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Faith, Religiosity and Sustainable Tourism Intention: An Integrative Review of Islamic Teachings and Environmental Stewardship in the Global Halal Tourism Market

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Abstract

Muslim international arrivals are projected to reach 262 million by 2030, yet it is unclear whether Islamic teachings on trusteeship (khalifah), balance (mizan) and avoiding waste (israf) make Muslim travellers more sustainable. This integrative review assesses how strongly Islamic teachings support, and faith and religiosity influence, sustainable tourism intention across the Muslim world, and why belief does or does not become action. From Scopus and Web of Science, 322 studies were included. Support is strong as doctrine but weaker in practice. All normative studies find Islamic principles supportive of sustainable tourism, and Islamic factors consistently shape destination choice, mainly as a halal threshold. Only 23 studies examined sustainability-related outcomes at tourist level, from pro-environmental intentions to destination attributes; of 14 studies testing this link, 13 found a significant effect, mostly indirect and strongest for pro-environmental outcomes, and no study observed actual behaviour. Belief translates only partly because ritual compliance is more salient than stewardship, general religiosity is a weak proxy for environmental values, and generosity, hedonism and weak institutions compete with it. Evidence is concentrated in Indonesia and Malaysia; the Middle East, South Asia, Central Asia and Africa contribute little. A Faith-to-Footprint framework, six propositions and a research agenda follow.

1. Introduction

Muslim travellers are one of the fastest-growing segments of international tourism. Muslim international arrivals reached 176 million in 2024 and an estimated 196 million in 2025, and they are projected to reach 262 million by 2030, when annual spending is expected to reach US$310 billion [1]. Measured as outbound travel spending, the market grew from US$217 billion in 2023 to US$249 billion in 2024 and is projected to reach US$424 billion by 2029 [2, 3]. Behind these figures is a global Muslim population of about 2.0 billion people, or 25.6% of the world population in 2020 [4]. Halal tourism, which adapts travel products and services to Islamic requirements such as halal food, prayer facilities and an appropriate social environment, has therefore moved from a niche to a mainstream concern for destinations in both Muslim-majority and Muslim-minority countries [5–7].

The growth of this market raises a question that the halal tourism literature has only recently begun to address. Tourism places heavy pressure on water, energy, waste systems and fragile ecosystems, and many tourists who express concern for the environment do not act on it when they travel [8]. Religious travel is not exempt. The Hajj generates large volumes of solid and liquid waste and greenhouse gas emissions [9], and audits of the 2023 Arba'een pilgrimage in Karbala recorded about 7,900 tonnes of food waste and 4,000 tonnes of plastic [10]. If Muslim tourism grows as projected, whether Muslim travellers choose and behave in environmentally responsible ways will matter for the destinations they visit.

Islam has much to say on this question. The Qur'an describes human beings as trustees (*khalifah*) on earth, presents creation as held in balance (*mizan*) and condemns waste (*israf*) and corruption of the land and sea (*fasad*) [11]. Contemporary scholarship on Islamic environmental ethics argues that these principles provide both a reason and a practical guide for protecting the environment [12, 13]. Yet halal tourism research has mostly treated Islam as a set of compliance requirements to be met by destinations,

and has mostly measured whether these requirements raise visit, revisit and recommendation intentions [14, 15]. Whether Islamic teachings and Muslim religiosity also encourage sustainable choices, and how strongly, has not been synthesised. The industry is moving in this direction: the Global Muslim Travel Index now scores destinations on environmental and social sustainability within its Environment pillar [1].

Three limitations of this literature motivate the present review. First, the central question has been overlooked: research has asked whether Muslim travellers will visit a destination, rather than whether, how and why religious belief becomes a sense of environmental responsibility, and whether that responsibility translates into sustainable travel intention. Second, the strength of Islamic influence has not been assessed across studies. Individual studies report positive, null and moderating effects, but no review has graded how consistent these effects are or separated the normative support that Islam provides from its measured influence on tourists. Third, the evidence is fragmented by country, and Muslim tourist markets have not been compared across the Muslim world to show where findings can and cannot be generalised. The link between religious belief, environmental responsibility and sustainable travel intention is therefore the central gap that this review addresses.

This review addresses these gaps. It asks how far Islam supports and influences sustainable tourism intention, and it does so across the whole Muslim travel market rather than a single country, covering Muslim-majority destinations of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and Muslim-minority destinations that court Muslim visitors. Four research questions guide the review:

RQ1. What normative support do Islamic teachings provide for sustainable tourism?

RQ2. How strongly, and through which pathways, do Islamic factors (religiosity, Islamic values and halal or Islamic destination attributes) influence tourists' travel intentions and behaviour?

RQ3. How strongly, through which mechanisms and under which conditions do Islamic factors influence sustainable, pro-environmental or responsible tourist intentions and behaviour, and why does religious belief not always become sustainable action?

RQ4. How is halal tourism linked to sustainability at the level of destinations, institutions and the market, and what framework and research agenda follow from the evidence?

To answer these questions, the review combines a documented search of Scopus and Web of Science, screening of 1,490 unique records, an evidence map of 322 included studies and an integrative synthesis of the studies that link Islam with sustainable tourism. It makes four contributions. First, it maps where and how the field has examined Islam and tourist behaviour across the Muslim world, and shows how little of it has measured sustainable outcomes. Second, it grades how strongly Islam supports and influences sustainable tourism at five levels, from doctrine to destination practice. Third, it explains how and why faith translates, or fails to translate, into sustainable tourism intention, and compares the evidence across the regions of the Muslim world. Fourth, it proposes an integrated framework, the Faith-to-Footprint framework, with testable propositions and a research agenda.

2. Conceptual Background

2.1. Islamic Environmental Ethics

Islamic environmental ethics rests on a small number of interlinked principles [12, 13]. *Tawhid*, the oneness of God, implies that nature belongs to God and that its parts are signs (*ayat*) of the Creator. *Khalifah* describes human beings as successors or trustees on earth (Qur'an 2:30; 6:165), and *amanah* describes the trust that they have accepted and for which they will be held accountable (Qur'an 33:72). *Mizan* refers to the balance in which creation was set and which people are told not to transgress (Qur'an 55:7–9). The Qur'an forbids excess and waste (*israf* and *tabdhir*; Qur'an 6:141; 7:31; 17:26–27) and attributes the corruption (*fasad*) that appears on land and sea to human actions (Qur'an 30:41) [11]. Travel itself is framed as a means of reflection: believers are asked to travel through the land and observe how creation began (Qur'an 29:20).

Islamic jurisprudence connects these principles with practice through the objectives of the Shariah (*maqasid al-shariah*), which protect religion, life, intellect, progeny and wealth. Several of the included studies extend this reasoning to tourism, either directly through the maqasid [16–18] or through an Islamic jurisprudence of the environment (*fiqh al-bi'ah*) [19, 20]. Table 1 summarises the principles and the tourist behaviours to which they most directly apply.

These principles are not confined to scholarship; religious authorities across the Muslim world have begun to translate them into public positions. The Islamic Declaration on Global Climate Change, adopted at an international symposium in Istanbul in 2015 and endorsed by scholars from about 20 countries, called on Muslims to respect the balance of creation and recognised a moral obligation to conserve it [21]. In 2014, the Indonesian Council of Ulama issued a fatwa that declared the illegal hunting and trade of endangered species forbidden in order to maintain the balance of ecosystems [22]. In 2024, *Al-Mizan: A Covenant for the Earth*, published with the United Nations Environment Programme, presented environmental stewardship as a responsibility of Muslims and called for conservation, moderation and environmental justice [23]. None of these statements addresses tourism directly, however, and none of the included studies examined whether Muslim travellers know of them or respond to them. The normative resources therefore exist at the level of doctrine and religious authority, but whether they reach travel decisions is an empirical question.

Table 1
Islamic environmental principles and the tourist behaviours they address

Principle	Meaning	Qur'anic basis	Implications for tourist behaviour
Khalifah (trusteeship)	Humans are entrusted with the earth	2:30; 6:165	Responsibility for impacts at the destination; care for nature and heritage
Amanah (trust)	Accountability for what is entrusted	33:72	Following rules in protected areas; honest use of shared resources
Mizan (balance)	Creation is balanced and must not be disturbed	55:7–9	Avoiding overuse of water, energy and fragile sites; respecting carrying capacity
Prohibition of *israf* and *tabdhir* (excess and waste)	Moderation in consumption	6:141; 7:31; 17:26–27	Reducing food and plastic waste; frugal use of hotel resources
Avoidance of *fasad* (corruption)	Human actions can corrupt land and sea	30:41	Avoiding pollution and damage to ecosystems
Travel for reflection (*sir fi al-ard*)	Travel as contemplation of creation	29:20	Nature-based and heritage travel valued for reflection rather than consumption
Maqasid al-shariah	Protection of religion, life, intellect, progeny and wealth	Jurisprudential	Judging tourism by its effects on community welfare and future generations

2.2. Halal Tourism and Muslim-Friendly Tourism

Halal tourism refers to tourism products and services that allow Muslim travellers to travel in accordance with Islamic teachings, and the related term Muslim-friendly tourism describes destinations that provide for these needs without necessarily being fully Shariah-compliant [5, 7]. Research in this field has concentrated on Islamic or halal destination attributes, such as halal food, prayer facilities, an appropriate social environment and the absence of alcohol and gambling, and on whether these attributes influence Muslim tourists' choices, satisfaction and loyalty [14, 15]. Religiosity, the degree to which a person holds and practises religious beliefs, has been treated as a driver of these choices and as a moderator of how destination attributes are evaluated [15]. The scope of the field has widened from Muslim-majority destinations to Muslim-minority destinations in East Asia, Europe and Oceania that seek Muslim visitors [6].

