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Halal fashion and ESG: A systematic review of sustainability and greenwashing

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Abstract

This study aims to map how existing literature connects halal fashion, Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) frameworks, and greenwashing, and to develop a conceptual framework for evaluating sustainability claims in the Muslim fashion industry. A systematic literature review following the PRISMA 2020 protocol was conducted through Open Knowledge Maps, which queries the Bielefeld Academic Search Engine (BASE). The search, performed in June 2026 for publications from 2015 to 2026, identified 98 records, of which 25 articles were included and analyzed using thematic synthesis. Three clusters emerged. Greenwashing in the fashion industry (64%) shows that misleading claims are systemic and erode consumer trust; halal fashion and sustainability (24%) reveals strong value alignment with slow fashion but no operational verification mechanism; and the ESG framework (12%) indicates that disclosure-performance gaps and mandatory regulation are the most reliable tools for detecting and curbing greenwashing. The study offers two conceptual contributions: halal-washing, a proposed construct describing halal claims that cannot be independently verified and that still requires empirical validation, and the Maqashid-ESG Anti-Greenwashing Framework with four indicators. These contributions provide regulators, halal certification bodies, brands, and Muslim consumers with a basis for assessing halal and sustainability claims.

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INTRODUCTION

The global fashion industry is facing unprecedented dual pressures. On one hand, consumers and investors are increasingly demanding verifiable commitments to sustainability-not just empty claims. On the other hand, the Muslim fashion market is growing at a pace that's hard to ignore, driven by more than 1.8 billion Muslim consumers worldwide who are increasingly conscious of their identity and values when it comes to consumption (Hackett et al., 2017). The problem arises when these two pressures converge, the line between genuine sustainability claims and mere image-building becomes extremely thin almost invisible. The global halal fashion industry itself reached a value of USD 295 billion in 2023 and is projected to reach USD 488 billion by 2030, with an average annual growth rate of 7.8% (Dinar Standard, 2023). Indonesia, Malaysia, and Turkey lead as the largest markets, while global brands are beginning to target this segment with their own modest fashion lines. However, behind these promising figures lie risks that have yet to be adequately addressed by research such as the possibility that "halal" attributes are used as a marketing tool without compliance that can be truly verified from the outside.

Greenwashing in the conventional fashion industry has already received considerable academic attention, with major brands such as H&M, Inditex, Shein, and Adidas implicated in misleading sustainability claims (Aya et al., 2025). Although the EU has responded with the SFDR and Green Claims Directive, these regulations do not address the halal fashion ecosystem. Paradoxically, Islamic values embedded in halal fashion the prohibition of israf, the obligation of hifz al-bi'ah, and the prohibition of gharar are conceptually stricter than conventional ESG standards, yet remain vulnerable to misuse precisely because no bridging mechanism exists. No prior Systematic Literature Review has simultaneously integrated halal fashion, ESG, and greenwashing within a single PRISMA protocol, leaving regulators, brands, and consumers without clear accountability standards.

This study aims to address this gap by answering three research questions: (1) how does the existing literature link halal fashion, ESG, and greenwashing; (2) what are the most critical research gaps at the intersection of these three domains; and (3) what conceptual framework can be developed from these findings to evaluate sustainability claims in the Muslim fashion industry? To this end, a Systematic Literature Review was conducted following the PRISMA 2020 protocol, a method that yields more transparent and reproducible syntheses than conventional narrative reviews, as demonstrated by cross-domain studies in fashion sustainability (Aya et al., 2025). The study offers three contributions. Theoretically, it proposes the concept of "halal-washing" as a construct parallel to, rather than a subtype of, greenwashing that has not been conceptualized in prior literature; methodologically, it offers a three-domain PRISMA protocol as a precedent for similar cross-domain reviews; and practically, it proposes the Maqashid-ESG Anti-Greenwashing Framework as a conceptual tool

that halal certification bodies, regulators, and industry stakeholders can develop further into a transparent and verifiable accountability system.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach following the PRISMA 2020 statement (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) (Moher et al., 2015; Page et al., 2021). This approach was chosen for its ability to synthesize evidence from various sources in a transparent, reproducible, and systematic manner, thereby minimizing the selection bias commonly found in conventional narrative reviews. The procedure consisted of five steps: (1) selection of data sources and search strategy, (2) study selection, (3) quality considerations, (4) data extraction and thematic synthesis, and (5) assignment of articles to thematic clusters, each of which is described below.

Data Sources and Search Strategy

The literature was identified using Open Knowledge Maps (OKMaps), an open-access visual literature discovery platform that generates topic-based knowledge maps by querying metadata from BASE (Bielefeld Academic Search Engine), which indexes over 300 million documents from nearly 10,000 repositories and content providers worldwide. These sources were selected for three reasons. First, this review sits at the intersection of three fields whose literatures are indexed unevenly: research on greenwashing and ESG is concentrated in international journals, whereas research on halal and Muslim fashion is published largely in open-access national journals, particularly in Indonesia and Malaysia, many of which are not indexed in Scopus or Web of Science. BASE aggregates both types of sources, including publisher metadata as well as institutional and Open Journal Systems repositories, thereby reducing the risk that the halal fashion domain would be underrepresented. Second, OKMaps groups retrieved records into thematic areas based on textual similarity, which supported exploratory mapping of a cross-domain topic before formal screening. Third, both platforms are freely accessible, so the search can be repeated by other researchers without subscription barriers, which supports reproducibility.

These sources also have limitations. BASE is a metadata aggregator rather than a curated citation index; it does not provide complete coverage of subscription-based journals, its metadata quality varies across providers, and OKMaps builds each map from a capped set of the most relevant records returned for a query (by default, 100 documents). Consequently, coverage is likely to be strongest for halal fashion research, which is predominantly open access, and comparatively weaker for greenwashing and ESG studies published in subscription journals. Because the aim of this review is to map the intersection of the three domains rather than to cover each domain exhaustively, this coverage was considered adequate for an exploratory synthesis; however, the findings should not be read as a comprehensive census of the greenwashing or ESG literature. The implications of this choice are discussed under potential selection bias below and in the limitations of the study.

The search was conducted in June 2026 using three complementary keyword clusters: (C1) halal fashion ("halal fashion" OR "modest fashion" OR "Muslim fashion" OR "Islamic fashion" OR "halal supply chain fashion"); (C2) ESG and sustainability ("ESG" OR "environmental social governance" OR "sustainable fashion" OR "sustainability claims" OR "circular fashion" OR "slow fashion"); and (C3) greenwashing ("greenwashing" OR "halal-washing" OR "green claims" OR "sustainability disclosure" OR "misleading environmental claims"). The clusters were combined pairwise with the AND operator, that is, (C1 AND C2) OR (C1 AND C3) OR (C2 AND C3), so that retrieved records addressed at least two of the three domains, consistent with the inclusion criteria in Table 1. Results were limited to the 2015–2026 publication period. A duplicate check was performed before screening, and one duplicate was identified (a preprint and the published version of the same article); it was removed, leaving 97 unique records for screening.

