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Faith in action: sustainable travel practices among Indonesian Muslim tourists

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ABSTRACT
Filling in a gap in the literature on Halal and Islamic tourism research, this study aims to explore Muslim tourists' sustainable travel behaviours. Indonesia provides a distinctive research setting, as the country is known as a top Muslim-friendly destination and one of the world's biggest Muslim countries. The combination of survey questionnaires from 409 respondents and autoethnography to collect data add to the study's novelty and originality. The findings indicate that Islamic teaching, as reflected in the five principles of Maqasid al-Shariah which include preservation of religion (al-din), life (al-nafs), intellect (al-aqal), posterity (al-nasl), and wealth (al-mal), influence the Muslims' sustainable practices during travel. This study provides valuable insights for tourism providers and policymakers on the significant role of faith in shaping sustainable travel practices among Muslim tourists.

Introduction

Islam promotes travel as a means of intellectual development, spiritual growth, health and well-being enhancement, and fostering a closer connection with Allah's creation (cf. Hassib & Ibtissem, 2020; Said et al., 2022). The importance of travel has been indicated in the Qur'an, such as in Surat Al-Ankabut 29:20 'Travel in the land and see how (Allah) originated the creation' and Surah Al Hajj, 22:46. 'Do they then not travel through the Earth, so that their minds gain wisdom and their ears thus learn to hear? For surely it is not the eyes that are blind, but blind are the minds which are in the insides'.

Apart from travelling, Islam also supports sustainability by encouraging people as nature's stewards to care for and preserve natural resources (Zafar, 2021). Indeed, Islamic teaching has been promoting sustainability practices for over 1,400 years. This notion was highlighted in several surahs in the Qur'an, including Surah Al-Rahman 55:5–9, Surah Al-Baqarah 2:143 and 205, and Surah Al-A'raf 7:31. These Quranic teachings strongly resonate with contemporary sustainability principles, emphasising the protection of the Earth for future generations.

Numerous studies have been conducted on travel and tourism related to Islam, Halal, and the Muslim tourists' needs and behaviour. Much of the focus has been on areas such as Islamic tourism development (e.g. Carboni et al., 2014), Halal tourism (e.g. Prayag, 2020; Rhama, 2022), Halal tourism destination (e.g. Al-Ansi & Han, 2019; Mursid & Anoraga, 2021), Halal hotel (e.g. Jeaheng et al., 2019), Halal food (e.g. Mannaa, 2019), tourist perspectives on Halal tourism (e.g. Rodrigo & Turnbull, 2019), and Muslim tourists' needs, travel intention, travel motivation, satisfaction

and loyalty (e.g. Aji et al., 2021; Dabphet, 2021; Faidah et al., 2021; Oktadiana et al., 2016; Rahman et al., 2017; Suhartanto et al., 2020).

Despite various literature on Islamic tourism and Halal-related travel, a significant gap remains in understanding Muslim tourists' sustainable travel behaviour. The existing studies on Muslim tourists are primarily about satisfaction and perceived value. Understanding how Islamic values and teachings influence Muslim tourists' behaviour during travel is essential, given the fast growth of this market segment. The focus of the study on sustainable practices among Muslim tourists thus offers something new. Furthermore, the combination of autoethnography and survey questionnaires adds the novelty and originality of this study as most studies on Muslim tourists or Halal/Islamic tourism employ bibliometric analysis, systematic literature reviews, or questionnaires. To the authors' knowledge, the use of multiple methods, grounded in emic perspectives (i.e. autoethnography) and etic perspectives (i.e. survey questionnaires) are limited or have not been applied in tourist behaviour research. The etic and emic perspectives provide the breadth and depth of the study concerning Halal/ Muslim tourism.

The focus on Indonesian Muslim tourists in this study is due to a couple of reasons. Firstly, Indonesia is one of the largest Muslim countries in the world with more than 85% (236 million) of Indonesia's total population being Muslim (Wiguna, 2024). Secondly, the country's ranking as the world's top Muslim-friendly destination 2023 and 2024 (Mastercard Crescent Rating, 2024). Therefore, Indonesia is an ideal case study for exploring how religion/ faith intersects with sustainability practices during travel.

This research contributes to academic knowledge and practical strategies for tourism providers and policymakers to promote sustainable tourism practices among Muslim travellers globally. Considering the fast growth of the Muslim travel market that is projected 230 million global Muslim tourists by 2028 (Islamic Tourism Centre, n.d.), this market has a strong potential to drive demand for sustainable tourism offerings.

Literature review

Tourism sustainability and Islamic teaching of Maqasid Shari'ah

Tourism has been playing a critical role in promoting sustainability in many countries since the 1990s (Richardson, 2021). Richardson further argued that tourism research on sustainable development has been immense. Nevertheless, negative impacts of tourism, such as climate change and social unrest, have also been noted.

According to UN Tourism (n.d., para 1), tourism sustainability is defined as 'tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities'. In other words, tourism sustainable development should consider the proper use of environmental resources, fair economic benefits for the local communities, and the host communities' culture and traditions.

