



The Role Of Religiosity As A Moderator Of Intentions To Visit Halal Tourism: A Study On Generation Z Muslims In Bengkulu

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the factors influencing the intentions of Generation Z Muslims in Bengkulu Province to visit halal tourism destinations. The variables examined include subjective norms, attitudes, perceived behavioral control, halal awareness, and religiosity as a moderating variable. The study employs a quantitative approach, with data collected through surveys of Generation Z Muslim respondents in Bengkulu Province. The analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The findings indicate that subjective norms and attitudes significantly influence travel intentions. This research provides practical implications for tourism managers in Bengkulu to enhance the appeal of halal destinations by promoting religious values and improving Muslim-friendly facilities.

INTRODUCTION

The development of the tourism sector continues to evolve in line with the conditions and preferences of travelers. Muslim tourists today tend to seek tourism services and facilities that uphold Islamic values, enabling them to maintain a lifestyle and behavior aligned with Islamic law (El Gohary, 2016). Awareness of the halal concept has been demonstrated by the growing demand for halal cosmetics in Malaysia (Ali et al., 2019), halal meat in Germany (Sherwani, 2018), halal products in China (Hong et al., 2014), and the provision of Muslim-friendly hotel facilities in Moscow and the Philippines (Rashid et al., 2020).

The growth of halal tourism has become an important alternative market segment for many international tourist destinations in recent years (Ryan, 2016). In 2023, the potential number of global Muslim tourists reached 140 million, and it is projected to grow to 160 million in 2024 and 230 million by 2028, with an economic potential of USD 225 billion (Crescentrating, 2023). As a result of this growth, halal tourism has expanded not only in Muslim-majority countries but also in non-Muslim countries (Abror et al., 2019; Han et al., 2019). Indonesia holds significant potential for developing its halal tourism industry, as it is currently the country with

the largest Muslim population in the world, reaching 240.62 million in 2023 (RISSC, 2023). The Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) categorizes Indonesia's population into six generations: Post-Generation Z, Generation Z, Millennials, Generation X, Baby Boomers, and Pre-Boomers. Post-Gen Z refers to those born in 2013 and beyond. Generation Z includes individuals born between 1997 and 2012, currently aged 12 to 27 years.

Millennials comprise those born between 1981 and 1996. Generation X includes those born between 1965 and 1980, while Baby Boomers were born between 1946 and 1964. Lastly, Pre-Boomers were born before 1945 (Rahmad, 2021). Generation Z's behavior is often characterized as fragile; many in this cohort have a strong enthusiasm for success but prefer quick or instant ways to achieve it. When faced with failure, they can easily feel demotivated, coining the term "needing healing" to restore their reduced enthusiasm (Wulandari, 2022). This phenomenon reflects that travel or recreation has become an essential need for Generation Z. In choosing a travel destination, Muslim Generation Z tends to be more selective, considering adherence to Islamic principles.

Current tourist destinations are often conventional and associated with immoral activities, leading to a predominantly negative perception among Muslim Generation Z, who may prefer not to visit such places (Azzahra, 2019). In response, halal tourism emerges as an alternative option for Muslim Generation Z in selecting travel destinations. Understanding their perceptions of halal tourism requires first exploring their interests, attitudes, and preferences (Han & Kim, 2018). To analyze interests, attitudes, and preferences, this study employs the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) approach.

TPB is one of the most widely used sociopsychological theories for predicting human decisions and behaviors (Guerin & Toland, 2020). According to TPB, there are three independent variables for studying interest or intention: attitude toward behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991).

Several previous studies have utilized TPB to analyze consumer behavior in purchasing products and services (Wang, 2014). Specifically, TPB has also been applied to examine consumer behavior towards halal concepts (Khalek & Ismail, 2015) and to predict visitors' intentions in selecting travel destinations (Wang & Fu, 2015).

This study seeks to extend the application of TPB in the context of halal tourism by incorporating additional variables, namely halal awareness and religiosity as a moderating factor. Existing literature has rarely examined the influence of these variables on Generation Z's interest in visiting halal tourism destinations. This research aims to fill that gap.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theory Of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). TRA concludes that the intention to perform a certain behavior is influenced by two factors: subjective norms and attitudes toward the behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). However, the TRA model has limitations, as it does not account for situations where individuals lack control over their behavior. In other words, it assumes that behavior is entirely volitional (Ajzen, 1991; Taylor & Todd, 1995).

