

Muslim travellers' willingness to stay at Shariah-compliant hotels: An ASE model perspective

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ABSTRACT

Islamic tourism, despite its growing significance has seen limited research on the behavioral mechanisms shaping accommodation choices. This study determines the factors influencing Muslim travellers' intention to stay at Shariah-compliant hotels in Malaysia by employing the attitude, social influence, self-efficacy (ASE) model, extended with the construct of Shariah compliance. A structured questionnaire, data were collected from 206 Muslim travellers with experience in domestic travel. The analysis was conducted using SmartPLS 4.0 to examine the measurement and structural models. The results demonstrate that Shariah compliance ($\beta = 0.651$, $p < 0.01$) significantly influence the willingness to stay at Shariah-compliant hotels. In contrast, attitude, social influence and self-efficacy exhibited non-significant effects. These findings highlight the importance of perceived religious in shaping consumer behaviour among Muslim tourists. Additionally, this study contributes theoretically by validating the ASE model in an Islamic hospitality context and practically by offering insights for hotel operators and tourism industry to better align services with Muslim travellers' expectations. Future research is recommended to explore cross-cultural comparisons and longitudinal behavioural tracking in halal tourism contexts.

1. INTRODUCTION

Muslim travellers' influx is projected to reach 230 million, generating an estimated USD 225 billion in travel expenditure by 2028 (GMTI, 2024). It positions Islamic tourism as one of the dynamic growing

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sectors of global tourism industry, catering to Muslim tourists in search of cultural comparable endeavours. In the context of Islamic hospitality, accommodation is an essential element of the tourism experience for tourist that offers comfort, safety and conducive space to stay. Driven by rising demand, it provides services that conform to the requirements of *Shariah*, such as halal food, alcohol-free, prayer facilities, gender-segregated amenities and among others, ensuring that Muslim guests can comfortably observe their religious practices while travelling (Marzuki et al., 2019; Othman et al., 2015). The growing market of Muslim travellers enables Malaysia to remain the top-ranked destination among Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) countries and the first-ranked destination for Muslim women-friendly travel (GMTI, 2024).

In Malaysia, the government has introduced initiatives to promote *Shariah* Compliance Hotel (SCH) as part of its strategy to attract tourists from Muslim countries (Sulaiman et al., 2023). In fact, Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC) awards the Muslim-Friendly Tourism and Hospitality Assurance and Recognition (MFAR) to tourism businesses that meet specific Muslim-friendly guidelines, reflecting their commitment to serving Muslim travellers particularly on accommodations. MFAR covering 10 sectors including spas, medical facilities and travel agencies. The recognition comprises into three categories: Silver, Gold and Platinum tiers which serves both as quality assurance and a marketing tool. Accordingly, based on the MFAR hotel listing, there are currently 5 Platinum, 11 Gold and 23 Silver-certified hotels across Malaysia. These certified hotels offer Halal-certified dining endorsed by Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM), prayer facilities and inclusive services for a comfortable and welcoming stay for the Muslim guests (ITC, 2025).

In light of the industry's continuous growth, the emergence of SCH represents a growing niche market, supported by the increasing number of Muslim travellers worldwide and their demand for accommodations that uphold Islamic values and religious practices (Rashidi et al., 2015). Although SCH are evolving, the absence of standardized guidelines has led many hotels to adopt varying interpretations of *Shariah* compliance (Rashidi et al., 2015; Razalli, 2019). This has led to a diverse range of practices and offerings, from fully *Shariah*-compliant hotels (SCH) to Muslim-friendly accommodations that provide basic Islamic amenities (Halim & Baroroh, 2021). Further research and development are needed to establish clear standards and enhance the overall quality and consistency of *Shariah*-compliant hospitality services (Qurtubi et al., 2021).

Moreover, the notion of compliance with *Shariah* also requires direct exploration. Muslim travellers' decision to stay at SCH is influenced by a combination of perceived value, practical compliance attributes and the level of religiosity (Koburtay, 2022; Nurul Azhani et al., 2017). Though halal certification and Islamic accommodation are closely related to the preferences of Muslim travellers, the specific discussion on how hotel compliance influences the desire to stay is understudied (Priyatmoko et al., 2021). Investigating these dynamics is particularly relevant to Malaysia, where the Islamic hospitality industry is rapidly growing diversified, and a better notion of how Muslim travellers in Malaysia make decisions is needed (Hamdan et al., 2024). Therefore, the objectives of this study are twofold:

- (i) To examine the effects of attitude, social influence, self-efficacy and *Shariah* compliance on the willingness of Muslim travellers to stay at *Shariah*-compliant hotels in Malaysia.
- (ii) To assess the level of awareness and understanding among Muslim travellers regarding *Shariah*-compliant hotel concepts and amenities.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Concept of Shariah-Compliant Hotels

Shariah-compliant hotels (SCH) are denoted as a form of accommodation that operates in accordance with Islamic principles, offering services and environments tailored to the needs of Muslim travellers. Essentially, SCH emphasize halal practices, privacy and religious observance (Priyatmoko, 2024; Qurtubi et al., 2021; Othman et al., 2019). The scope of these hotels not limited to halal food and beverages but extends to administrative practices, financial systems, service delivery and facility design which reflect Islamic values. Their facilities are structured to facilitate religious observance, such as rooms equipped with prayer mats and Qur'an, gender-separated swimming pools, halal-certified restaurants, the implementation of Islamic dress codes for service staff and among others (Arasli et al., 2023; Z. A. Sulaiman et al., 2022).