The concept and practices of sustainability in Islam align with Maqasid al-Shari'ah (Jaiyeoba et al., 2024). Maqasid is the goal or purpose, and al-Shariah refers to Islamic law. Thus, Maqasid al-Shariah means virtue in society as the higher objective of Islamic law (Zain & Zakaria, 2022). This concept emphasises the individual and community's welfare and well-being based on the Quran and Sunnah (the practices conducted by the Prophet Muhammad SAW) (Azli et al., 2011; Campra et al., 2021). Maqasid Shari'ah, as reformed by Al Ghazali, comprises the essential element (al-darur-iyyat) that promotes human needs including sustainable community and well-being (Chapra, 2008). This element consists of five pillars: preservation of religion *(al-din),* life *(al-nafs),* intellect *(al-aqal),* posterity *(al-nasl),* and wealth *(al-mal)* (Campra et al., 2021; Zain & Zakaria, 2022).

Several studies highlight the relationship between this Shari'ah concept and sustainability. Jaiyeoba et al. (2024) maintained that the Shari'ah concept should be embedded into the businesses' sustainability strategies that comply with social and environmental principles. While R. M. Ramli

(2020) identified the connection between five pillars of Maqasid al-Shari'ah and natural resource consumption and conservation. He identified the importance of managing and protecting natural resources sustainably for future generations (al-nasl), which is closely related to the preservation of life (al-nafs) and the safeguarding of intellect (al-'aql). The latter means intellectual development can be attained through observing natural resources to understand Allah's signs and creations. He also indicated that natural resource protection is vital for human survival and wealth (al-mal), as well as the preservation of faith (ad-din).

Given the importance of the sustainability concept in Islamic teaching, along with the fast growth of the Muslim tourist market, exploring how Muslim tourists implement sustainable practices while travelling is therefore essential. The Maqasid al-Shari'ah is used as a concept that underpins the study's analysis.

Muslim tourist behaviour

Several values influence Muslim tourists' travel decisions. Besides functional value (perceived utility), social value (social significance of a product), emotional value (feelings), conditional value (how or when something is used), and epistemic value (novelty), Islamic value (iman) also impact the Muslims' acts. Islamic value is related to Islamic teaching, such as prayer facilities, Halal food, and Halal accommodations, as well as avoiding something Haram or impermissible (Rodrigo & Turnbull, 2019).

When travelling, Muslim tourists generally adhere to Islamic principles, and they often select destinations that offer Islamic attributes and services (Bogan & Sarıısık, 2019; Najmaei et al., 2017l Zawawi et al., 2017). Such attributes are deemed to impact Muslim tourists' satisfaction (Monoarfa et al., 2022).

The particular needs of Muslim tourists include accessibility to Halal dining, safety for Muslim women, the availability of prayer mats and Qibla directions in the accommodation, and prayer information (Nurhafihz, 2016; Oktadiana, 2020). When searching for a destination, Muslims also strongly emphasise these needs (Oktadiana, 2020). Indubitably, the travel decisions and activities of Muslim tourists are greatly influenced by their faith (Rodrigo & Turnbull, 2019).

Studies by Oktadiana et al. (2017), Oktadiana (2020) and Pearce and Oktadiana (2022), portrayed the unique traits of Muslim tourists regarding travel motivation and behaviour, compared to the other tourist groups (i.e. Westerns, Asians, and a mixed group of tourists). The studies found that the Western and other tourist groups and the Muslims were all 'seeking novelty' when travelling. However, the degree of importance is different. While Western and other tourist groups put novelty as the top motivation to travel, Muslims place 'strengthening relationships' as the number one motivation. This tendency reflects that maintaining a relationship or 'silaturrahim' for Muslims is considered an act of worship and such an attitude is strongly encouraged in Islam. Muslim tourists also view 'nature' as the core travel driver, a trait that is considered the middle layer of travel motivation in the Travel Career Pattern theory (cf. Pearce, 2005). Appreciating nature for Muslim tourists is a way to praise Allah's creation which leads to the respect of the environment. Concerning information on a destination, Muslims do not only look for general safety, transportation systems, tours, accommodation and dining venues. They searched for more specific information on women's safety, safety from discrimination, accessibility and distance to the mosques, Muslim-friendly/ Shari'ah accommodation, restaurants, and tours.

Another Islamic value that also plays an important role in Muslim tourists is sustainability practices. This is evident specifically in Generation Z (born between 1997 and 2012) and the Millennials (born between 1980 and 1996), who are highly concerned about environmental issues, social inequality, and governance practice (Khalid, 2024). The way these generations advocate tourism sustainability practices can be seen, for example, in their preference to stay in eco-friendly accommodation, participate in community-based tourism programs, and support local businesses (Mastercard Crescent Rating, 2023). These behaviours are parallel with the Maqasid Shari'ah principles.

Conceptual framework

This study is guided by the concepts of tourism sustainability and the Islamic teaching of Maqasid al-Shariah to examine Muslim tourists' sustainable travel behaviour. Figure 1 shows how sustainability principles and Islamic teaching of Maqasid al-Shari'ah – which are based on Qur'an and hadith – are aligned. These values inform and shape Muslim tourists' sustainable travel behaviour.

Methodology

This study employs a unique methodological approach through a combination of a survey questionnaire and autoethnography. A survey questionnaire is valuable for collecting information from a large population to measure participants' thoughts, experiences, and attitudes quantitatively or statistically (Albudaiwi, 2017; Bhandari, 2023). Other advantages include time and cost efficiency, uniformity of the questions, high objectivity (minimising authors' bias), and broad accessibility to reach respondents (Dudovskiy, n.d.).

