

ISLAMIC SIGNIFIER INTENSITY, INTEGRITY, AND THEATRICAL PERFORMANCE IN INDONESIAN HORROR FILM CAMPAIGNS

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Abstract

Islamic symbolism has become a prominent feature of Indonesian horror film promotion, yet its market relevance depends on more than visual prominence because sacred cues may differ in semantic accuracy, ethical coherence, and contextual consistency. This study examines how Islamic Signifier Intensity and the Islamic Signifier Integrity Index are associated with theatrical audience performance, while also considering Established Market Recognition and Eid al-Fitr Release Timing as contextual market conditions. An exploratory secondary digital archival design was applied to fourteen Indonesian horror film campaigns released between 2022 and 2025 by coding official titles, posters, thumbnails, trailers, synopses, release metadata, and theatrical admissions through multimodal content analysis, rank-based comparison, permutation assessment, and contrasting-case interpretation. The results show a stable negative corpus-level association between signifier intensity and admissions, whereas established market recognition produced the strongest stable positive association; signifier integrity and Eid al-Fitr release timing retained positive but imprecise directions, while pre-release digital-attention metrics were excluded because comparable historical series could not be reproduced. The findings indicate that sacred-symbol visibility does not independently determine market performance and that credible symbolic use becomes strategically meaningful only when aligned with campaign coherence, audience familiarity, release conditions, and responsible marketing governance.

Keywords: *Film marketing; Islamic signifier integrity; Islamic signifier intensity; signaling theory; theatrical performance.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's screen industry has become an important component of the national creative economy through production, distribution, employment, advertising, and digital services. In 2022, the industry generated approximately Rp130 trillion in output, contributed

Rp81 trillion to gross domestic product, and supported about 387,000 jobs (PT PricewaterhouseCoopers Indonesia Advisory & LPEM FEB Universitas Indonesia, 2024). Indonesia's *box-office* revenue is projected to increase at a compound annual growth rate of 5.1 percent through 2030, while local films recorded 82 million theatrical admissions in 2024 and were projected to exceed 100 million admissions by 2026 (JAFF Market & Cinepoint, 2025; PwC Indonesia, 2026). These developments increase the strategic importance of recognizable, credible, and culturally appropriate promotional signals.

Horror provides a relevant setting for examining those pressures because its appeal is shaped by culturally embedded combinations of fear, morality, ritual, and supernatural belief. Contemporary Indonesian horror has shown renewed visibility of Islamic identity, while fear is constructed through coordinated linguistic, visual, auditory, and narrative resources (Ahmadi et al., 2025; Rahmalina et al., 2025). Prospective audiences encounter titles, posters, thumbnails, trailers, and synopses before the complete cinematic product, so these promotional paratexts frame genre expectations and anticipated viewing value (Gray, 2010; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021). Islamic language, prayer, sacred space, funerary practice, and eschatological imagery can consequently operate as religious references, genre markers, and market signals.

The strategic value of those signs depends on more than visibility because sacred references may gain or lose credibility through semantic accuracy, theological and ethical coherence, visual congruence, and contextual consistency. Arabic expressions in Indonesian horror titles can shift from sacred meanings toward fear-oriented commercial associations, while analyses of *Khanzab* and *Munkar* identify tensions involving prayer, the *musalla*, Qur'anic verses, and religious spaces (Astari et al., 2025; Darajat et al., 2025; Huda et al., 2025). Research on digital batik storytelling also shows that culturally meaningful symbols acquire strategic value through coherent interpretation and consistent curation across digital artifacts (Prasetia & Benyamin, 2026). These findings distinguish Islamic Signifier Intensity (ISI), which captures promotional prominence, from the Islamic Signifier Integrity Index (ISII), which assesses symbolic credibility and consistency.

Existing scholarship remains divided between religious representation and film marketing. Studies of Indonesian horror explain historical transformation, semantic shifts, multimodal fear, and film-specific representational tensions, but provide limited cross-film evidence connecting campaign-level sacred signals with theatrical admissions (Ahmadi et al., 2025; Astari et al., 2025; Darajat et al., 2025; Huda et al., 2025; Rahmalina et al., 2025). Marketing research demonstrates that audience responses can support trailer virality, that social-media activity and *box-office* performance may influence each other, and that existing source material can strengthen pre-release participation (Afifah et al., 2022; Feng et al., 2024; Schreiner et al., 2025). However, film-marketing research rarely evaluates the semantic and ethical credibility of culturally sensitive cues, while religious-film research rarely compares campaigns against measurable market outcomes.

