Exploring Muslim Travelers' Motives through Netnography: The Image of Non-Muslim Cultural Destinations and Halal Culinary Tourism at Pantai Indah Kapuk 2

Nurkhalila Fajrini [a,1], Irla Yulia [b,2,*]

[a,b] Universitas Terbuka, Jl. Cabe Raya, Pondok Cabe Pamulang, Tangerang Selatan 15437, Indonesia

[1] nurkhalila@ecampus.ut.ac.id; [2] irla@ecampus.ut.ac.id*

* corresponding author

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ABSTRACT

The growing trend of Muslim travelers exploring non-Muslim destinations highlights new challenges in understanding how communication and perception shape travel decisions. This study examines the factors influencing Muslim tourists' intention to visit non-Muslim cultural destinations, with a particular focus on halal culinary tourism at Pantai Indah Kapuk 2 (PIK 2), Jakarta. Employing a netnography approach guided by the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), this research was conducted over six months (January-June, 2024) through virtual observation, online interviews, and qualitative content analysis of Instagram and TikTok posts related to halal culinary experiences. The findings reveal three major determinants of visiting intention: the accessibility of halal information, credibility of peer reviews and influencer recommendations, and the presence of Muslim-friendly cultural representations that enhance comfort and trust. Social media functions as a participatory communication space where destination images and halal narratives are co-created through user-generated content, influencing travelers' attitudes, social norms, and perceived behavioral control. The study concludes that digital narratives play a central role in shaping Muslim travelers' behavioral motives toward non-Muslim destinations. These results provide practical implications for destination managers and tourism marketers to design Muslim-friendly communication strategies, and highlight the urgency for future research to explore digital engagement and intercultural inclusivity in halal tourism development. Insights for destination managers and tourism marketers to design Muslim-friendly and communication-based promotional strategies for halal tourism development.

INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry is undergoing rapid expansion, particularly as travelers increasingly seek novel experiences. A notable trend that has garnered attention is the rise in the number of Muslim travelers exploring diverse destinations, including international locations. However, these travelers frequently encounter difficulties in identifying locations that adhere to Islamic law, particularly regarding food and worship facilities.

Recent global reports from Crescent Rating and Mastercard's Global Muslim Travel Index (Bahardeen et al., 2023) show that the number of Muslim travelers is expected to reach 230 million by 2028, underscoring the growing significance of halal tourism in the global industry. Indonesia consistently ranks among the top destinations, yet Muslim tourists continue to face challenges related to food authentication, prayer facilities, and media representation (Eid & El Gohary, 2015).

Indonesia boasts a plethora of captivating tourist destinations, offering diverse travel experiences, including halal culinary options. A notable destination that has recently garnered attention is Pantai Indah Kapuk 2, or PIK 2, a relatively

recent tourist destination in the Jakarta area. Notably, PIK 2 is regarded as a distinctive destination for its diverse halal culinary offerings in a predominantly non-Muslim cultural milieu. This aspect positions PIK 2 as a noteworthy subject for academic inquiry, particularly from the perspective of Muslim tourists seeking halal culinary experiences.

However, previous studies on halal tourism have primarily focused on service quality, religiosity, and destination branding (Eid & El Gohary, 2015; Battour & Ismail, 2016), while few have examined how digital narratives on social media shape Muslim travelers' behavioral motives and intentions when visiting non-Muslim cultural destinations. This indicates a significant research gap regarding the role of mediated communication in constructing halal-friendly destination images.

In comparison, several non-Muslim countries such as Japan, Thailand, and South Korea have successfully implemented halal certification systems and digital branding strategies to attract Muslim travelers. These examples demonstrate that halal tourism involves not only religious adherence but also the adoption of intercultural communication and inclusive marketing strategies (Battour & Ismail, 2016). This presents a theoretical and practical paradox: while PIK 2 exists within a non-Muslim cultural context, its growing halal culinary reputation reflects an intersection between cultural diversity and religious sensitivity. This contradiction highlights the need to understand how Muslim travelers interpret and negotiate meaning through digital communication about such destinations.