Autoethnography offers rich, deep, and reflective insights from the author's experiences by integrating sustainability concerns with Islamic values. Using this method, authors 'can explore and portray the culture where a phenomenon is being experienced' (Méndez-López, 2013, p. 285). The voice of the Muslim female author in this study is beneficial as female voices in Halal and Muslim tourism research are often overlooked. Connecting the statistics and personal narratives provides the breadth and depth of this study on the sustainability practices of Muslim tourists when travelling. Moreover, to the authors' knowledge, no study regarding Halal and Muslim tourism employs this mixed method. Generally, bibliometric analysis, systematic reviews and survey are used.

Survey questionnaire: instrument and sampling

The questionnaire was established based on the work of several scholars, namely Diallo et al. (2015), Gong et al. (2019), Nasr et al. (2022), Su et al. (2018), and Zgolli and Zaiem (2018). It comprises demographic information and questions related to sustainable and responsible travel behaviour. It should be noted that the category of travel experiences in the demographic
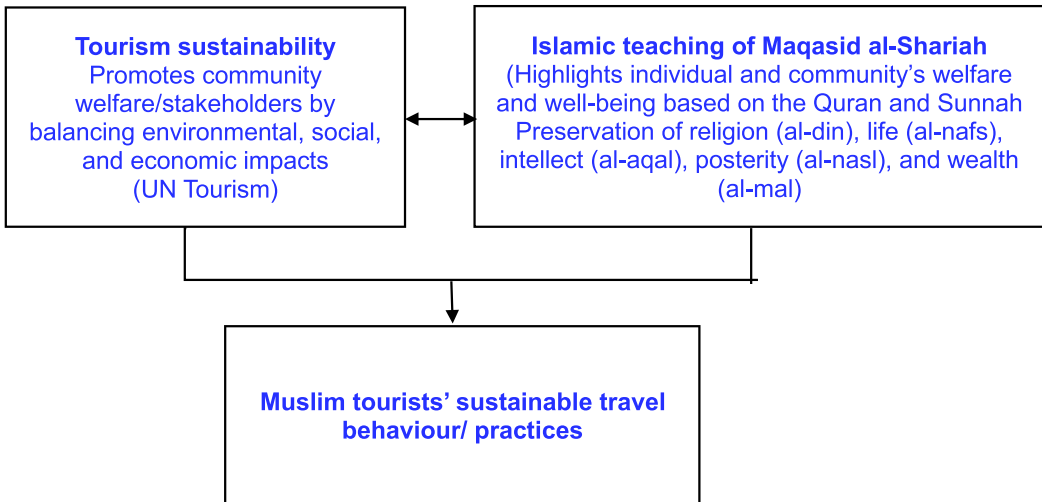

Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

information was adapted from Oktadiana et al. (2017). Ethical approval was attained from the authors' institution. Based on a pilot test with 45 respondents, one out of 19 indicators was removed due to its invalidity, resulting in 18 valid indicators with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.922. Table 1 shows the indicators of travel sustainable behaviour.

In this study, a 5-point Likert scale was applied, with one (1) denoting 'strongly disagree' and five (5) representing 'strongly agree'. A 5-point scale in the survey questionnaire is viewed more convenient and easier for respondents to complete compared to a 7- or 9-point scale, while still ensuring high-quality data (Revilla et al., 2014).

A combination of purposive and snowball samplings was applied to recruit participants. The target participants were Indonesian Muslim tourists who met the criteria of being Muslim with a minimum age of 18 years. We also sought the help of our Muslim network to distribute the questionnaire. Using the sample size calculator from Survey Monkey, maintained by Cloud Research (n.d.), a target of 400 respondents is deemed adequate for a population of over 10,000. The survey participation was completely voluntary, and participants provided consent indicating their agreement to participate in the study.

Data collection and data analysis of survey questionnaire

The questionnaire was created using Google Forms. Employing social media platforms, including WhatsApp groups and LinkedIn, the questionnaire was distributed to potential respondents. Social media was chosen due to its effectiveness and efficiency in reaching broader and diverse target participants across regions, faster and in real time (cf. Cheng, 2024). Moreover, social media has become part of people's daily lives, communication channels, and social exchanges (Armutcu et al., 2023). Using social media as a research method also considered less bias (Cheng, 2024). To mitigate potential biases, multiple social media platforms and inclusion criteria were applied in gaining respondents. In addition, the authors asked for the assistance of their Muslim colleagues to

Table 1. Indicators of sustainable travel behaviour.

Sustainable Travel Behaviour (Diallo et al., 2015; Gong et al., 2019; Nasr et al., 2022; Su et al., 2018; Zgolli & Zaiem, 2018).		
	B1	I buy (or use) local products and services when visiting a destination (e.g. local foods and drinks, local accommodations/restaurants)
	B2	I pick up litter/rubbish left by other people and encourage others to do the same
	B3	I avoid disturbing animals or plants
	B4	I tell my companions not to feed wild animals
	B5	After a picnic, I leave the place as clean as it was originally
	B6	I am willing to reduce my consumption in order to help tourism
	B7	I am willing to invest in local projects for sustainable tourism
	B8	I am ready to devote my time and energy to the implementation of projects for sustainable tourism
	B9	I am willing to pay more to compensate for my environmental footprint (e.g. choosing to stay in an eco-friendly hotel even though it is slightly more expensive)
	B10	I don't mind spending my money on the area I visit to benefit the local community
	B11	I have made an effort to participate in responsible tourism during a trip
	B12	I have acted responsibly during a trip
	B13	I follow the rules to protect the environment at the destination
	B14	I am enthusiastic about helping society
	B15	I am attuned to societal issues
	B16	I love devoting my free time to underprivileged people
	B17	I like learning more about the phenomena that affect society
	B18	I like to respect and obey the laws of local communities

disseminate the questionnaires to their network. Such strategies also help ensuring reliability in social science research (cf. Vicente, 2023). Data collection took place from the end of September to the end of November 2024.