2.3. The Muslim Travel Market

Table 2 summarises current indicators of the market. The Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) ranks Malaysia first, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye jointly second, and Singapore as the highest-ranked destination outside the OIC [1]. The index scores destinations on access, communication, environment and services, and its Environment pillar now includes a sustainability criterion that assesses environmental and

social sustainability initiatives, with a 5% weight [1]. Sustainability is therefore already part of how the market judges Muslim-friendly destinations, although with a small weight.

Table 2
Indicators of the Muslim travel market

Indicator	Value	Source
Muslim population (2020)	About 2.0 billion; 25.6% of the world population	[4]
Muslim international arrivals	176 million (2024); 196 million (2025); 208 million projected (2026); 262 million projected (2030)	[1]
Projected annual spending of Muslim international travellers	US$310 billion by 2030	[1]
Muslim outbound travel spending	US$217 billion (2023); US$249 billion (2024); US$424 billion projected (2029)	[2, 3]
Leading destinations (GMTI 2026)	Malaysia first; Indonesia, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye joint second; Singapore highest outside the OIC	[1]
Sustainability in the GMTI	Sustainability criterion within the Environment pillar (5% weight)	[1]

2.4. Theoretical Integration: From Islamic Teachings to Sustainable Intention

Three theories help to explain how religion could shape sustainable travel. The theory of planned behaviour explains intentions through attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control [24]. The norm activation model explains pro-social and pro-environmental behaviour through awareness of consequences, ascribed responsibility and personal norms [25], and the value–belief–norm theory links values to environmental beliefs and personal norms [26].

These theories can be integrated into one chain that specifies how Islamic teachings could become sustainable tourism intention. In the value–belief–norm sequence, values come first: the principles of *khalifah*, *amanah* and the prohibition of *israf* provide Islamic environmental values, a religiously grounded orientation in which nature is held in trust [12, 26]. In the norm activation model, such values matter only when they are activated. A traveller must recognise that a travel choice has environmental consequences (awareness of consequences) and accept personal responsibility for them (ascribed responsibility), which *khalifah* and *amanah* frame as accountability before God [25]. The activated value then becomes a personal norm, a felt moral obligation, which drives sustainable tourism intention. The theory of planned behaviour supplies a parallel and more deliberative route: Islamic teachings can also shape attitudes towards sustainable travel options, subjective norms through religious communities and leaders, and perceived behavioural control through practical knowledge of how to travel sustainably [24]. The two routes meet at intention.

This integration leads to three expectations that guide the synthesis. First, Islamic environmental values should predict sustainable intention more strongly than general religiosity, because they correspond to the

value stage of the chain. Second, the effect of Islamic values should pass through awareness of consequences, ascribed responsibility and personal norms rather than act directly. Third, where travellers lack awareness of consequences or practical control, strong faith should not translate into sustainable intention. The theories were used to interpret the evidence; the review did not require included studies to use them.

3. Review Method

3.1. Review Design

The review is an integrative review, a design suited to fields in which evidence comes from different methods and in which the aim is to build a conceptual framework rather than to estimate a single pooled effect [27–29]. Identification, screening and inclusion are reported following the PRISMA 2020 statement [30]. The review was not registered, and no protocol was prepared; the completed PRISMA 2020 checklist is provided in ESM 1. Because the included studies use different measures and designs, the results were synthesised by counting the direction of reported effects and by comparing mechanisms across studies, not by meta-analysis.

3.2. Sources and Search Strategy

The search was run in Scopus on 3 November 2026 and in the Web of Science Core Collection on 7 November 2026. In Scopus it covered titles, abstracts and keywords, and in Web of Science it covered all fields. Both searches combined three blocks: an Islamic block, a tourism block and a block covering sustainability and intention. The Scopus string was:

TITLE-ABS-KEY (islam* OR muslim* OR halal OR shariah OR sharia OR syariah OR "muslim-friendly" OR khalifah OR khalifa OR vicegeren* OR amanah OR maqasid OR quran*) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (touris* OR travel* OR hospitality OR hotel* OR destination* OR visitor* OR ecotouris*) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (sustainab* OR "pro-environmental" OR "environmentally responsible" OR "responsible touris*" OR "responsible travel*" OR green OR "eco-friendly" OR environment* OR conservation OR stewardship OR "low-carbon" OR overtourism OR intention* OR "behavio* intention*" OR "destination choice" OR "visit intention*" OR "revisit intention*") AND PUBYEAR > 1999 AND PUBYEAR < 2027 AND LANGUAGE (english) AND DOCTYPE (ar OR re OR cp)

In Scopus, the search was limited to English-language articles, reviews and conference papers published from 2000 to the search date and returned 1,003 records. The same three blocks were searched in all fields of Web of Science:

ALL=(islam* OR muslim* OR halal OR shariah OR sharia OR syariah OR "muslim-friendly" OR khalifah OR khalifa OR vicegeren* OR amanah OR maqasid OR quran*) AND ALL=(touris* OR travel* OR hospitality OR hotel* OR destination* OR visitor* OR ecotouris*) AND ALL=(sustainab* OR "pro-environmental" OR "environmentally responsible" OR "responsible touris*" OR "responsible travel*" OR green OR "eco-friendly"

OR environment* OR conservation OR stewardship OR "low-carbon" OR overtourism OR intention* OR "behavio* intention*" OR "destination choice" OR "visit intention*" OR "revisit intention*")

The Web of Science search returned 1,079 records. The Scopus limits were applied to this set, which removed 64 records (46 not in English, 5 published before 2000 and 13 of other document types), and 528 records already retrieved from Scopus were removed as duplicates by DOI and title, leaving 487 unique records. Because an all-fields search also matches author addresses, funding statements and source titles, it retrieved some records outside the topic, which were removed at screening. In total, 2,082 records were identified and 1,490 unique records were screened. Scopus and Web of Science were chosen because they are the two largest curated multidisciplinary citation databases, together cover the main tourism, hospitality and Islamic studies journals, and support the Boolean, truncation and field syntax needed to reproduce the search exactly.

3.3. Eligibility Criteria

A study was included if it met three criteria. First, it was set in tourism, travel, hospitality or a visitor destination, or it examined the ethics of tourism. Second, it examined an Islamic factor: Islamic teachings or values, the religiosity of Muslim travellers, halal, Muslim-friendly or Shariah-compliant attributes, or Muslim travellers as a defined group. Third, it addressed either a sustainable, environmental or responsible dimension of tourism, at the level of tourists, destinations or institutions, or tourists' intentions or behaviour, such as visit, revisit, purchase, loyalty or recommendation. Peer-reviewed articles, reviews and conference papers in English were eligible.

Studies were excluded if they were not about tourism or hospitality; did not examine an Islamic factor (including studies that mentioned a Muslim country only as a setting); dealt with medical or public health topics, including those of pilgrimage; dealt only with architecture, heritage conservation or history without a tourist or sustainability focus; examined only employees, operators or residents without a link to sustainability; were technical or computational; analysed financial markets; or examined halal or Islamic tourism supply, marketing or regulation without a sustainability or intention outcome. Studies that measured only satisfaction, perception or experience were excluded from the intention stream. Reviews and bibliometric analyses were read for background and discussion but were not coded as primary evidence.

3.4. Study Selection

Study selection followed the same procedure throughout. Two authors independently screened the titles, abstracts and keywords of all 1,490 records against the eligibility criteria, compared their decisions and resolved every disagreement by discussion until consensus was reached. The consensus decision, with one main reason for each exclusion, was recorded as the final decision. This procedure reports the information that PRISMA 2020 requires on study selection, namely how many reviewers screened each record and whether they worked independently, together with how disagreements were resolved [30]. The decision and the reason for every record were recorded, so that each decision can be checked. Figure 1 shows the flow of records.

3.5. Coding and Synthesis

Each included study was coded with a standard coding form for its evidence stream, the Islamic construct examined, the outcome, the country or countries, and the research design. Coding followed the same procedure as selection: the two authors coded each study independently, compared their codes and resolved disagreements by discussion, and the consensus codes were recorded. Four streams were defined. Stream A contains normative and conceptual work on Islamic teachings and sustainable tourism. Stream B-S contains empirical studies that examine an Islamic factor together with a sustainable, pro-environmental or responsible dimension at the level of tourists, either as an outcome or as a perceived attribute of the destination. Stream B-G contains empirical studies that relate an Islamic factor to general travel intentions or behaviour, such as visit, revisit, loyalty and recommendation. Stream C contains studies of halal or Islamic tourism and sustainability at the level of destinations, institutions and the market. Outcomes were coded at the level of tourists, so that sustainability outcomes measured at the level of destinations or institutions were assigned to Stream C rather than counted as tourist outcomes. Countries were grouped into OIC member states and other countries. Studies in Streams A, B-G and C were coded from their bibliographic records, which was sufficient to map their design, setting, constructs and outcomes; the studies in Stream B-S were coded from their full texts where these could be retrieved (Section 3.6).

For studies that tested relationships, the direction of each reported effect of an Islamic factor was coded as positive (direct or indirect), not significant, or moderating. In Stream B-S, only relationships in which an Islamic factor predicted a sustainable, pro-environmental or responsible outcome, or moderated a relationship involving such an outcome or attribute, were counted. Because effect sizes and model specifications differed too much to allow pooling, these codes were used to count results across studies, and a study was counted only when it reported the direction of the relevant effect. The codes were then compared across studies to identify mechanisms, boundary conditions and gaps, which formed the basis of the framework and propositions in Section 6.

