

# The Intention of Young Muslim Generation to Choose Muslim-Friendly Destinations in Indonesia

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## ABSTRACT

**Research Originality:** Although much research has examined Muslim-friendly tourism, this research conducts a more comprehensive study of the intentions of the young Muslim generation to choose Muslim-friendly tourist destinations.

**Research Objectives:** The research objective is to analyze what factors influence the young Muslim generation's intention to choose Muslim-friendly tourist destinations in Indonesia.

**Research Methods:** The data analysis technique used a Structural Equation Model (SEM) with SmartPLS 3.0 software. Data was obtained by distributing questionnaires to 200 respondents.

**Empirical Result:** The results showed that the variables of subjective norms, behavioral control, and religiosity had a significant effect on the intentions of the young generation in choosing Muslim-friendly tourist destinations in Indonesia, while the attitude variable had no significant effect.

**Implications:** The results of this research imply that the government must create regulations that attract the young generation of Muslims to visit Muslim-friendly tourist destinations in Indonesia.

## Keywords:

intention; young muslim generation; muslim-friendly tourism; religiosity

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## INTRODUCTION

In today's era, a new trend has emerged in the world of tourism, namely halal tourism, which is in great demand by Muslim tourists around the world, so that many Muslim-majority countries, even non-Muslim-majority countries, are ready to provide Muslim-friendly tourism products and facilities to attract the Muslim tourist market (Ratnasari et al., 2020). One of the fastest-growing sectors in the global tourism industry is halal tourism (Ainin et al., 2020; Moshin et al., 2020). Aminuddin and Jamal (2020) state a similarity between Muhammads' travel chronicle during premodern times and the types of tourism of contemporary standing.

According to DSN-MUI Fatwa Number 108 of 2016 concerning Guidelines for Organizing Tourism Based on Sharia Principles, halal tourism is tourism whose implementation process is by Sharia principles. The Global Islamic Economy Report reports that the turnover of money from world halal tourism is projected to increase from 177 billion US dollars in 2017 to 274 billion dollars in 2023. This condition makes countries with a Muslim majority population and countries with a non-Muslim majority population enthusiastic about developing halal tourism in their countries, including Indonesia.

The development of Indonesia's halal tourism potential began with a victory in the "The World Halal Travel Summit & Exhibition 2015" event, where Indonesia managed to win three awards at once, namely World Best Family Friendly Hotel, World Best Halal Honeymoon Destination, and World Best Halal Tourism Destination. The Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) 2023 ranked Indonesia as the world's top halal tourism destination. This accomplishment surpasses 140 other countries, including those with Muslim minority populations, such as Singapore, Thailand, and the Philippines. According to data from KNEKS, several countries have begun capitalizing on the potential of the Muslim travel market, including Muslim-minority nations like Japan, Thailand, South Korea, Spain, China, Russia, and Mexico. Consequently, developing Muslim-friendly tourism in regions with Muslim minority populations—such as North Sulawesi, which is the focus of this study—is an important agenda in advancing Muslim-friendly tourism destinations in Indonesia.

According to Battour and Ismail (2016), the success of developing halal tourism destinations must be guided by adopting Islamic principles in all tourism activities. Muslim-friendly destinations refer to travel locations that provide services and facilities aligned with Islamic principles, such as halal food, prayer facilities, gender-segregated amenities, and modest entertainment options (Battour & Ismail, 2016). This concept is based on Islamic principles distinguishing between halal (permissible) and haram (prohibited), which influence multiple aspects of Muslim life, such as food, clothing, behavior, and social interactions. Muslim travelers often prioritize access to halal food at their destinations (Akyol & Kilinc, 2014). A key challenge in halal tourism is ensuring compliance with halal standards (Boğan & Sarıışık, 2019).

In the tourism industry, halal refers to activities, products, and services that align with Islamic law and ethical guidelines, ensuring they are permissible and free from

prohibited elements. This action includes adhering to Islamic dietary laws in food sourcing and preparation and offering environments conducive to prayer, modesty, and family-friendly experiences. Proper management of Muslim-friendly features by tourism authorities can enhance visitor engagement and satisfaction (Abror et al., 2021). These destinations offer religiously appropriate services and promote an inclusive and culturally respectful environment. The increasing demand for such destinations is closely linked to the growing awareness among Muslim travelers about their faith-based requirements while traveling abroad.