In this context, researchers are interested in understanding how the image of a non-Muslim cultural destination influences Muslim tourists' intentions to visit and explore it. Pantai Indah Kapuk has the potential to attract Muslim tourists by offering halal culinary tourism that is rich in culture. The development of the tourism sector is inextricably linked to these issues. The literature indicates that accommodation and food services are pivotal factors in destination selection (Bon & Hussain, 2010). However, as Battour & Ismail (in Suryani & Bustamam, 2021), halal tourism encompasses more than just halal food. Of greater significance is the presence of Muslim-friendly accommodation, communication, environment, and services, which collectively facilitate and enhance the experience of Muslim tourists, allowing them to engage in their religious practices with ease and comfort. This assertion is corroborated by the findings of, who contend that the formulation of a halal tourism strategy must encompass several critical considerations, including the provision of halal guides, halal food options, and facilities conducive to religious worship. Moreover, the study emphasizes the necessity of robust collaboration among relevant stakeholders to ensure the success of this endeavor. Consequently, the enhancement of public perception is directly proportional to the favorable public attitude towards halal tourism. Interest in halal tourism is positively correlated with the public attitude towards it (Sari et al., 2019). The public perception is influenced by a person's knowledge, beliefs, learning processes, and experiences (Walgito, 2004).

From a communication perspective, the image of a tourist destination is shaped not only by its physical attributes but also by mediated representations and the ways messages about the destination circulate through digital networks. The widespread use of social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok has transformed how potential visitors construct perceptions and make travel decisions. Digital narratives created by influencers, vloggers, and ordinary travelers have become powerful forms of communication that can enhance or diminish a destination's appeal. In halal tourism, social media serves as a space where Muslim travelers interpret, validate, and share experiences of halal facilities and services. Through hashtags, captions, and visual storytelling, users create participatory narratives that shape the public perception of a destination's "Muslim-friendliness".

Despite these developments, little is known about how online interactions and social validation on platforms such as Instagram and TikTok translate into actual travel intentions among Muslim tourists. This study seeks to fill that gap by integrating the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) with a communication-based approach to halal tourism.

Digital engagement in tourism has evolved into a dynamic process of *meaning co-creation*, where travelers interpret, validate, and negotiate destination images through shared online narratives (Kim & Fesenmaier, 2008). Algorithmic visibility, the frequency with which halal-related content appears in users' feeds, also contributes to shaping travelers' perceptions of Muslim-friendly destinations (Gu & Zhu, 2023). Within this mediated landscape, social media serves not only as a platform for information dissemination but also as a space for participatory communication, where Muslim travelers co-construct the image of halal-friendly destinations. This process reflects the integrative nature of digital communication that merges behavioral, social, and cultural dimensions (Al-Ansi & Han, 2019).

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) provides an analytical framework to explain how an individual's intention is influenced by three interrelated components: attitude toward behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). In this theory, attitude represents an individual's evaluation of the behavior as favorable or unfavorable; subjective norms refer to perceived social pressure from significant others to perform or refrain from performing the behavior; and perceived behavioral control reflects the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behavior, depending on available resources and opportunities. These indicators collectively determine the strength of behavioral intention, which ultimately predicts actual behavior. Within a digital communication context, these components are shaped through online interactions. Attitudes are influenced by how halal culinary content is framed and visually represented; subjective norms emerge through social influence and peer validation on social media; and behavioral control relates to travelers' ability to access halal information easily through digital platforms. Priliana (2020) confirms that social media marketing significantly influences Muslim travelers' intention to visit halal destinations, underscoring that mediated communication

has become central in shaping travel behavior.

