

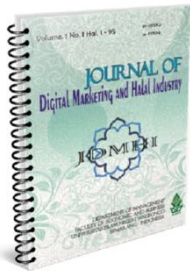


Gen-Z's Decision-Making: Impact of Attitudes, Knowledge, and Social Media on Halal Tourism Choices

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ABSTRACT

Halal tourism in Indonesia is experiencing significant growth, yet there remains limited research on factors influencing Generation Z's (Gen Z) decisions when selecting halal tourism destinations, especially in Riau Province. With its strong Islamic cultural heritage, Riau holds great potential for deeper exploration. This study aims to analyze the influence of attitudes, knowledge, and social media on Gen Z's decision-making when choosing halal tourism destinations in Riau Province. Using a quantitative approach with Structural Equation Model Partial Least Square (SEM PLS) technique, the research reveals that all three variables, attitudes, knowledge, and social media, directly and significantly impact the decision to choose halal tourism destinations. The attitude variable shows that individuals' perceptions of halal tourism aspects influence Gen Z's decision-making. Similarly, the knowledge variable highlights that awareness about halal destinations positively affects their choices. The social media variable emphasizes the crucial role of online platforms and content in shaping decisions. These findings suggest that both the government and tourism managers should prioritize awareness and education programs, improve social media strategies for effective marketing, and enhance digital infrastructure. Additionally, integrating halal tourism services with local communities and religious leaders is key to fostering sustainable growth. This research provides insights into the dynamics of Gen Z's decision-making in the context of halal tourism in Riau Province.

Introduction

Halal tourism is increasingly becoming a major concern in the era of globalization, along with the development of consumer preferences, especially from Generation Z (Gen-Z). Currently, interest in halal tourism is

increasing, in line with the growth in the number of Muslim tourists from year to year (Syihabudin, et al., 2022). Various countries, including countries with a majority Muslim and non-Muslim population, are increasingly active in developing the halal tourism sector (Safitri, Mukaromah, & Habib, 2021). The growth of halal tourism shows a significant increase every year. This can be seen from the

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growth in the number of Muslim tourist trips from 2014 to 2019 (Subarkah et al., 2020).

Great potential is wide open for the development of the halal industry which continues to grow in the global market, especially in the food and tourism sectors (Prayuda et al., 2023). Reported by www.kemenpar.go.id, the Ministry of Tourism reported that in 2019, Indonesia was designated as the best halal tourist destination in the world based on the 2019 Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) (Destiana et al., 2020). And now in 2023 according to the 2023 Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) released by Mastercard and Crescent Rating, Indonesia is ranked as the highest Muslim-friendly destination in the world (Annur, 2023).

Table 1.

List of Best Muslim Friendly Destination Countries in the World by Global Muslim Travel Index/GMTI (2023)

No.	Data Name	Value/Points
1	Indonesia	73
2	Malaysia	73
3	Arab Saudi	72
4	Uni Emirat Arab	71
5	Turki	70

Source: databoks, Annur (2023)

The surge in the number of Muslim travelers opens up opportunities for the tourism industry to explore the potential of halal tourism. Therefore, several countries have taken advantage of this momentum by developing a tourism sector that focuses on halal tourism, making it a prime destination for travelers who want a travel experience according to halal principles (Al-Qital et al., 2022). Along with that, the halal food and halal tourism sectors are becoming attractive sectors in the global halal industry.

Opportunities for halal products in the global market continue to increase, and Indonesia is positioned as a country with significant potential in the halal industry (Prayuda et al., 2023).

In Indonesia, the halal tourism sector is currently being pursued as a national program by the Ministry of Tourism. It has been determined that 15 provinces are the main focus of developing superior tourist destinations for Muslims (Al-Qital et al., 2022). The importance of halal tourism for Muslims cannot be ignored, even the concept of "Muslim friendly" applied in halal tourism emphasizes services, facilities, accessibility, and attractions designed to make it easier for Muslims to comply with Islamic teachings while in tourist destinations (Fitriyyah, 2022). Indonesia's success as one of the countries with the best halal tourism reflects the serious commitment of the government and halal tourism supporters, as well as the potential of each province in Indonesia with its own unique tourist destinations (Ferdiansyah, 2020).