3.6. Full-Text Assessment and Quality Appraisal

Stream B-S answers the central question of the review, so its studies were assessed in full text. The full texts of all 31 studies were sought through publisher platforms, the authors' institutional library and open repositories, and 26 were retrieved. From each retrieved study, the two authors extracted the design, sample, setting, measures, tested relationships with their coefficients and significance, non-significant results and stated limitations. The coded direction of each effect was then checked against the reported model and corrected where the full text showed a different result, for example an effect that was only indirect, or a non-significant direct effect accompanied by a significant indirect one. The five studies whose full texts could not be retrieved [31–35] were retained in the evidence map, are marked in Table 5, and were not appraised; Section 5.3 reports how the results change when they are excluded.

The methodological quality of the retrieved studies was appraised with the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT), version 2018 [36], which is designed for reviews that combine qualitative, quantitative and mixed-

methods studies. Each study was assigned to its MMAT category and rated on the five criteria of that category as yes, no or can't tell. Following the guidance of the tool's developers, no overall score was calculated, and ratings are reported criterion by criterion. The two authors rated each study independently and resolved disagreements by discussion. The ratings were used to interpret the strength of the evidence, not to exclude studies.

4. Evidence Map

The 322 included studies are summarised in Table 3 and Fig. 2. The field is recent and growing quickly: 48 studies were published up to 2019 and 201 (62%) were published from 2023 onwards. The largest stream is Stream B-G, with 205 studies that relate Islamic factors to general travel intentions. Stream C contains 74 studies of halal tourism and sustainability at the level of destinations, institutions and the market, and Stream A contains 12 normative and conceptual studies. Only 31 studies (10%) examine an Islamic factor together with sustainability at the level of tourists, and only 23 of them measured a sustainable outcome. The evidence that bears most directly on the central question of this review is therefore the smallest part of the field.

Most studies are quantitative (214 studies), mainly cross-sectional surveys analysed with structural equation modelling; 40 are qualitative, 42 use mixed methods, and 26 are conceptual, normative or descriptive. Halal or Islamic destination attributes are the most frequently examined Islamic construct (125 studies), followed by religiosity (61) and Islamic values or teachings (46). Visit or purchase intention is the most common outcome (136 studies), followed by revisit or repurchase intention (73); 23 studies, all in Stream B-S, measured a sustainable, pro-environmental or responsible outcome at the level of tourists. The other 8 studies in Stream B-S examined sustainability as a perceived attribute of the destination or as the context of the study, and sustainability outcomes at the level of destinations and institutions are covered by Stream C. Almost all tourist-level outcomes are self-reported intentions or attitudes; no included study observed tourists' environmental behaviour directly, and the only measured environmental data come from destination-level waste audits and emission estimates [9, 10, 37].

The studies cover 16 OIC member states and 13 other countries. Indonesia dominates, with 128 studies, followed by Malaysia (39). In total, 198 studies are set only in OIC countries, 41 include at least one non-OIC destination, such as Thailand, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, the United Kingdom or Spain, and 83 do not name a country in their title, abstract or keywords. Studies from the Middle East, North Africa, Central Asia and sub-Saharan Africa are few. The evidence on Muslim travellers is therefore largely Southeast Asian, which limits how far its conclusions can be generalised to the wider Muslim world. The journals with the most included studies are Journal of Islamic Marketing (56), International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage (9) and Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research (9).

Table 3
Evidence map of the 322 included studies

Dimension	Category	Studies (n)
Evidence stream	A. Normative and conceptual: Islamic teachings and sustainable tourism	12
	B-S. Islamic factor and sustainability at tourist level (outcome or perceived attribute)	31
	B-G. Islamic factor and general travel intention or behaviour	205
	C. Halal tourism and sustainability: destinations, institutions and market	74
Islamic construct (a study may have several)	Halal or Islamic destination attributes	125
	Religiosity	61
	Islamic values or teachings	46
	Halal awareness or literacy	16
	Islamic or halal destination image	7
	Muslim travellers as a group (no specific construct)	124
Outcome (a study may have several)	Visit or purchase intention	136
	Revisit or repurchase intention	73
	Loyalty	45
	Word of mouth or recommendation	61
	Sustainable, pro-environmental or responsible outcome (tourist level; all in Stream B-S)	23
	of which: pro-environmental behaviour, intention, attitude or concern	11
	of which: broader sustainable or responsible tourism behaviour or intention	5
	of which: perceived sustainability attribute linked to satisfaction, loyalty or intention	7
Design	Quantitative	214
	Qualitative	40
	Mixed methods	42
	Conceptual, normative or descriptive	26

Dimension	Category	Studies (n)
Setting	OIC member states only	198
	Non-OIC destinations only	28
	Both OIC and non-OIC destinations	13
	Not specified	83
Total		322

5. Findings

5.1. Normative Support: What Islamic Teachings Offer Sustainable Tourism (RQ1)

All 12 normative and conceptual studies conclude that Islamic teachings support sustainable tourism, but they ground this support in different principles. One line of work derives sustainability from the moral purpose of Islamic tourism. Hassib & Ibtissem [38] asks what the vision of Islam implies for tourism, development and nature conservation and argues that Islamic tourism can be developed in a practical form that is consistent with that vision. Elhadary [39] proposes a sustainable Muslim model built on the concept of *khairiyyah* (goodliness) and finds that its teachings are relevant to current sustainability problems and applicable to Muslim and non-Muslim communities that develop tourism.

A second line uses the objectives of the Shariah to judge tourism by its effects on welfare. Studies of mangrove ecotourism in Surabaya [16] and of nature-based ecotourism in Indonesian villages [40] use *maqasid al-shariah* as a normative foundation for environmental governance, and the latter reports that tourism profits were channelled into Islamic social finance (*zakat*, *infaq* and *sadaqah*) for village infrastructure. A third line finds the sources of sustainable practice in local Islamic traditions. Javanese Islamic ascetic values held by the community of Gunung Kemukus were found to help preserve both the environment and local rituals against destructive tourism patterns [41], and religion and sustainable tourism principles were described as complementary foundations for halal tourism development in Indonesia [42].

The normative literature also shows the limits of this support. Islam frames travel as reflection on the signs of creation rather than as consumption [43, 44], but where Islam shapes the state, tourism policy, marketing and gender norms create tensions that complicate tourism outside pilgrimage [45]. Hospitality students in Malaysia showed only moderate awareness of the link between Islamic teachings and environmental protection [46], which suggests that the normative potential of these teachings is not automatically realised.

5.2. Islamic Factors and Travel Intention (RQ2)

Stream B-G is large but answers a narrower question: whether Islamic factors make Muslim travellers more likely to choose, revisit or recommend a destination. Table 4 counts the reported results of the studies that tested these relationships. Because the studies in this stream were mapped from their bibliographic records, non-significant results may be under-reported, so the consistency of these counts is likely to be overstated.

Table 4
Direction of reported effects of Islamic factors (studies that reported the direction of the effect)

Relationship	Positive (direct or indirect)	Not significant or outweighed	Partly significant	Moderating effect	Studies (n)
Religiosity or Islamic values → travel intention or behaviour (Stream B-G)	20	5	–	7 significant; 2 not significant	34
Halal or Islamic destination attributes → intention, loyalty or their antecedents (Stream B-G)	40	8	6	–	54
Islamic factor → sustainable, pro-environmental or responsible outcome (Stream B-S)	5 direct; 7 indirect	1	–	1 significant	14

Religiosity and Islamic values. In 20 of the 34 studies, religiosity or Islamic values increased travel intention, either directly or through attitudes, trust or satisfaction. Religiosity raised the intention to visit halal destinations in Indonesia [47, 48], the intention to switch to halal tourism [49] and the intention to travel in a Muslim-minority region [50], and Islamic values raised visit intention in Aceh both directly and through attitudes [51]. Religious commitment worked through attitudes towards halal hotels [52] and towards halal food while travelling abroad [53], and Islamic religiosity shaped the travel preferences of Muslim students [54]. Several studies found that the effect is indirect. Religiosity predicted satisfaction and trust, which then predicted revisit intention [55], and in a study of Muslim travellers in Las Vegas religiosity had no direct effect on intentions but shaped them through more negative attitudes and stronger perceived disapproval of gambling-related services [56].

In 5 studies, religiosity had no significant effect. Religiosity did not affect the intention of Indonesian Muslims to visit non-Muslim destinations, which led the authors to suggest that experience, access and service quality may matter more than religious considerations [57], and it did not affect revisit intention to halal tourism in Yogyakarta [58] or intention in a technology acceptance model of halal tourism, where halal knowledge was significant [59]. Religiosity also affected the perceived risk of non-Islamic destinations but not attitudes or the perceived Islamic value of those destinations [60]. In a further 7 studies, religiosity acted mainly as a moderator. It strengthened the link between perceived value and satisfaction [61] or trust [62], moderated the effect of Shariah-compliant facilities and interior design on revisit intention [63], and weakened the effect of Korean popular media on Muslim women's intention to

visit South Korea [64]. In a study of virtual-reality tours of Islamic heritage, its moderating effect was significant but small [65].

Halal and Islamic destination attributes. Halal attributes were associated with more positive outcomes in 40 of 54 studies, usually indirectly, through perceived value, trust, destination image, satisfaction or memorable experiences [66–70]. These effects held in Muslim-minority destinations such as Japan, the United Kingdom and Thailand [66, 71, 72] and among non-Muslim tourists, for whom halal attributes also raised satisfaction [73]. When attributes were tested separately, however, only some were significant [74–76]. Halal food was not significant for destination selection but was significant for revisit intention and length of stay [77], and in 8 studies halal or Muslim-friendly attributes were not significant or were outweighed by other factors. Muslim-friendly amenities did not affect Kuwaiti travellers' choice of Islamic destinations [78], conventional attributes rather than Islamic ones drove Muslim tourists' satisfaction in South Korea [79], and recreation experiences outweighed halal experiences among Indonesian domestic tourists [80]. In Aceh, halal tourism attributes had no direct effect on revisit intention, whereas broader Shariah compliance did, which the authors interpret as a sign that halal attributes are basic expectations in a Shariah-governed destination [81]. A Malaysian study of spiritual journeys reached a similar conclusion for Islamic values and satisfaction [82].