The significance of SCH can be explained by the growing demand among a wide range of travellers, both Muslims and non-Muslims who want an experience matching their morals (Battour et al., 2018). This ban is a key element that determines the confidence of Muslim travellers towards the *Shariah* compliancy of a hotel, and it is indeed paramount to their general comfort and satisfaction when staying at the hotel (Junaidi, 2020). This warrants attention because SCH should ensure that the environment is safe, aligned with Islamic dietary laws and conducive to pleasant interactions between guests and the hotel.

In more details, providing prayer facilities including prayer rooms, bidet to perform ablution, prayer mats and Qur'an in guest rooms is a standard practice in SCH to accommodate Muslim guests' religious obligations. Obviously, prayer facilities access is considered one of the most necessary points in view of the Muslim travellers to attend to their religious prescriptions when staying away (Dinisa and Gayatri, 2024). Provision of religious services is not a luxury but a necessity to a significant number of guests which further reaffirms that the hotel is a place in which their spiritual needs can be respected and addressed (Adinugraha et al., 2023).

Besides, compliance with the principles of gender-segregation in forms of swimming pools, gyms and spas is another important characteristic of SCH. Most of the premises have designated timelines or specialized sections of women and men to comply with the religious specifications relating to modesty that makes the guest feels relaxed and respected (Rodrigo and Turnbull, 2019; Rachmiatie et al., 2021; Sulaiman et al., 2021). Operationally, these hotels apply Islamic principles in their design philosophy, management approach, and customer service. For instance, decorative arts located within the hotel premises will not feature excessive depictions of human figures and some entertainment services may be restricted to uphold *Shariah* principles. Furthermore, the uniforms of the working personnel are designed to be modest. They are trained on how to behave and interact with guests in accordance with Islamic cultural sensitivities. (Deliana, 2022; Suci et al., 2020).

Equally important, SCH integrate Islamic finance elements, including interest-free financial practices and zakat administration (Janah & Muharammi, 2024; Supaijo et al., 2023). The integration of financial aspects safeguards the alignment of hotel operations with both physical requirements and Islamic religious values, notably the prohibition of interest, gambling and uncertainty that underpin the individual faith (Azzumi and Aziz, 2023). Moreover, in Malaysia, some evaluation tools have been designed to evaluate compliance, including the *Shariah*-compliant Hotel Assessment Tool (SIHAT) which based on core characteristics in management, food, service provision, accommodation of guests and general areas (Mazlan et al., 2023; Haryanto, 2023). These assessment tools may help to standardize the practices, and to be sure that the hotels will live up to the expectations of Muslim travellers.

In all, the principle of the *Shariah*-compliant hotels incorporates the life approach that considers the physical, spiritual and psychological requirements of Muslim travellers. It also provides assurance regarding religious needs while enhancing visitors' confidence and comfort, thereby making it a crucial area of focus within the growing landscape of global Islamic tourism (Alam et al., 2024; Ebrahim and Abdelfattah, 2021; Vegirawati et al., 2019). Hence, to further investigate, this study employed of ASE model to examine Muslim travellers' willingness to stay at *Shariah*-compliant hotels (SCH). This framework provides a structured approach to understanding the factors influencing travellers' decisions and behaviours.

2.2 ASE model

The ASE model was developed by De Vries et al. (1988) ascribing it to explain individual behaviour depending upon the cognitive, social and self-efficacy forces. This framework allows to be applied beyond health and education, extending to other fields such as tourism and the hospitality industry (Haque et al., 2019). The ASE Model defines the three basic factors that influence the desire of an individual to participate in certain behaviours namely attitude, social influence and self-efficacy. Evidently, empirical data depicts that the ASE Model constructs can explain a pronounced share of the consumer behavioural intentions variables and proves the effectiveness of the model in bridging the gap between cognitive-social processes and the user behaviour (Haque et al., 2019; Hossain et al., 2024). This framework has little research been tapped on when it comes to Muslim travellers particularly in regards to choices of *Shariah* compliant hotels.

Incorporating the ASE model into Islamic tourism research can provide deeper understandings into the motivations and behaviours of Muslim travellers. For example, the model can support identifying the key factors that drive Muslim travellers' satisfaction and loyalty, such as the availability of halal-certified services, the quality of destination experiences and the alignment of tourism offerings with Islamic values (Al-Ansi & Han, 2019; Hanafiah et al., 2021; Isa et al., 2018). Moreover, understanding the social influences and self-efficacy of Muslim travellers can aid in developing targeted marketing strategies and enhancing the overall travel experience. By focusing on these aspects, destinations can create more inclusive and culturally sensitive tourism products, contributing to the sustainable growth of the halal tourism industry (Sutono et al., 2024; Yusuf et al., 2021). Hence, the ASE model offers a robust framework for examining hotel compliance behaviours in the hospitality context, including adherence to safety and service standards. Based on perceived social norms and self-efficacy, these behaviours strongly influence Muslim travellers' decision-making and their desire to stay.

