

Halal Fashion E-Commerce: Driving Economic Inclusion in East Aceh

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Abstract

This study investigates the effectiveness of e-commerce in boosting halal fashion sales in Peureulak, East Aceh, Indonesia, exploring its potential to enhance economic opportunities in the region. Employing a qualitative field research approach, data was gathered through interviews with owners, employees, and buyers of halal fashion businesses in Peureulak. The research examines online strategies and their impact on sales, and reveals that e-commerce significantly increased halal fashion sales in Peureulak by expanding market reach beyond local boundaries and facilitating effective and clear product promotion. Key success factors include ease of online access, high-quality product presentation, competitive pricing, trustworthy customer service, diverse payment options and positive customer reviews. While local sales remained primarily conventional, e-commerce by Peureulak Halal Fashion Businesses successfully attracts external customers, substantially supporting business growth. The study suggests that optimizing digital platforms such as TikTok, Shoppe, and Instagram, alongside prioritizing rapid customer service, attractive promotions, and reliable product quality, are crucial strategies for enhancing e-commerce effectiveness in the halal fashion sector. These findings highlight the potential of e-commerce to drive economic growth and broader social inclusion within similar contexts by leveraging local strengths and expanding market access.

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1. Introduction

The global halal economy has expanded rapidly beyond food and finance into lifestyle sectors such as fashion. In this study, halal fashion refers to both halal clothing products (*Busana Syar'i*) and business practices that comply with Islamic ethical and transactional principles, including transparency, fairness, and halal-certified production. Alongside this expansion, e-commerce has become a key driver of market access and economic inclusion for halal fashion entrepreneurs, particularly in OIC countries (Anita *et al.*, 2023; Wardani, 2016). While digital platforms significantly enhance sales performance and customer reach, entrepreneurs face intense competition that requires effective online strategies (Amsal *et al.*, 2022; Khoeren, 2022; Samsuar *et al.*, 2023). This study explores how halal fashion entrepreneurs in Peureulak, East Aceh, optimize e-commerce to strengthen sales and expand their digital market participation.

While existing studies have widely examined the expansion of e-commerce and the growing global halal market, including online halal product sales, there remains a limited understanding of how e-commerce specifically drives the development of the halal fashion industry and contributes to economic inclusion at the local level, particularly in semi-urban and peripheral regions such as Peureulak. Peureulak, located in East Aceh, represents a community deeply shaped by the values and traditions of Islam Nusantara, characterized by the integration of Islamic teachings with local cultural practices, strong religious observance, and community-based economic activities. Within this socio-religious setting, local halal fashion entrepreneurs, many of whom are women, have increasingly adopted digital marketing and e-commerce platforms to overcome geographical limitations and expand their market reach beyond local boundaries (Amsal *et al.*, 2022). The growth of halal fashion holds significant potential for women's economic empowerment because the sector aligns closely with women's traditional roles in garment production, retail, and home-based entrepreneurship, while also offering flexible, low-entry-barrier business opportunities through digital platforms. By enabling women entrepreneurs to access wider consumer networks, digital payments, and logistics services, halal fashion e-commerce strengthens inclusive economic participation and long-term business sustainability (Ardiantono *et al.*, 2022; Ayyah & Murniningsih, 2021; Maulana & Zulfahmi, 2022). Thus, addressing these gaps, this study seeks to generate grounded insights into the relationship between e-commerce, halal fashion, and economic inclusion in Peureulak, with implications for local development strategies and halal digital economy policies in OIC regions.

Despite the growing recognition of the important role of e-commerce in the halal market, a research gap remains concerning the nuanced impact of online platforms on halal fashion businesses in specific local contexts like Peureulak. This study addresses this gap by examining the effectiveness of e-commerce strategies in boosting halal fashion sales in Peureulak, while also exploring the challenges of online competition and the need for businesses to adapt to digital advancements. Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following questions: (1) How effective is e-commerce in increasing halal fashion sales in Peureulak? (2) What factors influence e-commerce success in the context of halal fashion sales? and (3) What strategies enhance e-commerce effectiveness for halal fashion sales in Peureulak? The objectives of this study are to determine the effectiveness of e-commerce for halal fashion, identify the influencing factors, and explore enhancement strategies.

Therefore, this research aims to provide a deeper understanding of e-commerce's pivotal role in boosting halal fashion sales and fostering social inclusion and economic opportunities within Peureulak's local Islamic economic ecosystem. This study also intends to offer policy recommendations to the newly elected regent of the Peureulak, Idi, East Aceh region.

2. Literature Review

Halal fashion, especially syar'i clothing, represents an expanding and promising segment within the global halal economy. It especially holds considerable potential within OIC countries such as Indonesia. The advent of e-commerce has fundamentally reshaped the distribution and consumption of these products, dismantling geographical barriers and generating novel economic avenues.

2.1. The Global Halal Economy and the Rise of Halal Fashion

The global halal economy has grown to food and beverages, projected to exceed USD 5.96 trillion by 2025 with continued expansion (Wood, 2025). Halal fashion has emerged as a key non-food sector, driven by increasing consumer demand for religiously aligned goods and adherence to Islamic principles within a rapidly growing market segment (Susilawati, 2020; Ya *et al.*, 2017). Studies indicate that these consumers are motivated by religious beliefs, cultural identity, and a preference for ethically sourced products (Haslina *et al.*, 2015; Heriani *et al.*, 2018). Accordingly, purchasing halal fashion is often a statement of identity, reflecting a commitment to modesty and social responsibility. The consumers prioritize quality, transparency, and ethical sourcing (Akbar *et al.*, 2023; Zainudin *et al.*, 2020), responding positively to brands that integrate Islamic values. This dynamic market

balances innovation with cultural-religious norms.