As a Muslim-majority country with numerous tourist attractions and destinations, Indonesia should strategically prepare and maximize the benefits of this advantage. Muslim travelers may find visiting a Muslim-majority country more appealing than a non-Muslim one, provided they receive the same level of hospitality (Abror et al., 2019). However, some tourists, especially non-Muslim tourists, have a negative perception of halal tourism. Non-Muslim tourists consider halal tourism rules to restrict their freedom to enjoy the tourist destination (Battour et al., 2018).

According to Battour et al. (2022), Muslim-friendly terms could be more suitable in halal tourism when non-Muslim destinations try to promote themselves as Muslim-friendliness. Before someone travels to a halal tourist destination, it is generally based on the intention to carry out the behavior. Adel et al. (2021) and Adham et al. (2025) state some remarkable results regarding the importance of some halal marketing strategies such as halal searchability and availability, halal certification and appraisal, halal at airports and halal hotels that affect Muslim tourists to travel in tourism-destination. Battour et al. (2018) suggest that countries with strong Islamic norms and values can promote as travel destinations to non-Muslim tourists interested in Islamic culture and halal hospitality.

Cupian et al. (2021) stated that knowledge, motivation to travel, accommodation, and ease of obtaining halal food and drinks have a significant influence, while WOM factors, destination image, and facilities do not have a significant influence on the intention of millennial Muslim tourists to travel halal in West Sumatra. This study differs from Cupian et al. (2021) in terms of grand theory because this study uses the Theory of Planned Behavior.

The main difference between this research and previous research is the respondents' use. This research focuses on the young generation of Muslims who will travel to Muslim-friendly destinations. Young Muslim tourists represent a particularly influential segment among the various demographic groups within the Muslim tourism market. Often characterized as digital natives with higher levels of education and global exposure, young Muslim travelers are more adventurous yet remain conscious of their religious identity. A unique interplay of religious commitment, social influences, lifestyle aspirations, and exposure to global trends via digital platforms shapes their travel behavior.

Understanding the intention of young Muslim tourists to visit Muslim-friendly destinations is vital for tourism marketers, destination managers, and policymakers aiming to attract and accommodate this growing segment. Despite the growing academic interest

in Muslim tourism, research focusing specifically on young Muslim travelers remains limited. Most existing studies tend to generalize Muslim tourists as a monolithic group, overlooking generational and behavioral diversity. Moreover, there is a lack of empirical studies examining the behavioral intentions of young Muslims using comprehensive theoretical frameworks. This gap necessitates a deeper investigation into the factors influencing their travel intentions in contemporary global tourism.

This study aims to fill that gap by analyzing the intention of young Muslim tourists to visit Muslim-friendly destinations. The findings are expected to provide practical implications for tourism providers and policy planners seeking to develop inclusive, sustainable, and faith-conscious travel experiences. This study aims to analyze what factors influence the intention of the young Muslim generation to choose Muslim-friendly tourist destinations. It is expected that this research will contribute to the development of Muslim-friendly tourism in Indonesia.

## **METHODS**

This study will use the theory of planned behavior framework developed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) to analyze the intentions of the young Muslim generation to travel to Muslim-friendly destinations. Ajzen (1991) defines intention as the subjective probability that a person has to perform a behavior. Intention will remain a behavioral tendency until, at the right time, an effort is made to change the intention into a behavior. The Theory of Planned Behavior intention has three aspects: Attitude Toward Behavior, Subjective Norms, Indirect Perceived Behavioral Control, and Direct Perceived Behavioral Control (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Intention is influenced by three things, namely, attitude, subjective norms, and behavioral control (Asadifard et al., 2015).

The dependent variables in this study consist of attitudes (X1), subjective norms (X2), behavioral control (X3), and religiosity (X4). The independent variable is the intention of young Muslim tourists to choose halal tourist destinations (Y). This study uses primary data in the form of a questionnaire of 200 respondents. Sampling in this study used a non-probability sampling technique with a purposive sampling method where the researcher has determined the sample criteria. There are three main criteria for respondents: being Muslim, aged between 20 - 40 years, and having an independent income.