Signaling theory provides the primary foundation because audiences evaluate films as experience goods through observable cues before underlying quality becomes accessible. Signals reduce uncertainty when receivers interpret them as credible information, while legitimacy theory explains why comparable sacred references may appear appropriate in one campaign and contested in another (Connelly et al., 2025; Spence, 1973; Suchman, 1995). Islamic marketing ethics further places justice, fair dealing, responsible representation, and social welfare within promotional decision-making, while perceived brand integrity can strengthen corporate legitimacy in *halal* markets (Amani, 2024; Saeed et al., 2001). Sacred-symbol prominence, integrity, prior recognition, and release timing should therefore be examined as interdependent conditions.

Accordingly, this study examines Indonesian horror-film campaigns released between 2022 and 2025. The first research question investigates how ISI and ISII vary across promotional paratexts, while the second examines their associations with theatrical admissions alongside Established Market Recognition (EMR) and *Eid al-Fitr* Release Timing (ERT). The third research question identifies contrasting configurations associated with higher and lower theatrical performance, while a reproducibility audit evaluates whether pre-release digital-attention measures can be admitted into the analytical matrix. The wording emphasizes association, configuration, and auditability because an observational archival design cannot establish experimental causality.

The study contributes by separating symbolic prominence from symbolic credibility, positioning promotional legitimacy at the pre-consumption stage, and treating EMR as a complementary familiarity signal. The film campaign serves as the unit of analysis, enabling promotional artifacts to be compared through multimodal coding, rank analysis, sensitivity testing, and contrasting-case interpretation. For producers, distributors, and creative-industry stakeholders, the framework supports evaluation of whether religious cues strengthen coherent positioning or generate visibility at the expense of credibility and long-term legitimacy. Figure 1 summarizes the relationships among sacred-signal properties, contextual market conditions, pre-release digital attention, legitimacy, and theatrical audience performance.

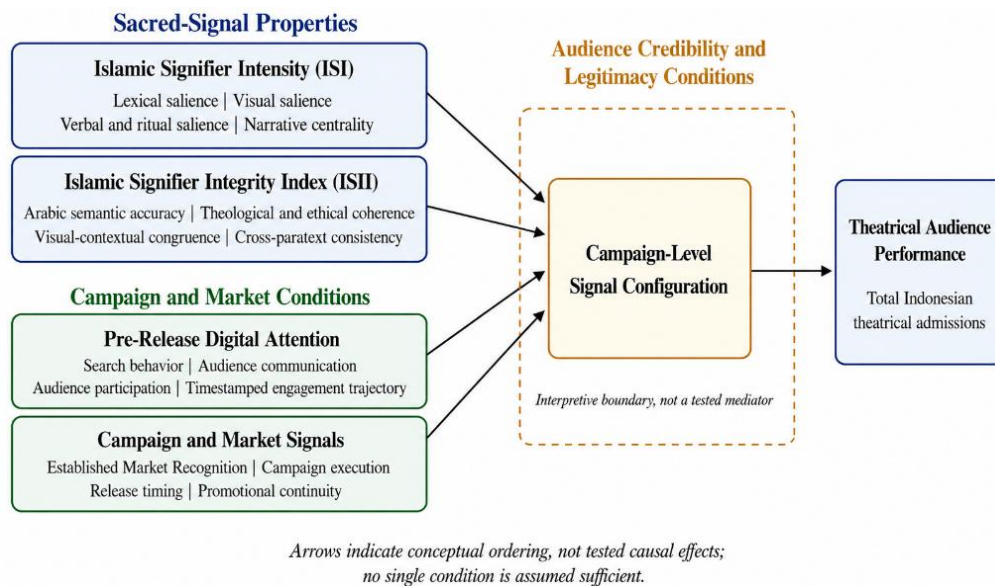


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Sacred-Signal Credibility and Theatrical Performance

Note. Pre-release digital attention was specified as a conceptual campaign dimension and subjected to a reproducibility audit. Incomparable numerical series were excluded from the inferential analysis.