Taken together, these results suggest that Islam influences travel intention mainly as a threshold and a filter. Halal assurance and Islamic values make a destination acceptable and trustworthy to Muslim travellers, and religiosity changes how strongly other features are weighed. Once halal needs are met, intentions depend on the same factors as for other tourists: experience, value, image and trust [57, 68, 80].

5.3. Islamic Factors and Sustainable Tourist Behaviour (RQ3)

Of the 31 studies in Stream B-S, 23 measured a sustainable outcome at tourist level, and these outcomes differ in how closely they reflect environmental sustainability (Table 3): 11 measured pro-environmental behaviour, intention, attitude or concern; five measured sustainable or responsible tourism behaviour or intention more broadly, including cultural, social and consumer responsibility; and seven measured a perceived sustainability attribute of the destination in relation to satisfaction, loyalty or intention. Loyalty and repurchase intention are not environmental behaviour in themselves, so studies in the last category show only that sustainability features matter to Muslim travellers, not that Islamic factors make them act more sustainably.

Of the 23 studies, 14 tested a relationship between an Islamic factor and such an outcome and reported its direction; the others were qualitative or descriptive, or did not test an Islamic factor. Each study was counted once, by the strongest form of evidence it reported for the Islamic factor. Five studies reported a significant direct effect, seven a significant indirect effect only, one a significant moderating effect that strengthened a positive relationship, and one no significant effect. Thus 13 of the 14 studies found a significant effect of the Islamic factor, and all of these effects ran in the expected direction. The evidence is strongest for pro-environmental outcomes, where all seven studies that tested the link found a

significant effect, and weakest for perceived sustainability attributes, where two of the three did. Table 5 summarises the key studies that report the setting, sample, Islamic factor, outcome and finding.

Table 5
Key studies linking Islamic factors with sustainable tourist outcomes

Study	Setting	Design and sample	Islamic factor	Sustainability dimension (category)	Main finding
Hermawan et al. [83]	Indonesia	Survey; 174 Muslim tourists	Islamic environmental values (with norm activation)	Pro-environmental behaviour intention at halal destinations (E)	Islamic environmental values significant directly (β = 0.173) and through personal norms (β = 0.337); model explains 73.6% of intention
Islam et al. [34]†	Bangladesh	Survey; 665 Muslim and Hindu travellers	Religiosity	Pro-environmental behaviour at home and intention during travel (E)	Religiosity contributes to both, for both faiths
Oktadiana & Rahman [18]	Indonesia	Mixed methods; survey of 409 Muslim tourists and autoethnography	Maqasid al-Shariah (interpretive framework)	Sustainable travel practices (S)	Respondents endorsed responsible practices, most strongly keeping sites clean and following environmental rules; the authors mapped these practices onto the five maqasid; faith was not measured
Dewi et al. [20]	Indonesia (Yogyakarta)	Survey; 258 Muslim tourists	Environmental fiqh norms	Environmentally responsible behaviour (E)	Islamic environmental norms raised personal norms; behaviour followed through attitudes, while personal norms had no direct effect

Study	Setting	Design and sample	Islamic factor	Sustainability dimension (category)	Main finding
Ro'is et al. [84]	Indonesia (Rinjani–Lombok Geopark)	Survey; 235 Muslim tourists	Religious centrality (moderator)	Willingness to pay for conservation (E)	Trust drives payment; religiosity strengthens and overtourism weakens this link
Suhartanto, Dean, Amin, et al. [85]	Indonesia (Riau)	Survey; 234 young Muslim tourists	Religiosity	Attitude towards mangrove ecotourism (E)	Indirect effect through consumption value, environmental concern and knowledge
Suhud, Unarto, et al. [86]	Indonesia (Dieng Plateau)	Survey; 217 visitors	Religious commitment	Environmental concern and visit intention (E)	Religious commitment raises environmental concern and social influence
Patrisia et al. [87]	Indonesia (West Sumatra)	Survey; 500 Muslim travellers	Religiosity	Environmental awareness and halal culinary repurchase (E)	Religiosity drives environmental awareness, attitude, resilience and self-efficacy
Zulvianti et al. [88]	Indonesia (West Sumatra)	Survey; 310 visitors	Religiosity (moderator)	Loyalty to halal destinations (A)	Perceived environmental value raises loyalty; religiosity moderates satisfaction–loyalty
Bt Mohamed Sadom et al. [89]	Malaysia	Survey; 222 Muslim hotel guests	Islamic ideal of frugality (avoidance of waste)	Frugal consumption in hotels (E)	Environmental advertising and green attitude increase frugality; religious appeals not tested
Abdelghani et al. [31]†	Egypt (Mamluk heritage)	Survey; 215 visitors	Islamic cultural heritage value	Sustainable heritage tourism intention (S)	Heritage value explains 62.5% of

Study	Setting	Design and sample	Islamic factor	Sustainability dimension (category)	Main finding
					variance in intention
Wijaya, Sarastiani, et al. [90]	Indonesia	Survey; 273 Muslim travellers	Obedient (Islamic) values	Behavioural intention and perceived sustainability of Muslim-friendly destinations (A)	Significant for intention; no direct effect on sustainability, indirect effect through intention (β = 0.113)
Suhud, Sugianto Sihotang, et al. [91]	Indonesia	Survey; 256 Muslim tourists	Halal destination attributes	Destination sustainability awareness; visit intention (A)	Halal attributes raised sustainability awareness and trust; sustainability awareness raised visit intention
Asbollali et al. [92]	Malaysia (Port Dickson)	25 interviews and observation	Ethical-spiritual and stewardship logics	Coastal leisure practices (E)	Gratitude, modesty and care for cleanliness organise women's coastal experiences

Category: E = pro-environmental behaviour, intention, attitude or concern; S = broader sustainable or responsible tourism behaviour or intention; A = perceived sustainability attribute linked to satisfaction, loyalty or intention. † Full text not retrieved; data charted from the published record and not appraised.

Excluding the five studies whose full texts could not be retrieved leaves 11 of 12 studies with a significant effect (92%), so the direction of the findings does not depend on them. The quality appraisal qualifies the pattern, however (Appendix A, Table A1). All 21 quantitative studies were cross-sectional surveys; 14 relied on purposive, judgemental or self-selected samples, and in a further 6 the representativeness of the sample could not be judged (MMAT criterion 4.2). Nonresponse was reported and acceptable in only 5 (criterion 4.4). Measurement was generally sound: 16 reported adequate reliability and validity (criterion 4.3), although one study reported no psychometric tests at all [93]. The qualitative studies met all or nearly all criteria, whereas none of the three mixed-methods studies met the criterion on the quality of its individual components (criterion 5.5). The evidence is therefore consistent in direction but rests mostly on non-probability samples of young, educated Indonesian travellers, which limits how far it can be generalised more than it limits the direction of the findings.

Three pathways emerge. The first is normative. When Islamic environmental values are added to the norm activation model, they raise Muslim tourists' pro-environmental intentions at halal destinations both directly and through personal norms, and together with awareness, responsibility and subjective norms explain 73.6% of the variance in intention [83]. Norms derived from Islamic environmental jurisprudence strengthened personal norms and attitudes, but environmentally responsible behaviour followed through attitudes rather than directly through personal norms [20], and Islamic local wisdom raised tourists' sense of Islamic socio-cultural responsibility at ten priority halal destinations in Indonesia [94]. A mixed-methods study mapped the responsible practices endorsed by 409 Indonesian Muslim tourists onto the five objectives of the Shariah, although it did not measure faith itself [18]. Among 600 Muslim and non-Muslim tourists in India, Islamic marketing appeals strengthened attitudes, subjective norms and perceived control, through which they raised sustainable tourism behaviour [95].

The second pathway is cognitive and runs through environmental concern and knowledge. Religiosity raised environmental concern among visitors to the Dieng Plateau [86] and environmental awareness among Muslim travellers in West Sumatra [87]. Among young Muslim tourists in Riau, religiosity influenced attitudes towards mangrove ecotourism only indirectly, by increasing consumption value, environmental concern and knowledge [85]. A comparison of Muslim and Hindu travellers in Bangladesh found that religiosity contributed to pro-environmental behaviour at home and to pro-environmental intentions during travel in both faiths [34], which suggests that the effect is not unique to Islam but reflects religiosity more generally.

The third pathway is relational and institutional. Faith-aligned experiences in urban parks raised satisfaction, which in turn raised both loyalty and responsible consumption among young Muslim visitors [96]. In the Rinjani–Lombok UNESCO Global Geopark, Muslim tourists' willingness to pay for conservation depended on their trust in governance, which fairness strengthened and greenwashing undermined; religious centrality strengthened the link between trust and payment, while perceived overtourism weakened it [84]. Religiosity can therefore amplify sustainable intentions when institutions are credible, but it does not replace credible institutions.

The evidence also contains null and mixed results. Obedient Islamic values raised behavioural intention but had no direct effect on the perceived sustainability of Muslim-friendly destinations in Indonesia; their influence passed only through intention [90]. Sustainable tourism development did not affect satisfaction at a halal destination, although it affected electronic word of mouth [97], and its mediating role in West Sumatra was only partial [98]. Frugality among Muslim hotel guests in Malaysia, a behaviour that corresponds to the Islamic prohibition of waste, was driven by environmental advertising and green attitudes rather than by religious appeals, which the study did not test [89]. Qualitative work adds that Muslim women's coastal leisure in Malaysia is organised around gratitude, modesty and care for cleanliness [92], and that gender and religion shape what female Muslim tourists seek in a destination [99].