In order to achieve the best position, Indonesia has also developed the Indonesia Muslim Travel Index (IMTI), which is based on the standards of the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) (Nurhanisah, 2022). Riau Province previously achieved third place in the IMTI 2019, and in 2023, Riau received recognition once again by being included among the 15 regions nominated for the IMTI Award 2023 (Royani, 2023). This award demonstrates Riau's dedication to developing halal tourism that meets the needs of Muslim travelers. Riau Province is one of ten provinces in Indonesia that is being prepared by the Ministry of Tourism to become a halal tourism destination, in accordance with the 2018

Indonesian Sharia Economic Master Plan. This selection is not made without reason. As the hometown of the Malays, Riau is rich in culture, customs, and literature (including Malay Arabic letters and the book *Tunjuk Ajar Melayu*) that are closely related to Islamic teachings. In addition, several historical sites of Riau's Malay royal heritage, such as the Siak kingdom, also confirm the role of Islam in community life, government, and organization in the Riau province region (Bustaman & Suryani, 2021).

The Riau region is known as an area rich in resources, including oil palm, rubber, natural gas, fiber plantations, and has superior tourist attractions. Therefore, Riau is recognized as one of the regions with high wealth (Fajriandhany et al., 2020). Halal tourism in Riau Province is considered to have great potential to improve the economic sector, so it needs to receive more serious attention (Qurniawati et al., 2023). Therefore, the Riau Provincial Government has issued a Regulation approved by the Governor with Number 18 of 2019 regarding Halal Tourism (Bustamam & Suryani, 2022), as an effort to thoroughly understand the existing potential.

According to Bustamam & Suryani (2021), the potential for halal tourism in Riau Province is highly promising for development, supported by factors such as tourist attractions, accessibility, facilities, supplementary services, and adequate institutions. The growth of this sector has had a significant impact on the region's economic development, evidenced by the rise of businesses around tourist destinations, improvements in infrastructure, the creation of new jobs, and an increase in local revenue. Aligning with this, BPS (2024) recorded a sharp increase in international tourist arrivals to Riau, rising from 3,684 visits

in January 2023 to 42,769 in January 2024, reflecting a month-to-month growth of 9.62 percent. Mardatillah's (2023) research supports this trend, revealing that halal tourism in Riau has great potential due to its rich Islamic history, strong Malay Islamic culture, and the presence of halal certifications and local cultural attractions that appeal to Muslim tourists. The combination of enhanced halal facilities and rich local culture strengthens Riau's position as an attractive international tourism destination.

Research conducted by Battour and Ismail (2016) concluded that Muslim tourists tend to consider the halal aspect, which refers to everything that is allowed or permitted according to Islamic teachings, when determining the purpose and accommodation of their travel. This is due to the fact that every action of Muslim tourists is based on the principles of the Quran and hadith, including in the context of traveling (Henderson, 2016). Another study by Prayuda et al. (2023) revealed that the growth of the halal tourism industry is occurring globally in response to increased demand from Muslim travelers who want a travel experience that supports the practice of worship and provides halal food during their trip. With the aim of obeying Islamic principles, there is no potential risk or sin when enjoying halal food given by God as a form of His generosity (Sahnan et al., 2023).

Riau Province, as one of the potential tourist destinations in Indonesia, is an interesting research site to identify the factors that influence Gen-Z's decision to choose a halal tourist destination. Riau has various features in the halal tourism sector, offering tourist destinations that present Islamic nuances as an integral part of Malay cultural heritage (Syahrizal, 2021). This uniqueness is a special

attraction for travelers who are looking for a travel experience that is rich in culture and natural beauty.

In an effort to better understand the factors that influence Generation Z (Gen-Z) decisions in choosing halal tourism destinations, this study was initiated with a focus on the context of Riau Province. The purpose of this study is to analyze the influence of attitude, knowledge, and social media on the decision of Gen-Z in Riau Province in choosing tourism destinations that follow halal principles. This research is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of how attitudes, knowledge, and social media together influence Gen-Z decisions regarding halal tourism destinations in Riau Province. The results of this study are expected to provide valuable insights for tourism policy makers and related industries to develop more targeted and sustainable strategies in attracting the attention of Gen-Z as a halal tourism market.

