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Muslim Identity and Customer Trust in Sharia Digital Gold Services: Evidence from a Digital Islamic Finance Context

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Abstract

Sharia digital gold has grown rapidly, yet customer trust in these platforms remains relatively low. Research on trust in digital finance has focused mostly on technological and rational factors, while religious identity has rarely been tested directly as a determinant of trust. This study examines whether Muslim identity influences customer trust in Sharia digital gold services. Questionnaire data from 117 customers were analyzed using PLS-SEM in SmartPLS 4 and interpreted through the maqāṣid al-sharīʿah framework. Muslim identity had a positive path coefficient ($\beta = 0.282$), but the effect was not significant ($t = 1.359$; $p = 0.174$). It explained only 7.9% of the variance in customer trust and had a small effect size ($f^2 = 0.086$). Given low measurement reliability, these results warrant caution. They nonetheless question the assumption that shared religious identity is enough to earn trust in Sharia financial products. In a digital setting, trust may depend more on security and transparency, suggesting that ḥifẓ al-māl (protection of wealth) weighs more heavily than ḥifẓ al-dīn (protection of religion). The novelty lies in testing religious identity as a direct determinant of trust in a technology-based Sharia product and in using maqāṣid al-sharīʿah to explain a non-significant result. For providers, the Sharia label must be backed by visible security and transparency.

Keywords: Muslim identity; customer trust; Sharia digital gold; maqāṣid al-sharīʿah; Islamic fintech

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Introduction

The development of digital technology has driven significant changes in the global financial system, particularly in the investment sector. Amid global economic uncertainty, such as market fluctuations and inflationary pressures, gold remains a preferred instrument due to its nature as a safe-haven asset. This is supported by the study of Yustiana et al. (2026), which demonstrates that gold price prediction models are capable of following market trends and consistently providing projections of price increases within the next 30 days. The model has also been implemented in a TensorFlow.js-based platform, enabling real-time, efficient, and responsive access to predictions. Along with these technological advancements, an innovation in the form of sharia digital gold has emerged, offering ease of access, transactional flexibility, and compliance with Islamic principles.

In recent years, Indonesia's economic conditions have faced several challenges, including inflation fluctuations, global economic uncertainty, and a relatively low level of Islamic financial literacy, all of which affect public trust in digital-based investment instruments (Otoritas Jasa Keuangan, 2025). On the other hand, Indonesia, as the country with the largest Muslim population in the world (Putrie, 2026), holds significant potential for the development of the Islamic finance industry. The growth of the digital economy has increased public demand for financial services that are not only efficient but also aligned with religious values. Financial digitalization not only expands access to various investment instruments but also influences how Muslims integrate religious values into their economic decision-making processes.

Research by Aliyyah et al. (2025) shows that digitalization plays a role in helping Muslim Generation Z access halal products while encouraging the adoption of a halal lifestyle. Furthermore, a report by the World Gold Council (2024) indicates that interest in sharia digital gold investment in Southeast Asia has increased by more than 30%, while the Pew Research Center (2023) reports that the global Muslim population is growing at approximately 1.8% per year. These data suggest that religious factors, including Muslim identity, are key drivers in the development of digital-based Islamic finance. In this context, customer trust in Islamic financial services becomes a strategic factor that not only influences individual decisions but also contributes to enhancing financial inclusion and the stability of the Islamic financial system at the national level.

In practice, customer trust in Islamic financial services, including digital gold, plays an important role in increasing public participation, strengthening the stability of the Islamic financial system, and supporting national financial inclusion. Trust is not only shaped by technological aspects but also by ethical and religious values. Muslim identity, which reflects the internalization of Islamic values such as halal compliance, justice, and adherence to sharia principles, is considered to influence customer preferences and attitudes in using Islamic financial services, including digital gold. This is in line with the concept of maqāṣid al-sharīʿah, particularly in the preservation of wealth (ḥifẓ al-māl), which emphasizes the importance of a financial system that is secure, transparent, and beneficial to society (Al-Syatibi, 2023).

However, despite the positive growth of sharia digital gold, there remains a gap between market potential and the level of customer trust. Some people still question the security of digital systems, transaction transparency, and the certainty of compliance with sharia principles. In addition, the uneven level of Islamic financial literacy leads to differences in perception regarding the use of such services. Academically, previous studies tend to focus on rational factors in shaping customer trust, such as service quality, price, promotion, and ease of technology use. Models such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), as discussed by Alshurafat et al. (2026); Avifa & Nasrulloh (2026); Khan et al. (2026); Noor (2024), are more dominant in explaining technology acceptance but have not sufficiently integrated religious dimensions such as Muslim identity as a primary determinant.

