evident when practitioners negotiate client preferences by offering acceptable alternatives rather than outright rejection. This indicates that diplomacy emerges from controlled flexibility, where openness to interaction is balanced by principled limits, allowing practitioners to maintain both relational harmony and value consistency.

4.8. Inconsistent and Reflective Relationships

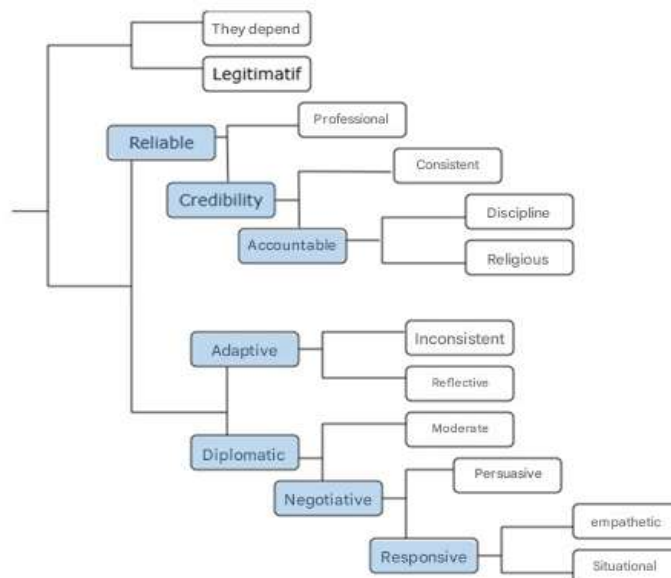


Figure 33. Adaptive Analysis Results

The findings show that inconsistency and reflexivity interact in shaping the personal identity of Shariah MUA (Figure 33). Inconsistency arises from tensions between contemporary beauty trends and adherence to Sharia principles, while reflexivity enables practitioners to reassess and realign their identity. This pattern is consistent with identity development literature, which views tension as a driver of identity formation (Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016; Ibarra, 1999). However, the present findings emphasize that inconsistency functions as a constructive mechanism, rather than a sign of instability. Similar observations are found in (Peek, 2005) and (Verkuyten, 2018), where moments of tension or doubt contribute to deeper internalization of religious identity. Within the CTI framework, these tensions can be understood as identity gaps that prompt reflexive processes (Jung & Hecht, 2004). While previous studies highlight identity gaps as potential sources of conflict, the findings here show that they can also serve as drivers of adaptive alignment, particularly in contexts where individuals must reconcile evolving external influences with stable internal values. In practice, this is evident when Shariah MUA encounter beauty trends that challenge Shariah norms. Rather than adopting or rejecting them outright, practitioners engage in reflection and reinterpretation, allowing them to adapt selectively while maintaining core principles.

4.9. Adaptive and Diplomatic Relations

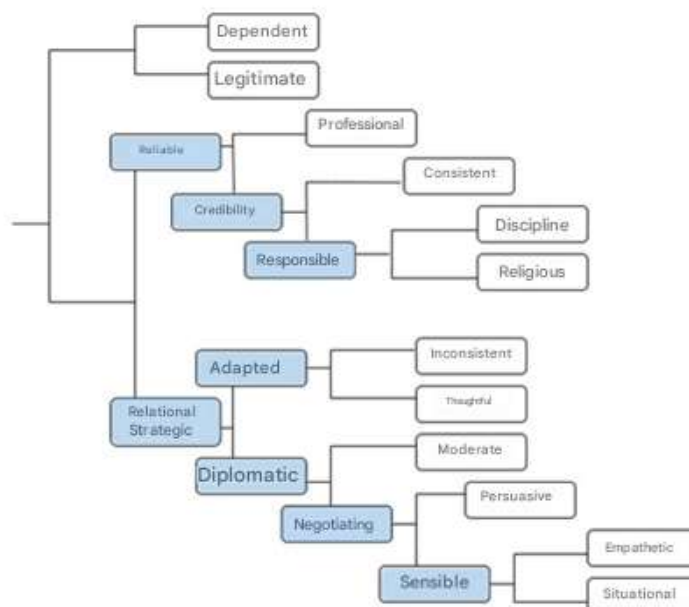


Figure 34. Results of Relational Strategic Analysis

The findings indicate that adaptability and diplomacy combine to form relational strategic communication among Shariah MUA (Figure 34). Adaptability reflects the ability to adjust communication based on client characteristics, while diplomacy ensures that such adjustments are conveyed in a respectful and non-confrontational manner. This aligns with identity-as-narrative perspectives, where individuals adapt communication strategies in response to social contexts (Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010). However, the present findings place stronger emphasis on relational harmony as an outcome, extending beyond mere role adaptation. J. Brown (2023) Similarly, it highlights how religious communities maintain cohesion through adaptive practices, which helps explain why communication strategies among Shariah MUA prioritize maintaining positive relationships. Furthermore, (DeVito, 2016) emphasizes the role of sensitivity in interpersonal communication. The current findings complement this by showing that sensitivity is operationalized through diplomacy, particularly when communicating value-based limitations. In practice, this is visible when practitioners adjust their tone and explanation style without creating conflict, especially in situations where client expectations differ. This indicates that communication is not only adaptive but also strategically oriented toward preserving relational balance.