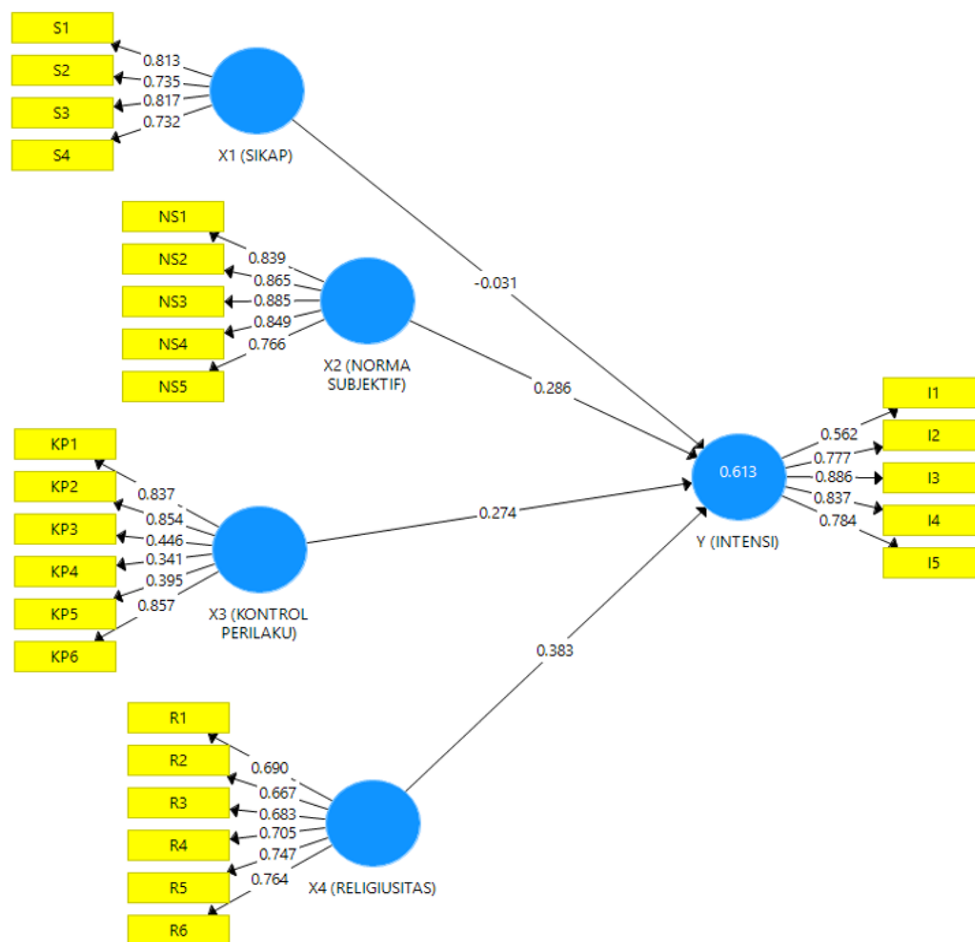
This quantitative study uses the Structural Equation Model (SEM) data analysis technique with the SMART-PLS 3.0 tool. According to Panca et al. (2017), there are 4 (four) stages of SEM-PLS analysis, namely: formulating structural model theory, outer model analysis, inner model analysis, and hypothesis testing.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The convergent validity value can be seen from the correlation between item or indicator scores and constructs. An indicator is valid if it has a correlation value above 0.70, but the loading factor value of 0.5 - 0.6 is still acceptable in the research stage