The limitation of approaches that focus solely on rational factors results in a lack of understanding of religious dimensions as determinants of trust, particularly in the context of Islamic finance, which is intrinsically value-based.

Based on these issues, this study aims to analyze the influence of Muslim identity on customer trust in the use of sharia digital gold services. This research offers novelty by integrating religious dimensions (Muslim identity), Islamic economic principles (maqāṣid al-sharīʿah), and the context of digital technology into a single analytical framework. Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of trust models in Islamic finance by incorporating Muslim identity as a psychological-religious factor. Practically, the results of this study are expected to serve as a basis for developing marketing strategies and improving the transparency of sharia digital gold services. Furthermore, this research is expected to assist service providers in designing strategies to enhance customer trust through approaches that are not only technology-based but also grounded in Islamic values. Thus, this study is not only academically relevant but also contributes to strengthening the Islamic finance industry in the digital era.

Literature Review

Muslim identity is a concept that describes the extent to which individuals understand, internalize, and practice Islamic values in their daily lives. This identity includes aspects of sharia understanding, compliance with Islamic principles, and attachment to religious values in economic activities. Previous studies state that the formation of Muslim identity in the context of globalization emphasizes the importance of internalizing Islamic values. This shows that Muslim identity is fundamentally rooted in belief in one God (Allah) and recognition of Prophet Muhammad as His messenger, which serves as the foundation for religious devotion and the formation of a sense of community (Farid et al., 2025).

However, there is still a research gap indicating that studies on Muslim identity have mostly focused on social aspects and general religious behavior, while its implications in the context of Islamic digital finance remain relatively limited. In particular, studies that deeply examine the influence of Muslim identity on customer trust in digital Islamic gold services are still scarce. Meanwhile, in the Islamic digital financial ecosystem, trust is a crucial factor that determines the acceptance and use of services by customers. Therefore, research on the influence of Muslim identity on customer trust in digital Islamic gold services is important to fill this literature gap and provide a more comprehensive understanding of Muslim financial behavior in the digital era.

Customer trust generally arises from the willingness to act based on the belief that the bank or service provider will deliver what is expected and that statements, promises, or commitments made by the provider are trustworthy. Trust reflects consumers' confidence that an exchange partner will provide what they expect from the offered goods or services (Sudaryana, 2020). In the context of digital finance, trust is a crucial factor because all transactions are conducted without face-to-face interaction, increasing reliance on systems and service providers.

Trust Theory explains that trust is a fundamental basis in digital financial transactions. It is formed through three dimensions: integrity (belief that the service provider fulfills promises), benevolence (perception that the platform acts in the customer's interest rather than solely for profit), and competence (technical ability to secure digital gold assets). Research by Aningtyas & Supriyono (2022) shows that trust, price perception, and product reviews have a positive and significant effect on repurchase intention, confirming that trust plays an important role in the continued use of digital services.

However, there is an important research gap in the context of digital Islamic gold, where most previous studies focus on economic and general behavioral factors such as price, reviews, and satisfaction, without specifically linking religiosity or Muslim identity as determinants of trust. In addition, prior studies have not sufficiently explored how the integration of sharia values and digital technology simultaneously shapes customer trust. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by positioning Muslim identity as a socio-religious variable that influences customer trust in digital Islamic gold services based on the principles of Maqāṣid al-Sharīʻah.

Digital Islamic gold is an investment instrument conducted online and must comply with the principles of fiqh muamalah. This product has become increasingly popular due to its accessibility, flexibility, and perceived safety. However, in practice, trust is a key factor because all transactions are conducted digitally without direct physical interaction between customers and service providers, making perceptions of security and sharia compliance highly influential in investment decision-making.

Previous studies show that ease of use not only directly influences investment intention but also indirectly through the formation of positive attitudes, supporting the relevance of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) in the context of digital Islamic gold (Alshurafat et al., 2026; Avifa & Nasrulloh, 2026; Khan et al., 2026; Noor, 2024). These findings indicate that technological aspects such as ease of access and system usefulness are important factors in encouraging the adoption of Islamic digital financial services, especially among young investors who are already familiar with app-based services.

However, there is still a significant research gap, as previous studies have mainly emphasized technological factors and usage behavior (such as ease of use and system benefits), while the role of religious factors such as Muslim identity in shaping customer trust has not been deeply examined. Furthermore, there are limited studies that simultaneously integrate sharia compliance aspects (fiqh muamalah) with technology acceptance models. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by examining how Muslim identity as a religious factor influences customer trust in the use of digital Islamic gold services that are technology-based while remaining compliant with Islamic principles.