Study Selection

Study selection followed the four PRISMA stages, namely identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion, and was carried out by a single reviewer (the author) by applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria presented in Table 1. The absence of an independent second screener is acknowledged as a potential source of bias (see Potential Selection Bias).

Table 1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria for Literature Selection

Aspect	**Inclusion Criteria**	**Exclusion Criteria**
Document Type	Peer-reviewed journal articles and academic conference proceedings	Books, editorials, theses
Language	Indonesian and English	Other than Indonesian and English
Publication period	2015–2026	Outside the 2015–2026 period
Main topics	Meets at least 2 of 3 criteria: (C1) halal/Muslim fashion, (C2) ESG/sustainability, (C3) greenwashing	Meets only 1 criterion without substantive relevance to the core topic
Context	Related to the fashion industry, ESG, or greenwashing	Focused on finance/banking without providing ESG or greenwashing measurement or regulatory insight applicable to the fashion industry
Availability	Full text available	Full text not available

At the screening stage, the titles and abstracts of the 97 unique records were checked against the document type, language, publication period, and topic criteria in Table 1, and 27 records were excluded. The full texts of the remaining 70 records were retrieved (none were unavailable) and assessed for eligibility; 38 records were excluded because, on full reading, they did not substantively address at least two of the three domains or focused on finance or banking without offering measurement or regulatory insight transferable to the fashion industry. The remaining 32 articles were then assessed for fashion relevance, and seven were excluded because fashion appeared only as a passing example rather than as the research context or unit of analysis. Finance-oriented ESG studies were retained only when they offered a greenwashing detection method or regulatory mechanism that could be transferred to the fashion sector. In total, 25 articles were included in the synthesis (Figure 2).

Quality Considerations

No formal quality-appraisal instrument (e.g., MMAT, JBI, or CASP) was applied. These instruments are designed for specific study designs, whereas the included literature combines quantitative, qualitative, mixed-method, conceptual, documentary, and review studies across three fields. Conceptual and documentary studies in particular have no agreed appraisal criteria, so applying a single checklist would have produced scores that are not comparable across designs. This approach is consistent with guidance that integrative reviews aimed at conceptual development, rather than at estimating effect sizes, may rely on transparent selection and critical reading instead of formal scoring (Snyder, 2019). In place of scoring, a minimum quality threshold was built into the eligibility criteria: only peer-reviewed journal articles and academic conference proceedings with full text available were included, and the context, design, and key findings of each article were extracted and reported (Tables 2–4) so that readers can judge the strength of the underlying evidence.

The absence of formal appraisal nevertheless means that findings from studies of differing rigor carry similar weight in the synthesis, which may affect the reliability of some conclusions. To limit this risk, the synthesis distinguishes between findings supported by empirical studies and propositions derived from conceptual work, and the framework developed in this study is presented as a conceptual proposal rather than as a validated instrument.

Data Extraction and Thematic Synthesis

Data were extracted using a standard template that recorded article identifiers (author, year, journal, and country), research objectives, methods, key findings, contributions to the review topic, and the assigned thematic cluster. Synthesis followed the thematic synthesis procedure of Thomas and Harden (2008), combined with the descriptive, thematic, and interpretive analyses recommended by Marzi et al. (2024), and was carried out in five stages. First, in data extraction and familiarization, the findings and arguments of each article were entered into the extraction template and read repeatedly. Second, in initial coding, findings were coded inductively, producing descriptive codes such as “vague claims,” “selective disclosure,” “consumer distrust,” “halal supply chain,” and “mandatory disclosure.”

Third, in code categorization, codes with similar meanings were grouped into higher-order categories, for example, greenwashing tactics, consumer responses, halal supply chain dimensions, and disclosure-performance gaps. Fourth, in theme development, categories were compared across articles to form descriptive themes, which were consolidated into the three thematic clusters. Fifth, in interpretive synthesis, the clusters were read against one another to identify cross-cluster gaps, from which the concept of halal-washing and the Maqashid-ESG framework were derived as analytical themes that go beyond the content of any individual study.

Assignment of Articles to Thematic Clusters

Because several articles address more than one domain, each article was assigned to a single primary cluster on the basis of its main research object and its main contribution to the review questions. Articles whose main object is the conceptualization, measurement, practice, or consumer effects of greenwashing in fashion were assigned to Cluster 1 (greenwashing in the fashion industry). Articles whose main object is halal or Muslim fashion were assigned to Cluster 2 (halal fashion and sustainability). Articles whose main object is ESG disclosure, rating, or regulatory and market mechanisms, even when greenwashing is the outcome variable, were assigned to Cluster 3 (ESG framework). Each article therefore appears in only one cluster table (Tables 2–4), while its secondary relevance to other clusters is discussed in the cross-cluster analysis.

Potential Selection Bias

Several sources of selection bias were considered. Database bias may arise because reliance on a single aggregator through OKMaps may underrepresent subscription journals indexed only in Scopus or Web of Science, which matter more for the greenwashing and ESG domains than for halal fashion. Language bias may arise from restricting the review to Indonesian and English, which excludes literature in Arabic, Malay, and Turkish from several of the largest halal fashion markets; together with the strong presence of Indonesian open-access journals in BASE, this may partly explain the prominence of Indonesian studies in the sample. Accessibility bias may arise from the full-text availability criterion, which favors open-access publications. Publication bias may also be present, since studies reporting clear evidence of greenwashing are more likely to be published than those with null findings. Reviewer bias may also be present, because screening and cluster assignment were performed by a single reviewer, so borderline inclusion and classification decisions could not be cross-checked independently. These biases mainly limit the comprehensiveness and generalizability of the descriptive results, such as the distribution of studies across countries and clusters. They are less likely to affect the conceptual contribution, which rests on identifying an unaddressed intersection rather than on the frequency of studies. Nevertheless, the results should be interpreted as indicative, and replication using Scopus, Web of Science, and additional languages is recommended.