Source: Developed by the authors.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The study employed an exploratory, non-reactive secondary digital archival multiple-case design. All materials were publicly accessible, and no questionnaire, interview, focus group, experiment, participant observation, or interaction with platform users was conducted. The film campaign constituted the primary unit of analysis, with each case comprising an official title, one official theatrical poster or verified thumbnail, one official full trailer, an official or producer-authorized synopsis, release metadata, and total Indonesian theatrical admissions. Multimodal content analysis and film-level comparison were used to examine observable linguistic, visual, auditory, ritual, spatial, and narrative evidence within a common analytical frame (Gray, 2010; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021; Krippendorff, 2018; Serafini & Reid, 2023).

The sampling frame covered Indonesian theatrical horror films released from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2025. Maximum-variation purposive selection produced fourteen campaigns differing in signifier prominence, admissions, market recognition, adaptation status, and holiday timing. Inclusion required an identifiable Indonesian production or co-production, a verifiable theatrical release date, a traceable admissions figure, an official full trailer, and sufficient promotional material for multimodal coding, while direct-to-streaming titles, re-releases, unofficial uploads, and films with unverifiable admissions were excluded. *Sewu Dino*, *Badarawuhi di Desa Penari*, and *Pabrik Gula* served as internal comparators because their campaigns relied more strongly on local occult mythology or established story recognition than on explicit Islamic signifiers.

Release dates and admissions were assembled through a hierarchical protocol in which Film Indonesia served as the primary industry database, while official producer or distributor announcements and credible industry reporting were used to reconcile incomplete or revised records (Film Indonesia, 2026). Admissions were reported as theatrical attendance rather than revenue because comparable ticket prices, screen allocation, distribution duration, marketing expenditure, and gross receipts were unavailable. Promotional artifacts were collected from official production, distribution, or exhibition channels, and one official full trailer was selected per film to avoid double counting teasers, repeated uploads, reaction videos, and unofficial copies. Each item retained its source, access date, official-status assessment, relevant timestamp, evidence note, and uncertainty classification.

Pre-Release Digital Attention (PDA) was specified through an intended window from eight weeks before release to the release week, but the available series did not satisfy the data-admission rule. Google Trends interface requests are independently scaled from 0 to 100, and nine titles were semantically ambiguous because the same expressions could denote religious terms, personal names, rituals, or ordinary language (Waisberg & Jacobi, 2025). YouTube permits time-ordered, paginated retrieval of timestamped comments, but complete historical extraction required credentialed Application Programming Interface (API) access, while current counters could not reconstruct pre-release conditions (Google, 2026c, 2026b, 2026a). Numerical search trajectories and timestamped comment counts were therefore recorded as unavailable rather than zero and excluded from inferential analysis.

Table 1. Construct Operationalization and Data-Admission Rules

Construct	Components and operationalization	Analytical status and boundary
Islamic Signifier Intensity (ISI)	Title salience, visual salience, verbal or ritual salience, and narrative centrality, each scored from 0 to 4; $ISI = [\Sigma(I1 \text{ to } I4) / 16] \times 100$	Core condition measuring prominence, not religious correctness or effectiveness
Islamic Signifier Integrity Index (ISII)	Arabic semantic accuracy, theological and ethical coherence, visual-contextual congruence, and cross-paratext consistency, with each applicable dimension scored from 0 to 4; $ISII = [\text{mean}(G1 \text{ to } G4) / 4] \times 100$	Core condition for signifier-positive cases; not applicable when evidence was insufficient
Established Market Recognition (EMR)	1 = sequel, adaptation, promoted viral source, established legend, or prior screen property; 0 = absent	Contextual familiarity signal, not a pure franchise effect
<i>Eid al-Fitr</i> Release Timing (ERT)	1 = release within seven days before or after <i>Eid al-Fitr</i> ; 0 = outside that corridor	Contextual timing condition, not screen access or competitive intensity
Campaign Execution (CE)	Trailer lead time, teaser support, release-date clarity, and continuity of official material	Qualitative descriptor excluded from rank tests when metadata were incomplete