Muslim identity is theoretically expected to influence customer trust because religious values can shape preferences toward halal financial products. Previous research shows that religious commitment has a positive and significant effect on customer trust in using Islamic financial institutions. Based on the results, the t-value is greater than the t-table value, namely 19.245 > 1.666 with a probability value of 0.915, indicating significance at the 5% level (0.05). In addition, Islamic product attributes also have a positive and significant effect on customer trust, with a t-value of 6.125 > 1.666 and a probability value of 0.108, also below the 5% significance level (0.05). Simultaneously, Islamic product attributes and customer trust show a positive and significant influence based on the F-test, with an F-value of 189.181 greater than the F-table value of 3.12 at df (n1 = 2; n2 = 32) with a significance of 0.000 (< 0.05).

Nevertheless, there is a research gap indicating that previous studies have mostly focused separately on religious commitment and Islamic product attributes in the context of conventional Islamic financial institutions, while studies that link Muslim identity as a more comprehensive construct with customer trust in digital financial services, particularly digital Islamic gold, remain very limited. This highlights the need for further research to examine the extent to which Muslim identity can influence customer trust in increasingly developing digital financial services.

From the perspective of Islamic economics, Muslim identity is also related to the implementation of Maqāṣid al-Sharīʻah, particularly in preserving religion (ḥifẓ al-dīn) and wealth (ḥifẓ al-māl), meaning that financial decisions are not only rational but also spiritual. Trust in Islamic financial services is not only based on technical aspects but also on compliance with sharia principles such as justice (ʻadl), transparency (ṣidq), and trustworthiness (amanah). This gives customer trust a stronger religious and ethical dimension compared to conventional financial services. Based on the Maqāṣid al-Sharīʻah approach, customer trust also reflects the extent to which the financial system is able to protect wealth (ḥifẓ al-māl) and provide benefits (maslahah) to users.

Customer trust is defined as consumers' belief in the security, honesty, and credibility of a financial service. In a digital context, trust becomes a very important factor because transactions are not conducted face-to-face. Maqāṣid al-Sharīʻah itself is the primary objective of Islamic law, one of which is the protection of wealth (ḥifẓ al-māl). In this context, digital Islamic gold investment can serve as a means to achieve this objective as long as it complies with principles of justice, transparency, and halal compliance. Moreover, this investment not only serves to preserve wealth but also reflects universal Islamic values such as economic justice, consumer protection, public welfare, and community empowerment. The use of sharia contracts such as wakalah bil ujrah and murabahah also shows that digital Islamic gold practices comply with fiqh muamalah principles and support the achievement of Maqāṣid al-Sharīʻah (A'yun, 2025).

However, there is still a research gap indicating that studies integrating Muslim identity, Maqāṣid al-Sharīʻah values, and customer trust in the context of digital Islamic gold investment remain limited. Most previous studies have focused separately on sharia compliance or customer trust, while few have simultaneously examined the interrelationship of these three aspects in the digital financial ecosystem. Therefore, further research is needed to analyze how Muslim identity based on Maqāṣid al-Sharīʻah values can influence customer trust in digital Islamic gold investment services in a more comprehensive manner.

Methods

This study analyzes the influence of Muslim identity on customer trust in sharia digital gold services using a mixed-methods approach (Hidayanto, 2024), which combines quantitative and qualitative approaches to examine in depth the effect of Muslim identity on customer trust in sharia digital gold services. The quantitative approach (Sujarweni & Arisudhana, 2025) is used to analyze measurable empirical data, such as gold management developments, trends in sharia digital gold transactions, and relevant macroeconomic indicators to assess the impact of Muslim identity on customer trust in sharia digital gold services. Meanwhile, the qualitative approach (Sujarweni & Arisudhana, 2025) is used to analyze from the perspective of maqāṣid al-sharīʻah and to understand more deeply the phenomena, policies, and dynamics of Muslim identity implementation within the Islamic financial system, including sharia compliance analysis, financial institution practices, and perceptions of customer trust in sharia digital gold services. The combination of these two approaches is expected to provide a more comprehensive, objective, and measurable picture in assessing the relationship between socio-economic variables, financial policies, and the strengthening of an asset-based Islamic financial system.

Primary data were obtained through distributing questionnaires to 117 sharia digital gold customers. The sample was determined using a sampling technique, and the research findings provide a deep understanding of the relationship between sampling techniques, specific research objectives, and actual field conditions. The implication of this study is to provide practical guidance for researchers in designing strong and valid methodologies, ensuring that the collected data is truly representative in achieving the intended depth of understanding. Thus, the quality and credibility of the research can be significantly improved, helping researchers make more appropriate methodological decisions and obtain more comprehensive findings (Anwar & Desi, 2019). From the population of digital gold service users, the sample of 117 respondents is considered representative of user perceptions. Secondary data in this study were obtained from various documentation studies, official reports from OJK, BI, BSI, and related institutions, as well as literature from scientific journals, academic books, and international publications (Sugiyono, 2008).