In the contemporary era, social media platforms have assumed a significant role in shaping travelers' perceptions. Muslim travelers, in particular, have increasingly utilized social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube to share their experiences, including information on halal dining options. These content creators employ hashtags such as #halal and #halalfood to enhance the discoverability of their content to a broader audience, thereby expanding the reach of information about halal destinations. Halal Indonesia is the primary source of information for people seeking halal information (Fadhli, S. et al., 2025). Hashtags such as #kulinerhalalpik are gaining popularity, facilitating the identification of recommendations by prospective travelers. Research by Jiang (2024) highlights that social media content portraying halal culinary experiences significantly influences tourists' perceptions, demonstrating that positive and authentic narratives can enhance destination credibility and intention to visit. Similarly, A., F. A., M. M. M., et al. Sulaiman (2022) identifies that the most prevalent hashtags related to halal food on Instagram, such as #halalfoodexpo, #halalfoodkorea, and #halaltourism, tend to generate positive sentiment, strengthening the image of destinations as halal-friendly. Follow-up research by M. Sulaiman et al. (2023) further supports this finding by showing that social media reviews from fellow Muslim travelers serve as credible communication channels that shape behavioral intention and increase trust in halal destinations. Priliana (2020) also found that social media marketing strongly influences Muslim tourists' intention to visit halal destinations, as it fosters trust, social validation, and perceived accessibility to halal information. This participatory nature of communication reflects the shift from one-way marketing to two-way dialogue, in which tourists act as both audiences and content producers, influencing the formation of destination image. In addition, social media also plays an essential role in viral marketing. Viral marketing's potential impact extends beyond commercial use. It can also serve as a powerful tool for advancing social issues(Salsabela, K. et al., 2024).

From this standpoint, halal tourism can be interpreted not merely as an economic phenomenon but as a communication process that involves symbolic interaction, mediated persuasion, and audience engagement. This finding aligns with previous discussions by Prabowo (2012), who emphasizes that effective halal tourism strategies require inclusive communication and collaboration among stakeholders to strengthen destination image and visitor trust. Furthermore, the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (Kemenkraf, 2021) highlights that the potential for Indonesia to become a leading halal tourism destination is supported by effective communication strategies, digital promotion, and community participation. The present study thus aims to elucidate how the image of non-Muslim cultural destinations, such as PIK 2, influences Muslim tourists' inclination to visit by analyzing social media communication practices.

This research adopts a netnography approach, which allows researchers to observe and interpret online interactions and cultural meanings constructed in digital spaces (Caliandro, 2018). By integrating the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) with a communication perspective, this study contributes to the development of communication studies by illustrating how digital discourse and participatory engagement shape behavioral intentions among Muslim travelers. Furthermore, the study offers practical implications for destination managers and tourism marketers to design Muslim-friendly. These communication-based promotional strategies align with the principles of halal tourism while fostering cultural understanding among diverse communities.

Ultimately, this study situates halal tourism within the broader discourse of communication and behavioral science, emphasizing that social media narratives, through attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived control, mediate Muslim travelers' behavioral intentions to explore non-Muslim cultural destinations (Ajzen, 1991; Rahman et al., 2023). Therefore, this study not only contributes to expanding the theoretical discussion of the Theory of Planned Behavior within the context of digital communication but also provides practical insights for destination managers and marketers to develop Muslim-friendly communication strategies in multicultural environments.

METHOD

In this research, the netnography method is employed to examine Muslim tourists' inclination towards non-Muslim cultural destinations and halal eateries in Pantai Indah Kapuk 2. The netnography method enables researchers to conduct observations, interviews, and participation in digital environments pertinent to their research topic, including social media, online forums, and other digital platforms. This approach enables researchers to understand the perspectives, experiences, and practices of the subjects involved in their study without the need to be physically present.

Caliandro's (2018) analytical concept is particularly pertinent for ethnographers operating within social media environments. According to Caliandro (2018), the primary task of ethnographers in social media environments is not merely to identify online communities, but rather to meticulously map the practices employed by Internet and digital device users to establish social formations around specific objects, such as brands. To facilitate this mapping process, Caliandro (2018) proposes a set of five analytical concepts: community, public, crowd, self-presentation as a tool, and user as a device. These concepts will be discussed in this research, including hashtag analytics. This theoretical framework is employed to assess the prevalence of tags, and the insights derived are subsequently leveraged for analysis and discussion in this study.

This research examines the online environment surrounding the Pantai Indah Kapuk 2 tourist destination. The observed online environment includes social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, which contain active discussions on halal tourism and culinary experiences. A comprehensive exploration of websites and mobile applications providing information on tourist destinations and culinary offerings in Pantai Indah Kapuk 2 was also conducted to complement the analysis. The target population of this study consists of Muslim travelers who actively engage with online platforms (particularly Instagram and TikTok) related to PIK 2's tourist attractions and culinary offerings. The purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants who possessed knowledge and experience relevant to the research topic.