4.10. Reliable and Strategic Relational Relationships

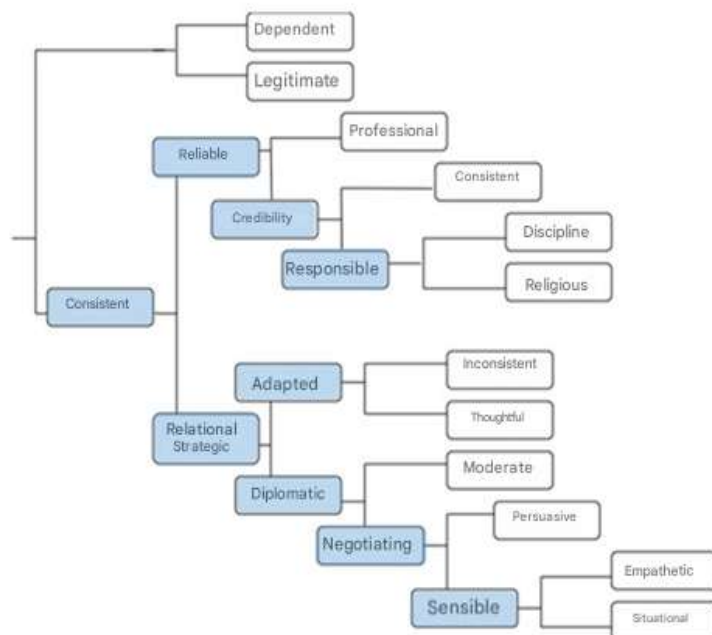


Figure 35. Coherent Analysis Results

The findings show that reliability and relational strategy interact to produce coherence in the communication identity of Shariah MUA (Figure 35). Reliability is reflected in consistent adherence to sharia principles, while relational strategy enables flexibility in responding to different client situations. This supports the concept of coherence in CTI, which emphasizes alignment across identity layers (Hecht, 1993a; Jung & Hecht, 2004). However, the present findings extend this perspective by showing that coherence emerges through an ongoing balancing process, rather than a fixed state. This is consistent with (Caza et al., 2018), who highlight identity as continuously constructed through interaction. Additionally, (Walden et al., 2017) emphasize that communication consistency contributes to organizational commitment and trust. The current findings align with this but demonstrate that, in the context of Shariah MUA, consistency must coexist with relational flexibility to remain effective in client interactions. In practice, coherence becomes visible when practitioners maintain stable values while adapting communication strategies based on situational needs. This balance allows them to remain predictable in principle while responsive in interaction.

4.11. Dependent and Legitimative Relationships

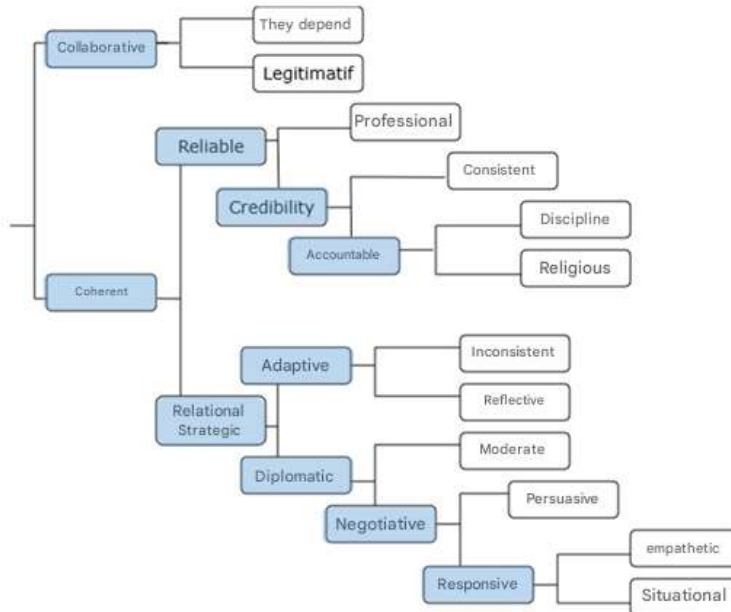


Figure 36. Collaborative Analysis Results

The findings indicate that dependency and legitimacy jointly shape a collaborative identity among Shariah MUA (Figure 36). Dependency