In this study, the independent variable (Srifariyati & Susianti, 2024) is Muslim identity, which is measured through indicators of sharia understanding, sharia compliance, Islamic value attachment, social commitment, and sharia practices. Meanwhile, the dependent variable is customer trust in sharia digital gold services, with indicators including the preservation of religion (Hifz al-Din), justice ('Adl), wealth protection (Hifz al-Mal), transparency (Tabligh/Shidq), and social responsibility (Ihsan) (Al-Syatibi, 2023).

Quantitative analysis in this study was conducted by processing respondents' answers regarding the Muslim identity variable and customer trust in sharia digital gold services, based on questionnaire results from 117 respondents. Data processing was carried out using SmartPLS 4 (Setiabudhi et al., 2024) with the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach, aiming to comprehensively analyze relationships between variables.

The analysis was conducted through two main stages: the evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) and the structural model (inner model). In the outer model stage, validity and reliability tests were performed using indicators such as factor loading, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Cronbach's Alpha, and Composite Reliability to ensure that each indicator accurately and consistently represents the research variables. In the inner model stage, relationships between variables were tested using path coefficients, T-statistics, and p-values to determine the direction and significance of the relationships. Through this method, the study provides a deeper understanding of the influence of Muslim identity on customer trust in sharia digital gold services.

In addition, descriptive statistics were also used to describe respondents' response tendencies for each research variable. Each indicator was measured using a Likert scale (Tanujaya et al., 2022) with five rating categories: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree, allowing the identification of general response patterns regarding customer trust in sharia digital gold services.

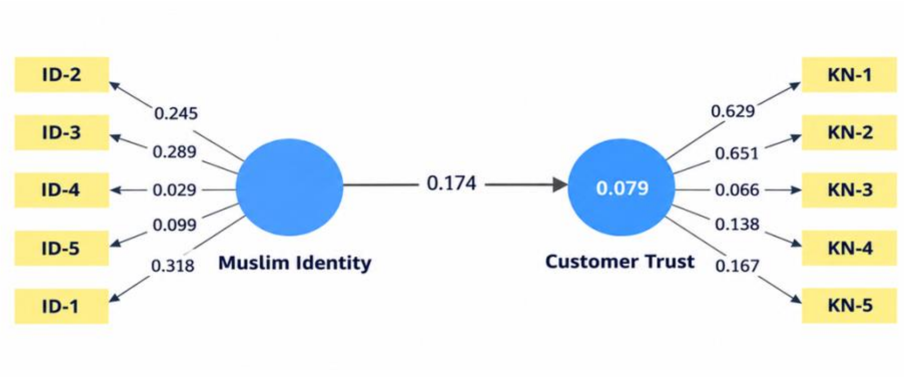
Thus, the combination of PLS-SEM analysis using SmartPLS 4 and descriptive statistics ensures that the research results not only show statistical relationships between variables but also provide a clearer picture of customer trust perceptions in sharia digital gold services and whether they are influenced by Muslim identity.

Results and Discussion

The Complementary Role of Muslim Identity in Shaping Customer Trust

Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between the research variables and the validity of their indicators. The model consists of two latent constructs, shown as blue circles: Muslim Identity as the independent (exogenous) variable and Customer Trust as the dependent (endogenous) variable. The arrow from Muslim Identity to Customer Trust has a path coefficient of 0.174, indicating a positive but weak effect of Muslim Identity on Customer Trust in this model. Each construct is measured by five questionnaire items, shown as yellow boxes. Muslim Identity (ID-1 to ID-5) has loading factors ranging from 0.029 to 0.318, and Customer Trust (KN-1 to KN-5) has loading factors ranging from 0.066 to 0.651. The value of 0.079 inside the Customer Trust construct is the R-square. This means Muslim Identity explains 7.9% of the variance in Customer Trust, while the remaining 92.1% comes from factors outside the model.

Figure 1. Relationship Between Variables and Indicator Validity



Muslim identity in this study is found to have a positive effect on customer trust, but with relatively weak strength. This is indicated by the path coefficient value of 0.174, suggesting that religious identity functions more as a complementary factor rather than a primary determinant in shaping trust toward Islamic digital gold services. Conceptually, this condition reflects that the religious values embedded in Muslim identity have not been fully internalized in economic behavior. From the perspective of maqāṣid al-sharīʻah, this indicates that the dimension of ḥifẓ al-dīn (protection of religion) has not yet become a dominant foundation in financial decision-making, meaning that preferences for Sharia-based services are not yet driven by substantive religious awareness, but rather remain symbolic.