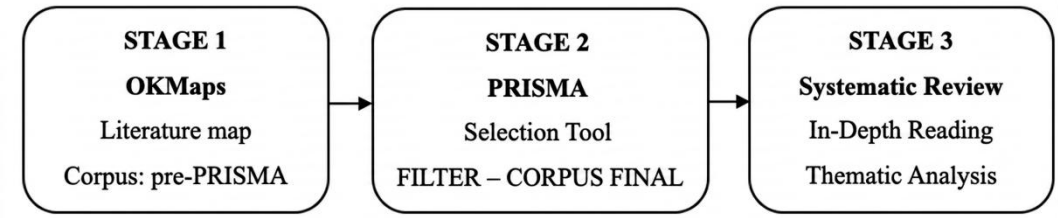


Figure 1. Hybrid Methodology Framework

Figure 1 presents the three-stage hybrid methodology: (1) topic-based literature mapping via OKMaps from 98 articles, (2) PRISMA protocol selection yielding 25 final articles, and (3) thematic synthesis to develop the proposed conceptual framework.

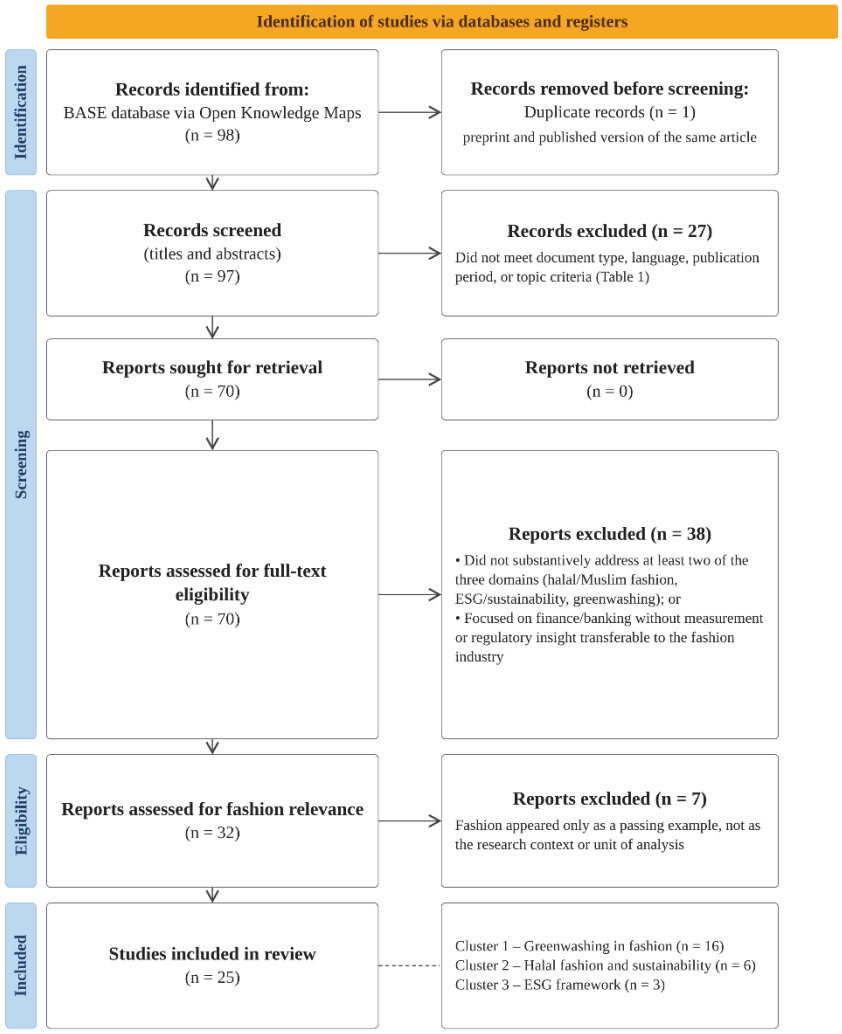


Figure 2. PRISMA Literature Selection Flow Diagram

Figure 2 shows the PRISMA selection flow: 98 records identified → 1 duplicate removed → 27 excluded at screening → 38 excluded at eligibility → 7 excluded for insufficient fashion relevance → 25 articles included in the final synthesis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

General Characteristics of the Included Articles

Of the 98 identified records, 25 articles were included in the final synthesis. Although the search window covered 2015–2026, the included articles were published between 2022 and 2026, with a peak in 2024 (ten articles). This indicates that scholarly attention to the credibility of sustainability claims in fashion is recent and grew after the COVID-19 pandemic. It also shows a shift in the field: earlier work describes sustainability values and consumer attitudes, whereas more recent articles begin to measure greenwashing and to test regulatory responses to it.

Geographically, global or multi-country studies account for 36% of the sample, followed by Indonesia (24%), Europe (16%), China (12%), and other countries, namely the United States, Vietnam, and Pakistan (12%). This pattern mirrors the thematic division of the field: global, European, and Chinese studies examine greenwashing, ESG disclosure, and consumer responses, whereas all six studies on halal fashion come from Indonesia and examine it without reference to greenwashing or ESG measurement. The countries where the halal fashion market is largest are thus where the greenwashing literature is weakest, which helps explain why the intersection of the three domains has remained unexplored. Methodologically, qualitative (36%) and quantitative studies (32%) dominate, followed by mixed-methods (16%), conceptual (8%), and review studies (8%), reflecting the exploratory stage of the field. Notably, none of the included studies empirically tests the verifiability of halal claims, which reinforces the need for the conceptual framework proposed in this study.

Diagram 1. Geographic Distribution (N=25)

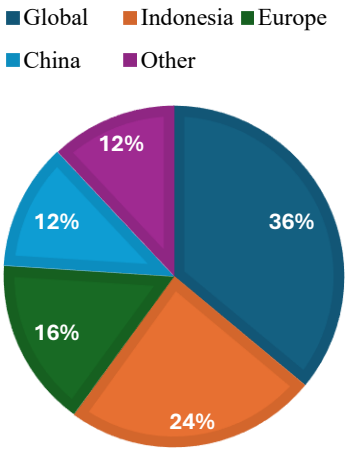
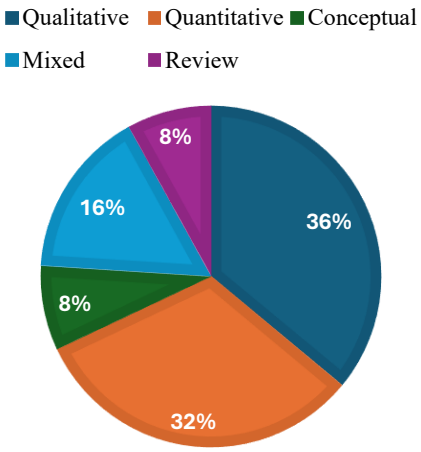


Diagram 2. Research Methodology (N=25)



Theme Cluster 1: Greenwashing in the Fashion Industry

This is the largest cluster (16 articles), within which three major sub-themes emerge consistently and reinforce one another.