Construct	Components and operationalization	Analytical status and boundary
Pre-Release Digital Attention (PDA)	Google search trajectories and timestamped top-level YouTube comments	Protocol audited, but numerical series were not admitted
Archival Trailer Visibility (ATV)	Retrieval-date view counter for one official full trailer	Supplementary snapshot, not historical attention or a causal predictor
Theatrical Audience Performance (TAP)	Total Indonesian theatrical admissions	Primary outcome representing attendance, not revenue, profit, or satisfaction

Source: Developed by the authors, *Proceed data (2026)*

ISI used anchors from zero for absence to four for a campaign-defining cue. ISII used zero for a seriously contradictory or misleading representation, one for a major deficiency, two for mixed or ambiguous representation, three for broad coherence with limited concerns, and four for accurate and mutually reinforcing representation. Arabic semantic accuracy was marked as not applicable when no Arabic expression required assessment, and campaigns with insufficient Islamic material received no aggregate ISII rather than an artificial zero. The index assessed promotional congruence and did not constitute a doctrinal ruling, *halal* certification, or validated psychometric scale.

A deductive codebook defined construct boundaries, scoring anchors, and evidence requirements before comparative scoring. Every score was linked to an artifact, source, access date, applicable timestamp, transcription, rationale, and uncertainty classification. Independent dual coding was not conducted, so intercoder reliability coefficients were not estimated; transparency was instead supported through evidence-linked documentation, repeated comparison against the codebook, case-deletion analysis, and bounded score perturbation. Ambiguous judgments were not resolved through automatic averaging because numerical midpoints could conceal substantive linguistic, theological, or contextual disagreement.

Analysis began with descriptive profiling of admissions, ISI, and applicable ISII values, followed by Spearman rank correlations for conditions with complete and reproducible observations. Two-sided permutation assessment used 200,000 Monte Carlo permutations and the corrected probability formula $p = (b + 1) / (m + 1)$, while binary conditions were examined through exact assignments preserving the observed number of positive cases (Phipson & Smyth, 2010). Leave-one-out analysis recalculated associations after removing one campaign at a time, and uncertain ISII dimensions were shifted by one admissible scale point to test directional stability. A qualitative configuration matrix then classified ISI and ISII as low below 50, moderate from 50 to below 75, and high at 75 or above, while theatrical performance was compared with the corpus median; the analysis

examined descriptive equifinality without claiming causal necessity, causal sufficiency, or formal fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis.

Public accessibility was not treated as automatic ethical permission because digital research requires attention to contextual privacy, traceability, vulnerability, and potential harm (Franzke et al., 2020). No username, profile image, channel identity, comment identifier, or searchable verbatim audience statement was retained or reported. Interpretations were limited to the selected corpus and did not establish population-level effects, profitability, artistic quality, or complete doctrinal correctness. No formal institutional ethics exemption was claimed because no exemption document had been issued.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The final analytical corpus comprised fourteen Indonesian horror-film campaigns released between 2022 and 2025. Theatrical admissions ranged from 774,516 for *Munkar* to 6,391,982 for *Pengabdi Setan 2: Communion*, with a mean of 2,814,703 and a median of 2,309,076. Islamic Signifier Intensity (ISI) ranged from 18.75 to 100 across all campaigns, while the Islamic Signifier Integrity Index (ISII) ranged from 50.00 to 93.75 across the eleven campaigns containing sufficient Islamic material for integrity assessment. Established Market Recognition (EMR) was identified in nine campaigns, and six campaigns were released within the *Eid al-Fitr* Release Timing (ERT) corridor. The corpus therefore displayed substantial variation across all examined conditions.

Table 2. Campaign-Level Evidence and Derived Scores

Film and year	Release date	Admissions	Rank	ISI	ISII	EMR	ERT	Coding uncertainty
<i>Qodrat</i> (2022)	27 October 2022	1,751,637	10	93.75	93.75	0	0	Low
<i>Pengabdi Setan 2: Communion</i> (2022)	4 August 2022	6,391,982	1	37.50	75.00	1	0	Moderate
<i>Waktu Maghrib</i> (2023)	9 February 2023	2,403,711	7	87.50	83.33	0	0	Low
<i>Khanzab</i> (2023)	19 April 2023	1,166,706	12	100.00	56.25	0	1	High
<i>Sijjin</i> (2023)	9 November 2023	1,930,901	9	75.00	50.00	1	0	High
<i>Siksa Neraka</i> (2023)	14 December 2023	2,610,036	6	100.00	66.67	1	0	Moderate
<i>Sewu Dino</i> (2023)	19 April 2023	4,886,406	2	18.75	N/A	1	1	Low
<i>Siksa Kubur</i> (2024)	11 April 2024	4,000,826	5	93.75	91.67	1	1	Low