Intention To Visit

Intention to Visit is a critical topic in tourism research. Intention refers to an individual's motivation to consciously exert effort to perform a behavior. It is also the core focus of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which indicates the strength of an individual's attempt to execute a behavior and the level of effort dedicated to facilitating that behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Intention is considered representative and significantly simpler, as it offers a higher likelihood of accuracy compared to actual behavior (Hassan et al., 2016).

Moreover, research by Grimmer & Miles (2016) found that intention has a substantial influence on behavioral decisions, such as purchasing a product. Conversely, behavior itself is highly complex, as numerous factors can influence an individual's actions. Therefore, this study is limited to exploring the indicators of tourists' intentions to visit halal tourism destinations, rather than delving into the complexities of actual behavior.

Attitude

Attitude can be defined as an individual's response to positive or negative influences, which subsequently affects their actions (Ajzen, 2012). Similarly, Schiffman & Kanuk (2008) describe attitude as a consistent tendency to act, acquired through learning, that reflects emotions and intentions.

Attitude encompasses cognitive, affective, and behavioral tendencies learned to respond either positively or negatively to objects, situations, institutions, concepts, or individuals. According to Eagly & Chaiken (1993), attitude is a personal factor that involves positive or negative evaluations influencing behavior to avoid, resist, or oppose an object. Fishbein & Ajzen (1991) further elaborate that attitude toward behavior is an individual's positive or negative feeling about performing a particular behavior. This attitude is shaped by the assessment of beliefs about the consequences of the behavior and the evaluation of the desirability of those consequences.

Perceived Behavioral Control

Perceived behavioral control refers to an individual's perception of how easy or difficult it is to perform a specific behavior, including the challenges they might encounter (Ajzen, 1991). According to Francis et al. (2004), perceived behavioral control is the extent to which an individual feels capable of enacting a behavior.

It is the only factor directly influencing an individual's actions or decision-making process. When individuals believe they possess greater resources, such as access to facilities, time, financial means, knowledge, or skills, their perceived behavioral control increases. Conversely, a lack of such resources, often influenced by factors beyond personal control, may hinder their intention to perform certain behaviors (Shi et al., 2017; Wan et al., 2014). Ajzen (1991) suggests that the intention to perform a behavior tends to diminish if any of these necessary resources are unavailable.

On the other hand, individuals who have control over these resources are better positioned to evaluate the feasibility of their actions, anticipate possible obstacles, and predict the outcomes of engaging in a particular behavior.

Subjective Norms

Subjective norms refer to the social pressure an individual feels to engage in or avoid certain behaviors, shaped by the influence of significant others such as family members, partners, close friends, coworkers, or other relevant groups (Ajzen, 1991). Damit et al. (2019) define subjective norms as an individual's expression of specific conditions influencing decision-making, derived from the mental representation of others related to the individual. According to Nilsson et al. (2004), subjective norms are ideational norms that describe a person's belief about the influence of others on their behavior and their motivation to align with that reference. Similarly, Memon et al. (2019) explain that subjective norms are normative beliefs formed by social pressures. Reference groups' opinions about a specific behavior, as perceived by individuals, become a consideration leading to social pressure.

This pressure either motivates individuals to continue exhibiting that behavior as a group norm or discourages them from doing so (Lim et al., 2020). The more individuals perceive that their reference groups support them in performing a behavior, the stronger the social pressure they feel to enact that behavior. Conversely, when individuals perceive that their reference

groups disapprove of a behavior, they are more likely to experience social pressure to refrain from engaging in that behavior.

Halal Awareness

Halal awareness refers to the level of knowledge, understanding, and attention consumers give to the concept of halal and its application in daily life. The halal concept extends beyond food to encompass various lifestyle aspects aligned with Islamic principles, including pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, clothing, finance, and tourism (Tiemann et al., 2019). Bonne et al. (2007) found that halal awareness plays a crucial role in the purchase of food products among Muslim consumers in non-Muslim countries.