5.4. Halal Tourism and Sustainability at Destination and Market Level (RQ4)

The 74 studies in Stream C examine whether halal tourism is organised in sustainable ways. Four themes stand out.

Governance and regulation. Several studies use the *maqasid* to evaluate halal tourism regulation [17, 100, 101], and one concludes that regulation grounded in them encourages ethical conduct, environmental care and social inclusion [17]. Others document regulatory ambiguity, fragmented policies and limited involvement of local communities in Indonesia and Uzbekistan [102], reluctance of local governments in Madura to formalise halal tourism [101], and conflicts between economic interests and cultural preservation at Labuan Bajo [103]. At the household level, Islamic religiosity was associated with a more positive attitude towards sustainable tourism development among residents in Pakistan [104].

Community-based halal tourism and Islamic social finance. Halal tourism villages and community-based halal ecotourism in Indonesia and Malaysia combine Islamic values with local wisdom and resource conservation [19, 105–107]. A distinctive contribution of this stream is the use of Islamic social finance. Studies of productive and green *waqf* (endowment) show how endowment assets can finance halal tourism and its infrastructure, while also showing that regulation and standardisation are needed [108–110].

Green practices in halal hospitality. The evidence on hotels is sobering. Green practices were scarce in Malaysian halal hotels, which emphasised neither halal attributes nor green practices [111]. In Indonesian Shariah hotels, the implementation of “green Islam” varied with institutional capacity and leadership, and Shariah-hotel certification did not address food waste [112]. In Arab hospitality, plate waste persists despite religious teaching against waste, because generosity towards guests is expressed through excess [113]. Halal certification bodies, by contrast, improved the sustainability performance of culinary supply chains when combined with halal marketing [114].

Environmental footprint of Muslim travel. Religious travel has measurable environmental costs. The Hajj generates large amounts of waste, uses scarce fresh water and produces substantial greenhouse gas emissions [9]. In Saudi Arabia, pilgrim numbers, energy use and higher temperatures were associated with higher energy consumption and carbon dioxide emissions [37, 115], and in a panel of 13 Muslim countries tourism was associated with higher carbon dioxide emissions [116]. The 2023 Arba’een pilgrimage produced 0.36 kg of food waste and 0.18 kg of plastic per pilgrim, and religious leaders noted the contrast between this excess and Islamic values of modesty and resource conservation [10]. Residents of Mashhad perceived mass religious tourism as environmentally negative overall [117]. At market level, a composite index of sustainable halal tourism across 116 countries found that halal tourism is still at a developing stage [118], and an analysis of CrescentRating guidelines found that halal tourism as promoted by the index resembles traditional mass tourism more than alternative tourism [119].

5.5. Tensions and Boundary Conditions

Four tensions qualify the positive picture. First, faith and hedonism can conflict. Halal-sensitive tourists reported an average level of hedonic tendency and a tendency to comply with religious prohibitions [120], and hedonic and spiritual motives coexist in Umrah travel [121]. Second, religious norms can push some

travellers to escape them. In Iran, a segment of outdoor tourists seeking escape from cultural restrictions and social surveillance disregarded its social and ecological impacts and imposed costs on local communities and nature [32]. Third, generosity and hospitality, which Islam values, can produce waste when they are expressed through excess [10, 113]. Fourth, the growth of Muslim travel is concentrated in destinations and events that already carry heavy environmental loads, such as Makkah and Madinah [9, 37]. These tensions suggest that Islamic teachings support sustainable tourism most clearly when they are translated into concrete norms, credible institutions and practical options.

5.6. How Strongly Does Islam Support and Influence Sustainable Tourism? A Graded Assessment

Bringing the findings of Sections 5.1–5.5 together allows the central question of the review to be answered at five levels (Table 6). The levels differ in what is claimed: that Islam provides reasons for sustainable tourism, that Islamic factors shape travel decisions, that they shape sustainable intentions, that they change actual behaviour, and that they shape destination and institutional practice. The strength of the evidence declines sharply from the first level to the last.

Table 6
Graded assessment of how strongly Islam supports and influences sustainable tourism

Level	Evidence base	Direction and consistency	Assessment
1. Normative support: Islamic teachings provide reasons for sustainable tourism	12 normative and conceptual studies; declarations and fatwas (Section 2.1)	All studies supportive, grounded in *khalifah*, *amanah*, *mizan*, the prohibition of *israf* and the *maqasid al-shariah*	Strong
2. Influence on general travel intention	34 studies of religiosity or Islamic values; 54 studies of halal or Islamic attributes	Positive in 20 of 34 (59%) and 40 of 54 (74%); the rest null, partly significant or moderating; mapped from bibliographic records, which may under-report null results	Consistent but threshold-type: Islam filters destination choice rather than driving sustainability
3. Influence on sustainable intention	14 studies in Stream B-S that reported the direction of the effect	Significant in 13 of 14 studies (93%): 5 direct, 7 indirect only, 1 moderating; 1 not significant. Strongest for pro-environmental outcomes, weakest for sustainability attributes linked to loyalty	Moderate, indirect and conditional; small evidence base centred on Indonesia
4. Influence on actual sustainable behaviour	No tourist-level study observed environmental behaviour	Unknown	Not established
5. Destination and institutional practice	74 studies in Stream C	Green practices scarce in halal hotels; certification omits environmental criteria; large pilgrimage footprint; *maqasid*-based regulation and green *waqf* promising	Weak; normative potential largely unrealised

The overall answer is therefore asymmetric. Islamic support for sustainable tourism is strong as doctrine, consistent as a filter on destination choice, moderate and indirect as an influence on sustainable intentions, and unproven as an influence on behaviour. The 93% rate of positive findings in Stream B-S should not be read as an effect size. It rests on 14 studies, most of them cross-sectional surveys of intentions in Indonesia, and significant results are more likely than non-significant ones to be reported and published. The more defensible conclusion is that, where Islamic factors have been tested against sustainable outcomes, they rarely work against sustainability, and general religiosity in particular works through other psychological and institutional mechanisms.

5.7. Why Belief Does Not Automatically Become Sustainable Action

The gap between strong normative support and modest empirical influence requires explanation. Five mechanisms, each visible in the reviewed evidence, help to explain why Islamic belief translates into sustainable tourism intention only partly and under particular conditions.

Ritual salience over ethical salience. In tourism, Islam is made visible mainly through consumption rules, such as halal food, prayer facilities and alcohol-free and gender-appropriate settings, and these are what destinations certify and Muslim travellers look for [5, 7]. Environmental teachings are equally part of the tradition but are rarely made salient in travel settings. Shariah-hotel certification did not address food waste [112], Malaysian halal hotels emphasised neither halal attributes nor green practices [111], and hospitality students showed only moderate awareness of the link between Islamic teachings and environmental protection [46]. At Indonesia's priority halal destinations, prayer facilities and halal assurance had no significant effect on tourists' Islamic socio-cultural responsibility, whereas Islamic local wisdom did [94]. Religious identity is therefore expressed through compliance, while stewardship remains latent.

General religiosity versus internalised environmental values. Most studies measure religiosity with general scales of belief and practice. Where the Islamic factor was defined in environmental terms, as Islamic environmental values or as norms derived from Islamic environmental jurisprudence, it was associated with pro-environmental intentions [83] and, through personal norms and attitudes, with environmentally responsible behaviour [20], whereas obedience-based Islamic values had no direct effect on the perceived sustainability of Muslim-friendly destinations and influenced it only through behavioural intention [90]. The modest average influence may thus partly reflect what has been measured rather than what Islam teaches.

Activation through norms, concern and knowledge. Religiosity seldom acts directly. Its effects pass through environmental concern, awareness, knowledge and personal norms [83, 85–87]. Without these intermediate states, which depend on information and on recognising the consequences of one's own actions, religious commitment does not reach environmental behaviour. This pattern is consistent with the norm activation model [25] and with the wider attitude–behaviour gap in tourism [8].

Competing cultural and motivational scripts. Some values that Islam esteems, such as generosity towards guests, are expressed through abundance and produce waste in Arab hospitality and at mass pilgrimages [10, 113]. Hedonic motives coexist with religious ones [120, 121], and some travellers use tourism to escape religious and social surveillance, with environmental costs [32]. Sustainable behaviour therefore competes with other culturally sanctioned scripts, not only with self-interest.

Institutional credibility and practical options. Religious centrality amplified the effect of trust in governance on willingness to pay for conservation, while greenwashing eroded that trust [84], and frugal behaviour among Muslim hotel guests responded to environmental advertising and green attitudes [89]. Faith supplies motivation, but institutions and the design of choices determine whether that motivation can be acted on.

Two further findings qualify claims that Islam exerts a unique influence. Religiosity raised pro-environmental intentions among both Muslim and Hindu travellers in Bangladesh [34], and in Egypt the value that 215 visitors attached to Islamic Mamluk heritage explained 62.5% of the variance in their sustainable tourism intentions [31], which points to cultural identity as well as belief. The distinctive

contribution of Islam may therefore lie less in a unique motivational force than in a rich and widely shared vocabulary, including *khalifah*, *amanah*, *mizan* and *israf*, that can make environmental responsibility personally and communally meaningful when it is deliberately activated.

5.8. The Muslim World in Comparative Perspective

Muslim travellers come from, and travel to, every region of the world, but the evidence is distributed very unevenly. Table 7 groups the included studies by the region of the study setting.