Literature Review

Halal Tourism Destinations

Sofyan and Riyanto (2012) stated that the concept of halal tourism has a broader scope than religious tourism, as it is a type of tourism based on the principles of Islamic sharia values. Shakiry further explained that halal tourism is not limited to religious tourism, but includes all forms of tourism except those that contradict Islamic principles. This implies that halal tourism is not exclusive to Muslims, as both Muslims and non-Muslims can enjoy services based on sharia values. Moreover, halal tourism is not restricted to pilgrimage or religious destinations but also includes various other destinations that provide supporting

facilities such as restaurants and hotels offering halal food and places of worship (Sari et al., 2019). Carboni, Perelli, and Sistu (2017) described halal tourism as a form of tourism that adheres to Islamic principles, designed to meet the needs of Muslim travelers in accordance with their religious practices while traveling. In general, halal tourism refers to tourism activities or trips that comply with sharia law (Jafari & Scott, 2014; Battour et al., 2017).

It is important to note that the concept of halal tourism is not limited to ritual aspects alone but also encompasses various aspects of daily life in accordance with Islamic norms. Mohsin, Ramli, and Alkhulayfi (2016) describe halal tourism as the provision of products and services designed to meet the needs of Muslim travelers, including prayer facilities and accommodations that adhere to Islamic principles. Therefore, those who choose halal tourism can expect a more comprehensive experience, covering aspects such as the selection of travel destinations, types of activities participated in, and social interactions during the trip, all aligned with sharia values and principles.

Attitude

Attitude is a term in the field of psychology that refers to the relationship between a person's perception or response and their behavior. Based on the definition from the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), attitudes refer to a person's actions or behaviors that are guided by beliefs that come from accepted norms in society, often including religious norms. Looking at previous research, it is evident that attitude has a significant influence on Muslim tourists' decisions in choosing halal tourism destinations. For instance, a study in Sabah, Malaysia, found that halal image and

attitude affected international Muslim tourists' intentions to visit homestays. However, halal awareness did not always moderate this relationship (Jalasi et al., 2022). This suggests that a positive attitude towards halal destinations is often strong enough to drive decisions, regardless of deeper awareness about halal concepts.

Furthermore, tourists' perceptions of halal tourism are directly and positively linked to their decisions to visit halal destinations, reinforcing the role of positive attitudes in shaping travel decisions (Rohman & Fajri, 2023). This emphasizes the importance of a positive outlook on halal attributes in determining the final choice of destination. However, as explained by Ramadhanti (2023), not all studies show consistent results; in the context of Sunan Ampel Tourism in Surabaya, attitudes toward halal tourism did not significantly influence the intention to visit, suggesting that other factors also play a role in motivating tourists' decisions.

Therefore, it is essential for this research to explore how attitude, knowledge, and the role of social media interact in influencing halal tourism decisions, especially among Gen-Z, who possess different decision-making characteristics compared to previous generations.

Knowledge

Knowledge refers to the understanding and knowledge that has been acquired and understood by individuals. It can also be interpreted as the result of the process of observation and reasoning that has been carried out by humans (Nugraheni & Muthohar, 2021), plays a crucial role in the selection of halal tourist destinations by Generation Z. Research by Lestia (2024)

indicates that motivation, destination image, and knowledge significantly and positively contribute to their intention to visit halal tourism in Malang. This finding aligns with that of Riansyah and Ismail (2024), which states that literacy regarding halal tourism has a significant impact on the community's interest in visiting such destinations. The deeper an individual's understanding of various aspects of halal tourism, such as suitable facilities, religious values, and the experiences offered, the more positive their attitude toward these destinations. Therefore, it is important to build a positive image of halal tourism to ensure the sustainability of this sector in Indonesia, especially in Riau Province.