Similarly, Lada et al. (2009) demonstrated that halal awareness influences consumers' purchase intentions, particularly for products with credible halal certification. Moreover, research by Awan et al. (2015) revealed that digital media plays a key role in building halal awareness, particularly among younger generations. This suggests that increasing halal awareness can have a significant impact on consumer behavior, especially in contexts where halal compliance is a priority, such as the tourism sector.

Religiosity

Religiosity is one of the most significant cultural forces influencing human behavior (Eid & El-Gohary, 2015). It refers to the degree of belief and commitment individuals have regarding the absolute nature and truth of religious teachings and sacred scriptures (Ahmad et al., 2019). Ariffi et al. (2016) argue that religiosity, or an individual's religious affiliation with a specific faith, actively shapes their attitudes and behavioral outcomes.

This is because religion and belief systems influence intra-psychic factors, such as attitudes and behaviors (Mansori et al., 2015). Consequently, religiosity is associated with the internalization of values, beliefs, and attitudes that predominantly affect behavioral intentions. Religiosity can play a pivotal role in guiding individuals' preferences and decisions, particularly in contexts where moral and spiritual considerations are paramount, such as in selecting halal tourism destinations.

METHODS

This study employs a quantitative approach with variables categorized into exogenous and endogenous variables. The exogenous variables include subjective norm (SN), attitude (A), perceived behavioral control (PBC), halal awareness (HA), and religiosity (R), while the endogenous variable is travel intention (IV).

Indicators and their derivatives in this study are adapted from previously validated research and modified to align with the research theme. The research variables are utilized to measure specific phenomena with the aim of producing accurate quantitative data. To ensure this, each variable is assigned a scale. A likert scale is used in this study to reflect the degree of agreement or disagreement with given statements, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

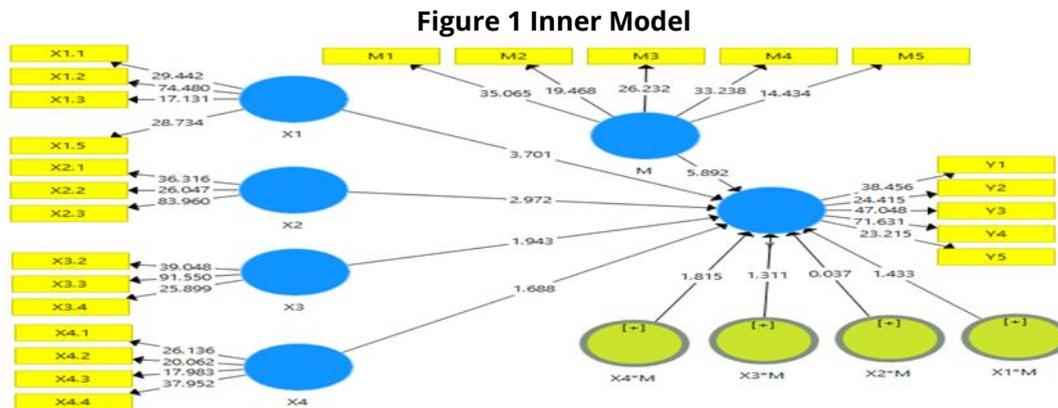
The respondents are members of generation z residing in Bengkulu province, selected using purposive sampling. This sampling method ensures that information is obtained from a specific target group. The inclusion criteria for respondents are as follows: they must be Muslim, aged between 12 and 27 years, and interested in visiting halal tourism destinations. The sample size was determined based on data sufficiency for analysis purposes, targeting 300-400 respondents. A set of questionnaires was distributed directly to respondents through eight research assistants. These assistants coordinated with Islamic student and youth organizations such as HMI, Kammi, IMM, IPM, IPNU, PMII, Rohis, and Komunitas Pemuda Hijrah. For data

analysis, the study employs structural equation modeling (sem) using the partial least square (pls) technique to assess the relationships between variables and test the proposed hypotheses.

RESULTS

INNER MODEL

The inner model is used to determine the causal relationships between latent variables and those that cannot be directly altered. the inner model in this study is displayed in figure .



DISCUSSION

The results of this study show that attitude and perceived behavioral control have a positive and significant effect on the intention to engage in halal tourism, while subjective norms, halal awareness, and religiosity moderation do not have a significant impact. These findings provide new insights into understanding the behavior of Muslim Generation Z in Bengkulu Province in relation to halal tourism.