The first sub-theme concerns the definition and typology of greenwashing. Pedersen & Andersen (2023) provide the strongest conceptual foundation by conceptualizing greenwashing not as a single lie, but as a "broken business model" a systemic condition in which the value proposition communicated to the public is disconnected from the actual business architecture being implemented. Akın & Etib (2026) expand on this typology by identifying seven concrete tactics they call the "Eco-Chameleon Effect," ranging from vague

claims lacking testable definitions, selective disclosure of only favorable information, and false labeling, to what they term “hidden trade-offs” claims of progress in one dimension while simultaneously worsening another dimension that goes unreported. At the measurement level, Dorfleitner & Utz (2024) propose a framework based on the five pillars of ESG that operationalizes greenwashing as a measurable gap between “apparent” and “actual” performance.

The second sub-theme is the empirical documentation of greenwashing in global fashion brands. Della et al. (2024), through a semiotic analysis of H&M’s Conscious Exclusive campaign, found that more than half of the sustainability claims made by H&M were factually inaccurate. Irawan et al. (2026) audited the sustainability reports of H&M, Inditex, and Adidas for the 2020-2024 period and identified a consistent pattern, strong positive narratives on the front pages, while actual emissions data particularly Scope 3 emissions covering the supply chain lagged far behind published targets. Puteri et al. (2025) added the case of Shein with its 2024 EvoluShein campaign, which identified five simultaneous greenwashing strategies, the use of vague eco-terminology, symbolic green-tinted visual imagery, unverifiable certifications, emotional and moral appeals, and absolute claims unsupported by data.

The third sub-theme is the impact of greenwashing on fashion consumers. Ngo & Le (2026) found that young consumers in Hanoi who were aware of greenwashing did indeed experience a decline in trust toward brands, but this did not necessarily lead to a change in their purchasing behavior. Lu et al. (2022) quantitatively demonstrated that perceptions of greenwashing negatively impact green purchase intention through two mediating channels, financial perceived risk and green perceived risk. This means that when consumers feel deceived by green claims, they not only lose trust in that specific brand but also become more skeptical of the entire category of sustainability claims including those that may be authentic.

Two further studies show how greenwashing interacts with genuine sustainability efforts. Rehman et al. (2024), surveying 446 fashion-brand customers in Pakistan, found that greenwashing weakens the positive effect of green packaging and green distribution practices on green brand association, meaning that misleading claims erode the very brand value that genuine green supply chain investments are meant to create. In contrast, Velasco-Molpeceres et al. (2023) found no greenwashing in the Instagram communication of five Spanish slow-fashion brands, while noting that sustainable fashion communication remains largely unregulated. Read together, these studies suggest that greenwashing is not inherent to sustainability communication; it thrives where claims cannot be verified and regulation is absent, which is precisely the condition of the halal fashion market today.

From the perspective of Islamic business ethics, these tactics correspond to practices that Islamic commercial law prohibits. Vague claims, hidden trade-offs, and unverifiable certifications create gharar, an excessive uncertainty that prevents the informed mutual consent (taradin) required by QS. An-Nisa [4]: 29, while selective disclosure and manipulated imagery constitute tadlis, which the Prophet condemned in the hadith “whoever cheats us is not one of us” (narrated by Muslim). A brand that markets itself as Islamic is therefore bound

by these norms not only by law but also by the very values it advertises, so greenwashing by such a brand represents a double inconsistency.

Table 2. Synthesis of Key Findings from the Greenwashing Cluster

No	Author & Year	Context	Method	Key Findings
1	Pedersen & Andersen (2023)	Global	Conceptual	Greenwashing as a broken business model; 42% of online green claims are proven to be fraudulent
2	Akın & Etib (2026)	Global	Quantitative (SIWEC)	The 7 most influential tactics of the Eco-Chameleon Effect: false labeling and visual manipulation
3	Dorfleitner & Utz (2024)	Global	Conceptual	5-pillar framework for measuring greenwashing based on ESG
4	Hill et al. (2025)	Global	Qualitative (case testing)	A validated 4 dimensional assessment framework consisting of misleading communication, lack of evidence, vague claims, and irrelevance
5	Della et al. (2024)	H&M Global	Semiotics	More than 50% of H&M's sustainability profiles are inaccurate; the campaigns are categorized as greenwashed advertising
6	Irawan et al. (2026)	H&M, Inditex, Adidas	Content Audit	Patterns of selective information and gaps between targets and actual results in the 2020–2024 sustainability reports
7	Aya et al. (2025)	Spain/Global	Documentary	H&M and Inditex set vague targets without independent verification , while Ecoalf and Patagonia demonstrate genuine transparency
8	Puteri et al. (2025)	Shein	Critical Analysis	5 simultaneous greenwashing strategies in the 2024 EvoluShein campaign

9	Badhwar et al. (2024)	Global (SLR)	SLR PRISMA	Direct vs. Indirect Greenwashing: A Major Research Gap in the Context of Halal Fashion
10	Shield (2025)	Fashion USA	Qualitative	Greenwashing is often unintentional, resulting from a misalignment between the marketing and sustainability divisions
11	Diaz-Bustamante-Ventisca et al. (2024)	Spanish	Quantitative (SEM)	Perceptions of greenwashing reduce sustainable behavior and the intention to purchase sustainable products
12	Ngo & Le (2026)	Vietnam	Mixed (PLS-SEM)	Greenwashing reduces brand trust and brand loyalty, while perceived authenticity has a mitigating effect
13	Lu et al. (2022)	China	Quantitative (PLS-SEM)	Greenwashing has a negative impact on green purchase intention via financial and perceived green risk
14	Sailer et al. (2022)	Instagram/Global	Mixed	9 greenwashing and bluewashing strategies in fashion campaigns on social media
15	Rehman et al. (2024)	Pakistan	Quantitative (PLS-SEM, n=446)	Greenwashing negatively moderates the effect of green brand packaging and green distribution on green brand association
16	Velasco-Molpeceres et al. (2023)	Spain	Mixed (content analysis, interviews)	No greenwashing found among five slow-fashion brands on Instagram; sustainable fashion communication remains unregulated

Theme Cluster 2: Halal Fashion and Sustainability

Islamic values underpinning halal fashion are conceptually stricter than conventional ESG standards, yet the absence of adequate verification mechanisms makes them more susceptible to misuse. Karmanto et al. (2026) found that authentic halal fashion spans four

supply chain dimensions halal resourcing, handling, production, and retailing but most consumers associate the term solely with dress codes, creating a structural loophole for halal-washing. Cholifah (2026) confirmed that despite Indonesia ranking first in the 2024 Global Islamic Economy Report, no integrated reporting mechanism bridges halal and ESG standards. Pohan et al. (2024) further found that Muslim Gen Z consumers espouse circular fashion values yet exhibit hedonistic purchasing behavior, reducing market pressure for genuine change. Alivian & Rohim (2024) and Khuriyawati (2024), both identify a strong conceptual alignment between halal fashion and the slow fashion movement, but this alignment remains unoperationalized in certification or reporting systems.