2.2. E-Commerce and the Digital Economy in Muslim-Majority Countries

E-commerce adoption has rapidly grown across Muslim-majority countries, with Indonesia, Malaysia, and Turkey leading the way. Indonesia's e-commerce market, projected to reach \$94.48 billion in 2025 with a 15.5% Compound Annual Growth Rate, is fueled by high internet penetration (79.5%) and supportive government policies like the Digital Indonesia Roadmap (Achmad, 2023; Rahardyan, 2023; Sakti & Ramadhani, 2023). This surge significantly impacts economic development, contributing over USD\$ 130 billion to Indonesia's GDP by 2025, creating jobs, and expanding market access for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) via digital platforms like Shoppe and Tokopedia, particularly benefiting women and youth entrepreneurs (Kemkominfo, 2023; Sakti & Ramadhani, 2023). In addition, digital marketing to Muslim consumers online necessitates integrating cultural sensitivities and religious values to foster trust. Displaying halal certifications and leveraging relevant influencers on social media platforms, particularly during Ramadan, when video consumption surge have proved very effective (H. Arifin, 2023; Jamil *et al.*, 2021; Sulaiman *et al.*, 2023). Islamic marketing frameworks and culturally resonant content, such as family-oriented visuals, also strengthen consumer purchase intentions (Dhea Rizqi Karisma & Lina Nugraha Rani, 2023). While successful in driving Muslim fashion sales in Indonesia, the application of these strategies at the sub-national level remains underexplored. This literature gap, especially regarding how resource-limited local businesses adapt these tactics, underscores this study's aim to investigate culturally sensitive e-commerce strategies

2.3. Social Inclusion and Economic Empowerment through E-Commerce

E-commerce significantly empowers small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and local businesses by expanding their market reach and reducing entry barriers, offering a lifeline for growth in developing countries like Indonesia. Research on Indonesian SMEs demonstrates that e-commerce platforms like Shoppe and Tokopedia enable businesses to transcend local markets, with adoption levels showing high perceived benefits, mean scores of 4.32 for email, 4.54 for static websites, and 4.62 for interactive websites, particularly in extending market reach (Noya *et al.*, 2023; Sakti & Ramadhani, 2023). This is especially critical in geographically fragmented regions like Indonesia, where over 13 million islands pose physical access challenges, as highlighted in studies on developing countries noting e-commerce's transformative effects on market positioning (Sakti & Ramadhani, 2023; Wijayaningsih *et al.*, 2021). By eliminating the need for physical

storefronts and leveraging data analytics over costly traditional market research, e-commerce lowers startup costs and facilitates asset-light expansion, enabling higher profit margins through disintermediation (Aryadi & Hoesin, 2022; M. Sari *et al.*, 2023). However, technical barriers such as limited Information Technology (IT) literacy and staffing—54.6% of Indonesian SMEs have 1-2 IT staff, and 27.6% have none—suggest a need for targeted support, a gap this study explores in the context of Peureulak halal fashion sector and its potential for social inclusion (Farahdinna, 2022; Sakti & Ramadhani, 2023).

2.4. Adoption of Digital Fashion Sales in Peureulak

The local economy of Peureulak is rooted in agriculture and trade, reflecting the broader economic profile of Aceh, which benefits from natural resources such as oil, gas, and agricultural products like coffee and palm oil (Amsal *et al.*, 2022; Khoeren, 2022). The region highlights its historical significance as a hub and its modern economic reliance on these sectors, though specific data on Peureulak is scarce, suggesting a small-scale, community-driven economy potentially primed for e-commerce growth (Amsal *et al.*, 2022; Samsuar *et al.*, 2023). Culturally, Aceh is distinct within Indonesia for its deep Islamic heritage, governed by Sharia law since 2001, which shapes business practices a strongly emphasizing Islamic values (Khoeren, 2022). Studies on Islamic business ethics in Aceh note that these values foster a preference for halal-certified products, including fashion, aligning with the overall rise of the global halal economy (Ruhdiara, 2022; M. Sari *et al.*, 2023).

Therefore, Peureulak halal fashion e-commerce businesses contribute to these objectives by empowering small businesses and women, reducing poverty, and fostering social inclusion—key OIC priorities. Despite the recognized link between local digital economies and OIC goals, empirical evidence from rural areas like Peureulak remains limited, a gap this research aims to address.

3. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative field research approach to assesses the effectiveness of e-commerce in boosting halal fashion sales and driving social inclusion in Peureulak. This approach was appropriate for gaining insights into the experiences, perspectives, and practices of key stakeholders within this specific local context.

3.1. Design

The study adopted a qualitative case study design with elements of digital

ethnography, chosen to address the research gap in understanding the localized impact of e-commerce on halal fashion sales and social inclusion in areas like Peureulak. The case study approach allows for an in-depth investigation of a specific context (Sakti & Ramadhani, 2023; N. P. Sari *et al.*, 2021), Peureulak, a sub-district in East Aceh, known for its deep Islamic heritage as the site of the first Islamic kingdom in Southeast Asia. (Khoeren, 2022; Samsuar *et al.*, 2023), The field research of the study involved direct engagement with participants in their natural settings, enabling a nuanced understanding of the interplay between e-commerce and the local socio-economic context (Suravi, 2023).

3.2. The Instruments

The primary data collection tool was a semi-structured interview guide, in (table 1) featuring open-ended questions (Adams, 2015; McIntosh & Morse, 2015), which tailored for three groups: business owners, employees involved in online sales, and buyers.

Table 1. Semi-structured interview guide

Participant Group	Sample Questions	Thematical Link
Business Owners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What motivated you to adopt e-commerce for your halal fashion business? - How do you ensure your online strategies align with Islamic principles in halal certification and ethical pricing? - What challenges do women entrepreneurs face in using e-commerce, and how have you addressed them? 	Explores decision-making freedom and cultural participation.
Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How has working in e-commerce changed your role in the business? - What challenges arise when interacting with customers online, especially regarding halal compliance? - Do you feel your work in e-commerce has improved your economic opportunities? 	Examines economic freedom and skill development as capabilities.
Buyers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why do you choose halal-certified fashion brands online? - How does the business design (e.g., Islamic branding) influence your trust in the business? - Has purchasing from local halal fashion businesses online impacted your community connections? 	Links to trust a conversion factor and social inclusion via community ties.

