

Trust as the Gateway to Islamic Bank Adoption: Integrating Digital Religious Influence and Management Capability

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to examine customer adoption of Bank Syariah Indonesia (BSI) by applying a parsimonious Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) framework that integrates digital religious influence and institutional capability to explain adoption decisions in the context of Islamic banking.

Methodology: The study employed a quantitative survey approach using mixed-mode data collection (online and on-site questionnaires). Data were collected from 325 active BSI customers located in the Jakarta–Bogor–Depok–Tangerang–Bekasi (Jabodetabek) area. Online Religious Leaders and Managerial Performance were modeled as exogenous stimuli, Product Value Trust as the organismic variable, and the Decision to Become a BSI Customer as the response variable. The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS).

Results: The findings indicate that Online Religious Leaders and Managerial Performance significantly enhance Product Value Trust, which in turn positively influences customers' adoption decisions. Both stimuli also exhibit significant direct effects on adoption decisions. Mediation analysis confirms that Product Value Trust partially mediates the relationship between the stimuli and customer adoption.

Conclusions: The results demonstrate that customer adoption of Islamic banking is shaped by the alignment of credible religious influence and visible managerial performance that collectively strengthen trust in product value.

Limitations: This study is limited to customers in the Jabodetabek area and relies on cross-sectional data.

Contributions: This study contributes to Islamic banking and consumer behavior literature by identifying Product Value Trust as a central mechanism linking digital religious influence and institutional capability to customer adoption decisions.

Keywords: Bank Syariah Indonesia, Islamic Banking Adoption, Product Value Trust, Online Religious Leaders, Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR)

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1. Introduction

In a modern economy, the banking sector remains a central institutional backbone because it shapes credit allocation, investment cycles, payment stability, and economic resilience. The strategic importance of banks is often reflected in the share of banking assets relative to total financial system assets (Marjono & Chalid, 2024). In Indonesia, the banking industry accounts for approximately 78% of total financial sector assets as of 2024, highlighting why banking performance and public confidence

have system-level implications rather than merely firm-level consequences (Oktorini & Barus, 2022). Banking fragility rarely remains domestic. As Qi, Zhang, Shi, Feng, and Xu (2025) explains, shocks in one country's banking system can spread internationally through financial market contagion, trade finance disruptions, cross-border exposure among global banks, and generalized perceptions of systemic risk that trigger panic in economies viewed as structurally similar.

Indonesia's banking architecture includes both conventional and Islamic institutions. Islamic banks are designed to operate under Sharia principles and are institutionally differentiated from interest-based conventional banking through the scope of permissible contracts and compliance requirements (Indonesia, 2009). Despite the scale of Indonesia's Muslim population, Islamic banking penetration remains limited compared to conventional banking. Bank Syariah Indonesia (BSI) is the largest Islamic bank in Indonesia; however, its contribution to the national financial sector remains modest. In 2023, BSI's market share was 2.95% in assets, 3.32% in financing, and 3.41% in third-party funds, indicating that growth has not translated into parity with the intermediation role of conventional banking.

The operational reach of the military also remains constrained. In 2023, BSI operated 1,986 branches, far fewer than conventional peers such as BRI with 7,878 branches, and BSI maintained only one overseas branch compared to the broader international coverage by conventional banks (Oktorini & Barus, 2022). This limited footprint is significant in an archipelagic country where physical and service access remains uneven. Simultaneously, the adoption gap is striking: although 87.2% of Indonesia's roughly 273 million citizens are Muslim, only 8.5% of Muslim Indonesians used BSI services in 2023.

Beyond outreach, consumer experience and perceived reliability are additional constraints. Customer complaints appearing in social media reviews (February–March 2025) point to online transaction failures, ATM errors, slow customer service responses, and system upgrades that reduce functionality, signals of performance frictions that can erode user confidence and weaken trust. These conditions underscore why Islamic bank performance cannot be framed as a supply side expansion alone. Performance optimization in Islamic banking is frequently described as a function of strategic choices, execution capability, and the broader environment, including regulatory and sociocultural forces.

From a marketing and intermediation perspective, banks serve both surplus and deficit agents, and their long-run performance depends on whether they can meet evolving customer needs and values while sustaining credibility. As banking markets become more service-oriented, customer relationship management and service marketing increasingly determine competitive advantages. In Islamic banking, the service challenge is compounded by Sharia compliance expectations, where perceived credibility and ethical alignment can shape customer evaluations alongside functional benefits (Mahfud & Hermawati, 2025).