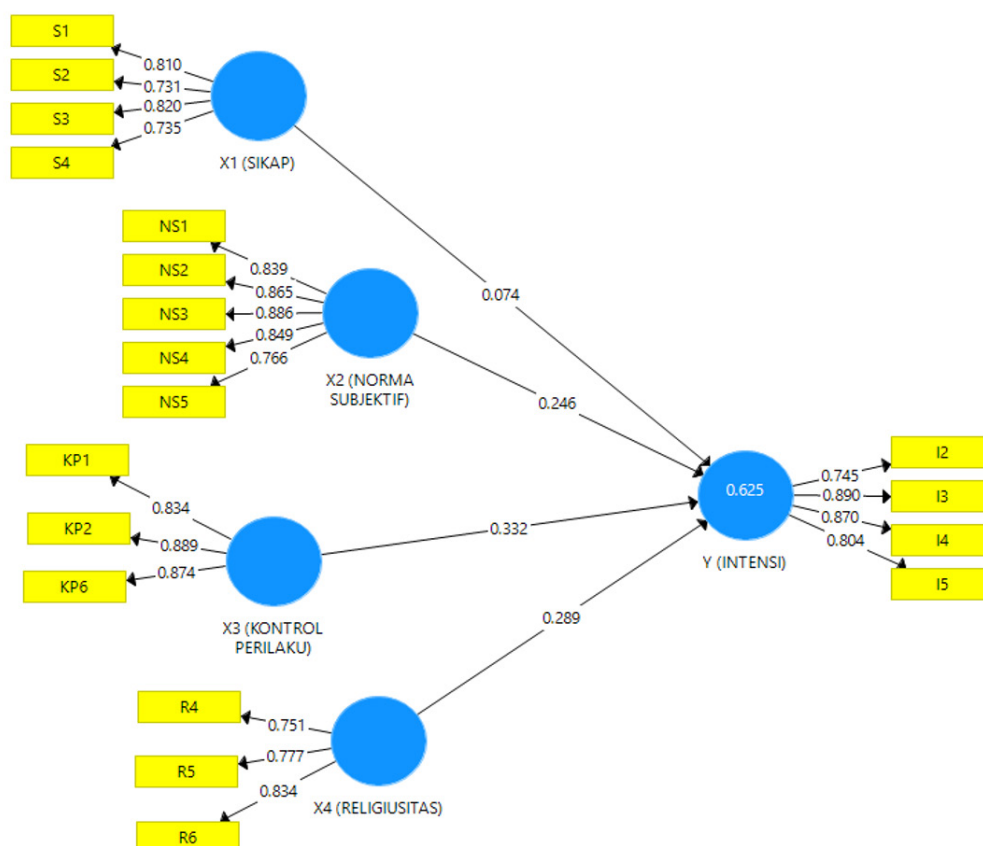
of developing the scale. If seen in Figure 1, it can be seen that in the latent variable of intention, there is one indicator (manifest variable) that must be removed from the model because the loading factor value does not meet the standard, namely more than 0.7, namely in indicator I1 which is worth 0.562. Then, in the latent variable of religiosity, three manifest variables must be removed from the model, namely in the R1 indicator, which is worth 0.690, then R2, which is worth 0.667, and finally, R3, which is worth 0.683. Furthermore, in the latent variable of behavioral control, 3 manifest variables are removed from the model, namely KP3, which is worth 0.446, KP4, which is worth 0.341, and KP5, which is worth 0.395.

Figure 1. Outer Model Algorithm (First)



Because there are several manifest variables that are removed from the first model, a second model will be created in which all manifest variables are considered to have passed the convergent validity test or have a loading factor value of more than 0.7 (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Outer Model Algorithm (Second)



Another way to test discriminant validity is with the AVE value. If the AVE value of each construct is more than 0.5, it is said to have passed the discriminant validity test. Based on Table 1, we can see that all variables in this study have AVE values of more than 0.5. Therefore, it can be concluded that all variables in this study pass the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) test.

Reliability tests can be known by looking at the composite reliability number. A construct is reliable if it has a composite reliability number of more than 0.6. In addition to looking at the composite reliability number, it is necessary to analyze Cronbach's alpha number. A construct is reliable if it has a Cronbach's alpha above 0.7. Based on Table 2, it can be seen that the Cronbach's alpha value and composite reliability value of all variables have met the requirements. It can be concluded that all variables in this study passed the reliability test.

Table 1. The Result Test of AVE

Variable	AVE
X1 (Attitude)	0.601
X2 (Subjective Norm)	0.709
X3 (Behavior Control)	0.750
X4 (Religiosity)	0.621
Y (Intention)	0.688

The Q2 value can know the goodness of fit in PLS. The Q2 value has the same meaning as the coefficient of determination (R-Square) in regression analysis (P Panca et al., 2017). The results of the R-square test can be seen in Table 3. Based on table 3 shows that the R Square value for variable Y (intention) is 0.625, or the percentage level is 62.5%. This result means that variables X1 (attitude), X2 (subjective norms), X3 (behavioral control), and X4 (religiosity) influence variable Y (intention) by 62.5%, and other variables influence the remaining 37.5%.