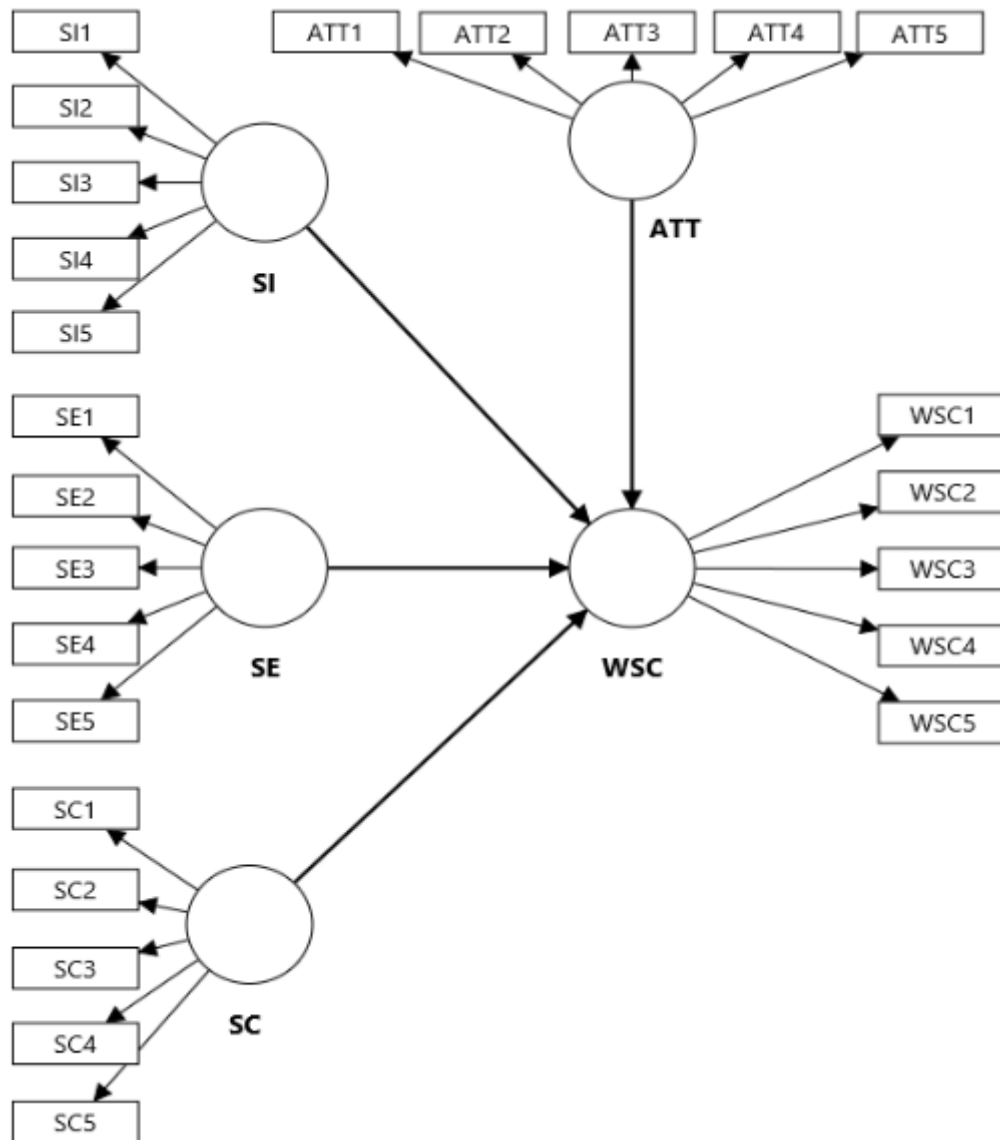


Fig. 1. Research Model

Notes: ATT = Attitude, SI = Social influence, SE = Self-efficacy, SC = *Shariah* compliance, WSC = Willingness to stay at *Shariah* compliant hotel

Source: Figure by Authors

Figure 1 depicted the research model of this study. The ASE Model is employed in explaining the way Muslim travellers develop attitudes on their willingness to stay at SCH, social influence factors of families and friends contribute to maintain or weaken accommodation option and self-efficacy can help the travellers to cope with the difficulties during the search and selection of the appropriate Islamic-focused accommodations. As a result, ASE Model offers a theoretical basis of psychological aspects that characterize Muslim travellers. In addition, *Shariah* Compliance factors were also examined in this study.

The ASE framework is expected to provide better insights into accommodation intentions in Malaysia, particularly within the context of the *Shariah*-compliant hotel landscape.