A key interpretation emerging from this cluster is that halal fashion should be understood as a value-chain concept rather than as a product attribute. In public discourse and in most consumer perceptions, halal fashion is equated with clothing that covers the ‘awrah and avoids prohibited materials. The reviewed literature, however, shows that the halal status of a garment also depends on how it is produced and distributed: whether inputs such as dyes, adhesives, and leather are free from najs and harmful substances (halal resourcing), whether goods are handled and stored without contamination (halal handling), whether production involves fair treatment of workers and responsible use of resources (halal production), and whether marketing and retailing are honest (halal retailing) (Karmanto et al., 2026). Under the principle of halalan tayyiban (QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 168), which requires that what is consumed be both lawful and wholesome, a garment sewn by underpaid workers or dyed with polluting chemicals may comply with the dress code yet fall short of being tayyib. This broader understanding links halal fashion directly to ESG: the environmental and social conditions of production are part of what makes a garment halal and tayyib, not an optional addition. The gap between this broad concept and the narrow, dress-code-based understanding held by consumers and reflected in current certification is precisely the space in which misleading halal claims can thrive.

Table 3. Synthesis of Key Findings from the Halal Fashion and Sustainability Cluster

No	Author & Year	Context	Method	Key Findings
1	Karmanto et al. (2026)	Indonesia (Java)	Mixed (PLS-SEM, n=221)	Halal fashion encompasses four supply chain dimensions; consumer understanding is still limited to dress codes
2	Cholifah (2026)	Indonesia	Literature Review	Indonesia ranks first in the 2024 SGIER, but there are no reporting standards that integrate halal and ESG
3	Pohan et al. (2024)	Indonesia	Descriptive Qualitative	Muslim Gen Z is aware of circular fashion but still exhibits hedonistic consumption behavior; Islamic values have the potential to serve as a motivator

4	Alivian & Rohim (2024)	Indonesia	Qualitative	Halal fashion is structurally aligned with slow fashion but has not yet been implemented in industry standards
5	Khuriyawati (2024)	Indonesia	Qualitative	The halal lifestyle has the potential to serve as a strong counter-narrative to fast fashion, based on the values of qana'ah and the prohibition against israf
6	Nuh et al. (2023)	Indonesia (Jakarta)	Quantitative (Survey, n=236)	Fashion engagement and pro-environmental attitudes have a significant influence on sustainable fashion consumption

Theme Cluster 3: ESG Framework

Although smallest in sample size, this cluster provides the most directly useful methodological input (Table 4). Liu et al. (2024) demonstrated that the gap between ESG disclosure scores and actual performance constitutes a reliable quantitative indicator of greenwashing, with financial consequences that include stock price crash risk through information asymmetry. Abouarab et al. (2025) and Tong et al. (2024) both confirm that mandatory regulation is the most decisive factor in curbing greenwashing, outperforming voluntary commitments and consumer pressure, a finding with direct implications for halal fashion governance. Figure 3 maps the positions of the three articles within this cluster according to their approaches and their contributions to the proposed framework.

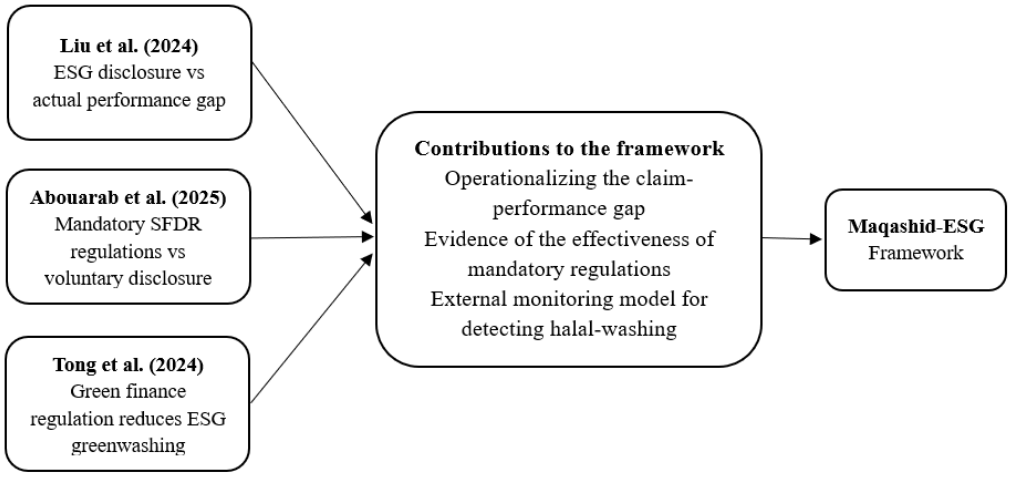


Figure 3. Map of ESG clusters' contributions to the proposed framework

Table 4. Synthesis of Key Findings from the ESG Framework Cluster

No	Author & Year	Context	Method	Key Findings
1	Liu et al. (2024)	China	Quantitative	The gap between ESG disclosure and actual performance (ESG report greenwashing) increases

No	Author & Year	Context	Method	Key Findings
				stock price crash risk through information asymmetry
2	Abouarab et al. (2025)	EU/SFDR	Quantitative (DiD, RDD)	Mandatory disclosure regulations are more effective than voluntary ones in curbing greenwashing
3	Tong et al. (2024)	China	Quasi-experimental (DID)	Green finance pilot zones are most effective at reducing ESG greenwashing in non-state-owned enterprises

Applied to halal fashion, conventional ESG frameworks have four limitations. First, they are values-neutral with respect to religion, so a brand can score well on ESG while selling products whose halal status is unverified, and vice versa. Second, ESG relies on self-reported disclosure, which can diverge systematically from actual performance (Liu et al., 2024), and many halal fashion producers are small and medium-sized enterprises that rarely publish audited sustainability reports. Third, ESG ratings diverge considerably across providers (Berg et al., 2022), leaving room for the selective use of favorable scores. Fourth, ESG was designed for accountability to investors, whereas accountability in Islamic economics extends to consumers, workers, society, and ultimately to God. Islamic economics offers complementary perspectives: the maqashid al-sharia provides an explicit structure of the interests to be protected, maslahah orients evaluation toward the welfare of all stakeholders, and the prohibitions of gharar and tadlis supply a principled basis for demanding verifiable and non-selective disclosure. These perspectives do not replace ESG metrics but give them a normative anchor appropriate to brands that claim Islamic legitimacy.