**Table 2. Reliability and Validity Constructs**

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
X1 (Attitude)	0.779	0.857
X2 (Subjective Norm)	0.896	0.924
X3 (Behavior Control)	0.834	0.900
X4 (Religiosity)	0.702	0.831
Y (Intention)	0.848	0.898

The bootstrapping stage determines the level of significance in the structural model. Bootstrapping is a procedure or statistical technique of resampling. Resampling means that respondents are drawn randomly, with replacement, from the original sample many times until observations are obtained.

**Table 4. The Result of R-Square**

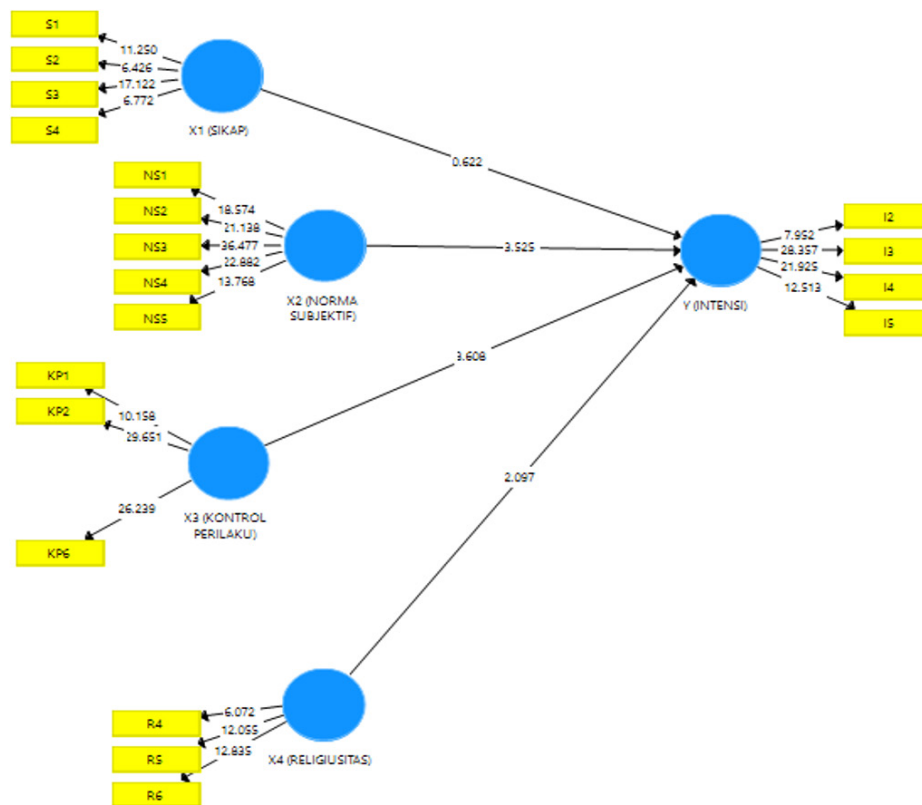
Variable	R Square
Y (Intention)	0.625

Based on Figure 3, it can also be seen that all paths have met the significant figures at CI 95% > (1.96). Hypothesis testing in this study was carried out by looking at the t-Statistics and P-Values. The hypothesis is accepted if the t-statistics value is > 1.96 and P-Values < 0.05. Based on Table 5, we can see that out of 4 variables, there is 1 (one) variable whose hypothesis is rejected, namely X1 (attitude) because the t-Statistics value is <1.96 and P-Values > 0.05. The hypothesis is accepted for the other three variables, namely variables X2 (subjective norms), X3 (behavioral control), and X4 (religiosity).

The attitude variable does not have a significant effect on travel intention. This study aligns with Akter and Hasan (2023), who state that attitude does not influence the intention to visit. However, this result differs from Abidin et al. (2022), who found that attitude positively relates to visit intention. In tourism, attitude refers to an individual's positive or negative evaluation of visiting a particular destination. For young Muslim tourists, this evaluation often includes considerations such as the availability of halal services, prayer facilities, safety, and cultural sensitivity. A positive attitude toward a Muslim-friendly destination that supports Islamic values and lifestyle significantly enhances the likelihood that the individual will intend to visit such a location (Han & Hyun, 2017).