2.3 Attitude

Attitude is the positive or negative evaluation of a certain behaviour at individual level. It summarizes their subjective ideas about the convenience, benefits and comfort of hotels that respect the *Shariah* principles. According to the research by Battour et al. (2018), Haque et al. (2019) and Shariff et al. (2021), the positive attitude to Islamically-oriented hotels is one of the significant preconditions to the desire to reserve such accommodation. This tendency is the consequence of the religious duty fulfilment and emotional needs satisfaction in the confirmative environment. Additionally, Muslim traveller's attitudes towards SCH are influenced by the availability of halal culinary services, *Shariah*-compliant facilities and overall satisfaction with the hotel services. Studies have shown that halal food and beverages are crucial in shaping travellers' revisit intentions (Febriandika & Millatina, 2023). Furthermore, the presence of *Shariah*-compliant facilities, such as prayer rooms and gender-segregated amenities, significantly enhances the attractiveness of these hotels (Thudam, 2025). However, the interior design and operational aspects of SCH do not have a substantial impact on revisit intentions, indicating that functional attributes are more critical than aesthetic look (Z. A. Sulaiman et al., 2022). This means that attitude has a significant effect on the intention to stay at *Shariah*-compliant hotels. Hence:

H1. Attitude has a positive effect on willingness to stay at *Shariah*-compliant hotels

2.4 Social Influence

Social Influence involves social perception of expectations and pressures by important people of the individual viz. spouse, family and friends. Studies show that the social norms and group reinforcement influences the accommodation decisions made by an individual, especially in cultures that emphasize cultural and religious conformity (Nahidloh and Qadariyah, 2021). From their study, it is revealed that social influence is a facilitator or a barrier in leading to the choice of *Shariah*-compliant hotels in aligning choices with communal values and expectations (Nahidloh and Qadariyah, 2021). Furthermore, social influence and religious commitment are vital in determining Muslim travellers' willingness to stay at SCH.

The preference for SCH is often moderated by the travellers' level of religiosity, with more religious individuals showing a stronger inclination towards these accommodations (Z. A. Sulaiman et al., 2022). The existence of spiritual facilities within luxury hotels can enhance guests' happiness, although high levels of spirituality and religiosity may sometimes decrease overall happiness during the stay (Koburtay, 2022). Furthermore, the competitive advantage of SCH in Muslim-majority regions, such as Indonesia and Malaysia, is significantly bolstered by their ability to cater to religious needs and preferences (Nasir et al., 2022; Sulaiman et al., 2023). The recognition of SCH through certifications and standards further empowers the tourism industry by ensuring compliance with Islamic principles (Abas et al., 2017; Sulaiman et al., 2023). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H2. Social Influence has a positive effect on willingness to stay at *Shariah*-compliant hotels

2.5 Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is a notion based on how a person perceives his capabilities of influencing positive actions. In a similar vein, self-efficacy is a belief in one's ability to perform specific behaviours, is closely

linked to satisfaction and the intention to repurchase. Through self-efficacy, Muslim travellers are able to recognize, make reservations and use the services of SCH. Such capability is important concerning the possibility of difficulties in reaching these accommodations, particularly when detailed or even variable reports about facilities that are passable are limited or even absent (Solehudin et al., 2024). Furthermore, Muslim travellers' satisfaction with SCH is influenced by perceived value involving quality, price, emotional and social value (Nurul Azhani et al., 2017).

The provision of unique services and the creation of awareness about *Shariah*-compliant offerings are essential strategies for enhancing satisfaction and fostering repeat visits (Thudam, 2025). Additionally, the desire to stay at SCH and the significance of *Shariah*-compliant attributes are crucial determinants of online repatronage intentions among Muslim customers (Sulaiman et al., 2021). The segmentation of Muslim travellers based on their motivations and values further highlights the diverse needs and preferences within this industry (Maghrifani, 2018; Papastathopoulos et al., 2020). Thus, the present study posits:

H3. Self-efficacy has a positive effect on willingness to stay at *Shariah*-compliant hotels

2.6 Shariah compliance

Essentially, *Shariah* compliance influences the perceptions, intentions and behaviours of Muslim travellers. The developing of *Shariah*-compliant audit checklists and rating tools facilitate and promote the SCH across various aspects of hotel operations, such as room services, facilities and overall management (Othman et al., 2015; Rashidi et al., 2015). These initiatives aim to provide clear guidelines for hoteliers and enhance the appeal of SCH to Muslim travellers. Additionally, the integration of *Shariah*-compliant attributes into the hotel's brand image and service quality has been shown to positively influence consumer purchase intentions and online repatronage among Muslim customers (Sulaiman et al., 2021, 2023).