Social Media

Technological advancements have simplified daily life, making it essential to evaluate their impact on individual development across life stages (Dananier, 2022). Furthermore, sharia-compliant products have a significant influence on decisions to stay at sharia hotels in Bandung, while social media greatly contributes to this decision, highlighting the importance of digital marketing strategies in the hospitality industry (Hamdani, 2022).

Generation Z, aged 16-25, is highly adept with technology and social media. Their engagement with these platforms significantly impacts the halal tourism sector, as they use social media to find information and make travel decisions (Kemenparekraf, 2020). The growth of halal tourism is driven by several factors, including the rising Muslim population, an expanding middle class, and easier access to information via social media. With a large number of young Muslims, the halal tourism industry has considerable growth potential (Mastercard-Crescentrating,

2018).

These studies are relevant to the topic. Social media has proven to be a key factor influencing Gen Z's decisions, as evidenced in research on its impact on hotel choices. Generation Z's tech-savvy nature supports the hypothesis that they will turn to social media when selecting halal travel destinations. Findings on the growing Muslim population and the need for Muslim-friendly services further align with the increase in halal tourism favored by Gen Z. These studies reinforce the analysis of how attitudes, knowledge, and social media shape their travel decisions.

The Theory of Reasoned Action

The Theory of Reasoned Action, developed by Icek Ajzen (2011), is an approach used to examine the tendencies and traits of individuals. This theory has significant relevance in understanding human behavior. According to this theory, a person's behavior can be accurately predicted by considering two main factors, namely the individual's attitude towards the behavior and the subjective norms accepted by the individual from his or her environment. Attitude towards the behavior reflects an individual's personal assessment of the advantages or disadvantages associated with the behavior, while subjective norms involve an individual's perception of expectations from people who are considered important regarding the behavior to be performed. By combining these two factors, the theory aims to provide a more complete and accurate picture of the factors that influence individual decision-making and behavior.

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) involves predicting behavior by understanding an individual's volition and intentions

(Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). This theory provides insight into how we can anticipate a person's actions based on their volition and intentions. In this context, volition refers to the extent to which a person has the desire or motivation to perform an action, while intention relates to the readiness to carry out the action. The meaningfulness of TRA lies in the recognition that actions or behaviors do not occur randomly, but rather involve thought and decision-making processes. The theory suggests that to understand why someone performs an action, we need to understand the extent to which they actually want to do it and the extent to which they intend to carry it out.

In the context of this research, the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) helps explain how attitudes, knowledge, and social media influence Gen-Z's decisions in choosing halal tourism destinations. Gen-Z's positive attitude towards halal destinations, which may be shaped by their knowledge of halal principles, affects their intentions and decisions to travel to such places. Social media, acting as a subjective norm, also plays a crucial role in shaping Gen-Z's perceptions and decisions. The information they acquire through social media platforms can influence the social pressure they feel, ultimately affecting their decision-making. TRA provides an appropriate framework for understanding how these factors interact and impact halal tourism decisions among Gen-Z, particularly in Riau Province.

Previous Research

The previous studies described in this section play an important role in providing a theoretical foundation and context for understanding the framework and possible findings of this journal. Analysis of these

studies may provide additional insights into previously identified factors, provide empirical support, or point to knowledge gaps that need to be further explored.

The first research conducted by Samsidar et al., (2023) with the research title "Factors Affecting Tourists in Choosing Halal Tourism Objects in Lhokseumawe City". The results of his research indicate that the results of simultaneous evaluation of the variables of Tourism Object Location (X1), Service (X2), and Promotion (X3) show a significant influence on the Tourism Object Selection Decision (Y) in Lhokseumawe City. When analyzed separately, it was revealed that the Tourism Object Location (X1) and Promotion (X3) variables had a significant impact on the Tourism Object Selection Decision (Y), while the Service variable (X2) did not have a significant effect on the decision in Lhokseumawe City.

Further research was conducted by Amzal et al., (2021) with the title "Analysis of Factors Affecting Public Interest in Visiting West Sumatra Halal Tourism (Case Study of Indonesian Millennial Muslim Travelers)". The results of his research state that the factors of knowledge, travel motivation, accommodation, ease of getting halal food and drinks have a significant effect on the intention of millennial Muslim tourists who travel halal tourism in West Sumatra. Conversely, the factors of electronic word of mouth, destination image, and facilities do not have a significant influence related to this issue.