A total of 12 Muslim travelers who had either visited or expressed interest in visiting Pantai Indah Kapuk 2 were interviewed via online communication channels such as WhatsApp and Instagram direct messages. The use of WhatsApp was considered appropriate given its widespread adoption and convenience among Indonesian travelers, allowing participants to communicate in a familiar and flexible environment. Each interview lasted between 30 and 45 minutes and focused on participants' perceptions, motivations, and experiences related to halal culinary tourism in non-Muslim cultural destinations. Participants were selected purposively based on their active engagement with halal culinary content on social media platforms, particularly Instagram and TikTok. They represented diverse demographic and professional backgrounds, including employees and students aged 20 to 35. This diversity allowed the study to capture a broad range of perspectives regarding Muslim-friendly tourism experiences in multicultural contexts.

To strengthen data reliability, the netnography process was conducted over six months, from January to June 2024, involving continuous observation and participation in online discussions related to #kulinerhalalpik and other halal culinary hashtags. The researcher analyzed approximately 30 Instagram posts and 10 TikTok videos, focusing on communication patterns, user comments, and visual framing of halal representation. This prolonged observation period enables a deeper understanding of cultural meaning-making and audience interaction over time.

The researchers followed several systematic steps to obtain the data. First, the researcher observed participants' activities on selected digital platforms, paying close attention to their interactions with content related to Pantai Indah Kapuk 2 and their discussions about the destination. Second, online interviews were conducted with participants who were deemed relevant to the study's objectives. The interview questions focused on participants' perceptions of non-Muslim destinations and their experiences in finding halal food. Finally, data from posts, comments, and discussions on platforms such as Instagram and TikTok were analyzed to uncover how tourists construct narratives about destination images and halal culinary experiences.

In addition to observation and interviews, this study also applied qualitative content analysis to examine recurring themes, language styles, and symbolic representations appearing in social media posts. Each piece of data was categorized based on its relevance to the three TPB dimensions -attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control- to identify communication patterns that influence Muslim tourists' behavioral intentions. The coding and categorization process was carried out manually by carefully reading, grouping, and interpreting textual and visual data to ensure systematic and consistent analysis. The researcher maintained detailed analytic memos and coding sheets to document the emergence of themes and their relationships to the theoretical framework.

The data obtained from observations, interviews, and content analysis will undergo thematic analysis. The pre-established theoretical framework will also be used to connect the data in finding the main topics. To ensure the accuracy and reliability of the interpretations, the researcher will conduct this analysis repeatedly.To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, this research will employ triangulation, combining various data sources (observation, interview, and content analysis). In addition, to ensure that the data is valid and reliable. The researcher will also conduct participant reviews, presenting them with preliminary interpretation results for comments and clarifications.

Ethical considerations were maintained throughout the research process. All participants provided informed consent before interviews were conducted, and their online identities were anonymized to protect privacy. All interviews conducted via WhatsApp were text-archived with participants' consent to ensure data transparency and ethical compliance. In line with virtual ethnographic ethics, researchers observed without intervening in online interactions and ensured that all analyzed content was publicly accessible. This adherence to ethical protocol ensures that the research remains credible and ethically sound.

In summary, the combination of prolonged observation, qualitative content analysis, and triangulation enhances the rigor of this netnography-based study. This methodological framework enables an in-depth exploration of how mediated communication and digital narratives on social media contribute to the construction of a Muslim-friendly image of destinations such as Pantai Indah Kapuk 2. Through this approach, the research captures not only patterns of online engagement but also the deeper meanings and social negotiations that underpin Muslim travelers' motives and intentions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study are based on netnography, which involves online observation and analysis of Muslim travelers' activities on social media platforms, particularly Instagram and TikTok. The analysis focuses on how halal tourism communication constructs travelers' behavioral intentions toward non-Muslim destinations such as Pantai Indah Kapuk 2 (PIK 2). The data are interpreted through the three key components of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB): *attitude toward behavior*, *subjective norms*, and *perceived behavioral control* (Ajzen, 1991; Siddiqi et al., 2022).