Descriptive statistics were utilised to assess the respondents' profiles, while structural equation modelling technique was applied to examine the factor loadings. Based on the validity test, two indicators had loading factor values below 0.5, whereas data were considered valid if having a loading factor value of ≥0.5. The two indicators were B3 – I avoid disturbing animals or plants (loading factor: 0.473) and B4 – I tell my companions not to feed wild animals (loading factor: 0.452). Subsequently, these two indicators were omitted from further analysis.

To determine the reliability of latent variables, Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha testing were conducted. The results showed that both variables are reliable with a threshold above 0.7; a Composite Reliability value of 0.925 and a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.923. Analysis of Variance or ANOVA was employed to analyse the significant differences in the means between two or more groups (in this study, gender, age, education, and travel experiences).

Autoethnography approach

To complement the results from the survey where data were generated from the etic perspective, autoethnography was implemented to understand the author's point of view or the emic perspective (cf. Oktadiana, 2024; Oktadiana & Pearce, 2020). Autoethnography approach differs from the traditional research method as it centralised on the author's personal experiences and positioning, which are often inspired by instances that provoke one's thoughts, feelings, and experiences (Adams et al., 2015; Adams et al., 2017; Ellis et al., 2011). In this approach, the information is derived from the moments of truth through personal experiences during travel (Edward, 2021; Oktadiana, 2024), offering more nuanced insights compared to other research methods such as questionnaires and interviews (Poerwandari, 2021).

In this study, data were collected through personal notes and photographs taken by one of the authors, an Indonesian Muslim woman residing in Australia, during her travel to Yogyakarta, Indonesia, from December 15 to 24, 2024. Her documentation served as a critical component in autoethnographic research to ensure the trustworthiness of the study (Oktadiana & Pearce, 2020). Given that Muslim women travellers are significant for the future of Muslim tourism, the voice of the female author as a Muslim woman traveller with extensive travel experience is crucial. Accounting for over 45% of the Muslim markets, the roles of Muslim women in family travel are therefore critical (A. Ramli, 2023).

To evaluate the autoethnographic narrative, the author employed Humphreys' (2005) framework that comprises four aspects: authenticity, exposure, reflexivity, and application. The author demonstrated authenticity by sharing personal stories of her tourism activities, including the mundane moments often unnoticed in tourism research. As for exposure, the author emphasised honesty in telling her experiences, including her vulnerability. This is in contrast with traditional academic writing which often portrays authors as knowledgeable and competent (Jennings, 2018). Reflexivity was depicted in how the author's background and experiences influenced her observations and reporting. Finally, the application involves translating the research findings into actionable recommendations.

To minimise biases, multiple sources of data from survey and archival information, including photographs and memos, were used as data triangulation (cf. Poerwandari, 2021). Biases were also mitigated by providing explanation about the study context, including locations, substance, and the author's position, involvement of the co-author in data analysis, and the implementation of another research method (survey questionnaire) (Poerwandari, 2021). Furthermore, transparency and rich descriptions contribute to the trustworthiness and rigour of the study. As Poerwandari (2021, p. 321) argued, 'narrative is very important in social sciences and humanities in making their scientific contributions'.

Results

Profile of respondents

Table 2 shows that the ratio of female respondents is higher than male respondents, 61.6% to 38.4%. Based on age, the respondents fall into three categories adapted from Dimock (2019): Millennials (31.8%), Generation X (30.6%), and Generation Z (27.1%). More than 40% of the respondents hold a postgraduate degree, while 34.7% hold a bachelor's degree. The number of professionals and students is similar at 21.3% and 21.5% respectively. This is followed by government officials (14.9%) and entrepreneurs (13.2%). Regarding travel experience, respondents are generally somewhat experienced in both domestic (34.7%) and international travel (36.9%). However, the number of experienced and very experienced travellers is higher in the domestic category.

Survey questionnaire result

Table 3 displayed eight items with high loading factors above 0.70, indicating a strong association with the construct being measured, that is the sustainable travel behaviour. The item related to social engagement, *I am attuned to societal issues*, exhibited the highest loading factor of 0.783, followed by *I am enthusiastic about helping society* (0.771) and *I like learning more about the phenomena that affect society* (0.741).

Other substantial loading factors included: *I am ready to devote my time and energy to the implementation of projects for sustainable tourism* (0.739), *I have made an effort to participate in responsible tourism during a trip* (0.733), *I love devoting my free time to underprivileged people* (0.735), *I don't mind spending my money on the area I visit to benefit the local community* (0.710), and *I am willing to invest in local projects for sustainable tourism* (0.709).

The mean scores displayed in Table 3 show that respondents generally agree with and are favoured to adopt sustainable practices. This is particularly evident in the mean score of over 4.0

Table 2. Respondents' profile.