Taken together, the three clusters reveal a mature body of knowledge on how greenwashing operates in conventional fashion, an emerging but fragmented understanding of halal fashion sustainability, and robust ESG measurement tools yet no integrated framework connecting all three exists. This gap defines the primary contribution of the present study.

Cross-cluster analysis reveals a structural gap between claim and reality operating simultaneously at three levels: the industry level, where brands deploy ESG narratives without altering their business models; the regulatory level, where halal and ESG standards remain siloed; and the consumer level, where awareness of greenwashing paradoxically breeds skepticism that impedes rather than accelerates sustainable transitions (Lu et al., 2022; Ngo & Le, 2026). In the halal context, Islamic sustainability values, namely the prohibition of israf, the obligation of hifz al-bi'ah, and the prohibition of gharar, have not been translated into verified operational standards, leaving both ‘halal’ and ‘sustainable’ claims vulnerable to the same commercial exploitation. The interpretation advanced in this review is that these three levels reinforce one another: weak regulation allows symbolic claims, symbolic claims erode consumer trust, and eroded trust reduces the market reward for genuine compliance.

The Concept of “Halal-Washing” as a Key Theoretical Contribution

From the synthesis of these 25 articles, the most significant finding did not come from a single study but from a pattern that became visible precisely because no article named it: the phenomenon this study proposes to call "halal-washing." Based on the cross-cluster synthesis, halal-washing is defined as a practice in which brands, organizations, or individuals in the fashion industry communicate compliance with or commitment to halal standards in an exaggerated, selective, or misleading manner in order to gain commercial, reputational, or legitimacy benefits in the Muslim market, without independently verifiable substance of halal compliance. Because the concept is derived from a literature synthesis, it is presented as a theoretical proposition whose occurrence and prevalence remain to be established empirically.

This conceptualization belongs to the broader family of "washing" terms that has grown since "greenwashing" was coined in 1986 to include bluewashing, SDG-washing, CSR-washing, and sportswashing (Spaniol et al., 2024). Halal-washing shares their deceptive mechanism, namely selective disclosure and the claim-action gap, but differs in the legitimacy it falsely invokes: religious and spiritual rather than environmental or institutional legitimacy. It also differs from the "indirect greenwashing" construct reviewed by Badhwar et al. (2024), which concerns supply-chain-mediated environmental claims. Because a product can be falsely marketed as halal without any sustainability narrative, halal-washing is a parallel construct rather than a subtype of greenwashing.

Potential forms of halal-washing that can be inferred from the reviewed literature include the use of halal symbols without verifiable official certification, claims of "modest fashion" on products made from raw materials sourced from unethical fast-fashion supply chains, the use of Muslim influencers to legitimize fast-fashion brands without adequate disclosure, and simultaneous claims of being "halal and eco-friendly" without substantive evidence for either. Table 5 summarizes how halal-washing differs from greenwashing in terms of the object of legitimacy, the mechanism of deception, and the impact on Muslim consumers.

Table 5. Fundamental Differences between Greenwashing and Halal-Washing

Dimension	Greenwashing	Halal-washing
Object of legitimacy	Environmental legitimacy (being "green," "sustainable," "eco-friendly")	Religious and spiritual legitimacy (being "halal," "syar'i," "Islamic")
Content of the claim	Environmental performance of products, processes, or the firm	Compliance of materials, processes, and conduct with Islamic law; may occur with or without any environmental claim
Mechanism of deception	Vague or absolute claims, selective disclosure, hidden trade-offs, unverifiable eco-labels	Uncertified or partially valid halal logos, religious symbols and vocabulary, endorsement by religious figures or hijab-wearing influencers, coupling of "halal" with "eco-friendly"

Dimension	Greenwashing	Halal-washing
Verifying authority	Environmental auditors, eco-label schemes, consumer-protection regulators	Halal certification bodies (e.g., BPJPH, JAKIM), religious authorities
Impact on consumers	Financial loss, misallocated green preferences, generalized skepticism	Financial loss plus impaired religious practice and loss of confidence that consumption aligns with faith; distrust may spread to genuine halal claims
Islamic ethical breach	Gharar and tadlis regarding environmental attributes	Gharar and tadlis regarding religious attributes; breach of amanah and a direct threat to hifz al-din

Halal-Washing through the Lens of Legitimacy Theory

Legitimacy theory explains why halal-washing is attractive to firms. Legitimacy is a generalized perception that an organization's actions are desirable, proper, or appropriate within a socially constructed system of norms, values, and beliefs (Suchman, 1995). Suchman distinguishes pragmatic, moral, and cognitive legitimacy, and in Muslim markets the halal label can deliver all three at once: it signals pragmatic value (the product can be used without religious doubt), moral approval (the brand shares the consumer's values), and cognitive taken-for-grantedness (halal becomes the expected default). Ashforth and Gibbs (1990) further distinguish substantive legitimation, which involves real changes in goals, structures, and practices, from symbolic legitimation, in which organizations merely appear consistent with social values through ceremonial conformity, the espousal of socially acceptable goals, and selective disclosure.

In these terms, halal-washing is a strategy of symbolic religious legitimation. Its devices include halal logos or “syar’i” labels on uncertified or only partially certified products, religious vocabulary and Arabic-script branding, endorsement by hijab-wearing influencers or religious figures, product launches timed to Ramadan and Eid, and the coupling of “halal” with “eco-friendly” claims. Each device exploits the fact that halal status is a credence attribute that consumers cannot verify at the point of purchase, so symbolic legitimation offers a high return at a low cost. Moreover, once deception is discovered, distrust spreads to the entire category of claims (Lu et al., 2022; Ngo & Le, 2026), so halal-washing by some brands may erode the credibility of genuinely compliant ones.

Maqashid-ESG Anti-Greenwashing Framework

Based on the identification of these gaps, this study proposes the Maqashid-ESG Anti-Greenwashing Framework as a conceptual framework that integrates the five dimensions of maqashid al-sharia, supplemented by the contemporary objective of hifz al-bi'ah, with the three pillars of ESG into a coherent evaluation system. The framework does not start from ESG and then seek Islamic counterparts; rather, it begins with a more fundamental question, namely what Islam requires of business entities that claim to be halal, and then asks how those requirements can be operationalized into measurable indicators. Table 6 maps each maqashid dimension to the ESG pillars.