In addition, Sulaiman et al., 2021 stated that availability of halal food and beverages, gender-separated facilities and prayer facilities constitute areas that are of considerable importance in influencing the intention of Muslim travellers to revisit SCH and it is classified as necessities and not luxuries to Muslim travellers who committed to *Shariah*-compliant practices. (Sulaiman et al., 2021). Besides, factors like the interior decoration of the hotel and the logistics of daily operations significantly do not play any significant difference when it comes to the intent to stay, except when combined with the religiosity of the travellers. This observation indicates that the preference towards *Shariah*-friendly facilities is not actually based on the physical features that the hotel offers but on the religious beliefs of the person (Sulaiman et al., 2021). This study is therefore being undertaken in examining *Shariah* compliance as an independent variable towards Muslim travellers' willingness to stay at SCH. Thus:

H4. *Shariah* compliance has a positive effect on willingness to stay at *Shariah*-compliant hotels

3. METHODOLOGY

An online questionnaire survey was administered using Google Forms, enabling flexible participation and reducing geographical constraints. The respondents comprised diverse demographic profiles in terms of age and employment status. Additionally, this study employed a non-probability purposive sampling

technique, selecting respondents based on their familiarity with the subject under investigation, which focuses on Muslim travellers' intention to stay at *Shariah*-compliant hotels. Hence, the target individuals were those who met three specific criteria to be included as respondents:

- (iii) Malaysian citizen;
- (iv) 18 years old or above and;
- (v) An individual who has experience in domestic travel within Malaysia.

Table 1 depicted the demographic profile of the respondents. Respondents were asked to provide information regarding their gender, age and employment status. These demographic data were collected to provide insight into the interpretation of the analysis results. From the total of 206 respondents, most of them were female which is 63.1% ($n = 130$) and 36.9% ($n = 76$) were male. The respondents' ages were classified into five categories. Among them, 21.4% ($n = 44$) were 18–25 years old, 32% ($n = 66$) were 26–35 years old, and 42.7% ($n = 87$) were 36–45 years old. Meanwhile, 3.4% ($n = 8$) were 46–55 years old, and 0.5% ($n = 1$) were above 56 years old. In terms of employment status, the highest number of respondents were private sector employees at 44.7% ($n = 91$), followed by government sector employees at 35.9% ($n = 75$), self-employed at 11.2% ($n = 23$) and others at 8.2% ($n = 17$).

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Profile	Description	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	76	36.9
	Female	130	63.1
Age	18 – 25 years	44	21.4
	26 – 35 years	66	32
	36 – 45 years	87	42.7
	46 – 55 years	8	3.4
	>56 years	1	0.5
Employment Status	Government sector employee	75	35.9
	Private sector employee	91	44.7
	Self-employed	23	11.2
	Others	17	8.2

Source: Table of Authors

Upon completion of data collection, cleaning and preparation, a total of 206 respondents were validated and deemed suitable for further analysis. Statistical power was estimated based on Cohen (1992) power tables and using G*Power 3.1.9.7 software. The minimum required sample size is 129 samples (Refer Appendix B). The F-test for regression was employed and the power analysis for multiple regression was conducted with four predictors to determine an appropriate sample size. The significance level (α) was set at 0.05, statistical power ($1 - \beta$) was set at 0.95 and the effect size was specified as medium ($f^2 = 0.15$).

Following, this study used IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (IBM SPSS Statistics) software version 30 for data analysis, which included data cleaning, descriptive statistics and data preparation in line with recommended guidelines for conducting rigorous quantitative research (Lim & Koay, 2024; Mohajan, 2020; Junaidi, 2020). Quantitative methods are widely recommended in social sciences and tourism studies due to their efficiency in gathering large volumes of data within a shorter time frame and lower cost, as well as their ability to detect dynamic patterns in travellers' behaviour (Sulaiman

et al., 2021; Junaidi, 2020). Subsequently, SmartPLS version 4 was utilized for the measurement model and structural assessment of the data (Ringle et al., 2024).

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Measurement model

The results obtained in Table 2 postulates the measurement model which has been tested on the loadings of average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR). The items exhibit acceptable indicator reliability varying from 0.745 to 0.959 and the loadings were also within threshold levels (Hair et al., 2019). In more details, CR ranges from 0 to 1 with the CR values for all the reflective constructs were in the range of 0.909 to 0.987 which exceeded the cut off value of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2022) evaluating the internal consistency reliability of the reflective measures.

Table 2. Measurement Model

Construct	Items	Loadings	CR	AVE
ATT	ATT1	0.936	0.987	0.789
	ATT2	0.958		
	ATT3	0.798		
	ATT4	0.959		
	ATT5	0.771		
SI	SI1	0.875	0.965	0.713
	SI2	0.897		
	SI3	0.749		
	SI4	0.874		
	SI5	0.816		
SE	SE1	0.745	0.909	0.723
	SE2	0.917		
	SE3	0.897		
	SE4	0.860		
	SE5	0.820		
SC	SC1	0.762	0.926	0.758
	SC2	0.918		
	SC3	0.896		
	SC4	0.890		
	SC5	0.880		
WSC	WSC1	0.900	0.937	0.794
	WSC2	0.908		
	WSC3	0.831		
	WSC4	0.928		
	WSC5	0.885		

Note: ATT = Attitude, SI = Social influence, SE = Self-efficacy, SC = *Shariah* compliance, WSC = Willingness to stay at *Shariah* compliant hotel.