This finding is reinforced by the R-Square value of 0.079, which shows that only 7.9% of the variance in customer trust can be explained by Muslim identity, while the remaining 92.1% is influenced by other variables outside the model. This suggests that, in the context of digital services, customer trust is largely shaped by rational considerations related to ḥifẓ al-māl (protection of wealth), such as system security, transaction transparency, contract clarity, ease of use, and platform credibility. Thus, customer trust tends to shift from a value-based orientation toward utility-driven and risk-mitigation considerations in digital financial services.

Furthermore, the low loading factor values for the Muslim identity indicators (0.029–0.318) indicate that this construct is not strongly measured or reflects a low level of internalization of Islamic values in the digital economic context. From the perspective of ḥifẓ al-ʻaql (protection of intellect), this condition can be interpreted as a limitation in Islamic financial literacy, where customers do not fully understand the concepts, contractual mechanisms, and characteristics of Islamic digital gold compared to conventional systems. As a result, trust is more influenced by practical experience and technological convenience rather than normative Sharia-based considerations.

These findings are consistent with previous research by (Siregar & Rusiadi, 2025), which shows that customer experience and product innovation have a stronger influence on brand image compared to Islamic values. This indicates a tendency for customers to exhibit more rational and utility-based behavior, prioritizing tangible benefits such as service quality, innovation, and security. In other words, there is a shift from *faith-based trust* to *performance-based trust*, where trust is no longer built solely on shared religious identity but increasingly depends on system performance and user experience.

However, this study offers several novelties that distinguish it from previous research. First, it does not merely examine the context of conventional Islamic banking but specifically focuses on Islamic digital gold services, which are technology-based and introduce new complexities in trust formation. Second, this study uses customer trust as the dependent variable, which is directly associated with financial risk, rather than merely focusing on perceptual constructs such as brand image. Third, this study integrates the *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* approach as an analytical framework to explain empirical phenomena, providing a more comprehensive perspective on the interaction between religious values, economic rationality, and digital technology.

In conclusion, although Muslim identity still contributes to shaping customer trust, its role in the context of Islamic digital gold services remains complementary. Trust is more strongly influenced by rational factors, technological aspects, and asset protection considerations. Therefore, enhancing customer trust requires an integrated approach that combines strengthening religious values, improving Islamic financial literacy, and developing secure, transparent, and accountable digital systems. The novelty of this study lies in its ability to demonstrate that trust in Islamic digital finance is not solely determined by religious identity, but rather emerges from a dynamic interaction between religious values and modern rationality within a technological ecosystem.

Limited Explanatory Power of Muslim Identity for Customer Trust

Figure 2 presents the R-square values of the model. The R-square of 0.079 indicates that Muslim Identity explains 7.9% of the variance in Customer Trust, while the remaining 92.1% is attributable to other factors outside the model. The adjusted R-square, which corrects the R-square for the number of predictors and the sample size, is 0.071, meaning that after this adjustment Muslim Identity accounts for 7.1% of the variance in Customer Trust.

Figure 2: R-square Overview

Construct	R-square	R-square Adjusted
Customer Trust	0.079	0.071

The findings of this study indicate that the Muslim Identity variable has a very limited contribution in explaining Customer Trust. This suggests that within the context of sharia-compliant digital gold services, religious identity does not function as a primary determinant, but rather as a complementary factor. Conceptually, this implies that the religious values embedded in Muslim identity have not been fully internalized in economic behavior, particularly within technology-based digital environments.

Compared to previous research by Ruba'i (2022), this study offers a key novelty in terms of context and analytical approach. While earlier studies emphasized external factors such as public perception, service quality, and financing products within conventional Islamic banking, this research specifically examines technology-based sharia digital gold services. In this context, trust formation no longer depends on direct interaction or service experience, but rather on system reliability, transaction security, and platform transparency. Thus, this study extends the understanding that determinants of trust are contextual and evolve alongside technological advancements.

Furthermore, the novelty of this research also lies in the use of Customer Trust as the dependent variable, which has greater complexity compared to the "decision to become a customer" variable used in prior studies. Trust is a psychological construct closely related to risk perception, particularly in digital transactions. Therefore, trust cannot be established solely through religious identity; it requires tangible evidence such as system security, clarity of contracts (akad), and service credibility. These findings indicate that within the digital ecosystem, trust tends to be more risk-based (risk-based trust) rather than identity-based (identity-based trust).