Figure 3. Bootstrapping Inner Model



The role of attitude in shaping travel intention is particularly relevant for Muslim travelers because leisure motivations and faith-based considerations often influence their decision-making. Research shows that when tourists perceive a destination aligning with their personal and religious values, they develop a favorable attitude toward that destination, strengthening their travel intention (Battour et al., 2018). This relationship is especially pronounced among younger generations, who, despite being globally connected and open to new experiences, still prioritize destinations that do not compromise their religious identity (Suhartanto et al., 2020).

Table 5. Path Coefficients.

Variables	Original Sampel	t-statistics	P Value	Note
X1 (Attitude)	0.074	0.622	0.534	Rejected
X2 (Subjective Norm)	0.246	3.525	0.000	Accepted
X3 (Behavior Control)	0.332	3.608	0.000	Accepted
X4 (Religiosity)	0.289	2.097	0.037	Accepted

Moreover, empirical studies have consistently validated the significance of attitude in predicting Muslim tourists' intentions. Muslim tourists with positive perceptions of a destination's Muslim-friendly attributes were likelier to express a firm intention to visit (Mohsin et al., 2016; 2020). These findings suggest that building and promoting



a favorable destination image—especially one that emphasizes Islamic hospitality, halal food, and cultural inclusiveness—can enhance tourists’ attitudes and, consequently, their intentions. Therefore, for destination marketers aiming to attract young Muslim tourists, fostering positive attitudes through tailored messaging, halal branding, and value-aligned experiences is essential.

The subjective norm variable significantly affects travel intention. Subjective norm reflects the influence of significant others—such as family, friends, religious leaders, and peer groups—on an individual’s decision to visit a particular destination. For young Muslim tourists, travel decisions are often made not in isolation but within a social and cultural framework where religious guidance and communal expectations shape individual preferences. When important referents support or endorse Muslim-friendly travel, individuals are more likely to form a strong intention to visit such destinations.

In Muslim societies, where collectivist values are often dominant, subjective norms can particularly strongly affect behavioral intentions (Musa et al., 2012). For instance, when family members or peers perceive Muslim-friendly destinations as appropriate, safe, and in line with Islamic values, young Muslims are more likely to feel encouraged and supported to choose those destinations. This dynamic is further amplified by the role of social media influencers, halal travel communities, and Islamic scholars, who shape the discourse around acceptable and desirable travel practices. The collective approval reinforces a sense of religious compliance and social belonging, increasing the intention to travel to Muslim-friendly locations.

Empirical studies have affirmed the significance of subjective norms in influencing Muslim tourists’ travel intentions. Battour et al. (2014) found that subjective norm was a significant predictor of intention among Muslim tourists, particularly in choosing destinations accommodating Islamic needs. Similarly, a study by Jalilvand et al. (2012) highlighted that social influence is critical in forming positive travel intentions in religious tourism contexts. These findings suggest that tourism marketers and destination managers aiming to attract young Muslim travelers should leverage community-based endorsements, testimonials from respected figures, and culturally appropriate promotions to strengthen the positive social influence associated with Muslim-friendly travel. This study is also in line with Jehane (2019), who concluded that, in general, it can be said that attitudes, subjective norms, and behavioral control positively influence the intention to visit a tourist attraction. In contrast, Akter and Hasan (2023) found that subjective norms do not affect halal tourism intention.

The behavioral control variable has a significant influence on the intention to travel. Perceived behavioral control (PBC) is another key construct within the theory of planned behavior (TPB), referring to an individual’s perception of the ease or difficulty of performing a particular behavior based on past experiences and anticipated obstacles. In the context of Muslim-friendly tourism, PBC relates to how much control a traveler believes they have over chosen and visiting a destination that accommodates Islamic principles—such as the availability of halal food, prayer spaces, modest dress norms, and Islamic-friendly accommodations. When young Muslim tourists perceive that they can

easily access such facilities, they are more likely to develop a stronger intention to visit these destinations.

For Muslim travelers, if a destination is perceived as safe, easy to reach, and supportive of Islamic values, it reduces psychological and logistical barriers, thus increasing travel intention. For example, destinations that offer clear information about halal certifications, prayer facilities, and separate recreational areas for men and women help reduce uncertainties and empower Muslim tourists to make decisions confidently (Battour et al., 2017). Conversely, perceived difficulties—such as language barriers, limited halal options, or cultural insensitivity—can lower one's perceived control and subsequently weaken the intention to travel to such places.