Owners were asked, questions about their business' history, reason for adopting e-commerce, online strategies, perceived impact, challenges, success factors, and views on economic inclusion. Employees were asked about their roles, e-commerce tasks, customer interactions, and perceived impact. Buyers were interviewed about motivations, experiences, decision factors, satisfaction, and local business connections. Additionally, platform observations (TikTok, Shoppe, Instagram) and a basic documentation analysis of marketing materials were conducted to assess content strategies, engagement, and thematic messaging.

The key informants, (Table 2), include owners, employees, and buyers from

halal fashion businesses in Peureulak, selected using purposeful sampling to ensure diversity in perspectives and experiences. Guided by qualitative case study principles, a sample of nine participants, was deemed sufficient to achieve thematic saturation in this bounded homogenous context (Baxter *et al.*, n.d.; Weyant, 2022). Weyant (2022) noted that 6 – 12 interviews typically suffice for saturation in focused qualitative studies, a threshold met here as no new themes emerged after interviewing the ninth participants.

Table 2. Participants Demography

No.	Role	Gender	Age	Business	Key contribution to Study
P1	Business Owner	Woman	35	DW Collection	Insights into halal branding strategies and women's agency in e-commerce
P2.	Business Owner	Woman	46	Putri Collection	Perspectives on logistical challenges in rural Aceh
P3.	Business Owner	Woman	40	Marfina Stuff	Role of Instagram influencers in driving sales
P4.	Employee	Woman	19	DW Collection	TikTok campaigns and customer trust-building
P5.	Employee	Woman	20	Putri Collection	Operational challenges in halal certification compliance
P6.	Employee	Woman	18	Marfina Stuff	Impact of e-commerce on job opportunities for young women
P7.	Buyer	Woman	37	DW Collection	Motivations for purchasing halal fashion online
P8.	Buyer	Woman	25	Putri Collection	Trust in sharia-compliant payment gateway
P9.	Buyer	Woman	35	Marfina Stuff	Perceived social impact of supporting local halal businesses

The small sample aligns with the study's aim to deeply explore Peureulak's unique Islamic economic ecosystem, a rural OIC region where cultural and geographic homogeneity reduces required sample size. This approach enhances understanding of how e-commerce impacts social inclusion for marginalized women, addressing gaps in underrepresented rural OIC Islamic contexts and aligning with MWEB's focus on poverty reduction through Islamic social finance.

3.3. Data Analysis

Data analysis employed thematic analysis, a systematic process to identify, analyze, and report patterns within the data (Adams, 2015; Lamb *et al.*, 2018). Transcriptions of interview recordings and compiled field notes were coded using qualitative data management software to identify initial themes related to research questions, such as benefits of e-commerce, challenges faced, and social inclusion impacts.

3.4. Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were paramount, given the study's involvement with human participants and cultural context. Informed consent was obtained from all interview participants, with clear explanations of the study's purpose, procedures,

and voluntary participation, ensuring compliance with local regulations and Islamic ethical norms in Aceh as Ratified by the House of Research and Publication, State Institute of Islamic Studies, IAIN Langsa, Kota Langsa. Privacy and confidentiality were maintained by anonymizing data and respecting public versus private settings in online observations, with secure storage of data to prevent breaches. Cultural sensitivity was addressed by aligning research practices with Aceh's Islamic values, such as ensuring gender-appropriate interactions during interviews, which address by the female support staff from the House of Research in IAIN Langsa, Kota Langsa.

4. Results and Discussion

This study evaluated the effectiveness of e-commerce in boosting halal fashion sales in Peureulak, Aceh, Indonesia, and its potential to drive social inclusion, contributing to OIC economic empowerment. The primary objectives were to understand how online platforms expand market reach and sales for halal fashion businesses and foster inclusivity for entrepreneurs, particularly women, in a rural OIC context. Peureulak, one of the sub-districts in East Aceh Regency, holds a distinguished place in Southeast Asian Islamic history as Bandar Khalifa, the region's first Islamic kingdom established in 225 H. This historical prominence as a major international trading hub, engaging with merchants from India, the Arab world, Persia, and various European nations, underscores a long-standing tradition of commerce and connection to global networks. Driven by Islamic scholars, Bandar Khalifa (now Peureulak) became the initial point for the growth and dissemination of Islam across Southeast Asia. This rich heritage and historical engagement with trade may provide a unique context for understanding the current dynamics of e-commerce adoption in the local halal fashion sector.

The local vendors in Peureulak, DW Collections, Putri Collections, and Marfina Stuff, serve as a social blockchain, illustrating e-commerce's potential for economic growth and social inclusion in OIC countries through local strengths and expanded market access. DW Collections, founded online in 2022 by Ms. Wilda Ika Silvia with limited capital, quickly gained local popularity for its affordable, quality women's clothing, leading to a comfortable physical store by 2024. Similarly, Putri Collections, established by Ms. Putri Nurlia Khairunnisa in 2022, transitioned from street vending to a store offering diverse women's fashion and hijabs, employing discounts to compete. Marfina Stuff, started online on Instagram by Ms. Anggi Marfina in 2018, expanded to a physical store in 2019 with a wide range of women's fashion items. Thus, these vendors of e-commerce with physical retail,

these vendors empower local women entrepreneurs, create jobs, and make halal fashion accessible, fostering social inclusion and demonstrating a scalable model for economic empowerment in OIC countries.

To illustrate the finding, the researchers classified the findings and discussion into several topics, i.e., (1). The effective is e-commerce in increasing halal fashion sales in Peureulak, (2). The factors influence e-commerce success in this context, and (3). The factors influence e-commerce success in this context.