From the perspective of maqāṣid al-syarīʿah, this study also introduces novelty by integrating the dimensions of ḥifẓ al-dīn (protection of religion), ḥifẓ al-māl (protection of wealth), and ḥifẓ al-ʻaql (protection of intellect) in explaining customer behavior. The results show that the dimension of ḥifẓ al-māl (wealth protection) is more dominant than ḥifẓ al-dīn (religious identity), indicating that customers tend to be more rational and pragmatic in making digital financial decisions. Meanwhile, the low contribution of Muslim Identity also reflects that the dimension of ḥifẓ al-ʻaql is not yet optimal, which is associated with limited Islamic financial literacy in understanding the concepts and mechanisms of sharia digital gold.

Thus, the main contribution of this study lies in affirming a paradigm shift from a religious identity-based approach toward a system- and risk-management-based approach in building customer trust. This study enriches the literature by demonstrating that in the context of digital Islamic finance, Muslim identity is no longer the dominant factor, but must be integrated with technological quality, transparency, and service security. Therefore, building customer trust requires a more comprehensive approach that simultaneously combines sharia values with the advantages of digital systems.

The Supporting Role of Muslim Identity in Customer Trust toward Islamic Digital Gold Services

Figure 3 presents the results of the effect size (f^2) test, which measures the relative magnitude of the influence of an exogenous (independent) variable on an endogenous (dependent) variable. The relationship tested is the effect of Muslim Identity on Customer Trust, which yields an f^2 value of 0.086. Cohen (1988) classifies f^2 values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 as small, medium, and large effects, respectively. Since 0.086 lies above 0.02 but below 0.15, Muslim Identity has a small effect on Customer Trust.

Figure 3. Effect Size (f^2) Test Results

Construct	Muslim Identity	Belief in the Hereafter
Muslim Identity	-	0.086
Belief in the Hereafter	0.086	-

The f^2 value of 0.086 for the relationship between Muslim Identity and Customer Trust indicates a small (weak) effect size, yet it still holds substantive meaning in explaining variations in customer trust toward sharia digital gold services. Methodologically, this value confirms that Muslim identity, as an exogenous variable, contributes to the model, although it does not act as the primary determinant. This suggests that individuals with stronger Islamic identity reflected in religiosity, awareness of halal-haram principles, and preference for sharia-based financial systems tend to exhibit higher levels of trust. However, the relatively small effect implies that customer trust is more strongly influenced by other factors such as platform credibility, technological security, transaction transparency, ease of use, and regulatory assurance.

Analytically, this finding positions Muslim identity as a supporting factor rather than a primary driver in building customer trust. It reflects a behavioral shift in the digital era, where rational and functional considerations such as perceived risk, data security, and service quality become more dominant than purely normative-religious considerations. Thus, customers do not automatically place trust solely based on the "sharia" label; instead, they require concrete evidence of its implementation in operational practices.

From the perspective of maqāṣid al-syarī'ah, this result remains strategically meaningful. Muslim identity contributes to achieving ḥifẓ al-dīn (protection of religion) through a preference for sharia-compliant transactions, and ḥifẓ al-māl (protection of wealth) through the selection of investment instruments perceived as safe and free from riba, gharar, and maysir. However, the small effect size indicates that achieving maqāṣid in this context cannot rely solely on individual religiosity. It must be reinforced by institutional mechanisms that ensure real protection of wealth, such as digital asset security, contractual transparency, and compliance with sharia regulations and fatwas. Therefore, the integration of religious values (Muslim identity) with institutional quality (governance and technology) becomes essential in strengthening customer trust.

The novelty of this study, compared to prior research such as Cahyani & Indra (2025), lies in its ability to demonstrate a consistent but contextually expanded pattern. While previous studies found that rational factors (e.g., education and personal motivation) were more dominant than spirituality in shaping entrepreneurial interest, this study confirms and extends that pattern into the domain of digital sharia finance. Specifically, it reveals that even in a financial system explicitly labeled as “sharia,” religious identity does not automatically become the dominant determinant of trust. Instead, trust formation shifts toward a risk-based and system-oriented paradigm, where technological reliability and service transparency play a more decisive role.

Thus, the key contribution and novelty of this research is in highlighting that within the modern digital Islamic economic ecosystem, religious identity must be operationalized and integrated with technological and institutional excellence. Muslim identity alone is insufficient as a standalone driver; rather, it must be translated into measurable, credible, and system-supported practices to effectively influence customer trust.