Table 7
Included studies by region of the Muslim world

Region	Countries in the evidence (studies)	Included studies	Stream B-S studies	Most frequent Islamic construct
Southeast Asia (OIC)	Indonesia (128); Malaysia (39); Brunei (5)	165	22	Halal or Islamic attributes
Middle East and North Africa	Saudi Arabia (19); UAE (5); Iraq (2); Kuwait (2); Bahrain (2); Egypt (1)	29	1	Muslim travellers as a group
Iran and Türkiye	Iran (9); Türkiye (4)	13	1	Muslim travellers as a group
South Asia	India (8); Pakistan (7); Bangladesh (6); Sri Lanka (1); Maldives (1)	20	3	Muslim travellers as a group
Central Asia and the Caucasus	Uzbekistan (1)	1	0	Muslim travellers as a group
Sub-Saharan Africa	Ghana (1)	1	0	Religiosity
East Asia and non-OIC Southeast Asia	Thailand (13); South Korea (5); Taiwan (4); Singapore (3); Japan (2)	25	2	Halal or Islamic attributes
Europe, North America and Oceania	UK (4); Spain (3); Australia (2); USA (1); Portugal (1)	11	1	Muslim travellers as a group

Note: Studies set in more than one region are counted in each. 83 studies did not name a country and are not shown. OIC = Organisation of Islamic Cooperation.

Southeast Asia dominates. Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei account for 165 studies and 22 of the 31 studies in Stream B-S. This is where the halal tourism industry is most institutionalised and where national policy actively promotes Muslim-friendly tourism; Malaysia and Indonesia also lead the GMTI [1]. It is the only region in which all three pathways of the framework have been tested, and the region with the most developed experiments in *maqasid*-based regulation, halal tourism villages and green *waqf* [17, 106, 109]. Findings about how Islam influences sustainable intention are therefore, in effect, findings about Indonesian and Malaysian travellers.

The Middle East and North Africa host the holiest sites of Islam and the largest religious mobility in the world, yet contribute 29 studies and only one study of a sustainable tourist outcome. Research in this region measures the environmental footprint of pilgrimage at the level of the system, including waste, water, energy and carbon at the Hajj, Umrah and Arba'een [9, 10, 37, 115], rather than the intentions or behaviour of pilgrims themselves. Other studies show that heritage and identity can carry sustainable intentions: in Egypt, the value attached to Islamic Mamluk heritage was a critical predictor of visitors' sustainable tourism intentions [31], and in traditional Omani villages concerns about religious and cultural preservation shaped residents' attitudes towards outside visitors [122]. Iran and Türkiye add 13 studies, including evidence on the environmental costs of mass religious tourism as perceived by residents of Mashhad [117] and on travellers who use nature tourism to escape religious surveillance [32].

South Asia, home to several of the largest Muslim populations in the world, contributes 20 studies. They include the only comparison across faiths, which found that religiosity raised pro-environmental behaviour at home and during travel among both Muslims and Hindus in Bangladesh [34]; evidence that Islamic religiosity is associated with residents' support for sustainable tourism development in Pakistan [104]; a study of Islamic marketing appeals among Muslim and non-Muslim tourists in India [95]; and a mixed-methods study, including a field experiment in Pakistan, of how symbolic elements shape the perceived sacredness, and thus the spiritual sustainability, of nature-based religious destinations [35].

Muslim-minority destinations in East Asia, non-OIC Southeast Asia, Europe, North America and Oceania contribute 36 studies, which focus mostly on whether halal attributes attract Muslim visitors. Sustainability enters mainly through a segmentation of Muslim tourists' lifestyles on Thailand's Andaman coast [123] and through the travel experiences of Muslim women in the United Kingdom, framed as a search for a sustainable destination [99]. For these destinations, halal assurance remains the condition of entry and sustainability a second-order consideration (P3 in Section 6).

Central Asia, the Caucasus and Sub-Saharan Africa are almost absent. One comparative legal study covered Uzbekistan [102], and one survey of Ghanaian Muslim tourists found that religiosity moderated the effect of perceived value on satisfaction [61]. No included study was set in the Maghreb, the Sahel or East Africa.

The comparison has two implications. First, the evidence base does not yet represent the Muslim world: the region with the largest religious mobility, the Middle East, and regions with very large Muslim populations, South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, contribute little or no evidence on sustainable tourist outcomes. Second, the meaning of "Islamic influence" appears to differ by context. In Southeast Asia it operates through a state-supported halal economy, in the Middle East through pilgrimage and heritage, and in Muslim-minority destinations through halal assurance as a condition of access. Claims about Islam and sustainable tourism should therefore be specified by context rather than generalised from Indonesia and Malaysia.

6. The Faith-to-Footprint Framework

The evidence can be brought together in an integrated framework (Fig. 3). The framework treats Islam as a source of sustainable tourism behaviour that operates at four levels and through three pathways, and it identifies the conditions under which this potential is realised or lost.

The first level consists of the **normative foundations**: the principles of *khalifah*, *amanah*, *mizan*, the prohibition of *israf* and *fasad*, the *maqasid al-shariah* and travel as reflection (Section 2.1). These principles are widely shared and are the main source of normative support identified in Stream A. The second level consists of **individual activators**: religiosity, internalised Islamic environmental values and halal literacy. The evidence shows that these activators do not produce sustainable behaviour on their own. They operate through three **pathways**: a normative pathway, in which Islamic values become personal norms and a sense of responsibility [20, 83, 94]; a cognitive pathway, in which religiosity raises environmental concern, awareness and knowledge [85–87]; and a relational pathway, in which faith-aligned experiences and trust in governance lead to responsible consumption and willingness to pay for conservation [84, 96]. The normative pathway corresponds to the value–belief–norm chain set out in Section 2.4. These pathways lead to the fourth level, **sustainable outcomes**: sustainable intentions, actual behaviour such as waste reduction and conservation payment, and destination outcomes.

Conditions shape every link. Halal assurance acts as a threshold: it determines whether Muslim travellers consider a destination, but beyond that threshold additional halal attributes add little [80–82], and no included study shows that halal assurance by itself makes travellers behave more sustainably. Credible governance conditions how far religious motivation turns into conservation support, because religious centrality works through trust and greenwashing erodes that trust [84]. Hedonic motives, escape motives and expressions of generosity through excess can weaken or reverse the link [32, 113, 120]. Destination type matters: in Muslim-minority destinations, Muslim-friendly attributes shaped revisit and visit intentions [72, 75], although religiosity itself did not deter Indonesian Muslims from visiting non-Muslim destinations [57], and among young Indonesian Muslim travellers the effects of smart technology and environmental concern on the destination experience did not differ significantly between Islamic and non-Islamic destinations [124]. Finally, **institutional enablers** connect the framework to the supply side: certification that covers environmental as well as halal criteria, Islamic social finance such as green *waqf*, community-based governance and market indices that reward sustainability [1, 109, 112, 118]. Regional context determines which of these conditions matters most (Section 5.8).

The framework leads to six propositions for testing:

P1 (supported). Religiosity increases sustainable tourism intention mainly indirectly, through environmental concern, environmental knowledge and attitudes, rather than directly.

P2 (partly supported). Internalised Islamic environmental values (for example, beliefs about *khalifah* and the prohibition of *israf*) predict pro-environmental tourist behaviour more strongly than general religiosity, because they activate personal norms specific to the environment.

P3 (partly supported for travel intention; untested for sustainability). Halal assurance is a necessary but not sufficient condition for Muslim travellers' choices: its absence lowers visit intention, but once it is met,

additional halal attributes add little, and sustainability attributes become relevant only after halal needs are met.

P4 (preliminary: one study). Religiosity strengthens the effect of trust in destination governance on support for conservation, and greenwashing weakens support by eroding that trust.

P5 (theory-driven hypothesis). Hedonic and escape motives weaken the link between religiosity and sustainable behaviour during travel, especially in destinations where travellers are less visible to their own communities.

P6 (theory-driven hypothesis). Faith-based environmental communication that links specific tourist actions (reducing food and plastic waste, conserving water, respecting protected areas) to Islamic principles may be more effective than generic environmental messages under certain conditions, particularly among more religious travellers. No reviewed study has compared the two kinds of message, so this proposition rests on the normative literature and on evidence that Islamic appeals strengthen attitudes and norms [95], not on comparative evidence.

The propositions differ in how much of the reviewed evidence supports them, and the label after each proposition states this directly. Only P1 is supported by several studies; P2 and P3 are partly supported, P4 rests on a single study, and P5 and P6 are theory-driven hypotheses that the reviewed evidence motivates but has not tested. Table 8 sets out the evidence behind each label and what is still needed.

Table 8
Evidence status of the propositions

Proposition	Supporting studies	Evidence status	What is still needed
P1. Religiosity acts mainly indirectly	[85–87]; Islam et al. [34] for a direct effect across faiths	Supported: three studies report indirect effects through concern, awareness and knowledge; one cross-faith study reports a direct effect	Tests of full mediation with sustainable intention and behaviour as outcomes
P2. Islamic environmental values predict sustainable outcomes more strongly than general religiosity	[20, 83]; contrast with Wijaya, Sarastiani, et al. [90]	Partly supported: the comparison is across studies; no study compared both in one model	Both constructs measured in one model with sustainable outcomes
P3. Halal assurance is necessary but not sufficient	[57, 75, 80, 81]	Partly supported for travel intention; the sustainability part has not been tested	Tests of whether sustainability attributes matter only once halal needs are met
P4. Religiosity strengthens the trust–conservation link; greenwashing erodes trust	[84]	Preliminary: a single study in Indonesia	Replication in other regions and with behavioural outcomes
P5. Hedonic and escape motives weaken the faith–sustainability link	[32, 120, 121]	Theory-driven hypothesis: qualitative and descriptive evidence only; no test of moderation	Survey or experimental tests of moderation by hedonic and escape motives
P6. Faith-based environmental communication may be more effective than generic messages under certain conditions	[95]; religious guidance (Section 2.1)	Theory-driven hypothesis: Islamic appeals strengthened attitudes and norms, but no study compared them with generic messages	Field experiments that compare faith-based and generic messages

7. Research Agenda

The gaps identified in the evidence map and in the graded assessment lead to the research agenda in Table 9, which pairs each gap with a design and measures that can address it.