4.1. Role of e-commerce in increasing halal fashion sales in Peureulak

The effectiveness of e-commerce in boosting sales of sharia-compliant clothing stems from its ability to reach a wider audience, offer convenient and flexible shopping, and enable intensive promotion. Through digital platforms like marketplaces, social media, and websites, businesses leverage advertising, customer reviews, and discounts. Furthermore, e-commerce allows customers to easily compare products, build trust through reviews, and enjoy simplified, secure transactions. Based on an interview with Wilda Ika Silvia, the owner of DW Store, she stated:

“I started using e-commerce in 2016, back when I didn’t have a physical store, so I started selling online first. The platforms I use are TikTok, Shoppe, and Instagram, with the goal of reaching a wider range of customers, including those outside the town, while also reducing costs and increasing buyers. To achieve that, I focus on understanding customers, promoting products, and providing the best service. Alhamdulillah, the facilities and tools I have now are sufficient to support e-commerce operations. In my opinion, online and conventional selling are both good, but in e-commerce, having an attractive and easy-to-understand website layout is crucial so customers don’t get confused when browsing for products.”

DW Store's annual revenue shows consistent growth: 300 pieces sold for IDR 30 million, (USD 1,875) in 2022, 487 pieces for IDR 45 million (USD 2,813) in 2023, and 625 pieces for IDR 65 million (USD 4,063) in 2024. Since its adoption in 2016, e-commerce has significantly boosted the business by expanding its customer base beyond Peureulak, reducing operational costs, and increasing buyer numbers. Platforms like TikTok, Shoppe, and Instagram are key for promotion and sales. The owner emphasizes that understanding customers, effective promotion, and excellent service are vital for success, supported by adequate infrastructure. While both online and offline sales are beneficial, an attractive and user-friendly online interface is particularly crucial for a positive e-commerce experience.

The interview report above supported the literature on the effectiveness of e-commerce in boosting sales for sharia-compliant clothing. DW Store's experience shows how e-commerce overcomes geographical barriers, offering convenience to customers beyond Peureulak. Wilda Ika Silvia adopted e-commerce to expand reach, cut costs, and attract more buyers, using platforms like TikTok, Shoppe, and Instagram. This aligns with research on leveraging digital channels to engage Indonesia's target audiences, supporting e-commerce's role in boosting sharia-compliant clothing sales.

Since adopting e-commerce in 2016, DW Store has achieved steady revenue growth, with notable increases in pieces sold and revenue by 2022. This highlights the success of their online strategies in expanding their customer base. The owner's focus on understanding customers, effective promotion, and quality service reflects customer-centric principles from marketing literature. In addition, Wilda Ika Silvia emphasizes the need for an attractive, user-friendly online interface, a key factor in e-commerce success. Research on user experience and website design supports this, stressing navigation ease and visual appeal to retain customers. Her focus on reliable infrastructure also aligns with digital economy literature as a core requirement for effective e-commerce. Eventually, e-commerce serves as a powerful tool for promoting women's entrepreneurship and economic participation, particularly within the halal fashion sector. Atthala Rania Insyira, an employee at DW Store, stated:

"Since we started using e-commerce, sales of sharia-compliant clothing have significantly increased. Many customers find online shopping more comfortable because product details like bust size are comprehensive, eliminating confusion. We've also seen a sharp rise in customers from outside Peureulak, even from other parts of Aceh. Typically, online orders peak with new arrivals or at the start of the month, surpassing in-store sales."

The adoption of e-commerce has significantly boosted DW Store's revenue. Customers appreciate the detailed product information available online, such as sizing, which simplifies purchasing. Notably, the store has experienced a considerable increase in customers from outside Peureulak, including regions beyond Aceh. Online orders tend to be highest during new product launches and at the beginning of the month, often exceeding direct sales in the physical store.

The owner Marfina Stuff, Aggi Marfina, explained:

"I started advertising online before opening a physical store, initially selling

solely online via TikTok and Shopee. My goal was to boost sales and make shopping easier for customers, especially those outside Peureulak. To succeed online, I focus on understanding my target market, offering quality products, and providing excellent service. Thankfully, our current resources support our digital business well. I believe both e-commerce and traditional selling are effective, each offering unique benefits.”

Marfina Stuff's revenue figures show a fluctuating but overall upward trend: 150 pieces sold for IDR 20 million (USD 1,250) in 2019, 200 pieces for IDR 35 million (≈ USD 2,188) in 2020, 100 pieces for IDR 15 million (USD 938) in 2021, 250 pieces for IDR 40 million (USD 2,500) in 2022, 300 pieces for IDR 50 million (USD 3,125) in 2023, and 400 pieces for IDR 65 million (USD 4,063) in 2024. In addition, the owner explained:

“Since we started using e-commerce, sales clothing at the store have increased. Some people shop online, but many also prefer to come directly to the store. Local customers usually prefer to visit the store in person, while those who live far away feel more comfortable shopping online. Alhamdulillah, the number of customers from outside Peureulak has also grown since we began selling online. But if we look at the trend, most orders still come directly to the store rather than through e-commerce.”

While e-commerce has positively impacted sales of sharia-compliant clothing, most customers in this study still prefer to purchase in-store. E-commerce offers convenience for distant customers, whereas those living nearby tend to value the direct, in-person shopping experience. This indicates that e-commerce effectively reaches customers outside the local Peureulak area, contributing to overall customer growth. However, traditional in-store sales remain the dominant preference, especially for customers who prioritize a tactile and immediate shopping experience. This blended approach, e-commerce for expansion, physical stores for local appeal, mirrors trends seen in DW Store, showing e-commerce drives growth and customer acquisition in Peureulak halal fashion market, yet traditional retail remains vital.