Variable	Category	Total ($N = 409$)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	157	38.4
	Female	252	61.6
Age	18–27	111	27.1
	28–43	130	31.8
	44–59	125	30.6
	60–78	43	10.5
	>78	0	0
Education	High School	20	4.9
	Diploma Qualification	69	16.9
	Bachelor's Degree	142	34.7
	Postgraduate Degree	175	42.8
	Other	3	0.7
Occupation	Entrepreneurs/business people	54	13.2
	Government officials/civil servant	61	14.9
	Professional	87	21.3
	Student	88	21.5
	Retired	20	4.9
	Unemployed	17	4.2
	Others	82	20.0
Domestic travel experience	Inexperienced (0 years)	22	5.4
	Somewhat experienced (1–4 years)	142	34.7
	Experienced (5–10 years)	130	31.8
	Very experienced (>10 years)	115	28.1
International travel experience	Inexperienced (0 years)	118	28.9
	Somewhat experienced (1–4 years)	151	36.9
	Experienced (5–10 years)	70	17.1
	Very experienced (>10 years)	70	17.1

Table 3. Loading factors and mean score.

	Items	Loading factor	Mean score
B1	I buy (or use) local products and services when visiting a destination (e.g. local foods and drinks, local accommodations/restaurants)	0.515	4.313
B2	I pick up litter/rubbish left by other people and encourage others to do the same	0.629	3.934
B5	After a picnic, I leave the place as clean as it was originally	0.531	4.709
B6	I am willing to reduce my consumption in order to help tourism	0.658	4.149
B7	I am willing to invest in local projects for sustainable tourism	0.709	3.817
B8	I am ready to devote my time and energy to the implementation of projects for sustainable tourism	0.739	3.819
B9	I am willing to pay more to compensate for my environmental footprint (e.g. choosing to stay in an eco-friendly hotel even though it is slightly more expensive)	0.699	3.787
B10	I don't mind spending my money on the area I visit to benefit the local community	0.710	4.059
B11	I have made an effort to participate in responsible tourism during a trip	0.733	4.227
B12	I have acted responsibly during a trip	0.669	4.423
B13	I follow the rules to protect the environment at the destination	0.627	4.628
B14	I am enthusiastic about helping society	0.771	4.279
B15	I am attuned to societal issues	0.783	4.039
B16	I love devoting my free time to underprivileged people	0.735	4.083
B17	I like learning more about the phenomena that affect society	0.741	4.059
B18	I like to respect and obey the laws of local communities	0.633	4.553

(agree) for social engagement (B14-B16). Although four items (willingness to pick up litter, investing in local projects and devoting time and energy to tourism sustainability, and paying more for environmental footprint) fall within the scale of 3.0 (neither agree nor disagree), their mean scores close to 4.0 indicate that these practices are also viewed quite important by respondents. The mean score of between 3.7 and 4.7 on B1-B13 indicates that respondents mainly agree to practice responsible tourism initiatives.

Table 4 shows the results from ANOVA test to identify the significant differences between groups based on gender, age, education, and travel experiences. There is no difference in sustainable behaviour during travel between gender, age, education, occupation and international travel experiences, as the p-values are higher than 0.05. Interestingly, there are differences in behaviour based on domestic travel experiences (p-value = 0.043).

Further investigation on domestic travel experience (Table 5) indicates that individuals with no travel experience (0 years) show no significant difference in sustainable travel behaviour from

Table 4. Comparison between groups.

Variables		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Gender	Between Groups	.106	1	.106	.343	.558
	Within Groups	125.631	407	.309		
	Total	125.737	408			
Age	Between Groups	.591	3	.197	.637	.591
	Within Groups	125.146	405	.309		
	Total	125.737	408			
Education	Between Groups	2.391	4	.598	1.958	.100
	Within Groups	123.346	404	.305		
	Total	125.737	408			
Occupation	Between Groups	2.391	4	.598	1.958	.100
	Within Groups	123.346	404	.305		
	Total	125.737	408			
Domestic travel experiences	Between Groups	2.502	3	.834	2.741	.043
	Within Groups	123.235	405	.304		
	Total	125.737	408			
International travel experiences	Between Groups	1.146	3	.382	1.242	.294
	Within Groups	124.591	405	.308		
	Total	125.737	408			

Table 5. Multiple comparisons of domestic travel experience.

					95% Confidence Interval	
Domestic travel experience		Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Inexperienced (0 years)	Somewhat experienced (1–4 years)	.003	.126	1.000	−.32	.33
	Experienced (5–10 years)	−.108	.127	.830	−.44	.22
	Very experienced (>10 years)	−.186	.128	.469	−.52	.14
Somewhat experienced (1-4 years)	Inexperienced (0 years)	−.003	.126	1.000	−.33	.32
	Experienced (5–10 years)	−.111	.067	.346	−.28	.06
	Very experienced (>10 years)	−.189[a]	.069	.033	−.37	−.01
Experienced (5-10 years)	Inexperienced (0 years)	.108	.127	.830	−.22	.44
	Somewhat experienced (1–4 years)	.111	.067	.346	−.06	.28
	Very experienced (>10 years)	−.078	.071	.688	−.26	.10
Very experienced (>10 years)	Inexperienced (0 years)	.186	.128	.469	−.14	.52
	Somewhat experienced (1–4 years)	.189[a]	.069	.033	.01	.37
	Experienced (5–10 years)	.078	.071	.688	−.10	.26

[a]The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

those 'somewhat experienced', 'experienced', or 'very experienced', as the *p*-value is greater than 0.05 for most comparisons. There is however, one exception found in one comparison between 'somewhat experienced' (1-4 years) and 'very experienced' (>10 years) with the *p*-value = 0.033. There might be a slight decline in sustainable travel behaviour as travel experience increases. Nevertheless, the differences overall are mostly insignificant.