Thus, this research makes a significant contribution in understanding the factors that influence the decision of Gen-Z Riau Province in choosing halal tourism destinations, with a focus on the influence of attitude, knowledge,

and social media. The results of this study are expected to be a strategic foundation for the development of tourism policies that are more effective and responsive to the preferences of the younger generation, especially Gen-Z, in meeting their needs and expectations regarding halal tourism destinations.

Method, Data, and Analysis

This study employs a quantitative approach using the Structural Equation Model - Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) technique to analyze how attitude, knowledge, and social media influence Generation Z's decision-making in choosing halal tourism destinations in Riau Province. The SEM-PLS method was selected for its ability to model complex relationships between latent variables (constructs) and their indicators. The model fit is evaluated using the coefficient of determination (R^2) and Q^2 values to ensure accuracy in predicting the dependent variable. The construct validity is assessed through convergent and discriminant validity, with indicators such as Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and factor loadings used to validate the relationships among variables.

Data collection was conducted in Riau Province using questionnaires distributed via Google Forms and social media platforms, targeting Generation Z respondents. The sample, selected through simple random sampling, comprised 121 participants. The study focuses on four variables: attitude, knowledge, social media (independent variables), and the decision to choose halal tourism destinations (dependent variable). These variables were measured using a Likert scale to assess respondents' preferences and awareness related to halal tourism aspects, such as sharia-compliant facilities, halal food,

and worship amenities.

The data was analyzed using SmartPLS, starting with data tabulation and followed by evaluations of the outer and inner models. Path coefficients and R² values were calculated to determine the strength of relationships between variables, while hypothesis testing was conducted using t-statistics and p-values to assess the significance of these relationships. A p-value below 0.05 was considered statistically significant, indicating reliable relationships between the variables.

Result and Discussion

Respondent Characteristics

The research participants in this analysis can be identified by age group and religion, as illustrated in table 2. Most participants (85 or 70.3%) were within the age range of 21 to ≤ 26 years. Meanwhile, 36 participants (29.7%)

were between 14 and ≤ 20 years old. In terms of religion, the majority of participants adhered to Islam, consisting of 117 people or 96.7%. Furthermore, Christianity was followed by 3 participants or 2.5%, and Buddhism was the last choice with only 1 participant or 0.8%.

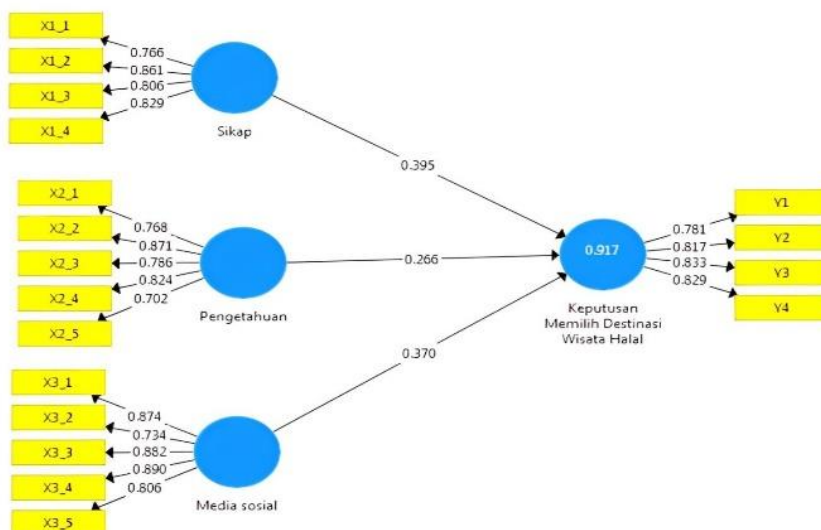
Table 2.
Respondent Characteristics Data (Gen-Z Riau Province

Respondent Characteristics	Total	Percentage
Age	21 - ≤ 26 Years	85 70,3%
	14 - ≤ 20 Years	36 29,7%
Religion	Islam	117 96,7%
	Kristen	3 2,5%
	Buddhism	1 0,8%

Source: Data processed (2024)

Figure 1.