The next participants, the owner of Putri Collections, Putri Nurlia Khairunnisa explained that:

“I started advertising my clothing business online in 2022, using TikTok, Shoppe, and Instagram. My goal was to simplify online selling and reach a broader customer base beyond geographical limitations. To achieve my sales targets, I

focused on selecting the right platforms and providing excellent customer service. Alhamdulillah, our current tools and facilities adequately support our online operations. I believe both e-commerce and traditional selling are beneficial, each offering distinct advantages.”

Since adopting e-commerce in 2022, Putri Collections has seen significant sales growth: 150 pieces sold for IDR 25 million (USD 1,563) in 2022, 250 pieces for IDR 45 million (USD 2,813) in 2023, and 300 pieces for IDR 55 million (USD 3,438) in 2024. This adoption has notably expanded the store's customer reach beyond local boundaries, facilitated by the strategic use of platforms like TikTok, Shopee, and Instagram for optimal online sales. The owner credits this success to selecting appropriate platforms and prioritizing excellent customer service, supported by adequate resources. She believes that while both e-commerce and traditional sales are valuable, e-commerce offers greater flexibility and a wider market reach. In addition, the participants, Nazwatun Nafiza, an employee at Putri Collections, stated:

“Since using e-commerce platforms, sales of sharia clothing have increased. With e-commerce, it’s easier to promote our products and reach a broader market. Customers also say they prefer buying through e-commerce because the product details are clear. Alhamdulillah, customers from outside Peureulak have also increased, even though those living near the store still prefer to come in person.”

The use of e-commerce has proven effective in increasing sales of shari’a clothing, particularly through easier promotion and broader accessibility. Customers feel more comfortable shopping via e-commerce due to the detailed and transparent product information provided. In addition, there has been a noticeable increase in customers from outside Peureulak, indicating that e-commerce is effective in reaching a wider market. Nonetheless, in-store purchases remain dominant, especially among customers living near the store.

Putri Collections, a halal fashion business in Peureulak, has thrived since adopting e-commerce platforms like TikTok, Shopee, and Instagram in 2022. Owner Putri Nurlia Khairunnisa’s strategic focus on suitable platforms and excellent customer service has fueled consistent sales growth from 2022 to 2024, expanding her reach beyond local boundaries. This aligns with research showing e-commerce boosts SME sales. Her multi-channel approach—blending online platforms with a physical store—meets varied customer preferences. The employee, Nazwatun Nafiza, highlighted that detailed online product information builds trust, a key factor in online success. While e-commerce draws customers from

outside Peureulak, local shoppers still favor the in-store experience, underscoring the value of a hybrid model. This strategy not only drives growth but also empowers women entrepreneurs like Putri by offering flexibility and broader market access.

Interviews with customers from DW Store, Marfina Stuff, and Putri Collections reveal a consistent appreciation for the convenience and time-saving aspects of purchasing shari'a-compliant clothing through e-commerce platforms. Melva Dwi Safitri, a DW Store customer, stated,

“Yes, for me it’s much easier to shop for shari’a-compliant clothing online because it saves time. I choose clothes without having to go to the store, so it’s more practical. So far, I’ve been very satisfied shopping through e-commerce because the products I’ve bought have never been disappointing.” This highlights the time efficiency and satisfaction with product quality as key benefits.

Similarly, Vina Alvina, a customer at Marfina Stuff, expressed her preference for online shopping due to the ability to “select and purchase products without having to leave the house,” emphasizing the convenience factor. While noting a preference for in-store shopping to try on clothes, she affirmed her satisfaction with online purchases for saving time, allowing her to shop even while relaxing. Halimatun Sakdiah, a customer at Putri Collections, also found online shopping easier, stating:

“Yes, for me it’s easier to buy sharia-compliant clothing online because I don’t have to bother leaving the house. Everything is accessible from my phone—just choose and pay. I’m very satisfied shopping online because the delivery is fast, so there’s no need to wait long.”

Her response underscores the convenience of mobile shopping and the satisfaction derived from efficient service, particularly fast delivery. Collectively, these customer testimonials indicate that e-commerce is highly valued for its convenience, time efficiency, and the ability to shop from the comfort of one's home. The reported satisfaction levels suggest that online platforms are effectively meeting customer expectations in terms of product quality and service delivery, particularly with the added benefit of fast delivery for some. While some customers still appreciate the option of in-store shopping for specific reasons like trying on clothes, the overall sentiment points towards a positive and convenient online shopping experience for sharia-compliant clothing in Peureulak.

E-commerce has significantly increased sales of shari'a-compliant clothing in Peureulak by expanding market reach beyond local boundaries. Platforms like

TikTok, Shopee, and Instagram enable businesses to promote products widely, attracting customers from various regions. Key benefits include easy access, time flexibility, and detailed product information, which customers highly value. Interviews show that e-commerce drives sales growth, with sellers noting more customers from outside Aceh. However, local buyers prefer in-store shopping for its hands-on experience. E-commerce enhances trust and convenience through detailed descriptions and flexible payment options like cash-on-delivery (COD). While in-store sales lead locally, e-commerce is vital for reaching distant markets, offering flexibility and removing geographical barriers. This dual strategy boosts business growth and competitiveness in Peureulak. Thus, e-commerce effectively grows sales of shari'a-compliant clothing by broadening market access, improving promotion, and providing a convenient, informative shopping experience. It complements local in-store sales, driving overall success by attracting buyers from beyond the city.