To address the adoption gap more precisely, this study re-specifies the explanatory model around a focused behavioural mechanism: Online Religious Leaders and Management Performance are treated as key external drivers, Product Value Trust is positioned as the core internal evaluative state, and the outcome is the Decision to Become a Customer of BSI. This structure is consistent with reasoned-choice arguments that intentions and decisions reflect attitudes and social pressures, as well as with digital-era evidence that consumer decisions are increasingly shaped by platform-mediated exposure and the credibility of external cues. Mulyanti, Nugroho, and Darmansyah (2025), theory of Reasoned Action proposes that behavioural intentions are shaped by attitudes and subjective norms. In Islamic financial contexts, subjective norms are particularly salient because religious authority can signal what is socially and morally appropriate for Muslims.

Online religious leaders, often operating as key opinion leaders (KOLs), may influence customer decisions by legitimizing Sharia-compliant financial behaviors. K. V. Tran and Uehara (2023) showed that religious authorities can operate as reference groups influencing trust and purchase decisions. Simultaneously, findings on which KOL attributes matter most remain mixed. Gong, Ren, Zeng, and Xing (2022) reported that KOL characteristics such as reputation, content compatibility, and interactivity can influence purchase intention directly and indirectly through engagement mechanisms.

V. D. Tran and Nguyen (2022) suggested that only certain attributes, particularly compatibility and interactivity, consistently strengthen trust and intention. This divergence motivates renewed empirical testing of online religious leaders in digital settings, especially when banking decisions are high-involvement and strongly tied to credibility.

The study conceptualizes Online Religious Leaders using indicators that capture the credibility and influence mechanisms most relevant to Indonesia's religious-media ecosystem. Building on established models, online religious leader influence is represented through charisma, reputation, perceived compatibility, and content quality, drawing on (Brown, Chen, & O'Donnell, 2017; Ernst et al., 2022). Charisma is emphasized because Indonesian religious figures such as Ustadz and Kyai often play a practical role in shaping public judgments on what is ethically acceptable, and digital platforms can amplify such influence through their reach, engagement, and repeated exposure.

The second external driver in the model is Management Performance, which captures consumers' perceptions of the bank's institutional capability and delivery reliability. In banking, managerial performance is not merely an internal efficiency metric; it becomes visible to customers through operational consistency, service quality, responsiveness, technological reliability, and governance credibility. L. H. Lee and Abdullah (2024) identifies critical success factors for Islamic banks that include Sharia governance, service quality, innovation, operational efficiency, risk management, reputation, customer satisfaction, and digital capability, dimensions that can shape whether customers view an institution as dependable. Supporting evidence also links trust-related constructs and institutional images to customer outcomes in banking and adjacent services (Cardoso & Cardoso, 2024; Phong & Anh, 2023).

Even when banks pursue broader management initiatives, their performance outcomes can vary. Aslam, Elmagrhi, Rehman, and Ntim (2021) suggest that environmental management can enhance financial performance through improved environmental performance, whereas indicate that profitability can decline when implementation imposes high costs. This mixed evidence strengthens the need to examine which aspects of perceived management performance are behaviourally consequential in an Islamic banking setting. In this study, management performance is evaluated using indicators that reflect institutional stability and delivery credibility, including liquidity strength, technological innovation, reputation and stability, and promotional strategy execution, interpreted as signals of capability rather than communication effects.

The model does not treat external cues as sufficient explanations for adoption. Instead, it places Product Value Trust as the central mechanism translating these cues into the Decision to Become a customer. Trust is widely recognized as essential in bank–customer relationships because financial products are complex, intangible, and difficult to evaluate before they are used. Trust is built through consistent service performance, transparency, and credible Shari' ah compliance (Hasan, Abduh, & Rosman, 2025). Digital environments intensify this requirement because service failures and informational ambiguity can be rapidly amplified through online networks and social media platforms. Prior evidence shows that social media marketing and platform-based communication can influence trust, which shapes purchasing behaviors (Althuwaini, 2022; Manzoor, Baig, Hashim, & Sami, 2020).