Measurement Reliability and Validity of Muslim Identity and Customer Trust in the Digital Islamic Finance Context

Figure 4 presents the results of the construct reliability and validity tests. Cronbach's alpha, which measures the internal consistency of each construct, is 0.263 for Muslim Identity and 0.278 for Customer Trust. Both values fall well below the commonly accepted minimum of 0.60–0.70, indicating that the items do not consistently measure their respective constructs. Composite reliability (rho_c), often regarded as a more appropriate reliability measure in PLS-SEM, is 0.617 for Muslim Identity and 0.445 for Customer Trust. The value for Muslim Identity is below the recommended threshold of 0.70 but above the 0.60 level considered acceptable in exploratory research, whereas the value for Customer Trust indicates that the construct is not reliable. Convergent validity was assessed using the average variance extracted (AVE), with a minimum acceptable threshold of 0.50, meaning that a construct should explain more than half of the variance in its indicators; the AVE values obtained are [xxx] for Muslim Identity and [xxx] for Customer Trust.

Figure 4. Relationship Between Variables and Indicator Validity

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_A)	Composite Reliability (rho_C)
Muslim Identity	0.263	0.323	0.617
Customer Trust	0.278	0.142	0.445

The results of the reliability and validity tests in this study indicate that the quality of the instrument still has significant weaknesses. The Cronbach's Alpha values for the Muslim Identity variable (0.263) and Customer Trust (0.278) indicate very low internal consistency, far below the commonly accepted minimum standard (>0.60 or >0.70). This suggests that the questionnaire items have not consistently represented the constructs being measured. In other words, the indicators used may not fully reflect the concepts of Muslim identity and customer trust in a comprehensive manner, which may reduce the accuracy of the research findings.

In the Composite Reliability (rho_c) test, the Muslim Identity variable obtained a value of 0.617, which falls into the moderate category (close to the minimum threshold), while the Customer Trust variable only reached 0.445, indicating that it is not reliable. This finding reinforces that the Customer Trust construct has not been optimally measured. Analytically, this may reflect variations in respondents' understanding of trust within the context of digital Islamic gold services, or that the instrument used has not been able to capture the dimensions of trust comprehensively, such as system security, transaction transparency, and platform credibility.

Furthermore, in terms of convergent validity measured by Average Variance Extracted (AVE), the minimum acceptable threshold is >0.50. If the AVE value does not meet this threshold, it can be concluded that the indicators are not sufficiently capable of explaining the latent variables. This indicates the need for a comprehensive evaluation of the questionnaire items, including wording, relevance, and suitability with the characteristics of digital Islamic gold services.

In relation to the research objective analyzing the influence of Muslim Identity on Customer Trust these findings imply that the relationships between variables should be interpreted with caution. The low reliability and validity indicate that the structural analysis results may lack stability, meaning that the conclusions drawn are not yet fully robust empirically. Therefore, improving the measurement instrument is essential to enhance the accuracy and credibility of the research.

From the perspective of maqāṣid al-sharīʻah, these weaknesses also carry important implications. Unreliable measurement may obscure the understanding of key values such as ḥifẓ al-dīn (protection of religion) and ḥifẓ al-māl (protection of wealth), which should form the foundation of trust in Islamic financial services. If these variables are not properly measured, evaluating the extent to which digital services fulfill the principle of public benefit (maṣlaḥah) becomes less optimal.

The novelty of this study compared to previous research, such as Subhaktiyasa (2024), lies in emphasizing the importance of instrument adaptation within a digital context. While prior studies highlighted the need for revalidating instruments due to socio-cultural changes, this study empirically demonstrates that instruments not adapted to the characteristics of digital Islamic gold services result in low reliability and validity. Thus, this study not only confirms the importance of revalidation but also extends it by showing that digital transformation requires the development of more contextual, adaptive measurement tools capable of capturing new dimensions such as technology-based trust, digital security, and system transparency.

The main contribution of this study is highlighting that in the digital Islamic finance ecosystem, the success of measurement is not only determined by theoretical constructs but also by the instrument's ability to adapt to changes in user behavior and technological environments. Therefore, the development of more innovative and contextual instruments is crucial to produce research that is valid, reliable, and relevant to the dynamics of modern Islamic economics.

The Non-Significant Relationship between Muslim Identity and Customer Trust: Statistical and Maqāṣid al-Sharīʻah Perspectives

Figure 5 presents the bootstrapping results used to test the hypothesized effect of Muslim Identity on Customer Trust. The original sample estimate (O), which is the path coefficient, is 0.282. Its positive sign indicates that higher Muslim Identity tends to be associated with higher Customer Trust. The sample mean (M) of the bootstrap estimates is 0.363, and the standard deviation (STDEV), which serves as the standard error of the coefficient across bootstrap subsamples, is 0.207; the smaller this value, the more precise the estimate. The resulting t-statistic (|O/STDEV|) is 1.359, below the critical value of 1.96 at the 5% significance level. The p-value is 0.174, above the 0.05 threshold; the p-value is the probability of obtaining an estimate at least this extreme if Muslim Identity had no effect. Both criteria therefore show that Muslim Identity does not have a significant effect on Customer Trust in this dataset, and the hypothesis is not supported.