reflects reliance on professional communities for support and shared understanding, while legitimacy relates to recognition gained through collective engagement. This aligns with Wenger’s concept of communities of practice, where identity is reinforced through participation. Similarly, (Suddaby et al., 2017) emphasize that legitimacy is constructed through both internal alignment and external recognition. The present findings extend these perspectives by showing that legitimacy is strengthened through collective identity projection, rather than individual positioning. Brown (2023) also highlights the role of religious communities in reinforcing shared values and trust. In line with this, the findings suggest that Shariah MUA rely on community engagement not only for support but also for validating their practices in the eyes of clients. In practice, this relationship is evident in how practitioners share experiences, align practices, and build collective credibility. This indicates that identity is reinforced internally through dependency and externally through legitimacy.

4.12. Collaborative and Coherent Relationships

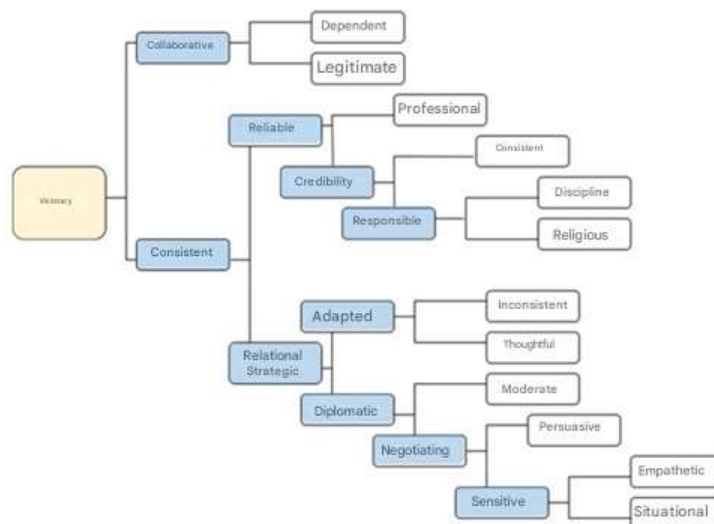


Figure 37. Results of Visionary Analysis

The findings show that collaboration and coherence interact to form a visionary communication identity among Shariah MUA (Figure 37). Collaboration is reflected in active participation in professional communities, while coherence ensures alignment between values and practices. This pattern is consistent with leadership and identity literature, where vision is grounded in shared values and collective direction (Kouzes & Posner, 2017; Stam, 2015). However, the present findings suggest that

visionary identity can emerge from collective interaction, not only from formal leadership roles. Wenger (1998) similarly emphasizes that communities of practice facilitate shared learning and identity development. In addition, Caza et al. highlight that identity evolves through continuous interaction and meaning-making. The current findings support this view by showing that collaboration enables practitioners to collectively shape future-oriented practices. In practice, this becomes visible in how Shariah MUA contribute to developing shared standards and influencing the direction of sharia-compliant beauty practices. This indicates that communication identity is not only maintained but also projected forward through collective engagement.

4.13. Contribution

This study offers several contributions to the development of communication and identity scholarship, particularly within the context of religious-based professional practices. First, at the theoretical level, this study extends the Communication Theory of Identity (CTI) by demonstrating that identity integration in professional religious contexts is not solely an individual process, but is reinforced through collective practices and shared meaning systems. While CTI emphasizes the interaction between identity layers (Hecht, 1993; Jung & Hecht, 2004), the present findings show that such integration is stabilized through recurring communication patterns within professional communities.

Second, this study contributes to identity and professional communication literature by introducing the role of value-based mechanisms, such as religiosity, discipline, moderation, and accountability, as key drivers in shaping communication identity. Unlike prior studies that often frame identity construction in organizational or secular contexts (Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016; Caza et al., 2018), this study highlights how religious values function not only as internal beliefs but also as operational principles guiding communication practices.

Third, this study enriches the understanding of credibility and persuasion by showing that, in the context of Shariah MUA, these processes are not primarily driven by strategic impression management (Bolino et al., 2016), but by alignment between moral commitment and communicative behavior. This indicates a shift from performance-based credibility toward ethically grounded credibility, where trust is built through consistency and accountability.

Finally, at the practical level, this study provides insights for practitioners in sharia-based beauty services, highlighting the importance of balancing adaptability and value consistency in client interactions. The identified communication patterns, such as diplomatic negotiation,

empathetic responsiveness, and relational strategy, can serve as reference points for developing professional communication competencies that are both effective and aligned with religious principles.

4.14. Limitation and Future Research

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that need to be acknowledged. First, the study is limited to a specific professional context, namely Shariah Makeup Artists, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other professions or cultural settings. The strong influence of religious norms in this context means that the identified communication patterns may not fully apply to more secular or less regulated environments.