Source: Table of Authors

Besides, convergent validity can be assessed by observing the AVE and outer loadings. It is suggested that AVE should be greater than 0.5 or higher to ensure that the latent variable explains at least 50% of the variance in each indicator (Ramayah et al., 2018). As demonstrated in Table 2, all constructs had AVE

values greater than 0.5 (Hair et al., 2012; Henseler et al., 2009). SI (0.713) has the lowest AVE, followed by SE (0.723), SC (0.758), ATT (0.789), and WSC (0.794). These results indicate that the measurement model exhibited sufficient convergent validity.

Following, discriminant validity is the degree to which items distinguish between constructs or measure distinct concepts. It is determined by the correlations between measures that have the potential to overlap (Ramayah et al., 2018). By definition, Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) Correlation Ratio is the ratio of between-trait correlations to the correlation between traits (Hair et al., 2017). The HTMT values should be < .85 value (Kline, 2011). As showed in Table 3, most of the respective constructs did not violate the HTMT threshold of 0.85 when assessed using the PLS algorithm. This indicates that the study meets the required standards of reliability and validity. Consequently, the data is deemed appropriate for further structural model analysis.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity – HTMT

Construct	1	2	3	4	5
Attitude					
Shariah compliance	0.480				
Self-efficacy	0.743	0.312			
Social influence	0.785	0.315	0.840		
Willingness	0.193	0.641	0.145	0.185	

Source: Table of Authors

4.2 Structural model

The outcomes delineate of the structural model as derived from hypothesis testing conducted with 10,000 bootstrapped samples, employing one-tailed significance assessments. Among the four hypothesized relationships, only one were identified as statistically significant and unlike another three hypotheses were non-significant. In Table 4, the predictors of *Shariah* compliance ($t = 10.327$, $p < 0.01$) emerged as a potent and statistically significant predictor of the willingness to stay at a *Shariah*-compliant hotel. This aligns with earlier studies such as Sulaiman et al. (2021) which emphasizing that religious fulfilment and perceived congruence with Islamic tenets enhance consumer trust and acceptance of halal-oriented lodging options thereby underscoring the central role of internal religious motivation in shaping guests' decision-making in Malaysia's Muslim-majority context. Therefore, H4 is supported.

Table 4. Structural Analysis

Hypothesis	Pathway	Beta	SD	t-value	p-value	BCI LL	BCI UL	VIF	f ²
H1	ATT→WSC	-0.197	0.089	2.229	0.013	-0.339	-0.052	2.632	0.024
H2	SI→WSC	0.143	0.098	1.466	0.071	-0.017	0.299	2.845	0.012
H3	SE→WSC	-0.025	0.076	0.322	0.374	-0.172	0.08	2.306	0.000
H4	SC→WSC	0.651	0.063	10.327	0.000	0.54	0.746	1.277	0.532

Note: $p < 0.05$; bootstrapping of 10,000

Source: Table of Authors

Conversely, the constructs of attitude (H1), social influence (H2) and self-efficacy (H3) portray non-significant predictors of willingness. Attitude was associated with a negative path coefficient ($\beta = -0.197$, $t = 2.229$, $p > 0.05$). Furthermore, social influence was reported ($\beta = 0.143$, $t = 1.466$, $p > 0.05$). Besides, self-efficacy exhibited a weak effect ($\beta = -0.025$, $t = 0.322$, $p > 0.05$). These findings are inconsistent with

prior literature Suzuki & Miah, 2016 and Amin, 2020a, 2020b which highlighted the significant impact of normative influences and perceived behavioural control in similar behavioural frameworks.

In more details, attitude was negatively associated with willingness to stay at *Shariah*-compliant hotels. This unexpected direction may reflect that adherence to *Shariah* compliance is perceived more as an internal religious obligation rather than as a product of general positive attitudes toward hotel features, which differs from prior literature where attitude is often significant in predicting behavioral intentions (Suzuki & Miah, 2016). Moreover, social influence was also showed non-significant outcomes which contrasts with many findings in collectivist contexts that typically report social influence as a strong predictor. In the Malaysian *Shariah*-compliant context, however, compliance is primarily regarded as a personal religious duty rather than a social signal. Consequently, external social pressures have less impact on willingness to stay at SCH, explaining both the non-significant effect and the slightly negative coefficient observed in attitude.

Likewise, self-efficacy exhibited a non-significant effect. This may indicate that, in the context of *Shariah* compliance, confidence in one's ability to adhere to compliance standards plays a minor role in determining behavioral intentions because religious norms are strongly internalized. Muslim travellers' willingness appears to rely more on intrinsic motivation than on self-efficacy. Accordingly, the minimal impact of attitude and social influence might indicate an evolving perspective among Muslim travellers who may be gravitating towards more independent and value-driven decision-making processes rather than depending on familial or societal suggestions. This notion is supported by research from Sulaiman et al. (2021), which found that personal religiosity and individual meaning-making exert a more substantial influence than external factors in contexts related to halal services.