Figure 5. Descriptive Statistics and Hypothesis Testing Results (Mean, Standard Deviation, T-Value, and P-Value)

Path	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
Muslim Identity → Customer Trust	0.282	0.362	0.207	1.369	0.174

The results of the structural model testing indicate that the relationship between the Muslim Identity variable and Customer Trust has a path coefficient of 0.282, which is positive. This suggests that, in terms of direction, an increase in Muslim identity reflecting the level of religiosity, awareness of sharia principles, and preference for sharia-based services tends to be followed by an increase in customer trust in digital sharia gold services. Thus, conceptually, there is a tendency that religious identity plays a role in shaping trust. The Sample Mean value of 0.363, which is relatively close to the original coefficient, indicates the stability of the estimation, although the standard deviation of 0.207 suggests a fairly high variation in responses among respondents.

However, based on statistical significance testing, the T-statistics value of 1.359, which is below the threshold of 1.96, and the P-value of 0.174, which is greater than 0.05, indicate that the effect is not statistically significant. This means that empirically, there is insufficient evidence to conclude that Muslim identity influences customer trust in the context of this study. Therefore, the proposed hypothesis cannot be accepted. These findings indicate that customer trust in digital sharia gold services is not directly determined by religious identity, but rather is more influenced by other factors such as system security, transaction transparency, ease of use, and the reputation of the service provider.

Analytically, these results reflect a transformation in customer behavior in the digital era, where trust is no longer solely built on religious identity or the “sharia” label, but rather on tangible evidence of service quality and system reliability. In this context, Muslim identity functions more as a normative value underlying preferences but is not strong enough to serve as the primary determinant in building trust. Additionally, potential limitations in the measurement instrument may have affected the model’s ability to capture this influence optimally.

When linked to maqasid al-sharia, these findings imply that achieving the objectives of sharia particularly in preserving religion (hifz ad-din) and protecting wealth (hifz al-mal) cannot rely solely on Muslim identity awareness. Customers require concrete assurance that the services they use are secure, transparent, and truly compliant with sharia principles. In this regard, the protection of wealth (hifz al-mal) becomes a more dominant factor in building trust, while religious identity continues to function as a foundational value that complements it.

Compared to previous studies, such as that conducted by Mauila et al. (2025), which found that halal product image and service quality significantly influence customer decisions, this study offers novelty by demonstrating that in the context of digital sharia gold services, individual religious identity is not always the primary factor in building trust. This novelty lies in emphasizing that in the digital era, customer trust is more strongly determined by functional and technological aspects such as system security and service transparency rather than solely by religious identity. Therefore, this study contributes to the literature by highlighting that building trust in digital sharia financial services requires an integration of religious values with high-quality systems, ensuring that the implementation is not merely symbolic but also substantive.

Conclusion

This study aims to analyze the effect of Muslim Identity on Customer Trust in sharia digital gold services. The results indicate that Muslim Identity has a positive relationship, but it is not statistically significant and tends to be weak in influencing customer trust. This suggests that although religious values still play a role as a basis for preferences, they are not the main determinant in building trust within a digital context. Customer trust is more strongly influenced by rational and functional factors such as system security, transaction transparency, ease of use, and the credibility of the service platform.

The novelty of this study lies in the finding that within the digital Islamic finance ecosystem, religious identity is no longer the dominant factor but rather serves as a complementary factor that must be integrated with technological quality and service systems. In addition, this study offers a more comprehensive perspective by linking empirical findings with the maqāṣid al-sharīʿah framework, explaining that customer trust is shaped by the interaction between religious values, economic rationality, and digital technological development. These findings also highlight a shift from identity-based trust to performance- and risk-based trust.

Scientifically, this study contributes to expanding the literature on Islamic finance, particularly in the digital context, and emphasizes the importance of developing more valid and reliable research instruments. Therefore, future research is recommended to design measurement tools that are more adaptive to digital environments and to include additional variables such as system security, Islamic financial literacy, and user experience. For practitioners, it is essential to adopt an integrative approach that combines the reinforcement of sharia values with the improvement of secure, transparent, and accountable digital systems in order to build stronger and more sustainable customer trust.

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