The above data supported a survey of 1,104 women across multiple regions revealed their innovative use of platforms like Shoppe, with implications for halal fashion given its \$295 billion global market in 2021 In Indonesia (Barau, 2015; Nofrizal *et al.*, 2023; Susilawati, 2020). The International Finance Corporation (IFC) estimates that closing the gender gap in e-commerce could add \$280 billion to Southeast Asia's economy by 2030, though women's internet usage trails men's (65% vs. 70% globally), indicating digital divides (Amalanathan & Reddy-Best, 2024; Mundy & Menashy, 2014). Qualitative studies from Dhaka on online clothing businesses show women leveraging technology for growth, a trend likely applicable to halal fashion, with policies supporting such development reducing gender disparities (A. Amin, 2018). This aligns with social inclusion goals in Muslim-majority regions like Peureulak, where women-led halal fashion enterprises could thrive via e-commerce, yet the literature's urban bias leaves rural empowerment understudied, a focus of this research.

The halal fashion market is currently shaped by the convergence of halal fashion, ethical sourcing, and digital influence, presenting significant opportunities within OIC regions and beyond. Halal fashion has broadened its appeal beyond religious boundaries to diverse consumers, with brands increasingly incorporating inclusive options like plus-size and sustainable designs (Ardiantono *et al.*, 2022; KNEKS, 2023). Ethical sourcing, emphasizing fair trade and environmentally friendly practices, aligns with Islamic principles and attracts conscious consumers, although its economic impact on small-scale producers warrants further investigation (Hefner,

2011; Seelos & Mair, 2020). Consequently, the market emerges opportunities include e-commerce-driven market expansion, enabling SMEs to reach global audiences, and the integration of Islamic fintech for seamless transactions. While these trends are evident in major markets, their application in localized settings like Peureulak holds particular promise for empowering small businesses through digital platforms and driving social inclusion.

4.2. Factors influencing e-commerce success in Peureulak

The success of e-commerce in selling halal fashion in Peureulak hinges on a combination of interconnected factors that enhance competitiveness and customer loyalty in the digital marketplace. The effective promotion stands out as a cornerstone, with Wilda Ika Silvia of DW Store emphasizing its power to attract and retain customers through strategies like discounts and engaging advertisements. Based on an interview with Wilda Ika Silvia, owner of DW Store, she stated:

“In my opinion, the most important factor in the success of e-commerce for syar’i clothing is promotion. Promotion is the most effective way to grab people’s attention and make them interested in buying, and also to keep them as loyal customers.”

Considering the interview result, Business owners emphasize the importance of strategic promotion to attract and retain customers. Supporting by the next respondent, Atthala Rania Insyra, an employee at DW Store, said:

“In my opinion, the most important factor in the success of selling syar’i clothing online is an attractive and easy-to-understand website display, good service, and easy payment options. If the website is appealing and makes it easy to find products, customers will enjoy shopping, and if the payment process is easy, they won’t hesitate to buy.”

She added an attractive and user-friendly website, good customer service, and a smooth payment process. An appealing website provides a pleasant shopping experience, making it easier for customers to search for and choose products quickly. Good service, including prompt responses to customer inquiries, plays an important role in building customer trust and loyalty. In addition, Furthermore, based on an interview with Anggi Marfina, owner of Marfina Stuff, she explained:

“In my opinion, good customer service is the most important factor in the success of selling Syar’i clothing online. If customers feel well taken care of, they will definitely come back to buy again. So, we must always be ready to help, respond quickly, and be friendly.”

Good customer service is a highly influential factor in the success of e-commerce in Syar'i clothing sales. Responsive and friendly service increases customer satisfaction, which in turn strengthens loyalty and encourages repeat purchases. Quality service also creates a positive shopping experience, enhancing the store's reputation and attracting new customers. Accordingly, Mardiati, an employee of Marfina Stuff, stated:

“Many customers prefer buying syar'i clothing through e-commerce because it's more practical and saves time, especially for those who live far away. They don't need to come to the store; they just browse from home. Also, the quality of product photos and descriptions is very important because that's what attracts people to buy. If the photos and descriptions are clear, it's more convincing. Prices are about the same online or offline, but the most important thing is easy payment methods like cash on delivery. Also, customer ratings and reviews have a big influence; if the rating is good, people will be more interested in buying.”

The next respondent, Marfina Stuff, pointed out customers' decision to buy syar'i clothing via e-commerce, including the convenience and practicality of online shopping, the quality of product photos and descriptions, and the availability of various payment methods. Online shopping offers advantages, especially for those with limited time or who live far from physical stores. In addition, clear product images and detailed descriptions provide accurate information that boosts buyer interest. Diverse payment methods, cash on delivery, facilitate transactions and increase customer convenience. Finally, ratings and customer reviews play a crucial role in building trust, as customers are more likely to choose products that have received positive feedback, ultimately increasing conversion rates. Convenient payment options, particularly cash-on-delivery, are essential in a region with limited digital payment adoption. Customers like Melva Dwi Safitri and Halimatun Sakdiah value COD's security and flexibility, aligning with findings from OIC contexts where trust in online payments is a barrier (B. Arifin *et al.*, 2021; Lewicki *et al.*, 2015; Zubaili *et al.*, 2023). The positive customer reviews and ratings, as noted by Halimatun Sakdiah, significantly influence purchase decisions by signaling quality and reliability. These factors—promotion, service, design, product information, payment ease, and reviews—collectively ensure accessibility and satisfaction, sustaining growth in Peureulak's competitive digital landscape. Putri Nurlia Khairunnisa, the owner of Putri Collections, explained:

“Many customers choose to buy syar'i clothing through e-commerce because it saves time, especially for those who live far from stores. Besides that, the quality

of product photos and descriptions is very important because it's the first thing that attracts buyers. The price depends on the quality of the fabric, and usually, the price is clearly listed on the sales platform. For easy payment, customers prefer COD because it's more practical and safer."