A. Attitude Toward Behavior

The first component of the TPB, *attitude toward behavior*, refers to individuals' evaluation of whether performing a particular behavior is favorable or not. The findings show that Muslim travelers develop a positive attitude toward visiting PIK 2 after being exposed to social media content that highlights halal-certified restaurants and muslim-friendly culinary environments.

Fig. 1. *Instagram posts showing halal-certified restaurants in PIK2*
Source: Social Media Instagram

These visual representations create a sense of trust and safety, which are critical in influencing travelers' attitudes. As emphasized by El-Gohary (2016), halal tourism experiences are shaped not only by religious compliance but also by the perceived credibility of information and authenticity of communication. Similarly, Battour & Ismail (in Suryani & Bustamam, 2021) argue that positive attitudes emerge when Muslim travelers perceive destinations as transparent and consistent in their communication of halal values.

One participant confirmed this perception by saying:

> *"The first time I went there, I was curious even though the tourist spot is known as a non-Muslim destination. However, after seeing many reviews on Instagram and TikTok showing plenty of halal food options, I became eager to visit." (translated from Indonesian, Interview)*

This statement illustrates how digital visualization fosters trust and positive emotions. Such mediated trust supports Rahman et al. (2023), who note that emotional resonance and information reliability are central to attitude formation in halal tourism communication.

The emotional appeal and perceived safety derived from halal food representation reinforce the formation of positive attitudes. As noted by Al-Ansi & Han (2019), visual assurance through digital imagery significantly enhances Muslim travelers' confidence and satisfaction, which, in turn, translates into stronger travel intentions. This finding is consistent with the idea that mediated trust functions as an antecedent to behavioral attitude (Eid & El Gohary, 2015). Furthermore, this finding aligns with El-Gohary's (2016) conceptualization of *perceived credibility* and *visual trust*, suggesting that travelers' confidence in halal authenticity is constructed through credible visual cues, narrative consistency, and influencer endorsement within social media ecosystems. These dynamics demonstrate that attitude formation is not only driven by informational accuracy but also by the emotional and symbolic trust embedded in digital communication, reinforcing the theoretical component of attitude within the Theory of Planned Behavior.

These findings show that Muslim travelers' attitudes toward visiting PIK 2 are shaped not only by rational evaluation of halal information but also by emotional and symbolic factors. Positive feelings of safety and trust arise

when travelers see convincing visual and narrative representations of halal practices on social media. Such emotional reassurance helps reduce doubts and perceived risks about visiting a non-Muslim destination. In this sense, digital images and influencer stories help Muslim travelers balance their religious values with their desire for leisure. As a result, their positive attitude toward PIK 2 comes from both confidence in the credibility of halal information and a sense of harmony between their faith identity and modern travel experiences. This suggests that social media plays a key role in reshaping how Muslim travelers perceive cultural compatibility between Islamic values and non-Muslim destinations.

B. Subjective Norms

The second component, *subjective norms*, refers to perceived social expectations that influence one's decision to perform a behavior. The findings indicate that peer validation, social interaction, and influencer recommendations play crucial roles in motivating Muslim travelers to visit PIK 2.

Fig. 2. *User Comments And Hashtag Interactions Showing Social Validation Of Halal Content*
Source: Social Media Instagram

As depicted in Figure 2, hashtags such as #kulinerhalalpik and #halalfood create symbolic validation within Muslim digital communities. Online comments expressing satisfaction and support reflect a collective belief that visiting non-Muslim destinations with halal facilities is socially acceptable and even encouraged.

Beyond peer validation, the influence of micro-influencers has become a decisive factor in shaping subjective norms. Micro-influencers often engage with niche audiences through authentic narratives that resonate with community identity and values (Luo et al., 2025). As a result, followers tend to perceive their recommendations as genuine and relatable, creating a symbolic form of social approval that influences travel behavior.