Film and year	Release date	Admissions	Rank	ISI	ISII	EMR	ERT	Coding uncertainty
<i>Pemandi Jenazah</i> (2024)	22 February 2024	1,645,513	11	87.50	83.33	0	0	Moderate
<i>Thaghut</i> (2024)	29 August 2024	887,283	13	93.75	56.25	0	0	High
<i>Munkar</i> (2024)	7 February 2024	774,516	14	87.50	50.00	1*	0	High
<i>Badarawuhi di Desa Penari</i> (2024)	11 April 2024	4,015,120	4	18.75	N/A	1	1	Low
<i>Qodrat 2</i> (2025)	31 March 2025	2,214,441	8	93.75	93.75	1	1	Low
<i>Pabrik Gula</i> (2025)	31 March 2025	4,726,760	3	18.75	N/A	1	1	Low

Note. ISI = Islamic Signifier Intensity; ISII = Islamic Signifier Integrity Index; EMR = Established Market Recognition; ERT = *Eid al-Fitr* Release Timing; N/A = not applicable. Rank 1 represents the highest theatrical admissions. The asterisk indicates sensitivity in the EMR classification of *Munkar* because its urban-legend origin permits a more conservative interpretation.

Source: Authors' calculations based on the audited film-campaign archive, *Proceed data* (2026)

Table 2 shows that comparable Islamic-signifier prominence did not correspond with uniform attendance. The three campaigns with ISI of 18.75 occupied the second, third, and fourth positions, while high-ISI campaigns appeared throughout the ranking. *Sewu Dino*, *Badarawuhi di Desa Penari*, and *Pabrik Gula* received no aggregate ISII because explicit Islamic material was insufficient, whereas *Pengabdian Setan 2: Communion* retained an applicable score because secondary cues remained observable. The N/A designation therefore prevents absence from being treated as deficient integrity. Numerical Google Trends trajectories and historical YouTube engagement were excluded because comparable pre-release series could not be reproduced and cumulative counters could include post-release attention (Feng et al., 2024; Google, 2026c, 2026b, 2026a; Waisberg & Jacobi, 2025).

ISI displayed a negative rank-based association with theatrical admissions at Spearman's $\rho = -0.559$ and a two-sided permutation probability of $p = 0.040$. Every *leave-one-out* estimate retained the negative direction, with coefficients ranging from -0.662 to -0.469 , indicating that the pattern was not created by one unusually successful or unsuccessful campaign. The four campaigns with ISI below 50 recorded a median of 4,806,583 admissions, compared with 1,841,269 among the ten campaigns with ISI of at least 75. The result does not support a simple proposition that more prominent Islamic symbolism consistently accompanied stronger attendance. It also does not show that Islamic symbols reduced admissions because ISI cannot be isolated from other campaign and market conditions.

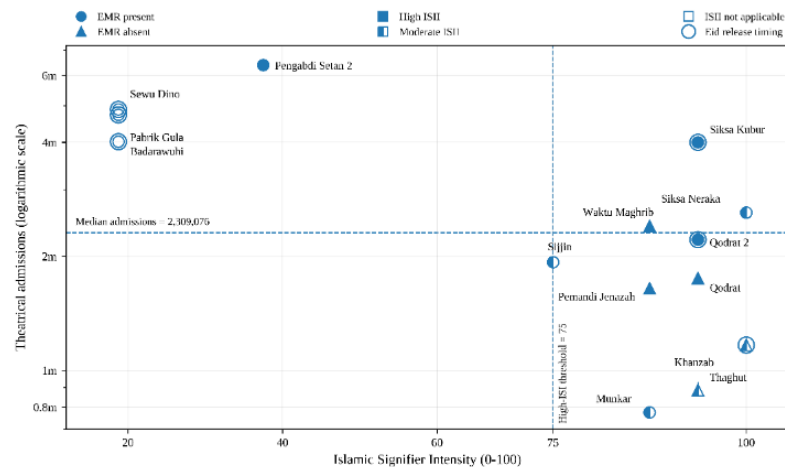


Figure 2. Sacred-Signal Configuration and Theatrical Audience Performance

Note. Circles represent campaigns with EMR, while triangles represent campaigns without EMR. Fully filled markers indicate high ISII, half-filled markers indicate moderate ISII, open markers indicate that ISII was not applicable, and outer rings identify ERT. Labels are abbreviated where necessary.