Subsequently, the effect sizes were evaluated in accordance with Cohen's (1988) framework, which categorizes f^2 values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 as representing small, medium, and large effects, respectively. As detailed in Table 4, attitude displayed a small effect ($f^2 = 0.024$), social influence had a negligible effect ($f^2 = 0.012$), self-efficacy also had a negligible effect ($f^2 = 0.000$), and *Shariah* compliance exhibited a large effect ($f^2 = 0.532$) on willingness to stay at *Shariah*-compliant hotels. Additionally, the R-square (R^2) value is 0.376, indicating that the model explains 37.6% of the variance in the endogenous construct. Therefore, the structural model validates the robustness of the extended ASE model in forecasting behavioural intentions among Muslim travellers, yielding significant theoretical and managerial implications for the Islamic hospitality industry.

4.3 Awareness of *Shariah*-compliant hotel concepts across gender

A chi-square test of independence was conducted to examine whether awareness of *Shariah*-compliant hotel concepts differed by gender. Based on the results indicated no statistically significant association between gender and awareness, $\chi^2 (1, N = 206) = 0.171, p = .680$. Descriptively, 90% of female respondents reported being aware of the concept, compared to 88.2% of male respondents. Although female respondents demonstrated slightly higher awareness, the difference was minimal and not statistically significant. These findings suggest that awareness of *Shariah*-compliant hotel concepts is broadly consistent across gender groups. The high level of awareness among both male and female respondents shows that the concept has achieved widespread recognition within the sampled Muslim traveller population, rather than being concentrated within a specific gender segment.

Table 5. Association Between Gender and Awareness of the Concept SCH

Gender	Aware n (%)	Not aware n (%)	Total
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Male	67 (88.2)	9 (11.8)	76
Female	117 (90)	13 (10)	130
Total	184 (89.3)	22 (10.7)	206

Note: Values are n (%). $\chi^2 = 0.171$, df = 1, p = .680.

Source: Table of Authors

4.4 Awareness of Shariah-compliant hotel concepts across age

The outcomes of the chi-square test reveal a significant association between age and awareness of the SCH concept ($\chi^2 = 12.49$, df = 4, p = 0.014). Overall, a high level of awareness was observed across the sample (89.3%), with the highest proportions reported among respondents aged 36–45 (93.2%) and 26–35 (89.4%), followed by those aged 18–25 (86.4%). Conversely, awareness was relatively lower among respondents aged 46–55 (71.4%), while respondents aged above 56 were minimally represented. The distribution of awareness responses shows that the majority of respondents who were aware of the SCH concept were concentrated in the 26–45 age range.

Table 6. Association Between Age Group and Awareness of the Concept SCH

Age group	Aware n (%)	Not aware n (%)	Total
18-25	38 (86.4)	6 (13.6)	44
26-35	59 (89.4)	7 (10.6)	66
36-45	82 (93.2)	6 (6.8)	88
46-55	5 (71.4)	2 (28.6)	7
>56	0	1 (100)	1
Total	184 (89.3)	22 (10.7)	206

Note: Values are n (%). $\chi^2 = 12.49$, df = 4, p = 0.014.

Source: Table of Authors

4.5 Awareness of Shariah-compliant hotel concepts across employment

The chi-square analysis depicted a statistically significant association between employment status and awareness of the SCH Concept ($\chi^2 = 29.90$, df = 3, p < 0.001). Awareness levels varied notably across employment categories, with respondents in the private sector reporting universal awareness (100%), followed by the self-employed group (95.7%) and government employees (79.7%). In contrast, respondents classified under “others” exhibited comparatively lower awareness (64.7%). In terms of distribution, private sector employees constituted the largest proportion of respondents who were aware of the SCH concept (50%), while government employees accounted for the majority of those who were not aware (68.2%).

Table 7. Association Between Employment and Awareness of the Concept SCH

Employment Status	Aware n (%)	Not aware n (%)	Total
Government sector	60 (80)	15 (20)	75
Private sector	91 (100)	0	91
Self-employed	22 (95.7)	1 (4.3)	23
Others	11 (64.7)	6 (35.3)	17
Total	184 (89.3)	22 (10.7)	206

Note: Values are n (%). $\chi^2 = 29.90$, $df = 3$, $p = <0.001$.

Source: Table of Authors

5. CONCLUSION

According to the survey in the current study, most respondents (89.3%) indicated that they are aware of and understand the concept of a *Shariah*-compliant hotel, whereas 10.7% stated that they are not. This raises the question of whether respondents truly comprehend the underlying principles of *Shariah* compliance or if their understanding stems merely from surface-level exposure. Given that accommodation is a fundamental component of the tourism industry, such awareness may reflect the increasing visibility of Islamic tourism offerings, though not necessarily a deep understanding of *Shariah* principles.

This study enriches the expanding corpus of research on Islamic hospitality by systematically examining the behavioral determinants that influence the intentions of Muslim travellers to select *Shariah*-compliant hotels in Malaysia. Employing the ASE model of attitude, social influence and self-efficacy in conjunction with a construct of *Shariah* compliance, this investigation elucidates the psychological and religious factors integral to the decision-making processes of Muslim travellers. The findings of this research demonstrate that the most significant predictor of intention is *Shariah* compliance. This revelation highlights the critical roles of perceived advantages and alignment with religious principles in determining accommodation preferences for Muslim travellers. In a somewhat unexpected outcome, attitude, social influence and self-efficacy emerged as non-significant predictors within this study, indicating that the decision to choose *Shariah*-compliant hotels may be predominantly personal and intrinsic, rather than predominantly influenced by external factors. This challenges previous assumptions regarding the substantial impact of familial or societal norms on Islamic consumption behaviors.

