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AI-Driven Personalisation in Beauty Marketing: Exploring the Role of Wardah Colour Intelligence™ in Shaping Consumer Perception and Self-Expression

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how AI-driven personalisation in halal beauty marketing shapes consumer perception and self-expression, focusing on Wardah Colour Intelligence™—Southeast Asia's first AI-based personal colour analysis system. Qualitative content analysis of five TikTok videos from @WardahBeautyOfficial (February–April 2025) identified four themes and twelve subthemes: perceived usefulness, ease of use, emotional personalisation, and halal cultural identity. Findings show AI effectiveness encompasses emotional validation and self-concept affirmation across self-knowledge, ideal self, and self-evaluation dimensions. Users negotiated algorithmic ambiguity through folk theories and peer interaction, while halal authenticity and community trust strengthened acceptance. The study extends TAM by foregrounding cultural and ethical dimensions of perceived usefulness, and enriches Self-Concept Theory by demonstrating how AI mediates identity negotiation in a halal digital context.

Keywords: AI marketing, consumer perception, halal beauty, personalisation, self-expression

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INTRODUCTION

Artificial intelligence (AI) has transformed beauty marketing through personalised, data-driven experiences intersecting with consumer identity and halal values in Indonesia's Muslim-majority market (Beyari & Hashem, 2025; Gao et al., 2023). TAM identifies perceived usefulness and ease of use as key adoption drivers (Davis, 1989, as cited in Popa et al., 2024).

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Self-Concept Theory explains how consumers affirm self-knowledge, ideal self, and self-evaluation through digital tools (Calhoun & Acocella, 1990, as cited in Hidayati & Suseno, 2024; Gonzalez-Jimenez, 2017).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

This study focuses on Wardah Colour Intelligence™, launched at Wardah Colourverse 2025 (February 8–16, Senayan City, Jakarta)—Southeast Asia's first AI-based personal colour analysis system generating personalised seasonal makeup palettes for Indonesian Gen Z women (Armelia, 2025). Despite growing research on AI personalisation in beauty, halal-context studies rarely address how consumers negotiate algorithmic ambiguity or construct self-concept through AI interaction. This study extends TAM by arguing perceived usefulness must encompass functional, emotional, and cultural-symbolic dimensions, and shows how AI recommendations simultaneously mediate all three self-concept dimensions.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How does Wardah Colour Intelligence™ influence consumer perception, self-concept negotiation, and self-expression in Indonesia's halal beauty market? Sub-questions address: (1) how users interpret AI recommendations in relation to self-knowledge, ideal self, and self-evaluation; (2) how algorithmic ambiguity is negotiated through community interaction; and (3) how halal identity shapes trust in AI-driven personalisation.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs qualitative content analysis (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008) of five purposively selected TikTok videos from @WardahBeautyOfficial (February–April 2025), identified via hashtags "#WardahColourIntelligence" and "#WardahPersonalColorAnalysis." Selection criteria: (1) demonstration of the AI colour test; (2) personalised palette recommendations; and (3) substantive comments addressing usefulness, trust, or halal values. The sample covered hijabi and non-hijabi creators in at-home and online settings. Comments in Bahasa Indonesia and English were inductively coded into themes and subthemes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As shown in Table 1, content analysis identified four themes with twelve subthemes.

Theme 1: Perceived Usefulness

Functional Usefulness

Comments like "ngebantu banget" (very helpful) showed AI reduced shade-selection complexity and purchase risk (Gao et al., 2023).

Emotional and Cognitive Usefulness

Results like "cool summer" acted as emotional mirrors validating self-perceptions (Beyari & Hashem, 2025), reflecting the self-knowledge dimension of Self-Concept Theory—converting abstract self-perception into actionable identity data.

Cultural and Symbolic Usefulness

Pride in a local halal brand pioneering AI strengthened cultural ownership and brand loyalty.

Theme 2: Ease of Use and Technical Friction

Persistent Experimentation

Repeated testing under varied conditions showed perceived value outweighed technical barriers.

Co-Created Accessibility

Comment sections functioned as peer-support forums, collectively lowering the usage threshold through troubleshooting.

Algorithmic Ambiguity and Literacy

Inconsistent results prompted "folk theories" about lighting and camera quality (Zhao & Chu, 2023), triggering collaborative sensemaking rather than abandonment. Minimal brand communication on data storage or AI logic represents a governance gap—Shin's (2021) explainability framework suggests transparent disclosure is essential when users share biometric data.

Theme 3: Emotional Personalisation and Self-Expression

Recognition and Validation (Self-Knowledge)

"No wonder this colour suits me" illustrates how AI outputs resolved aesthetic uncertainties and confirmed self-knowledge, functioning as identity mirrors (Gonzalez-Jimenez, 2017).

Relief from Uncertainty (Ideal Self)

Palette suggestions reduced purchase anxiety and helped users navigate aspirational self-presentation, connecting to the ideal self-dimension of self-concept theory.

Playful Exploration (Self-Evaluation)

Creative sharing and retesting turned personalisation into participatory self-expression (Gao et al., 2023). Where AI results conflicted with self-perception, users calibrated rather than capitulated—self-concept negotiation through AI is dialogic, not deterministic.

Theme 4: Halal Identity, Trust, and Cultural Positioning

Halal Brand Trust and Data Governance

Wardah's halal reputation enabled comfort with facial data sharing (Saleh & Rajandran, 2024), yet trust rested on reputation rather than verified transparency. The absence of data-retention and AI-logic disclosures risks undermining future AI adoption.

Community-Based Trust

Active TikTok responses humanised the brand and converted technical friction into shared learning.

Cultural-Spiritual Self-Concept

Users integrated AI results with halal modesty values, using the tool for faith-aligned self-discovery within Islamic identity (Gonzalez-Jimenez, 2017).

CONCLUSION

Wardah Colour Intelligence™ succeeded by integrating technological precision with emotional empathy, cultural relevance, and ethical transparency. Users actively negotiated meaning through algorithmic sensemaking and identity reflection rather than passively receiving AI outputs. Three theoretical contributions emerge: (1) TAM is extended by showing perceived usefulness must encompass functional, emotional, and symbolic-cultural dimensions; (2) Personalisation Theory is advanced by demonstrating it is co-produced through user agency; and (3) Self-Concept Theory is enriched by showing AI simultaneously mediates self-knowledge, ideal self, and self-evaluation, with algorithmic ambiguity activating rather than disrupting this process. Critically, halal-branded trust without transparent data governance is structurally fragile. Future research should explore how data transparency shapes long-term trust across diverse cultural markets.

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