Outer Model



Outer Model Test Results

Outer Loadings are used to describe the level of correlation between indicators and latent variables. To be considered valid, the outer loading value must exceed 0.7. The data in table 2. shows that all indicators in all variables have a loading factor > 0.7. Thus, it can be concluded that all indicators are valid.

Table 3. Outer Loadings

Variables	Indicator	Outer Loadings	Significance (>0,70)
Attitude	X1_1	0,766	VALID
	X1_2	0,861	VALID
	X1_3	0,806	VALID
	X1_4	0,829	VALID
Knowledge	X2_1	0,768	VALID
	X2_2	0,871	VALID
	X2_3	0,786	VALID
	X2_4	0,824	VALID
	X2_5	0,702	VALID
Social Media	X3_1	0,874	VALID
	X3_2	0,734	VALID
	X3_3	0,882	VALID
	X3_4	0,890	VALID
	X3_5	0,806	VALID
Decision to Choose	Y1	0,781	VALID
	Y2	0,817	VALID
Halal Tourism Destination	Y3	0,833	VALID
	Y4	0,829	VALID

Source: Data processed (2024)

Validity Test Results

Validity was tested using convergent validity and discriminant validity. In table 3, it can be seen that all indicators of each variable meet the convergent validity criteria because they have an outer load value of more than 0.7. The success of measuring items owned by convergent validity variables is met if the AVE

value > 0.5. Discriminant validity is used to assess whether the selected indicator is a good measure, by looking at Fornell-Lacker and Cross Loading which have a value > 0.7. Fornell-Lacker can be measured through the AVE root which is greater than the correlation value with other variables, indicating that the discriminant validity value is good. More complete data is in table 4. The cross loading value of the research measurement items shows a higher correlation than the variable it measures, so discriminant validity is met, indicating that all indicators have good discriminant validity.

Table 4. Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Variables	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Attitude	0,666
Knowledge	0,628
Social Media	0,705
Decision to Choose Halal Tourism Destination	0,665

Source: Data processed (2024)

Table 5. Fornell – Larcker

Variables	Decision to Choose Destination	Social Media	Knowledge	Attitude
Decision to Choose Halal Tourism Destination	0,815			
Social Media	0,897	0,839		
Knowledge	0,849	0,748	0,792	
Attitude	0,909	0,832	0,777	0,816

Source: Data processed (2024)

Reliability Test Results

This test evaluates consistency in variable

measurement. If the Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values exceed 0.6, it can be concluded that the reliability is acceptable. The results in table 5 show that Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability of each measuring variable can be considered acceptable or reliable because they show values that exceed 0.6.

Table 6. Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability

Variables	Cronbach's alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_a)	Composite Reliability (rho_c)
Decision to Choose Halal Tourism Destination	0,832	0,834	0,888
Social Media	0,894	0,902	0,922
Knowledge	0,854	0,873	0,893
Attitude	0,833	0,839	0,889

Source: Data processed (2024)

Collinearity Test Results (VIF)

The VIF check is used to identify the absence of correlation between variables. If the VIF value is <5, this indicates the absence of multicollinearity between the variables, as illustrated in Table 6.

Table 7. Collinearity - Inner VIF

Variables	Decision to Choose Destination
Decision to Choose Halal Tourism Destination	
Social Media	3,544
Knowledge	2,753
Attitude	3,933

Source: Data processed (2024)

Hypothesis Test Results

The significance of each path coefficient can be evaluated through the p-value and t-

statistics. If the p-value is <0.05, it indicates significance. While t-statistics >1.96 also indicate significance. The results of the analysis in table 7. show that social media, knowledge, and attitudes have a significant impact on the Decision to Choose Halal Tourism Destinations. The t-statistics value for the influence of social media on the decision to choose a Halal Tourism Destination is 6.310 > 1.96, and the p-value for social media on the decision to choose a Halal Tourism Destination is 0.000 < 0.05. These results illustrate the significant impact of social media variables on the Decision to Choose Halal Tourism Destinations.