These findings align with M. Sulaiman et al. (2023) and Hussain & Ali (2023), who revealed that community approval on social media strengthens normative pressures influencing travel intentions. Similarly, Zabudská & Pompurová (2024) explain that tourism-oriented online communities function as interactive reference groups that shape social norms and influence travelers' decision-making. In line with this, Gu & Zhu (2023) find that online reviews and community interactions within virtual tourism platforms act as mechanisms of social validation, encouraging Muslim-friendly behaviors among travelers through peer communication and value co-creation processes. This social endorsement reflects a transformation in communication patterns-from institutional marketing toward participatory communication- where audiences co-construct meaning and legitimize halal tourism practices through peer discourse.

These results illustrate the mechanism of peer influence and social validation, consistent with Ajzen (1991) framework of subjective norms. As Luo et al. (2025) highlight, online validation through likes, shares, and comments reinforces behavioral conformity, encouraging Muslim travelers to align their preferences with the perceived expectations of their digital community. Thus, the digital space becomes a social arena where behavioral intentions are co-shaped through interpersonal endorsement.

The results also highlight that social influence in halal tourism is increasingly shaped by online communities rather than traditional authority figures. Peer interactions and influencer recommendations on social media create a sense of social approval that encourages Muslim travelers to visit destinations like PIK 2. When travelers see positive comments and shared experiences from people who share their values, they feel that visiting such destinations is acceptable and even encouraged within their community. This shows that digital platforms act as spaces where social validation and collective identity are formed. In this context, social media serves not only as an information channel but also as a space where Muslim travelers negotiate what is considered morally and socially appropriate in their travel behavior.

C. Perceived Behavioral Control

The third component, *perceived behavioral control*, concerns travelers' perceptions of their ability to engage in a particular behavior. The study found that Muslim travelers perceive high control over their decision to visit PIK 2 because of the **easy access to halal-related information** on social media.

Online content, such as location tags, short videos, and user-generated guides, helps travelers plan their visits more confidently. As one respondent described during observation:

> *"Now it's easy to find halal food in PIK 2. You just search the hashtag, and you'll see dozens of posts showing where to eat and pray." (translated from Indonesian, Observation Note)*

This finding supports Priliana (2020), who stated that digital platforms enhance Muslim tourists' perceived control by providing transparent and accessible information. Moreover, Siddiqi et al. (2022) and El-Gohary (2016) emphasized that information reliability significantly affects travelers' perceived ability to act, thereby increasing behavioral intention.

These findings indicate that perceived behavioral control in the digital era extends beyond access to halal information. Furthermore, it is also determined by algorithmic visibility—how often halal-related content appears on a traveler's feed. Zeng & Gerritsen (2014) emphasize that algorithmic amplification of tourism content reduces uncertainty and strengthens travelers' perceived ease of decision-making. Similarly, Gu & Zhu (2023) highlight that online reviews and interactive engagement within tourism communities enhance perceived control by offering informational and emotional support, enabling travelers to make confident decisions in unfamiliar cultural contexts.

This reflects the role of digital accessibility and algorithmic visibility in shaping perceived behavioral control. When search engines and social media algorithms prominently feature halal culinary content, travelers perceive higher control and confidence in making travel decisions. The perceived ease of finding halal-certified venues online thus strengthens the behavioral intention to visit, aligning with Ajzen (1991) assertion that control beliefs directly influence intention formation.

The study also finds that Muslim travelers feel a strong sense of control over their travel decisions because halal information is easily accessible on social media. Location tags, hashtags, and user-generated guides allow them to plan their visits confidently and reduce uncertainty about food or worship facilities. This sense of control is not only practical but also symbolic. It reflects their confidence to explore non-Muslim destinations while staying true to their religious values. In this way, digital platforms empower travelers to make independent and informed decisions about where and how to travel. Social media, therefore, strengthens their perceived ability to act freely and responsibly in line with their faith.

Overall, the three components of the Theory of Planned Behavior (attitude toward behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control) work together to explain Muslim travelers' decision-making in the digital environment. Attitudes are influenced by emotional trust and positive feelings toward halal representations; subjective norms are shaped by community approval and peer influence on social media; and perceived behavioral control is strengthened by easy access to reliable information and digital empowerment. These factors interact dynamically, showing that Muslim travelers' behavioral intentions are not formed in isolation but co-created through communication, validation, and participation in online spaces. In this way, social media acts as both a persuasive and participatory arena that connects emotional, social, and informational dimensions of halal tourism behavior.