Autoethnography account

During the 10-day trip to Yogyakarta, the female author did various tourism activities, including visiting friends and family and experiencing new attractions. These activities included a Merapi volcano jeep tour and adventure activities in Gunung Kidul. She also visited Cilacap with her family, a town in Central Java located on the Java South Sea. The author and her family drove to Cilacap which took about 4–5 hours. Besides visiting her family in Cilacap whom she has not seen for more than a decade, she also wanted to explore the beaches. The author chose not to visit popular tourist attractions in Yogyakarta such as Borobudur Temple and the Sultan's Palace, as she had already been to these sites several times. The well-known tourist areas she visited in Yogyakarta were Kaliurang and Malioboro Street.

As part of a sustainable initiative to support local businesses, the author selected a hotel that promotes local arts and culture. Figure 2 illustrates Javanese art (wayang or puppet) and traditional herbal drinks offered by the hotel at breakfast. Upon arrival, we were welcomed with traditional drinks made from ginger and secang tree bark, which are believed to have health benefits and boost the immune system. We also enjoyed the traditional cuisine served at the hotel's breakfast buffet. The hotel's décor and cuisine feature its commitment to local culture and heritage. Moreover, its location – within walking distance of shops and dining – reduced the need of using car, thereby lowering air pollution and the carbon footprint.

When visiting the attractions, the author and her family always tried to support the local economy by purchasing local products and using local services. This practice complies with the Maqasid al-Shariah, particularly the preservation of wealth (al-mal), and sustainability principles. This included dining at local restaurants operated by locals and those that mainly used locally sourced ingredients. Some of them were Kopi Klotok, Suharti Fried Chicken, Jadah Mbah Tjarik,

Figure 2. Javanese art in a guest room and traditional drinks at the hotel. Source: Author's photos.

Gudeg Yu Djum, Warung Eyup, and Warung Tedoeh. Figure 3 highlights some of the traditional local cuisines served at the restaurants.

Dining at local food stalls is not without challenges, especially for street foods. We were happy to support the local businesses – as this connects to sustainability and Maqasid al-Shariah principle of supporting local economies – however, hygiene and safety were significant concerns. For example, handling food using bare hands and cleaning eating utensils in just a bucket of water. We also had to make sure that the ice cubes for cold drinks were made from drinkable water. One afternoon, we visited a well-known local kiosk for lunch. The food was quite delicious, but a bin on each table for disposing of bones or food waste was quite off-putting as multiple visitors used it. This lack of sanitation practices undermines cleanliness and public health, which are key concerns in both Maqasid al-Shariah and global sustainability goals,

Cleanliness and safety issues were also noted at several tourist attractions. During this trip, we tried some adventure activities offered by the local community, including Tanding Cave boat trip and body rafting in the Ayo River in Gunung Kidul, an off-road jeep tour and river crossing in Wukirsari Mount Merapi, and a boat tour to Pasir Putih Beach on Nusa Kambangan Island Cilacap. While these activities were enjoyable, we found issues with cleanliness at public facilities, such as toilets and shower areas. Moreover, rubbish was scattered on a white sandy beach and some floated on the water. Such degradation to the natural environment contradicts both Islamic teachings/ shariah and global sustainability values. Seeing this, we picked up some rubbish and put them in a plastic bag to be disposed of. We also maintained the cleanliness of the picnic area. Another issue arose during a jeep tour. It appeared that the helmets had been used by several visitors without proper cleaning. We had to disinfect the helmets before using them and told the operator to improve the hygiene practice. Our actions reflect personal responsibility that resonate with Maqasid al-Shariah in safeguarding nature and protecting life.

Safety was another critical factor that seemed to be neglected. During the body rafting, for example, the tour guide was more preoccupied with organising the floating tyres than looking after our safety. We had to cross parts of the river with quite a strong current from the previous day's rainfall, without any safety tools, such as ropes. The author's husband was busy helping the author, their 12-year-old daughter, and three senior aunties crossing the river. The tour guide did not explain the river conditions and safety procedures. When we encountered a sudden current,

Figure 3. Local cuisine of Yogyakarta (clockwise from top left) – (1) self-service at a local home-made cooking stall, (2) chicken meal set, (3) fried banana and coffee, (4) some local foods served at a stall. Source: Author's photos.

we were not prepared, so the author and her daughter lost one side of their sandals. After the incident, the tour guide told us that it was the point where the current was very strong. Why did he not tell us earlier? This lack of information was frustrating. Furthermore, to reach the river, we had to ride standing in the back of a pickup truck with our floating tyres. The road was rough and bumpy, and there were no proper handholds for those standing in the middle. The ride was challenging for the author's aunties, who are over 60 years old. Again, we were not informed about this condition by the tour organiser.

At a beach in Cilacap, we were approached by a local who offered to take us to a better beach on Nusa Kambangan island called Pasir Putih (White Sand Beach) – a 15 minuted boat ride. After some negotiation, we agreed on a price of IDR300,000 (USD18.50). Midway to the trip, the boat operator proposed an additional route past Nusa Kambangan Prison, often called Indonesia's Alcatraz, for an extra IDR250,000 (USD15.40). Since it was a new experience for us, we agreed this detour at a reduced price of IDR150,000 (USD9.20).

After viewing the prison, the boat continued toward Pasir Putih Beach. Along the way, the operator told us that they could not drop us directly at the beach due to some corrals that prohibits the boat from landing. They could only take us to a certain point where we had to walk 15 minutes to reach the beach. We were surprised by this new information as were initially told that they could take us straight to Pasir Putih Beach. After we complained, the boat operator dropped us off at the nearest point where the beach could be reached within five minutes walking, through an old fort, bushes, and trees. A safety issue we noticed was the insufficient life jackets for all the passengers. The author's husband could not wear one due to size limitations. It seemed that the jackets were designed only for Indonesian/ Asian body sizes.