Table 6. Mapping of Maqashid al-Sharia Dimensions to ESG Pillars

Maqashid dimension	ESG pillar	Focus in halal fashion	Example indicator
Hifz al-din (religion)	Governance (G-Halal)	Integrity of halal claims and certification so that consumers can practice their religion with certainty	Share of products under valid halal certification; disclosure of certification scope; no unauthorized religious symbols
Hifz al-nafs (life)	Social (S-Halal); Environmental	Safety and health of workers and consumers	Occupational safety audits; restriction of hazardous chemicals in dyes and finishes
Hifz al-'aql (intellect)	Governance; Social	Truthful, non-manipulative information that enables informed choice	Claims supported by evidence; absence of vague or absolute claims; accessible consumer disclosure
Hifz al-nasl (progeny)	Social (S-Halal)	Protection of children and families; intergenerational welfare	Child-labor audits across tiers of the supply chain; family-supporting employment conditions
Hifz al-mal (wealth)	Governance; Social	Fair exchange, fair wages, and absence of gharar	Price premium justified by verified attributes; living-wage compliance
Hifz al-bi'ah (environment), contemporary extension	Environmental (E-Halal)	Avoidance of israf and fasad in production	Audited carbon footprint; textile waste rate; share of recycled or certified materials

Two dimensions in Table 6 require explanation. Hifz al-din is placed in the governance pillar because Muslims rely on truthful halal claims to fulfil religious obligations, so halal-washing is first and foremost a threat to hifz al-din. Hifz al-'aql spans the governance and social pillars, since the intellect is protected when consumers receive accurate, non-manipulative information that enables informed choice. Hifz al-bi'ah is not one of the five classical objectives, but contemporary scholarship treats environmental protection as an extension of the maqashid (Auda, 2008), and it serves here as the normative anchor of the environmental pillar.

Accordingly, Environmental Halal (E-Halal) integrates the environmental dimension of ESG with hifz al-bi'ah and the prohibition of israf, translating into materials that meet taharah standards while being environmentally friendly, minimal textile waste, and an independently audited carbon footprint. Social Halal (S-Halal) integrates the social dimension with hifz al-nafs, hifz al-nasl, and 'adl, translating into fair wages, verified workplace safety, and the prohibition of child labor in the supply chain. Governance Halal (G-Halal) integrates governance with hifz al-din, hifz al-'aql, amanah, and the prohibitions of gharar and tadlis,

requiring supply-chain transparency, independent certification audits, and sustainability reporting that is comparable across brands.

Building on these three pillars, the framework proposes a mechanism for detecting "halal-washing" that operates through four indicators. First, the claim-action gap: the measurable discrepancy between halal claims communicated in marketing materials and actual practices that can be verified through third-party audits. Second, disclosure selectivity: the extent to which a company discloses only the positive aspects of halal compliance while concealing problematic aspects. Third, verifiability: whether the halal claims made can be tested and audited by a party independent of the brand's commercial interests. Fourth, materiality: whether the claimed halal aspects truly have a substantive impact on the entire value chain, rather than merely superficial aspects that are easy to communicate.

Table 7 summarizes how each indicator is grounded in the reviewed literature and in Islamic ethical concepts.

Table 7. Academic and Islamic Ethical Basis of the Halal-Washing Detection Indicators

Indicator	**Basis in the reviewed literature**	**Islamic ethical basis**	**Link to transparency and maslahah**
Claim-action gap	Decoupling between communicated and actual performance (Dorfleitner & Utz, 2024; Liu et al., 2024; Pedersen & Andersen, 2023)	Amanah and sidq: a claim is a trust that must match conduct	Ensures that promised benefits actually materialize for stakeholders
Disclosure selectivity	Selective disclosure and positive-only narratives (Akın & Etib, 2026; Irawan et al., 2026)	Prohibition of tadlis: concealing defects or embellishing a product	Requires complete disclosure and prevents hidden harm (mafsadah)
Verifiability	Lack of evidence and of independent verification; effectiveness of mandatory disclosure (Hill et al., 2025; Aya et al., 2025; Abouarab et al., 2025)	Prohibition of gharar: unverifiable attributes create excessive uncertainty and undermine taradin	Enables independent assurance and informed consent
Materiality	Hidden trade-offs and symbolic campaigns (Akın & Etib, 2026; Della et al., 2024; Puteri et al., 2025)	Maslahah and prohibition of israf: claims must concern substantive welfare, not cosmetic features	Directs disclosure toward impacts that matter for workers, consumers, and the environment

To move these indicators from concept to instrument, each requires a data source and a scoring rule: the claim-action gap as the proportion of marketing claims corroborated by an independent halal or environmental audit; disclosure selectivity as the ratio of favorable to unfavorable supply-chain disclosures; verifiability as a binary indicator of whether third-party audit access is contractually available; and materiality as the share of total production volume

covered by the claim. At this stage, the framework is a conceptual synthesis rather than an empirically validated instrument; its pillars and indicators have not been tested against real halal fashion brands or supply-chain data and should be read as a research agenda and evaluative heuristic rather than an auditing standard.

The framework draws on three sources from the reviewed literature: the gap-analysis methodologies of Dorfleitner and Utz (2024) and Liu et al. (2024); the four halal supply chain dimensions of Karmanto et al. (2026); and the regulatory logic of the SFDR examined by Abouarab et al. (2025), as visualized in Figure 4.