Similarly, the t-statistics value for the effect of knowledge on the Decision to Choose Halal Tourism Destinations is 3.906 > 1.96, with a p-value of 0.000 > 0.05. This means that the knowledge variable also has a significant impact on the Decision to Choose Halal Tourism Destinations. Furthermore, the t-statistics value for the effect of attitude on the Decision to Choose Halal Tourism Destinations is 6.857 > 1.96, and the p-value for attitude towards the Decision to Choose Halal Tourism Destinations is 0.000 < 0.05. Thus, these results indicate a significant impact of the attitude variable on the Decision to Choose Halal Tourism Destinations.

Table 8. Hypothesis Test Results

Influence between Variables	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	T-statistics (O/STDEV)	p-value
MS→KMDWH	0,370	0,370	6,310	0,000
PH→KMDWH	0,266	0,265	3,906	0,000
SK→KMDWH	0,395	0,397	6,857	0,000

Source: Data processed (2024)

Table 8. below indicates that three

significant hypotheses were proposed in this journal, and all of them were found to be significant. The three hypotheses include:

1. The Effect of Attitude (X1) on the Decision to Choose Halal Tourism Destinations (Y)
2. The Effect of Knowledge (X2) on the Decision to Choose Halal Tourism Destinations (Y)
3. The Influence of Social Media (X3) on the Decision to Choose Halal Tourism Destinations (Y)

Table 9. Summary of Hypothesis Test Results

Causality Relationship	Hypothesis	Analysis Result	Description
Direct influence			
Attitude (X1) with Decision to Choose Halal Tourism Destination (Y)	Significant	Significant	Proven
Knowledge (X2) with Decision to Choose Halal Tourism Destination (Y)	Significant	Significant	Proven
Social Media (X3) with Decision to Choose Halal Tourism Destination (Y)	Significant	Significant	Proven

Source: Data processed (2024)

Results of R-Squared and Q-Squared Analysis

The results described in table 8 show that the variables of social media, knowledge, and attitude together are able to explain about 91.7% of the variation contained in the variable Decision to Choose Halal Tourism Destinations. The use of Q-squared as an indicator of prediction accuracy shows that the Q-squared value for the Decision to Choose Halal Tourism Destinations is 0.589. This figure exceeds the threshold of 0.50, which indicates a high level of prediction accuracy. This means that the model or analysis involving social media variables, knowledge, and attitudes can well predict or explain the Decision to Choose Halal Tourism Destinations with a significant level of accuracy.

Table 10. R-Squared and Q-Squared values

Variables	R-Squared	Adjusted R-squared	Q-Squared
Decision to Choose Destination	0,917	0,915	0,589

Source: Data processed (2024)

Discussion

The recent surge in Riau Province’s tourism sector, particularly in the realm of halal tourism, reflects a combination of strategic development efforts and a growing global demand for Muslim-friendly destinations. Based on data from the Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS, 2024), international tourist visits to Riau rose dramatically from 3,684 in January 2023 to 42,769 in January 2024, with a notable monthly growth rate of 9.62%. This growth is largely attributed to Riau’s deliberate focus on developing its halal tourism infrastructure, supported by cultural, institutional, and infrastructural strengths as

highlighted by Bustamam & Suryani (2021). The province’s rich Islamic and Malay cultural heritage, combined with improving facilities that cater to Muslim tourists, positions it as a burgeoning hub for halal tourism in Southeast Asia.

The Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen, 2011) offers a theoretical lens through which this phenomenon can be understood. According to this theory, the decision-making process is shaped by an individual’s attitudes and subjective norms. In the context of halal tourism, the positive attitudes of Muslim travelers toward destinations that align with their religious values—such as the availability of halal food, Sharia-compliant accommodations, and prayer facilities—play a crucial role in destination selection. This is supported by Battour and Ismail (2016), who emphasize that Muslim tourists prioritize these elements when planning their travels. Empirical evidence from Prayuda et al. (2023) further illustrates that a growing number of global Muslim travelers seek out destinations specifically designed to accommodate Islamic practices, which has been a key driver behind the rising interest in halal tourism globally, and particularly in Riau.