Figure 4 shows images of the boat used to reach Nusa Kambangan Island, Pasir Putih Beach, the off-road jeep tour, a pickup truck used as transport to the Ayo River, and the body rafting activity.

We were fine with paying over IDR1,600,000 (more than USD100) for the river activities and IDR500,000 (USD30.80) for the jeep tour to support the local businesses. We also did not mind giving a monetary contribution to the locals for building roads in Gunung Kidul. Nevertheless, we expected good service, including transparent information. Lack of transparency, safety and hygiene issues can discourage tourists from using the business and revisiting the destinations. Worse, it could lead to a negative review that could potentially damage the reputation of local businesses and destinations. To raise awareness, we provided feedback to the tour operators, hoping that they could provide better services.

Figure 4. The experiences – (1) the boat used to go to Pasir Putih Beach Cilacap, (2) Pasir Putih Beach Cilacap, (3) trash at Pasir Putih Beach, (4) Merapi volcano jeep tour Yogyakarta, (5) a vehicle used to take tourists to Ayo River at Gunung Kidul Yogyakarta, (6) body rafting at Ayo River.

Figure 5. Encountering wildlife animal – monkeys at tourists' attractions.

In the context of responsible behaviour, it is important to consider how we engage with wildlife. When we visited Kaliurang, a resort area on the southern slope of Mount Merapi Yogyakarta, and Pasir Putih Beach Cilacap, we encountered monkeys (see Figure 5). It seemed that the monkeys were used to getting food from people. Their look tempted us to feed them. But we followed the rule for not feeding the monkeys and refrained from doing so. Feeding wild animals can disrupt the ecosystem as they may become dependent on humans and the food may act like fast food to them. They can become lazy and lose their natural ability to hunt for food. Moreover, our food may not be suitable for their consumption and pose risks to their health. We enjoyed the presence of the monkeys and did not disturb them or their habitats.

Discussion and conclusion

This study aims to examine the sustainable travel practices of Muslim tourists, using Indonesia as the context. The findings reveal that Indonesian Muslim tourists are likely to adopt sustainable practices when travelling as shown in their perspectives and behaviours that emphasise responsibility and social engagement. The results align with Diallo et al. (2015), who argue that social engagement and responsible tourist behaviour are closely linked, as well with Pearce and Oktadiana (2022) and Oktadiana et al. (2017), who indicated that social engagement and relationships are important to Muslim tourists.

For Muslims, social engagement is considered an act of worship through participation in social causes (e.g. helping others, giving, showing empathy, and promoting fairness) (Bagasra, 2021; Omer, 2022). Align with the survey results, the author's personal experience and narrative show concern for the community's welfare, as demonstrated by supporting local businesses through monetary contributions and dining out at local food stalls for instance. Such actions reflect both the Islamic value of charity or *sadaqah* and the broader principle of Maqasid al-Shariah which emphasises community benefits, wellbeing and promotes equality (cf. Ali, 2024; Azli et al., 2011; Campra et al., 2021), particularly the preservation of posterity and wealth.

Besides social engagement, the results indicated that Muslims have strong concerns about safety and security, as reflected in the way they respect for rules and act responsibly. Safety as a critical

sustainability element corresponds to Binns (2023) and Marciano et al. (2024). It also connects to Maqasid al-Shariah, especially al-nafs or protection life, that stresses physical safety and environmental security.

The influence of faith on the behaviour of Muslims during travel, as shown in the findings, is not dependent on gender, age, or education. This finding contradicts Özdemir Uçgun and Narcı (2022) and Vilkaite-Vaitone and Skackauskiene (2024) who asserted that gender, age, and education level affect sustainability awareness and sustainable travel behaviours, including willingness to pay more. Nevertheless, the results agreed with Diallo et al. (2015), who stated that responsible tourist behaviour is not tied to demographic factors.

Table 6 illustrates the findings derived from the survey and the autoethnography that resonate with the principles of Maqasid al-Shariah (cf. Campra et al., 2021; Zain & Zakaria, 2022).

The table exhibits that Muslims' sustainable travel practices (results both from the survey and autoethnography) are embedded in Islamic teachings, as manifested in the five principles of Maqasid Shari'ah.

In this study, the author's reflection as a female Muslim on her personal experiences enables her to critically analyse the findings by integrating the experience with survey data to understand Muslim tourists' sustainable behaviours through the lens of Islamic teachings. Reflection is viewed as an important element for assessing personal values, attitudes and perspectives shaped by past experiences (Humphreys, 2005). Moreover, recognising emotions and limitations enhances the trustworthiness and authenticity of the findings.

Table 6. The mapping of results with Maqasid al-Shariah.