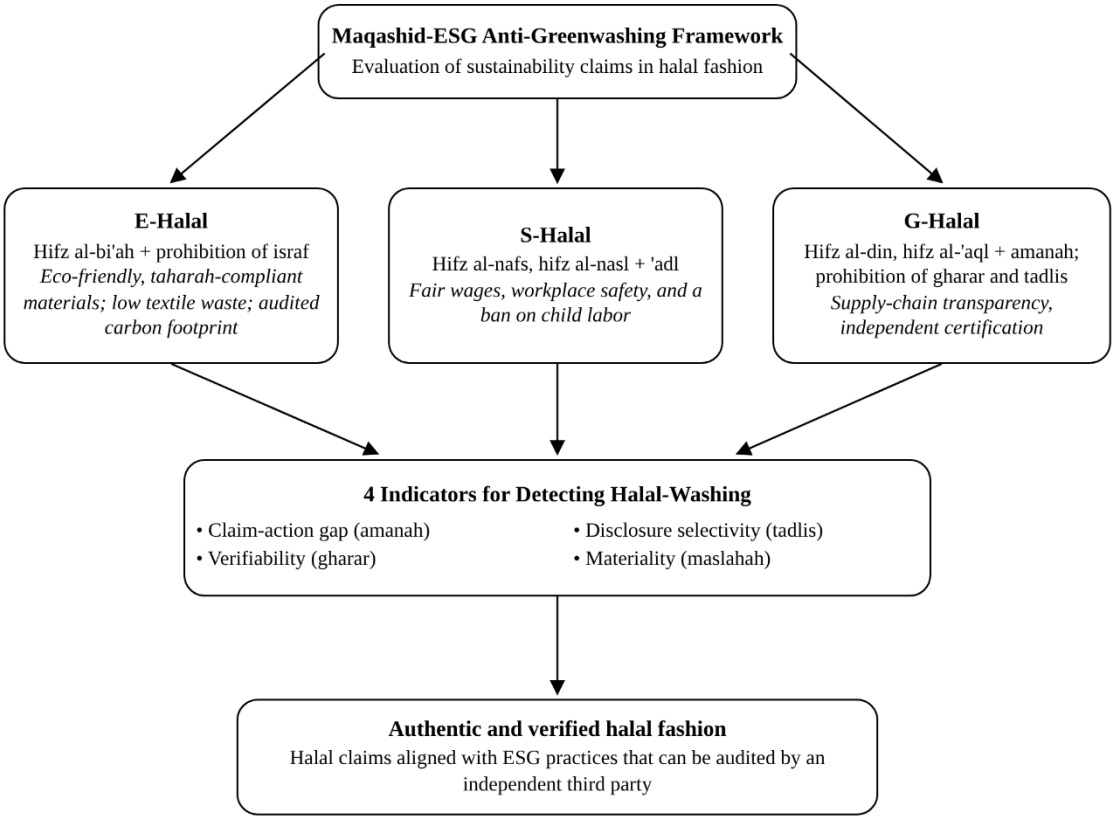


Figure 4. Maqashid-ESG Anti-Greenwashing Framework

Implications for Islamic Economics

The synthesis also has implications for Islamic economics in four areas. First, producer responsibility: producers act as khalifah who hold resources in trust, so a brand that uses halal symbols assumes a heightened duty of amanah that extends beyond legal compliance to the honesty of every claim. Second, protection of Muslim consumers: classical fiqh provides remedies such as khiyar al-‘ayb and khiyar al-tadlis for sales tainted by hidden defects or deception, and the institution of hisbah historically supervised fair dealing in markets; in a modern context, these principles support mandatory, verifiable halal and sustainability disclosure rather than reliance on voluntary claims.

Third, justice for workers: the principle of ‘adl and the prophetic instruction to pay workers their wages before their sweat dries (narrated by Ibn Majah) imply that a garment produced under exploitative labor conditions cannot be regarded as fully halal and tayyib, even if its materials and design comply with sharia. Fourth, environmental sustainability: the

prohibitions of fasad (QS. Ar-Rum [30]: 41) and israf (QS. Al-A'raf [7]: 31) provide a religious foundation for reducing overproduction, textile waste, and pollution, which places the slow-fashion orientation identified in Cluster 2 within the core of Islamic economic ethics rather than at its margins. Taken together, these implications suggest that the halal fashion industry is a natural testing ground for an Islamic economics that is not only normative but also measurable and enforceable.

Theoretical Implications

This study has three theoretical implications. First, it extends greenwashing theory into the religious domain by proposing halal-washing as a parallel construct: the deceptive mechanism, namely the claim-action gap and selective disclosure, is shared, but the legitimacy appropriated is religious rather than environmental, and the harm extends to the consumer's religious practice. Second, it extends legitimacy theory by showing that religious legitimacy can be pursued symbolically, and that the halal label is an unusually powerful symbolic resource because it combines pragmatic, moral, and cognitive legitimacy and is evaluated by consumers largely on trust. Third, it contributes to the Islamic economics literature by moving the maqashid al-sharia from a normative reference to an evaluative structure that maps each objective to an ESG pillar and to indicators grounded in amanah, tadlis, gharar, and maslahah. These implications are propositions derived from a literature synthesis and require empirical testing.

Practical Implications

For halal certification bodies (e.g., BPJPH and MUI in Indonesia and JAKIM in Malaysia), this study suggests expanding certification standards to include environmental and social dimensions, given evidence that voluntary approaches are insufficient (Abouarab et al., 2025). For regulators in Indonesia and Malaysia, developing an integrated halal sustainability reporting standard, analogous to the European Union's mandatory Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), is a priority for ensuring that halal claims are verifiable and comparable across brands.

For halal fashion brands, the Maqashid-ESG framework offers a common operational language between marketing and production divisions to build authentic, verifiable sustainability claims, addressing the structural disconnect identified by Shield (2025) as a root cause of unintentional greenwashing. For Muslim consumers, halal-sustainability literacy is both a consumer right and a matter of religious integrity; key warning signs include uncertified halal symbols, unverifiable eco-friendly claims, and undisclosed influencer affiliations.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to map how the literature links halal fashion, ESG, and greenwashing, to identify the main research gaps, and to develop a framework for evaluating sustainability claims in the Muslim fashion industry. Regarding the first objective, the synthesis of 25 articles shows that the three domains have developed largely in isolation: greenwashing research

documents systemic and increasingly sophisticated misleading claims in conventional fashion; halal fashion research highlights strong value alignment with sustainability but lacks verification mechanisms; and ESG research provides measurement and regulatory tools that have not yet been applied to halal fashion. Regarding the second objective, the central gap is the absence of a framework that integrates halal principles and ESG standards to evaluate claims, which leaves room for halal claims to be used without verifiable substance.

Regarding the third objective, this study offers two conceptual contributions to the Islamic economics literature. The first is the concept of halal-washing, a proposed construct that is parallel to, rather than a subtype of, greenwashing, distinguished by its appropriation of religious legitimacy and by the harm it causes to the consumer's religious practice. The second is the Maqashid-ESG Anti-Greenwashing Framework, which maps the objectives of sharia onto the ESG pillars and proposes four detection indicators grounded in amanah, tadlis, gharar, and maslahah. Both contributions are conceptual proposals derived from a literature synthesis; this study does not demonstrate empirically that halal-washing occurs or how widespread it is.

This study has limitations, which are discussed in detail under Potential Selection Bias in the Research Method section. In brief, the literature was drawn from a single aggregator (BASE via Open Knowledge Maps), restricted to Indonesian- and English-language publications from 2015–2026, and screened by a single reviewer, so the descriptive results should be read as indicative rather than exhaustive. Future research should replicate this review using Scopus, Web of Science, additional languages, and independent double screening, and should validate halal-washing empirically, for example through content analysis of the halal and sustainability claims of fashion brands, consumer experiments on the credibility of religious claims, and field tests of the Maqashid-ESG indicators in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Turkey, leading to a quantitatively measurable halal-washing index.

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