Table 9
Research agenda

Gap	Evidence	Priority for research	Suggested design and measures
Few studies of sustainable outcomes	23 of 322 studies measured a sustainable or responsible tourist outcome	Test P1–P6 with sustainable intention and behaviour as the main outcome rather than visit or revisit intention	Surveys and panels with validated pro-environmental and responsible-travel intention scales; structural models testing P1–P6
Reliance on self-reported intentions	No tourist-level study observed environmental behaviour	Use field experiments, behavioural measures (waste, water and energy use, conservation payments) and longitudinal designs	Randomised field experiments in hotels and at destinations; metered water and energy use, weighed food waste, recorded conservation payments; follow-up after the trip
Geographic concentration	128 of 322 studies are set in Indonesia; few studies from the Middle East, Africa and Central Asia	Study Gulf, North African, Central Asian and African destinations, and outbound Muslim travellers from these regions in non-OIC destinations	Multi-country surveys with matched samples across regions; tests of measurement invariance
General measures of religiosity	Most studies use general religiosity scales	Develop and validate measures of Islamic environmental values and test them against general religiosity (P2)	Scale development (item generation from Islamic environmental ethics, expert review, EFA and CFA); comparison of predictive validity with general religiosity
Pilgrimage footprint	Studies of Hajj, Umrah and Arba'een measure impacts but not pilgrims' behaviour	Examine pilgrims' waste and water behaviour and test faith-based interventions during pilgrimage	Waste audits linked to pilgrim surveys; intervention trials of faith-based messages at Hajj, Umrah and Arba'een
Supply-side sustainability	Green practices scarce in halal hotels; certification omits environmental criteria	Evaluate certification schemes that combine halal and environmental standards, and green *waqf* financing	Comparative case studies of certification bodies; quasi-experimental comparison of certified and non-certified hotels on waste, water and energy
Comparisons across faiths	One study compared Muslim and Hindu travellers	Compare faith traditions and secular environmental values to identify what is specific to Islam	Multi-group structural models across faith groups and secular travellers

Gap	Evidence	Priority for research	Suggested design and measures
Context-specific meaning of Islamic influence	Influence operates through the halal economy in Southeast Asia, pilgrimage and heritage in the Middle East and halal access in Muslim-minority destinations	Run multi-country studies with tests of measurement invariance across regions and source markets	Comparative qualitative studies and multi-group models by region and source market
Reach of religious environmental guidance	Declarations and fatwas on the environment exist, but none addresses travel and no study tested their reach	Test whether awareness of religious environmental guidance changes travel intentions and behaviour	Surveys measuring awareness of declarations and fatwas; message experiments using religious guidance

8. Practical Implications

For destinations in OIC countries. Destinations that already meet halal needs can compete on sustainability. Destination management organisations can frame environmental requests, such as reducing food waste, conserving water and respecting protected areas, in terms of Islamic principles of trusteeship and moderation, and can work with mosques and religious leaders to communicate them [34, 83]. Pilgrimage authorities can set targets for waste and water use at Hajj, Umrah and other mass gatherings and design services that make the less wasteful option the easiest one [9, 10].

For destinations outside the OIC. For Muslim-minority destinations, halal assurance remains the first condition of competitiveness [72, 75]. Once it is in place, sustainability information can be added to halal information, so that Muslim travellers can identify accommodation and activities that are both halal and environmentally responsible.

For religious authorities. Declarations and fatwas on the environment already exist (Section 2.1), but none addresses travel. Religious councils, pilgrimage authorities and mosque networks could issue concrete guidance on travel behaviour, covering waste at pilgrimages and in hospitality, water use, wildlife and protected areas, so that the vocabulary of *khalifah* and *israf* reaches the moment of travel decisions [10, 22].

For certification bodies and market indices. Halal and Shariah-hotel certification currently pays little attention to the environment [111, 112]. Adding criteria on food waste, energy and water to these schemes would align them with the Islamic principles they invoke. The sustainability criterion of the GMTI is a first step, and a higher weight would send a stronger signal to destinations [1].

For operators and investors. Hotels and tour operators serving Muslim travellers can reduce waste in buffets and hospitality rituals without reducing generosity, for example through portion choices and redistribution of surplus food [89, 113]. Islamic social finance, particularly green *waqf*, offers a source of funding for community-based halal ecotourism that is consistent with Islamic values [108, 109].

9. Limitations

The review has limitations. The search used two databases and English-language publications, so studies indexed only in other sources, such as Google Scholar or regional databases, or published in Arabic, Malay, Indonesian, Turkish or Persian may have been missed. Studies in Streams A, B-G and C were mapped from their bibliographic records rather than their full texts, so their counts may overstate positive findings where non-significant results were not reported, and effect sizes could not be pooled. Five Stream B-S studies could not be retrieved in full text, although excluding them did not change the direction of the findings, and most quantitative studies relied on non-probability samples. Screening and coding decisions were recorded as consensus decisions of the two authors rather than as separate ratings; the decision and reason for every record and the codes of every included study are available from the corresponding author. The included studies are mostly cross-sectional surveys of self-reported intentions, so the review cannot establish that Islamic factors cause sustainable behaviour. Finally, the evidence is concentrated in Indonesia and Malaysia, and conclusions about the wider Muslim world should be treated as provisional until more regions are studied.

10. Conclusions

This review asked how far Islam supports and influences sustainable tourism intention across the Muslim world. The answer is graded rather than simple. As doctrine, the support is strong: principles of trusteeship, balance and moderation, and the objectives of the Shariah, provide a clear basis for environmentally responsible travel, and every normative study draws this conclusion. As an influence on travel decisions, Islam is consistent but acts mainly as a threshold, through halal assurance. As an influence on sustainable intentions, it is moderate, indirect and conditional: in 13 of the 14 studies that tested the link, Islamic factors had a significant effect, most clearly on pro-environmental outcomes and least clearly on sustainability attributes linked to loyalty; Islamic environmental values had direct effects, whereas general religiosity, obedience-based values and Islamic marketing acted mostly through environmental concern, knowledge, norms, attitudes and trust in governance. As an influence on actual behaviour, it has not been established. Belief translates only partly into action because ritual compliance is more salient than stewardship, general religiosity is a weak proxy for environmental values, and generosity, hedonism and weak institutions compete with it.

The gap between the normative potential and the evidence is large. Only 23 of the 322 studies measured a sustainable outcome at tourist level, none observed tourists' environmental behaviour directly, and the market is growing fastest in destinations that already carry heavy environmental loads. Closing this gap requires research that tests how Islamic values become sustainable behaviour, and practice that turns those values into concrete norms, credible certification and convenient options for Muslim travellers. Because most of the evidence comes from Indonesia and Malaysia, these conclusions describe the Muslim world as it has been studied rather than the Muslim world as a whole. The regional comparison in Section 5.8 shows where the evidence is thin, and the Middle East, South Asia, Central Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, where most Muslims live and where much of the market growth is expected, are where new studies would add most.

Declarations

Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

Ethics approval and consent to participate

Not applicable. This review analysed published literature and involved no human participants.

Consent for publication

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Author Contribution

Md. Sojib Hasan Choyon: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Data curation, Formal analysis, Visualization, Writing original draft. Hishamuddin Bin Ismail: Methodology, Investigation, Validation, Supervision. Stany Wee Lian Fong: Supervision, Methodology, Investigation. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Data availability

The completed PRISMA 2020 checklist is provided in ESM 1. The data supporting this review, including the search results, the record-level screening decisions and the coding of the included studies, are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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Figures