Empirical evidence supports the notion that PBC is a significant predictor of travel intentions among Muslim tourists. A study by Eid and El-Gohary (2015) demonstrated that perceived behavioral control strongly impacted Muslim tourists' intentions to visit Islamic tourism destinations. Similarly, research by Rianawati and Febryano (2020) found that the more confident Muslim travelers could find Muslim-friendly facilities and services, the more likely they were to plan a visit. These findings suggest that tourism stakeholders should prioritize accessibility, clear communication, and infrastructure tailored to Muslim needs to enhance PBC and foster higher travel intentions among this growing segment. The results of this study are also in line with the research of Anggriana et al. (2022), which resulted in the behavioral control variable having a reasonably sizeable positive effect on the intention to visit a tourism destination. Akter and Hasan (2023) also found that perceived behavior control affects halal tourism intention.

The religiosity variable has a significant influence on travel intention. Religion has long been the most influential motivational factor when someone travels, considering that tourism and hospitality are industries that include socio-cultural elements—a condition within an individual that encourages him to behave according to his obedience to religion. Religiosity plays a central role in shaping the travel intentions of young Muslims. It affects their destination choices and their expectations regarding travel services and facilities (Liat et al., 2021). Studies have shown that travelers with high levels of religiosity are more likely to prioritize destinations that align with their Islamic beliefs (Battour et al., 2018). However, religiosity is not a homogenous concept and varies significantly across individuals and cultural contexts, especially among youth.

This result aligns with the research of Abror et al. (2021) that found religiosity as a significant antecedent of Muslim-friendly tourism. The same result was also found by Abror et al. (2023), highlighting the moderating roles of Islamic religiosity. Aji et al. (2021) state that religiosity affects the perceived risk of Muslim tourism when visiting the destination. Religiosity influences a person's purchase intention for a product; the stronger a person's commitment to the teachings of the religion he adheres to, the stronger his purchase intention is for products that do not conflict with the teachings of his religion. Tourism destination management should improve the facilities that can accommodate the needs of Muslim tourists. According to Battour and Ismail (2016), Shariah-compliant

hotels are still limited, especially in non-Muslim destinations. According to Boğan and Sarıışık (2019), one of the practical challenges in halal tourism is having a lack of halal standards, especially for hotels.

Stakeholders must also consider the socio-demographic characteristics of tourists. Aziz et al. (2018) found that differences in socio-demographic characteristics affect motivation and intention to travel. Government and destination management should increase the engagement of tourists because customer engagement will increase tourist satisfaction (Abror et al., 2019) because tourist engagement will increase tourist loyalty (Djatola et al., 2025). Tourist destination management should create tourist attractions to increase the number of visitors (Sasanti et al., 2025).

In addition, the influence of social media and online platforms cannot be overstated in this context. Young travelers rely heavily on digital content, peer reviews, and influencers to shape their perceptions and decisions. Muslim travel bloggers, halal travel communities, and user-generated content have become powerful tools in shaping destination awareness and trust. The digital sphere also amplifies the visibility of Muslim-friendly destinations and facilitates the exchange of experiences among like-minded travelers. The halal travel industry can use digital platforms to increase the experience of the entire Muslim community, especially Gen Alpha travelers (Battour et al., 2022). Berakon et al. (2023) state that the increasing number of tourists in the Muslim world encourages digital business developers to integrate halal services, including Muslim-friendly tourism, with the technologies. The management of Muslim-friendly destinations can use AI to improve the Muslim-friendly tourism experience (Battour et al., 2023).

## CONCLUSION

Empirical findings show that based on subjective norms, behavioral control, and religiosity have a positive influence on the intention of young Muslim generations in choosing Muslim-friendly tourist destinations. While the attitude variable does not have a significant influence on the intention of young Muslim generations in choosing halal tourism destinations. The variable that has the greatest influence is the behavioral control variable. Based on these results, managers of Muslim-friendly tourist destinations must develop facilities and attractions that can attract more Muslim tourists to visit.

Suggestions for related parties in the management and development of Muslim-friendly tourism to pay attention to indicators that can influence tourist intentions in choosing halal tourist destinations that have been analyzed in this study. The government needs to improve the quality of service at every Muslim-friendly tourist destination in Indonesia.

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