The success of e-commerce in selling Syar'i clothing is influenced by easy access and time efficiency for consumers who live far from physical stores, making e-commerce a more practical option. The quality of product photos and descriptions also plays a vital role in attracting customer interest, as clear and accurate information increase purchase intent. Transparent pricing that aligns with product quality significantly influences buying decisions (Anthoniraj et al., 2022; Fitriani, 2020). The availability of easy-to-use payment methods, such as COD, helps facilitate transactions and enhances customer convenience in making online purchases. In addition, Nazwatun Nafiza, an employee of Putri Collections, stated:

"Customers prefer to buy Syar'i clothing through e-commerce because it's practical—they just complete the transaction and wait for the package at home. The quality of the photos and product descriptions is very important to attract buyers. In our store, the price is fixed, and the availability of COD payment methods really makes it easier for customers."

The quality of product photos and descriptions is a key factor in attracting customer interest. Transparent and competitive pricing, payment options, also plays an important role in making purchases easier and more comfortable for consumers. Accordingly, Melva Dwi Safitri, said:

"I've been buying Syar'i clothing online more often since this store started using e-commerce. There are usually no issues, and the price matches the quality. I'm interested because of the good service and the variety of products. The quality of online products is not much different from those in physical stores. Payments are also easy, especially with many options. Customer reviews are really important to me before making a purchase."

Correspondingly, from the point of view of costumer, Vina Alvina, a customer at Marfina Stuff, also stated:

"I buy Syar'i clothing online more often because the store is quite far. I've never had any issues, and the price is fair based on the quality. I'm interested in buying because the clothes are nice and the service is fast. The quality of online products is the same as in-store. Payment options are convenient and very helpful. Customer reviews are important for me to check product quality before buying."

The main reason customers choose to buy Syar'i clothing online is the convenience and efficiency, especially when the store is far. Fair prices, fast service, and easy payment methods increase customer satisfaction. Additionally, Halimatun Sakdiah, another customer at Putri Collections, stated:

"I often buy Syar'i clothing online because the product details are clear. I've never had any problems when buying. The price matches the quality, especially when there are promotions. The clothes are good and just what I was looking for. Online and in-store product quality is equally good. I'm also comfortable with the many payment options. Customer reviews are very important to me because they help me choose the right product."

The comfort and ease of buying Syar'i clothing online is supported by clear product information, fair pricing, and attractive promotions. The consistent quality between online and in-store products builds customer trust. The success of Syar'i clothing e-commerce in Peureulak is influenced by various interrelated factors such as promotion, customer service, website design, ease of transactions, and product photo and description quality. Customers consistently value the convenience and practicality of online shopping, facilitated by clear and high-quality product photos and descriptions. Fair pricing that aligns with product quality is also a key consideration. Furthermore, customer ratings and reviews play a vital role in building trust and influencing purchasing decisions. The availability of various payment methods, particularly COD for enhanced convenience and security, significantly contributes to a positive online shopping experience.

Therefore, E-commerce success in Peureulak's halal (syar'i) fashion market relies on key factors boosting competitiveness and loyalty. Effective promotion, emphasized by DW Store's Wilda Ika Silvia, draws and retains customers with discounts and ads. Responsive customer service, noted by Marfina Stuff's Anggi Marfina, builds trust and repeat business. A user-friendly website, per DW's Atthala Rania Insyra, improves shopping with easy navigation and visuals, while clear product photos and descriptions, stressed by Mardiaty and Putri Nurlia Khairunnisa, instill confidence.

4.3. Strategies enhancing e-commerce effectiveness for halal fashion sales in Peureulak

To enhance the effectiveness of e-commerce for halal fashion sales, implementing strategies that attract customer interest and improve the shopping experience is crucial. As Wilda Ika Silvia, owner of DW Store, stated:

“I sell Syar’i clothing through platforms like TikTok, Shopee, and Instagram. The goal is to reach more people, especially those who live far from the city. It also helps save costs and makes it easier to find customers. I always understand my target customers, promote often, and ensure good service. If the online store looks appealing and is easy to navigate, sales go more smoothly. Promotion and product quality are key to getting more buyers. Shopee is the best platform for selling—its pricing matches the quality of the product.”

Business owners in Peureulak City utilize e-commerce platforms such as TikTok, Shopee, and Instagram to market Syar’i clothing. Strategies include a deep understanding of the target market, effective promotions, and optimal customer service. In addition, Atthala Rania Insyra, an employee at DW Store, stated:

“The store promotes on Instagram and includes a link to Shopee so that potential buyers know about our shop. We usually use J&T Group Currier for shipping so the goods arrive quickly. To make our products more attractive, we promote them using in-house models. Promotions and discounts really help increase sales. Fast and friendly service is very important—otherwise, customers can get upset.”

Strategies to improve e-commerce effectiveness include active promotion on social media platforms like Instagram by providing direct links to Shopee. Shipping is facilitated through trusted courier services like JNT. Product presentation is enhanced by promoting with in-store models to attract customer interest. In addition, the owner of Marfina Stuff, Anggi Marfina explained:

“I use TikTok, Shopee, and Instagram to sell, so that more people, especially those far from Peureulak, know about it. My strategy focuses on targeting the right market, selling quality products, and providing good service. The website appearance should be attractive, easy to understand, and offer easy payment options. Product prices match the quality, so customers aren't disappointed. Promotions like discounts and pre-order systems are also effective in attracting buyers.”

In addition, Mardiati, an employee at Marfina Stuff, also stated:

“We use endorsements, stay active on social media, and rely on customer testimonials. We ship via JNT to ensure fast delivery. To grab attention, we create attractive product catalogs and offer promotions or discounts to entice buyers. Friendly service is also important so customers enjoy shopping at our store.”

Furthermore, Putri Nurlia Khairunnisa, the owner of Putri Collections, explained:

“I use TikTok, Shopee, and Instagram to sell because it's easier and can

reach many customers. The strategy involves choosing the right platform, being active in social media promotion, and providing good service. Product prices are matched with quality to ensure buyer satisfaction. We've tried using discounts and promotions, and the results have been increased sales."