Source: Authors' calculations based on the audited film-campaign archive.

Figure 2 positions ISI on the horizontal axis and theatrical admissions on a logarithmic vertical scale. All four campaigns with ISI below 50 appeared above the corpus median, while high-ISI campaigns extended from the lowest attendance level to the upper half of the distribution. Marker shapes, fills, and outer rings show that comparable ISI values occurred within different combinations of recognition, integrity, and timing. Sacred-signal prominence must therefore be interpreted with the contextual conditions summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Rank-Based Associations with Theatrical Admissions

Condition	<i>n</i>	Spearman's ρ	Two-sided permutation <i>p</i>	Leave-one-out ρ range	Stability interpretation
Islamic Signifier Intensity	14	-0.559	0.040	-0.662 to -0.469	Stable negative corpus-level pattern
Established Market Recognition	14	0.573	0.042	0.535 to 0.761	Strongest stable positive corpus-level pattern
Eid al-Fitr Release Timing	14	0.394	0.181	0.330 to 0.577	Positive but imprecise corpus-level pattern
Islamic Signifier Integrity Index	11	0.450	0.166	0.294 to 0.581	Positive but imprecise corpus-level pattern

Note. Continuous conditions were assessed through 200,000 Monte Carlo permutations. Binary conditions were assessed through exact enumeration while preserving the observed number of positive cases. Probability values describe random reassignment within the purposively selected corpus and do not constitute population-level inferential estimates.

Source: Authors' calculations based on the audited film-campaign archive, *Proceed data* (2026)

The negative ISI coefficient partly reflected overlap with market familiarity because all four campaigns with ISI below 50 also possessed EMR, while ISI and EMR were negatively associated at $\rho = -0.416$. Signaling theory explains that visibility reduces uncertainty only when audiences interpret a cue as credible information about an experience product (Connelly et al., 2025; Spence, 1973). High ISI can support genre recognition and moral framing but cannot substitute for familiarity, execution, distribution, or trust. Producers should therefore evaluate narrative fit and cultural coherence rather than mechanically reducing religious imagery (Ahmadi et al., 2025; Astari et al., 2025; Prasetia & Benyamin, 2026).

EMR demonstrated the strongest positive association with admissions at $\rho = 0.573$ and $p = 0.042$, with all *leave-one-out* estimates remaining positive from 0.535 to 0.761. Recognized campaigns recorded a median of 4,000,826 admissions, compared with 1,645,513 among campaigns without identifiable prior recognition. Recognized properties can reduce uncertainty by connecting a release with audience memory and existing social conversation (Schreiner et al., 2025). Several high-performing cases illustrate this potential, but *Munkar* shows that familiarity does not guarantee conversion. Recoding *Munkar* from EMR present to absent increased the coefficient to $\rho = 0.788$ with $p = 0.0027$, confirming that the positive direction did not depend on the classification-sensitive case.

ERT produced a positive but imprecise association with admissions at $\rho = 0.394$ and $p = 0.181$. The positive direction remained stable across case deletion, while the six ERT campaigns recorded a median of 4,007,973 admissions compared with 1,841,269 for campaigns outside the corridor. *Sewu Dino*, *Badarawuhi di Desa Penari*, and *Pabrik Gula* combined ERT with EMR and achieved comparatively high attendance, whereas *Khanzab* and *Qodrat 2* demonstrate that the same timing condition did not produce uniform outcomes. The holiday corridor may expand viewing opportunities but can also intensify competition for screens and attention. ERT is therefore a conditional opportunity rather than a sufficient source of performance.