Second, the study relies on qualitative data and thematic analysis, which, while providing in-depth insights, may be influenced by subjective interpretation (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Although efforts were made to ensure analytical rigor, different analytical approaches or datasets may yield alternative interpretations of identity construction.

Third, the findings are primarily based on self-reported experiences and narratives, which may not fully capture discrepancies between intended communication and actual practice. Observational or longitudinal approaches could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how communication identity is enacted over time.

Based on these limitations, future research can be directed toward several areas. First, comparative studies across different professional or cultural contexts would be valuable to examine whether similar patterns of value-based communication identity emerge beyond Sharia-based practices. Second, integrating mixed-method approaches, including quantitative or experimental designs, could strengthen the generalizability of findings and test the relationships identified in this study. Third, future research may explore the role of digital communication platforms in shaping professional identity, particularly as beauty services increasingly rely on social media interaction.

Overall, further investigation is needed to understand how communication identity evolves across different contexts and how value-based principles interact with changing social and technological environments.

5. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Shariah MUAs engage in continuous identity negotiation when aligning Sharia principles with clients' aesthetic expectations, particularly in digitally mediated interactions. Rather than assuming a universally stable, adaptive, or coherent identity, the findings

indicate that communication practices are situational and contingent, shaped by client expectations, platform norms, and the degree of religious commitment expressed in each interaction. This process also includes moments of inconsistency and hesitation, which function as productive spaces for reflection and adjustment rather than as indicators of instability. Specifically, persuasive strategies are employed to reframe beauty standards within halal boundaries, empathetic communication is used to maintain relational trust, and educational messaging functions to legitimize professional constraints as ethical commitments rather than service limitations. These patterns are therefore better understood as context-dependent practices rather than generalized communication traits.

Within the Communication Theory of Identity (CTI) framework, this study does not claim a formal theoretical extension, but instead offers a contextual refinement by demonstrating how religious norms operate as an organizing logic that conditions the alignment and misalignment between personal, relational, communal, and enacted identity layers in micro-entrepreneurial settings. More precisely, the findings suggest that (1) the personal layer is anchored in religious doctrine rather than individual preference, (2) the relational layer is negotiated through value-sensitive communication strategies, (3) the communal layer functions not only as a normative regulator but also as a source of legitimacy, peer support, and moderated adaptation, and (4) the enacted layer is strategically performed through digital content that balances piety and market appeal. This also indicates that CTI's implicit emphasis on individual agency may be less applicable in contexts where identity is normatively grounded in religious doctrine, thereby highlighting the role of socio-religious structures in shaping identity processes. In this sense, the study contributes by clarifying how CTI operates in a religious-professional context without proposing new constructs or redefining its core dimensions.

From a practical perspective, the study provides actionable implications for Shariah MUAs and similar micro-entrepreneurs. Communication strategies should be platform-specific and context-sensitive. For instance, on Instagram, visual content can integrate modest makeup demonstrations with concise captions explaining sharia compliance, while on WhatsApp, personalized consultation messages can be used to negotiate client expectations in a more private and dialogical manner. Content implementation may include: (a) before-and-after visuals accompanied by explicit disclaimers on permissible styles, (b) FAQ-based educational posts addressing common misconceptions about sharia-compliant makeup, and (c) testimonial narratives emphasizing ethical professionalism and client trust. Importantly, ethical boundaries in

religious persuasion should be maintained by avoiding coercive or judgmental language, instead framing recommendations as informed choices grounded in shared values. These differentiated strategies move beyond abstract prescriptions and provide concrete, implementable guidance.

However, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the interpretive nature of the phenomenological approach situates the findings within specific socio-cultural and professional contexts, thereby limiting their transferability rather than constituting a methodological weakness. Second, the study primarily reflects the perspectives of Shariah MUAs, without incorporating client-side interpretations, which may reveal discrepancies between intended and perceived communication practices. Third, identity performances observed in digital platforms such as Instagram may be influenced by platform affordances, algorithmic visibility, and performative tendencies, potentially privileging certain forms of expression over others. Finally, potential researcher positionality must be considered, as institutional affiliation, socio-cultural background, and possible alignment with dominant religious norms may have shaped both data interpretation and the framing of conclusions.

Based on these limitations, future research should be directed toward clearly identified gaps. Incorporating client perspectives through audience-centered studies would enable evaluation of how value-based communication strategies are received, interpreted, and negotiated, particularly in cases where misalignment occurs. The use of digital ethnography is specifically recommended because it allows real-time observation of identity performance across platforms, thereby capturing discrepancies between intended messaging and audience reception that could not be accessed through retrospective accounts alone. Additionally, comparative studies between Shariah and conventional MUAs may provide a more systematic understanding of how differing value systems shape communication strategies, professional positioning, and identity negotiation processes within the broader beauty industry.

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