Maqasid al-Shariah Principles	Survey questionnaire	Autoethnography account
Preservation of Religion (al-din)	Help society. attuned to societal issues, learn about the phenomena that affect society, pick up litter/rubbish, act responsibly, follow the rules to protect the environment	Follow the rules at attractions to protect the environment, care for and respect local people, and maintain cleanliness
	These actions reflect the fulfillment of Islamic ethical values, including community care, promoting goodness, respect for the environment, and adherence to lawful conduct.	
Preservation of Life (al-nafs)	Follow the rules to protect the environment, leave the place as clean as it was originally, pick up litter/rubbish, pay more to compensate for environmental footprint, reduce consumption	Obey and follow local rules (e.g. not feeding animals), maintain cleanliness at attractions and dining venues, provide feedback to tour operators about safety and hygiene, prefer walking to minimise car usage, and choose hotels that promote sustainable practices
	These actions relate to environmental sustainability and aim to safeguard the lives of future generations, reflecting the Islamic duty to care for Allah's creation.	
Preservation of intellect (al-aqal)	Learn about the phenomena that affect society, devote time to underprivileged people, devote time and energy to the implementation of sustainable tourism projects, participate in responsible tourism during a trip	Raise the family's awareness about not feeding wild animals, while emphasising the importance of maintaining safety and cleanliness, provide feedback and share experiences with others to promote responsible behaviour
	These practices reflect the promotion of education, awareness, and responsible behaviours, which contribute to intellectual growth and development.	
Preservation of Posterity/ Lineage (al-nasl)	Spend money for the benefit of local community, willing to invest in local projects for sustainable tourism, respect and obey the laws of local communities, devote time and energy to the implementation of sustainable tourism projects	Obey and follow local rules, respect the local culture, make monetary contributions to local business, concern on safety and cleanliness
	These acts aim to preserve a healthy environment and society for future generations.	
Preservation of Wealth (al-mal)	Buy/ use local products and services, spend money to benefit the local community, reduce consumption to help tourism, willing to invest in local projects for sustainable tourism.	Dine at local restaurants, purchase traditional crafts, support local tour operators and services, stay at national-chain hotels
	These deeds encourage responsible financial behaviour that fosters community economic growth and sustainability.	

Theoretical and practical contributions

From a theoretical perspective, this study is significant as it enriches tourism and Islamic literature, by providing insights into Muslim tourists' sustainable travel behaviour, an area that has not been expansively explored. It also offers a unique methodological approach by combining survey questionnaires with autoethnography. Furthermore, the principles of Maqasid al-Shariah are generally aligned with universal ethical values and humanities that promote people's well-being and welfare. Allah commands in the Qur'an (e,g, Qur'an 2:30; 2:60; 89:18; 28:77) for all mankind *(Ya ayyuha annas)* to look after and preserve nature and the environment, avoid corruption, maintain balance and harmony, do good, and give back to the community through *zakat* and *sadaqah* (obligatory and voluntary charities). Even the regenerative concept is strongly aligned with Maqasid al-Shariah. This suggests that Maqasid al-Shariah can serve as a sustainability/ sustainable travel behaviour framework for people of all religions and beliefs due to its universal view.

The concept of Maqasid al-Shariah in sustainability and sustainable travel behaviour can also enrich other theories, such as the Theory of Planned Behaviour and Sustainable Livelihoods Framework. The Theory of Planned Behaviour primarily focuses on the cognitive aspect and individual or personal choice (Brookes, 2023). The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework emphasises capital assets, capabilities, and activities for living and reducing poverty. Nevertheless, it does not fully address vulnerability context and power imbalances, assumes that assets can be gradually and steadily improved, and understates the probability that helping a certain group might undermine another (Serrat, 2017). Maqasid al-Shariah goes beyond cognitive, rational and materials elements. It offers a more holistic dimension that includes normative values, moral obligation, ethical responsibility, social and economic justice, and spirituality, that are ingrained in the protection of faith, life, intellect, lineage, and wealth.

Practically, the results indicate that business strategies should consider the influence of faith and Islamic teachings on Muslim tourists. Destination management organisations could develop and implement policies and programs that integrate Islamic values, such as faith-based ecotourism initiatives, socially responsible travel guidelines, and social engagement projects.

Marketers should create promotional materials that align with Islamic principles. Since faith-driven behaviour among Muslims is not affected by demographic factors such as gender, age, education level, or occupation, promotional materials can focus on the shared values among Muslims in general. For example, restaurants and hotel managers can develop a program that emphasises charity and giving back to the community, as charity *(sadaqah)* is one of Islam's five pillars. Furthermore, tourism businesses, destination management organisations, and other tourism institutions can collaborate with religious leaders to carry out promotional campaigns.

Other collaborations with religious leaders may include training programs for business professionals about the safety and transparency of information as these two factors are considered critical in Islamic teachings. The importance of individuals' well-being and protection is emphasised in Maqasid Shiar'ah (preservation of life). Islam also strongly stresses honesty and transparency in all activities and dealings.

Tourism education institutions should consider including learning materials on Muslim tourist behaviour that can be incorporated into marketing or other business subjects, especially in countries aiming to become Muslim-friendly destinations. The growth of this market certainly cannot be ignored.

Limitations and future research

The limitations of this study lie in the use of a single site and nationality. The sustainable travel behaviour of Muslims in this study's context (i.e. Indonesians) may differ from that of Muslims in oOktadianather countries – both in Muslim-majority and non-Muslim countries –due to different cultures and traditions. Future research could incorporate multiple tourism sites and countries to compare

Muslim tourists' behaviour across different regions and nationalities. Future research can also investigate the high-loading factors items by interviewing Muslim tourists to get their perspectives and analyse the influence of religious leaders and technology on their sustainable behaviours. Additionally, Muslim tourists' perceptions of sustainability can be assessed through netnography using social media, travel blogs, and online communities.

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Author contributions

CRediT: **Hera Oktadiana:** Conceptualization, Data curation, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing; **A. Faidlal Rahman:** Formal analysis, Project administration, Resources, Validation, Writing – original draft.

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