Among the eleven campaigns with applicable scores, ISII was positively associated with admissions at $\rho = 0.450$, although the permutation probability remained imprecise at $p = 0.166$. Every *leave-one-out* coefficient remained positive within a range from 0.294 to 0.581, and campaigns with ISII of at least 75 recorded a median of 2,309,076 admissions compared with 1,166,706 among campaigns scoring from 50 to below 75. All 81 reasonable perturbation scenarios for the four high-uncertainty cases also retained a positive coefficient, ranging from 0.398 to 0.535. These checks support directional stability but do not replace independent coding, intercoder reliability, or construct validation. ISII therefore remains a credibility condition within the examined configurations rather than a validated predictor.

High-integrity cases such as *Qodrat*, *Siksa Kubur*, and *Waktu Maghrib* maintained comparatively coherent relationships among prayer, *ruqyah*, religious protagonists, moral conflict, and campaign promises. *Pemandi Jenazah* retained recognizable funerary context

despite limited ethical ambiguity. Moderate scores reflected clearer semantic or contextual tension, including terror within sacred space in *Khanzab*, Qur'anic recitation and the *pesantren* as fear mechanisms in *Munkar*, and compressed Arabic or theological categories in *Sijjin* and *Thaghut* (Astari et al., 2025; Darojat et al., 2025; Huda et al., 2025). These classifications assess promotional congruence rather than religious permissibility, complete doctrinal correctness, or artistic merit.

Legitimacy theory clarifies why symbolic integrity may support campaign credibility before consumption. Promotional paratexts provide an early basis for judging whether sacred meanings are used coherently and proportionately (Gray, 2010; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021; Suchman, 1995). Islamic marketing ethics treats justice and fair representation as qualities of marketing conduct, while perceived integrity can strengthen legitimacy in *halal* markets (Amani, 2024; Saeed et al., 2001). Integrity therefore contributes to signal quality, but contrasting high-integrity cases confirm that it cannot guarantee conversion.

The cross-case matrix integrates these associations by classifying symbolic intensity, symbolic integrity, market recognition, release timing, and performance relative to the corpus median. Comparable conditions sometimes produced different outcomes, while distinct signal packages could produce similar performance. Table 4 therefore summarizes descriptive configurations rather than causal pathways.

Table 4. Contrasting Campaign Configurations and Median-Based Theatrical Outcomes

Observed configuration	Illustrative cases	Above-median outcome	Configurational interpretation
Lower ISI + EMR, with mixed ERT	<i>Pengabdi Setan 2: Communion; Sewu Dino; Badarawuhi di Desa Penari; Pabrik Gula</i>	4 of 4	Prior familiarity accompanied market clarity without highly intensive Islamic signaling
High ISI + high ISII + EMR + ERT	<i>Siksa Kubur; Qodrat 2</i>	1 of 2	Symbolic credibility, recognition, and favorable timing did not produce
High ISI + high ISII + no EMR + no ERT	<i>Waktu Maghrib; Qodrat; Pemandi Jenazah</i>	1 of 3	High integrity supported coherent stand-alone positioning but did not ensure above-median attendance
High ISI + moderate ISII + EMR + no ERT	<i>Siksa Neraka; Sijjin; Munkar</i>	1 of 3	Recognition did not consistently compensate for moderate integrity or other campaign constraints
High ISI + moderate ISII + no EMR, with mixed ERT	<i>Khanzab; Thaghut</i>	0 of 2	High prominence without prior recognition coincided with below-median performance in both cases

Note. Lower ISI denotes a score below 50, while high ISI denotes a score of at least 75. High ISII denotes a score of at least 75, while moderate ISII denotes a score from 50 to below 75. Above-median performance refers to admissions exceeding 2,309,076. The configurations are descriptive and do not establish causal necessity, causal sufficiency, or population-level relationships.

Source: Authors' calculations based on the audited film-campaign archive, *Proceed data* (2026)

The lower-ISI and EMR group was the only configuration in which every case achieved above-median attendance, but all four also possessed prior familiarity and three entered the ERT corridor. Other configurations produced mixed outcomes, including *Siksa Kubur* versus *Qodrat 2*, stand-alone high-integrity campaigns, and recognized moderate-integrity campaigns. These contrasts show that no observed condition was sufficient and that no single condition appeared across every above-median case.