On a practical note, the implications of this research are substantial for hoteliers, tourism agencies, and marketing professionals aiming to appeal to Muslim travellers. Effective communication that accentuates *Shariah*-compliant attributes, ensuring the availability of visible religious amenities such as halal dining options and prayer spaces and fostering favorable perceptions could notably enhance consumer trust and intention to book stays. Nonetheless, the study is not without its limitations. Firstly, the relatively modest sample size ($n=206$) and the specific geographical context in Malaysia setting may restrict the applicability of these findings to the broader Muslim demographic. Secondly, the cross-sectional nature of the design limits the capacity to monitor behavioral changes over time. Thirdly, reliance on self-reported measures introduces potential for social desirability bias, especially in contexts pertaining to religious behavior.

Future research endeavors should seek to broaden the research sample to span various Muslim-majority and minority nations to facilitate cross-cultural comparisons regarding *Shariah*-based hospitality preferences. Additionally, longitudinal studies could provide insight into how attitudes and intentions evolve with increased exposure to Islamic-friendly branding or global travel experiences. Researchers might also explore variables that mediate or moderate the intention to stay at *Shariah*-compliant accommodations, such as levels of religiosity, perceived risks or access to technology for instance, online reviews. By fostering deeper theoretical engagement and embracing a wider array of methodological frameworks, subsequent studies can continue to enhance both academic understanding and practical applications, ultimately guiding the tourism industry in effectively catering to the growing demographic of Muslim travellers in a manner that is both ethically sound and economically viable, at best.

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7. CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors agree that this research was conducted in the absence of any self-benefits, commercial or financial conflicts and declare the absence of conflicting interests with the funders.

8. AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Hani Amirah Juisin: Conceptualisation, methodology, investigation, formal analysis, writing-original draft, writing-review and editing, validation, and visualization; **Ahmad Shakani Abdullah:** Conceptualisation, writing-original draft, writing-review and editing.

9. DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI IN THE WRITING PROCESS

During the preparation of this work, the author(s) used **CHATGPT OPEN AI** in order to **polish language, help organize structure, and aid in visualizing concepts in the preparation of this manuscript**. After using this tool/service, the author(s) reviewed and edited the content as needed and take(s) full responsibility for the content of the publication.

10. DATA AVAILABILITY/SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

The datasets used and/or analysed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

11. ETHICS STATEMENT

The authors declare that this research did not involve human or animal subjects, and the research was conducted in accordance with the institutional research guidelines of the authors' institution.

12. ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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14. APPENDIX

Battery Items

Construct	Items
Attitude	ATT1: Choosing to stay at <i>Shariah</i> -compliant hotel is a good idea
	ATT2: Selecting to stay at <i>Shariah</i> -compliant hotel is beneficial
	ATT3: I like the concept of <i>Shariah</i> -compliant hotel
	ATT4: Staying at <i>Shariah</i> -compliant hotel is a pleasant
	ATT5: I have a positive perception towards <i>Shariah</i> -compliant hotel
Social Influence	SI1: My family prefer to stay at <i>Shariah</i> -compliant hotel
	SI2: My family will support my action to stay at <i>Shariah</i> -compliant hotel
	SI3: My friends prefer to stay at <i>Shariah</i> -compliant hotel
	SI4: My friends will support my action to stay at <i>Shariah</i> -compliant hotel
	SI5: Most people who are important to me recommend to stay at <i>Shariah</i> -compliant hotel
Self-Efficacy	SE1: I have control (e.g., booking via websites) to stay at <i>Shariah</i> -compliant hotel
	SE2: I have the knowledge necessary on <i>Shariah</i> -compliant hotel
	SE3: I have adequate money to stay at <i>Shariah</i> -compliant hotel
	SE4: I have time to stay at <i>Shariah</i> -compliant hotel

Shariah Compliance	SE5: I have a complete guide to stay at <i>Shariah</i> -compliant hotel
	SC1: I know the difference between <i>Shariah</i> -compliant hotel and non- <i>Shariah</i> -compliant hotel
	SC2: <i>Shariah</i> -compliant hotel provides Quran, prayer mat in each room
	SC3: <i>Shariah</i> -compliant hotel provides separate facilities such as indoor swimming pools, prayer room for different gender
	SC4: The hotel staffs wearing a proper attire (e.g., cover torso)
Willingness to stay at <i>Shariah</i> Compliant Hotel	SC5: Serving halal food and beverages
	WSC1: I am interested to stay at <i>Shariah</i> -compliant hotel
	WSC2: I am willing to stay at <i>Shariah</i> -compliant hotel even though choices are limited
	WSC3: I am willing to stay at <i>Shariah</i> -compliant hotel because the benefits outweigh the cost
	WSC4: I will stay at <i>Shariah</i> -compliant hotel in the future
	WSC5: I will recommend others to stay at <i>Shariah</i> -compliant hotel