In Riau, the strategic development of halal tourism is not just about meeting global demand but also leveraging the province’s deep cultural and historical roots in Islam. Mardatillah (2023) points out that Riau’s Islamic history and Malay heritage provide a unique allure for Muslim travelers, offering a distinctive experience that blends cultural authenticity with modern tourism needs. The rise in tourist numbers can be seen as a result of conscious policy implementations that not only enhance Riau’s infrastructure but also market its cultural assets in alignment with

halal tourism principles. Empirically, this growth trend mirrors broader global shifts toward destinations that emphasize Muslim-friendly services, further validating the strategic alignment of Riau's tourism policies with both domestic and international trends.

This intersection of theoretical frameworks and empirical data highlights how Riau's approach to halal tourism is both reactive to global trends and proactive in utilizing its local cultural resources. The substantial rise in tourist numbers indicates that Riau's focus on halal tourism is yielding tangible results, positioning the province as a major player in the global halal tourism industry. As demand for halal services continues to grow, Riau's strategic development in this sector is expected to further strengthen its position as a prime destination for Muslim travelers.

Conclusion

This study analyzes the significant influence of attitude, knowledge, and social media on the decision-making of Generation Z in Riau Province when choosing halal tourism destinations. These three variables directly impact tourists' preferences for halal destinations. Attitude towards halal tourism, which includes understanding of Sharia principles and Islamic-friendly facilities, plays a crucial role in decision-making. A deeper knowledge of aspects such as halal-certified food and prayer facilities also increases tourists' confidence in selecting destinations that align with Islamic values. Additionally, social media plays a strong role in disseminating information and shaping tourists' perceptions of halal destinations. Generation Z's use of social media as a source of travel information and recommendations is proven to influence their decisions.

This research contributes to the literature on halal tourism by linking its findings to the Theory of Reasoned Action, which shows that attitude, knowledge, and the influence of social media collectively affect tourists' intentions and decisions. The practical implication is the need for more effective marketing strategies through better social media management and increasing halal literacy among young travelers. Furthermore, the importance of collaboration with local communities and religious leaders is a key factor in promoting the sustainability of halal tourism.

However, this study has limitations, particularly regarding the sample representation, which only covers Generation Z in Riau, making it difficult to generalize the results to other regions. The local culture of Riau also influences the findings, but this aspect has not been explored in depth. Therefore, future research is encouraged to explore external factors such as the influence of religious values or economic considerations and conduct comparative studies with other regions to determine whether the findings are universally applicable or specific to Riau.

Suggestion

To further develop halal tourism in Riau Province, several key strategies should be considered. First, strengthening engagement on social media is essential, given its significant role in the lives of Gen-Z. Tourism stakeholders should enhance their digital marketing efforts through collaborations with influencers, creating engaging content, and launching targeted campaigns that highlight halal tourism destinations. These campaigns should emphasize facilities and experiences aligned with Islamic values to attract the

younger Muslim demographic.

Increasing awareness and education is another vital strategy. Local governments and tourism authorities need to proactively raise public understanding of what halal tourism entails and its benefits. Educational campaigns can improve tourists' knowledge and influence their destination choices. Collaboration with religious leaders and local communities is equally important, as their involvement can add authenticity and deepen the cultural and religious connection of these destinations. This collaboration helps maintain Sharia-compliant services and ensures the sustainability of halal tourism in the region.

Additionally, expanding the halal tourism market by leveraging Riau's rich Islamic and Malay heritage can attract more visitors. Lessons from other regions, both within and outside Indonesia, can provide insights that strengthen Riau's market position. Future research should explore moderating and mediating variables, such as religious and cultural values, as well as economic factors, to gain deeper insights into halal tourists' decision-making processes. Comparative studies with other regions can help identify trends that could either be unique to Riau or part of a broader global movement in halal tourism. Implementing these strategies will enable halal tourism in Riau to align with global trends while reflecting the values embraced by the Muslim Gen-Z demographic.

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