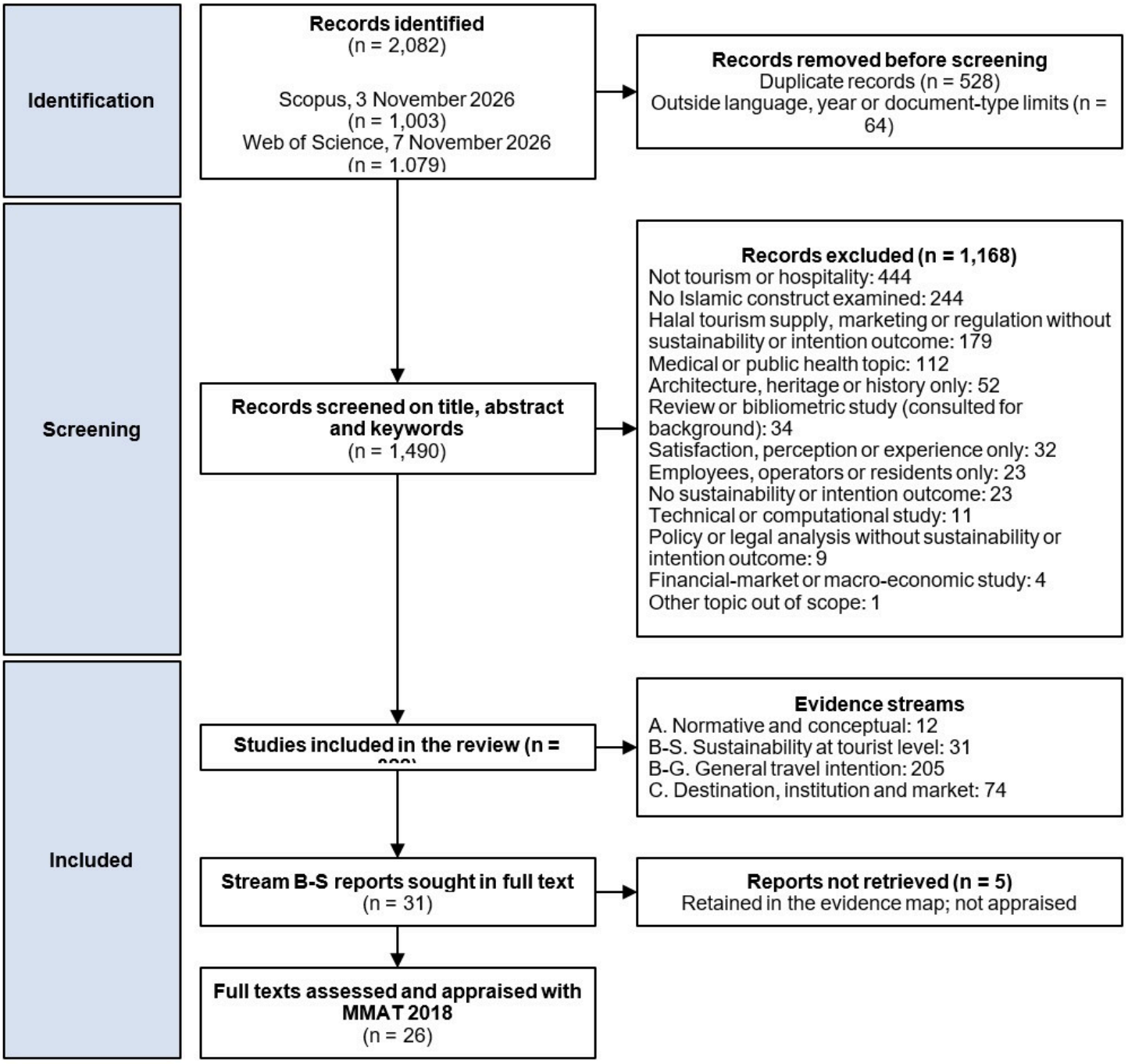

Figure 1

Identification, screening and inclusion of records. Counts of excluded records are by the main reason for exclusion. The full texts of the Stream B-S studies were sought for data extraction and quality appraisal

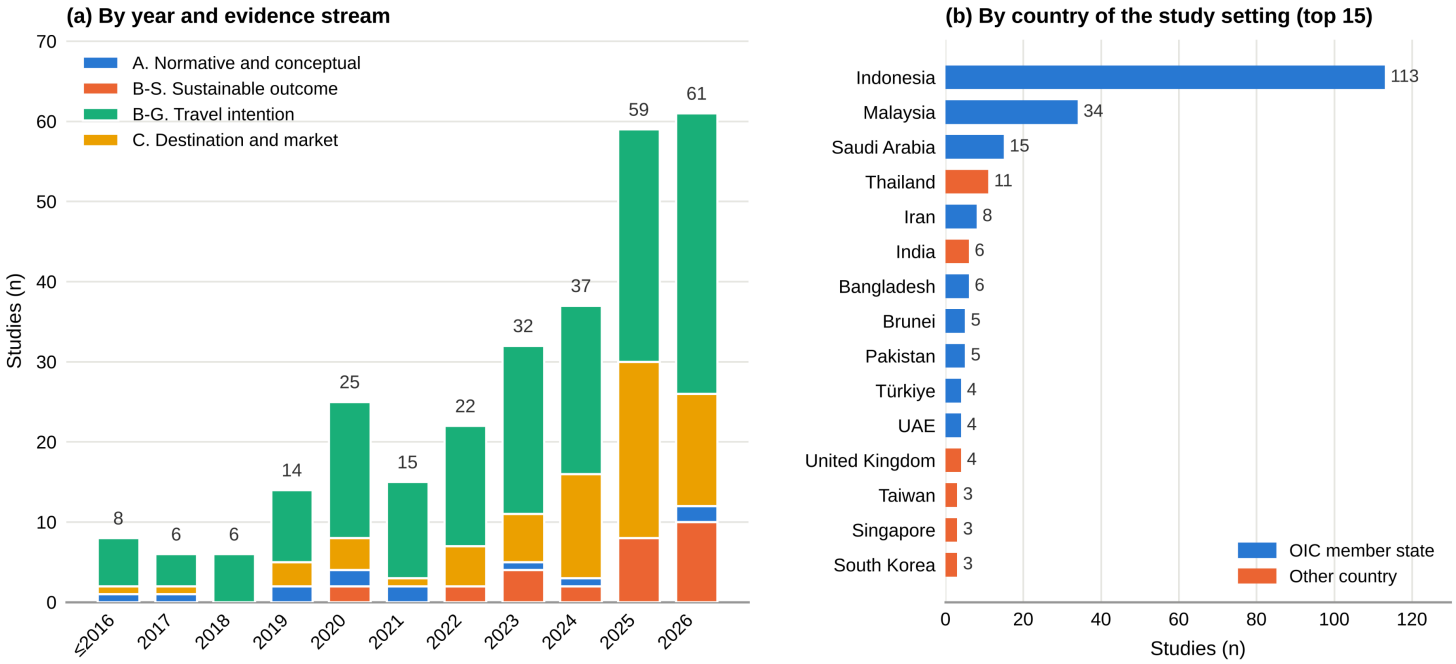

Figure 2

Included studies by year of publication and evidence stream (a) and by country of the study setting (b). Studies set in several countries are counted once for each country

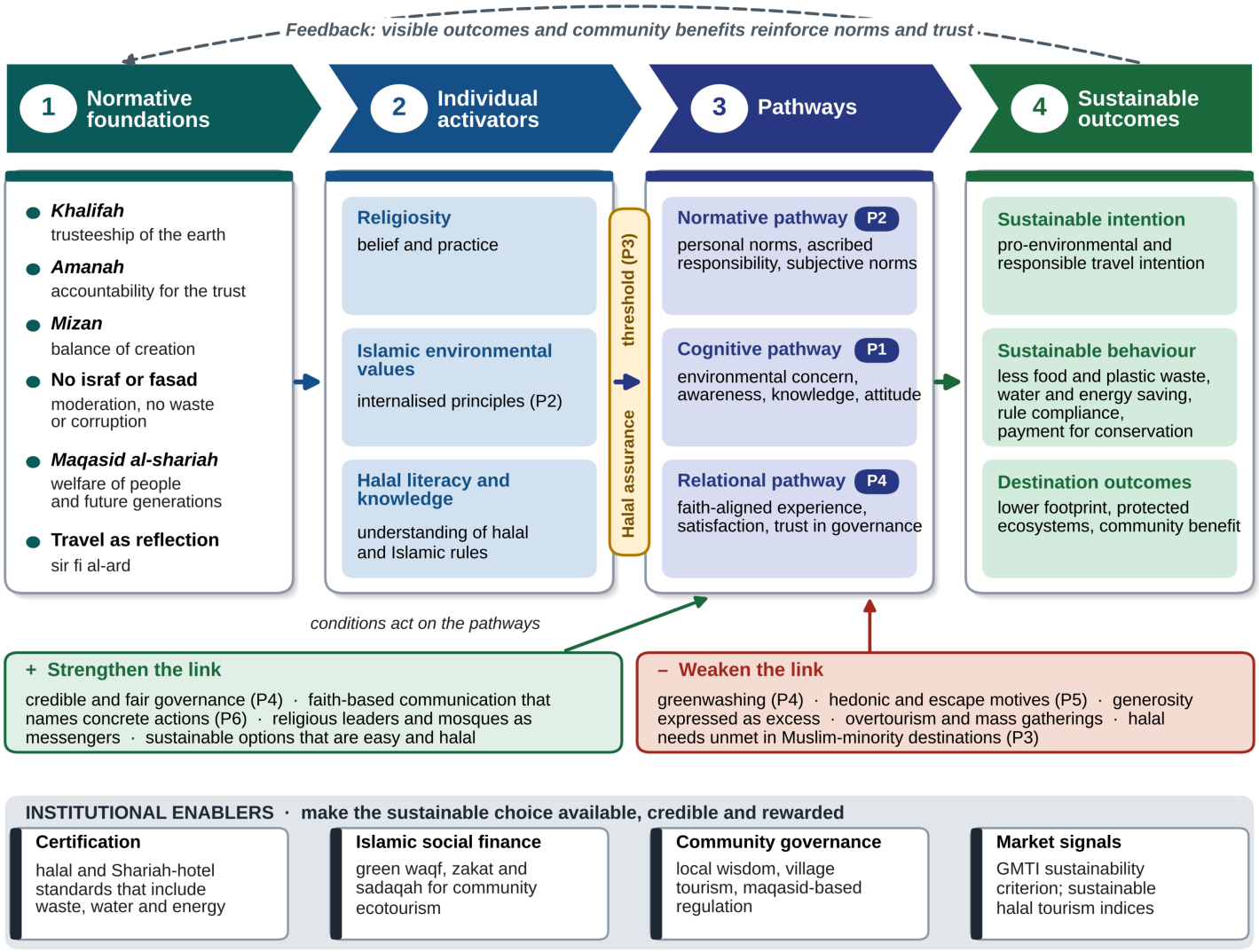

Figure 3

The Faith-to-Footprint framework: how Islamic teachings and religiosity can shape sustainable tourism intention and behaviour, and the conditions that strengthen or weaken this influence. P1–P6 refer to the propositions in Section 6

Supplementary Files

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- ESM11.docx