The Influence Of Attitude On The Intention To Engage In Halal Tourism

This study supports the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), which states that attitude is an important factor in shaping an individual's intention. Muslim Generation Z, who have a positive attitude toward halal tourism—including perceptions of comfort, alignment with Islamic values, and the benefits of the tourism experience—are more likely to have the intention to engage in halal tourism. This finding aligns with research by Battour et al. (2017), which found that attitudes toward the halal attributes of a destination are significant predictors of Muslim tourists' intentions. Therefore, promoting halal tourism in Bengkulu should focus on creating positive perceptions through tourism experiences that support Islamic values.

The Influence Of Perceived Behavioral Control On The Intention To Engage In Halal Tourism

The findings of this study also support the Theory of Planned Behavior by showing that perceived behavioral control significantly affects the intention to engage in halal tourism. This result is consistent with the study by Han et al. (2010), which states that an individual's perception of the ease of accessing destinations and available resources influences the intention to travel.

In the context of Bengkulu, perceived behavioral control could include the availability of Muslim-friendly facilities such as places of worship, halal food, and accessible transportation. This suggests that tourism managers need to enhance perceptions of ease for Muslim tourists by providing suitable facilities.

The Insignificance Of Subjective Norms

The finding that subjective norms do not significantly influence the intention to engage in halal tourism contradicts previous research, such as the study by Riaz et al. (2021), which found that social norms influence halal tourism intentions, particularly among young Muslims. This difference may be due to the social context in Bengkulu, where Muslim Generation Z tends to be more independent in decision-making and less influenced by social pressure or the expectations of others.

The Insignificance Of Halal Awareness

The finding that halal awareness does not significantly affect the intention to engage in halal tourism also contradicts research by Lada et al. (2009), which states that halal awareness can influence positive attitudes toward halal products or services. In this case, the study suggests that halal awareness may not directly influence intentions but may play a role through mediating variables such as attitude. This indicates the need for more intensive education about the importance of halal in tourism to foster positive attitudes.

The Role Of Religiosity As A Moderator

This study found that religiosity does not moderate the relationship between attitude, perceived behavioral control, subjective norms, or halal awareness and the intention to engage in halal tourism. This finding supports the research by Wilson et al. (2013), which states that although religiosity is important in Muslim consumer behavior, its level of influence can vary depending on the context.

In this case, Muslim Generation Z may not view religiosity as a factor that strengthens the relationship between other variables and intention but rather as a personal factor that is separate from the others.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to analyze the effect of attitude, perceived behavioral control, subjective norms, halal awareness, and religiosity as a moderator on the intention of Muslim Generation Z in Bengkulu Province to engage in halal tourism. Based on the data analysis results and hypothesis testing, the following conclusions can be drawn: Attitude has a positive and significant effect on the intention to engage in halal tourism. This indicates that the positive perception of Generation Z toward halal tourism, such as its alignment with Islamic values and the benefits it offers, plays a crucial role in shaping their intention to visit halal destinations. Perceived behavioral control also has a positive and significant effect on the intention to engage in halal tourism.

The perception of ease and the ability to access halal destinations influence Generation Z's confidence in making decisions to engage in halal tourism. Subjective norms do not have a significant effect on the intention to engage in halal tourism. This finding suggests that social influences, such as support or expectations from family, friends, or society, are less relevant in shaping Generation Z's intention to engage in halal tourism.

Halal awareness does not show a significant effect on the intention to engage in halal tourism. Although awareness of the importance of halal aspects is high, this variable does not directly drive Generation Z to engage in halal tourism, but rather contributes indirectly through attitude.

Religiosity as a moderating variable does not strengthen the relationship between attitude, perceived behavioral control, subjective norms, and halal awareness with the intention to engage in halal tourism. This indicates that the level of religiosity in Generation Z does not play a reinforcing role in the relationship between these variables.

LIMITATION

This study has limitations in terms of geographical scope and its focus on Muslim Generation Z. Future research is recommended to expand the geographical coverage, explore other factors such as travel experiences, and test additional mediating or moderating variables to gain a more comprehensive understanding of halal tourism behavior.

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