The marketing strategy includes using TikTok, Shopee, and Instagram to broaden customer reach and facilitate easier sales. Active promotion on social media, friendly customer service, and pricing based on product quality are key approaches. Special discounts and promotions have proven effective in boosting sales, while good service helps maintain customer loyalty. Nazwatun Nafiza, an employee at Putri Collections, added:

"The quality of photos and product descriptions is super important because that's what attracts buyers. As for pricing, our store already sets fair prices, so there's no need for bargaining. The payment options are convenient, especially with COD. Reviews and ratings also matter a lot—they help people feel more confident in buying. Social media promotion helps the online store become more well-known. We use JNT for fast shipping. Great product photos really help attracts customers. Of course, discounts and promotions help boost purchases. Fast and friendly service is important to keep customers satisfied."

Effective strategies to boost syar'i clothing sales on e-commerce include providing high-quality product photos and clear descriptions to attract customers. Competitive pricing and a variety of payment methods, including COD, make transactions easier. Customer reviews and ratings help build trust, while social media promotions enhance store visibility. Fast shipping through trusted couriers like JNT, combined with discounts and promotions, effectively increase purchases. Prompt, friendly, and responsive customer service is key to maintaining customer satisfaction and loyalty. Melva Dwi Safitri, a customer of DW Store, shared:

"I always check product descriptions and photos first before buying, so I can be sure. Discounts and promotions really influence me—they make me more interested in shopping. The shipping is fast, and the service is satisfying and very friendly."

The customers tend to examine product descriptions and photos before making a purchase, as these elements provide a clearer understanding of the item. Promotional strategies like discounts are proven to be very effective in attracting buyers. Additionally, fast shipping and responsive, friendly customer service are key to creating a satisfying shopping experience. Vina Alvina, a customer of Marfina

Stuff, also shared:

"I usually check product descriptions and photos first to see if they're good. Buyer reviews are also important. I decided to buy because I liked the product—especially when there are discounts, it makes me even more interested. Shipping is on time, and the service is very friendly, which makes me happy shopping here."

The Customers often rely on descriptions, product photos, and customer reviews to assess product quality before buying. Promotional strategies like discounts significantly influence purchase decisions. On-time delivery and quick, friendly customer service are key elements in boosting customer satisfaction and loyalty to online stores. Halimatun Sakdiah, a customer of Putri Collections, said:

"I shop here because the clothes are great and match the photos. Discounts and promotions also attract me. Shipping is fast, the service is satisfying, and the products are really good, so my shopping experience has been great."

The participant pointed out that the strategy is strengthened through active promotion on social media and the use of features such as direct links to sales platforms, which efficiently capture the attention of potential buyers. Additionally, excellent customer service and responsive communication, as stressed by Marfina Stuff's Mardiaty, maintain loyalty. These strategies align with e-commerce literature emphasizing user experience and trust-building (Abdulgani & Suhaimi, 2014; Kurniawati *et al.*, 2021). By adopting these approaches, vendors not only enhance competitiveness but also contribute to social inclusion by empowering women entrepreneurs and creating jobs, as seen in DW Collections' transition from online startup to physical store and Putri Collections' growth from street vending to a thriving hybrid business.

Attractive promotions and product presentation are crucial factors in encouraging consumer purchases. Sellers who consistently offer discounts, pre-order systems, and special offers via platforms like TikTok and Instagram can increase product appeal. Additionally, high-quality product photos, informative descriptions, and appealing catalogs can influence purchase decisions. Consumer trust is further reinforced through positive customer reviews and ratings. Recommended strategies to enhance the effectiveness of e-commerce for Syar'i clothing sales in Peureulak include optimizing the use of popular platforms like TikTok, Shoppe, and Instagram to expand market reach and build engagement with customers through engaging content and promotions. Providing fast, friendly, and responsive customer service is essential to improving customer satisfaction.

Additionally, offering discounts, special promotions, and attractive product catalogs can more effectively capture consumer interest. Fast and timely shipping, along with guaranteed product quality, are key elements in retaining customer loyalty and increasing sales volume.

Although, e-commerce in Muslim-majority countries faces unique challenges, the necessitating cash on delivery (COD) gaining consumer trust regarding product authenticity and halal compliance. The payment systems are another hurdle due to limited Sharia-compliant digital options, though Islamic fintech innovations like ShopeePay and GrabPay, which accounted for 35.7% of Indonesian transactions in 2023, offer promising alternatives (Fitri Fadilah Widyaputri & Edy Yusuf Agung Gunanto, 2023; Nahlah *et al.*, 2022). Digital infrastructure disparities, especially in rural areas with high costs and low connectivity, complicate adoption (Alfarizi, 2023; Das *et al.*, 2016; Hari Purwanto *et al.*, 2021). However, government initiatives across OIC states to improve internet access signal significant growth potential, which empower SMEs and enhance social inclusion by connecting underserved regions to broader markets (A. K. Amin, 2021; Slesman *et al.*, 2015). These factors highlight e-commerce's transformative potential if trust, payment, and infrastructure gaps are strategically overcome.

5. Conclusion

This study confirms e-commerce's effectiveness in boosting halal fashion sales in Peureulak, Aceh, and its role in promoting social inclusion, aligning with OIC economic empowerment goals. Businesses demonstrate significant sales growth and expanded reach via platforms like TikTok, Shopee, and Instagram. Key success factors include strategic promotion, user-friendly interfaces, quality visuals, clear descriptions, and convenient payment options. Excellent customer service and competitive pricing enhance trust and drive sales, complementing local in-store preferences. E-commerce empowers women entrepreneurs in this rural OIC context, fostering social inclusion and economic independence. To further amplify this, businesses should optimize platforms, offer engaging content and promotions, ensure fast delivery, and maintain product quality. Recommendations include continued investment in online presence and digital skills, supported by policy efforts to improve infrastructure and training. While the study's qualitative focus on a small sample is a limitation, it highlights e-commerce's dual role in driving halal fashion sales and social progress in Peureulak, building on its historical trading legacy.

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