D. The Integrative Role of Social Media

The integration of these three components shows that social media functions not only as a channel for information dissemination but also as a mediated space of interaction, validation, and empowerment. The digital affordances of Instagram and TikTok enable travelers to co-construct the image of PIK 2 as a halal-friendly and Muslim-friendly culinary destination. This supports Battour & Ismail (Suryani & Bustamam, 2021); Rahman et al. (2023); and Yudhistira et al. (2023), who identified that online engagement and social media use play a vital role in shaping travelers' attitudes and behavioral intentions.

In this context, Hussain & Ali (2023) and M. Sulaiman et al. (2023) assert that mediated discourse and participatory communication help sustain trust in halal tourism and Muslim-friendly destination images. Likewise, Prabowo (2012) highlights that a marketing approach emphasizing the availability of Muslim-friendly facilities and services is fundamental to enhancing destination reputation and strengthening the perceived authenticity of halal tourism. This reinforces the idea that social media narratives not only validate tourist experiences but also amplify values that are central to Muslim travelers.

These findings collectively reinforce the idea that social media engagement operates as both a symbolic and a functional process of communication. As Sunaidah (2024) notes, halal tourism branding in Indonesia increasingly relies on digital storytelling that integrates emotional connection, cultural representation, and perceived authenticity. The mediated environment, therefore, serves as a participatory ecosystem in which Muslim travelers negotiate the meanings of faith,

modernity, and leisure. This communication dynamic aligns with the postmodern paradigm of tourism representation, in which travelers are not passive recipients but active co-creators of meaning through digital interactions (Feizollah et al., 2021).

Overall, these findings demonstrate that digital interaction serves as a behavioral mechanism that aligns with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), in which attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control converge to shape Muslim travelers' intentions. The findings extend prior studies (El-Gohary, 2016; Priliana, 2020; Rahman et al., 2023) by emphasizing that social media narratives not only inform but also *co-produce* behavioral intentions through emotional resonance, peer validation, and algorithmic empowerment, transforming Muslim travelers from passive audiences into active meaning-makers in the halal tourism discourse.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Muslim travelers' intention to visit non-Muslim cultural destinations such as Pantai Indah Kapuk 2 (PIK 2) is strongly influenced by three interrelated factors: the accessibility of halal-related information, the credibility of peer reviews and influencer recommendations, and the availability of Muslim-friendly facilities that foster comfort and trust. Social media plays an integrative role, not only functioning as a channel of information dissemination but also as a participatory communication space where destination images and halal narratives are co-constructed through digital interactions.

By applying the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), the study shows how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control work together through digital communication to influence Muslim travelers' intentions. Attitudes are shaped by emotional trust and visual representations of halal values; subjective norms are formed through social validation and peer influence; and perceived control is strengthened by digital accessibility and algorithmic visibility. These findings emphasize that Muslim travelers' behavioral intentions are not individual or static decisions, but dynamic outcomes of continuous communication, validation, and participation in social media environments.

Beyond theoretical contribution, the results also offer practical implications for halal tourism development. For destination managers and marketers, the findings highlight the importance of strengthening halal facilities, ensuring communication transparency, and collaborating with digital influencers who can authentically represent Muslim-friendly experiences. Social media strategies should focus on community engagement, user-generated content, and trust-based storytelling to build credibility and an emotional connection with travelers.

Extending the Theory of Planned Behavior to digital communication contexts, this study confirms that attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control are not fixed psychological variables but dynamic communicative processes. These processes are mediated by emotional resonance, social validation, and the visibility of halal-related content in social media algorithms. In other words, Muslim travelers' decisions are continuously shaped by what they see, feel, and share in digital spaces, showing that online communication has become a central driver of modern halal tourism behavior.

Future research could expand this study by exploring comparative cases in other non-Muslim destinations or by examining how different digital platforms influence travelers' perception and behavior. Such studies would further enrich our understanding of how digital communication, culture, and religion interact to shape tourism in increasingly diverse and connected societies.

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