The configurations provide descriptive evidence of *equifinality* because stronger attendance accompanied more than one combination of conditions. However, median classification simplifies continuous differences, so Table 4 must be read with raw admissions in Table 2 and rank associations in Table 3. The combined evidence supports contextual interdependence rather than a universal performance formula.

The findings refine signaling theory by separating signal prominence from signal credibility. ISI captures noticeability, ISII captures coherence, EMR provides familiarity, and ERT represents temporal opportunity rather than quality. Legitimacy also begins before consumption because promotional paratexts can strengthen or weaken perceived appropriateness. Islamic marketing ethics therefore forms part of signal quality rather than only an external restriction.

Conceptually, this distinction prevents the presence of a sacred cue from being treated as evidence of its credibility. A campaign may be visually explicit yet semantically compressed, while a less intensive campaign may communicate a more coherent promise. The configurational evidence further indicates that audience uncertainty is structured by several signals at once, including symbolic meaning, prior recognition, and release context. This interpretation extends the analysis from isolated promotional devices toward the credibility of the complete campaign package.

For practice, producers and distributors should review sacred signals before campaign launch. Arabic expressions, Qur'anic references, rituals, sacred spaces, and eschatological imagery can be assessed for semantic accuracy, ethical proportionality, visual function, and cross-paratext consistency by relevant marketing, visual, linguistic, and Islamic-studies. Recognized properties can use familiarity as an anchor, while stand-alone campaigns require a distinctive premise and clearer narrative explanation. Holiday timing should be evaluated against competing titles, screen availability, distribution, promotional lead time, and audience overlap. Prospective archiving of search, communication, exposure, engagement, ticketing, and post-release activity would improve attention-to-attendance analysis.

Such review should remain voluntary quality assurance rather than censorship, doctrinal certification, or a compulsory *halal*-film label. Findings should be tied to identifiable semantic, visual, ethical, or cross-paratext inconsistencies while preserving artistic interpretation. The index evaluates public campaign promises, not the religious status or complete moral value of films. Responsible curation may support legitimacy, but admissions remain affected by broader market conditions.

Robustness checks preserved the principal directions under case deletion, alternative coding of *Munkar*, and bounded ISII perturbations. Nevertheless, fourteen purposively selected campaigns cannot represent the population or support stable multivariable estimation and causal inference. Comparable evidence was unavailable for budgets, promotional expenditure, screen allocation, distribution, competition, ratings, and post-release word of mouth. Admissions also represent attendance rather than revenue, profitability, artistic quality, or satisfaction.

ISII remains exploratory and requires independent coding, reliability assessment, and validation across broader campaigns and genres. EMR combines several familiarity types, while ERT does not capture competitive congestion or daily screen access. Excluding historical digital-attention series protected reproducibility but prevented direct testing of attention and engagement. Future research should prospectively archive campaign activity, disaggregate EMR, incorporate distribution and competition controls, and use larger longitudinal or formally calibrated configurational designs.

4. CONCLUSION

This study shows that Islamic Signifier Intensity and the Islamic Signifier Integrity Index represent different properties of promotional communication in Indonesian horror-film campaigns. Greater symbolic prominence did not consistently accompany stronger theatrical attendance, whereas Established Market Recognition produced the strongest positive corpus-level pattern; signifier integrity and *Eid al-Fitr* Release Timing remained positive but imprecise contextual conditions. Contrasting cases further showed that comparable attendance could emerge from different combinations of visibility, credibility, familiarity, and timing, while nominally similar configurations could produce divergent outcomes. These findings refine signaling theory by distinguishing signal noticeability from signal credibility and by locating legitimacy within the pre-consumption campaign stage.

The practical implication is not to minimize Islamic imagery, but to evaluate whether sacred terms, rituals, spaces, and eschatological references remain semantically accurate, contextually coherent, ethically proportionate, and consistent across promotional materials. Established properties and stand-alone campaigns require different positioning strategies, while *Eid al-Fitr* timing should be treated as a conditional market opportunity rather than a guarantee of conversion. The conclusions remain bounded by a purposive fourteen-case corpus, unobserved market conditions, an exploratory integrity index, and unavailable reproducible pre-release digital-attention series. Future research should combine broader case coverage, independent domain coding, prospective digital archiving, disaggregated recognition measures, and longitudinal analysis to examine how symbolic credibility contributes to theatrical audience conversion.

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