Reputation also matters. Company reputation affects trust and loyalty across multiple dimensions. The construct label, Product Value Trust, further emphasizes that adoption depends not only on trusting the institution in general but also on trusting that the bank's products deliver meaningful value in ways consistent with ethical and Sharia expectations. This value-oriented trust framing is supported by consumption value research showing that the emotional and symbolic dimensions of value can shape attitudes and intentions Yu and Lee (2019), while functional and social values also influence decision processes (Gan & Wang, 2017).

In Islamic banking, value judgments plausibly include additional moral content, such as fairness and responsibility, because transparency and accountability are part of how customers interpret Shariah consistency in practice. BSI provides a particularly relevant context for testing this streamlined model

because it is positioned as the flagship Islamic bank in Indonesia following the merger of major state-owned Islamic banking entities; however, it still faces the practical challenge of converting a large potential Muslim customer base into sustained usage. Simultaneously, technological change continues to reshape how consumers evaluate and adopt financial services.

Putri (2025) emphasizes that perceived usefulness and ease associated with technology can shape acceptance behaviours, and in contemporary banking, this logic extends to digitally mediated service encounters and information exposure. Consumers today encounter Islamic banking information through Internet-based channels and social platforms, where messages are received, processed cognitively, and evaluated before they are translated into decisions. Therefore, the key empirical question is not simply whether customers are exposed to religious and institutional cues, but whether these cues build sufficient Product Value Trust to convert favourable perceptions into the decision to become a customer.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Stimulus–Organism–Response as an Explanatory Lens for Islamic Banking Adoption

The framework is grounded in the stimulus–organism–response (SOR) tradition, which conceptualizes consumer behavior as a sequence in which external cues shape internal evaluative states that, in turn, drive behavioral responses (Kexin & Teo, 2023). This perspective is particularly useful for digital and service environments because it specifies how heterogeneous information inputs can produce different choices depending on consumers' inferences about credibility, risk, and value. Prior SOR research consistently shows that stimuli in online and service contexts affect behavioral intentions and choices largely through organismic mechanisms, most commonly trust, perceived risk, affective reactions, and perceived value (Kim, Lee, & Jung, 2020; Wu & Li, 2018). These mechanisms are especially salient for financial services, where decisions entail uncertainty and potential loss. As a result, internal evaluations, rather than exposure to stimuli alone, tend to become the most proximal determinants of adoption.

In Islamic banking, the relevance of SOR is amplified by additional evaluative layers that are not always central to conventional banking: ethical expectations, perceived Sharia compliance, and the credibility of religiously framed claims about institutions and products. Ethical and governance considerations operate as informational signals that customers use to judge whether value is delivered in a manner consistent with Islamic principles (Gilani, 2015). Empirical evidence further indicates that trust in Islamic banks is intertwined with perceived value and satisfaction, and that these constructs jointly explain key relationship outcomes (Abror, Patrisia, Engriani, Idris, & Dastgir, 2022). This stream of findings motivates the theoretical refinement in the model: instead of dispersing explanatory power across multiple internal states, product value trust is positioned as the central organismic mechanism through which salient stimuli are translated into adoption behaviors.

2.2 The response construct: decision to become a customer in financial services

Becoming a bank customer is not a low-cost purchase decision; it is a commitment under uncertainty. Customers evaluate not only tangible benefits, such as access, cost, and convenience, but also the likelihood of adverse outcomes, including hidden charges, service failure, weak service recovery, or perceived inconsistency between promised standards and realized experiences. Research on mortgage buyers shows that information search and knowledge accumulation function as risk-reduction strategies, underscoring that adoption decisions are often the endpoint of a deliberate process to resolve uncertainties. Similarly, studies on credit card adoption highlight how multifaceted perceived risk, financial, performance, privacy, and social risk shape intention, reinforcing the view that internal confidence is a prerequisite for committing to financial services. In mobile banking, adoption is likewise associated with multi-criteria evaluations of service attributes and perceived utility, suggesting that the behavioral response is driven by structured appraisal rather than impulse (Widodo, 2025).

These findings imply that a plausible adoption model must (i) identify stimuli that meaningfully reduce uncertainty and increase perceived credibility or value clarity and (ii) specify the internal appraisal mechanism through which these stimuli influence the final decision. This is consistent with SOR

evidence that reputation cues, quality signals, and marketing-mix factors operate by shaping organismic states such as emotion, perceived risk, trust, and perceived value, which then predict purchase intentions and related behaviors (Wu & Li, 2018). The same logic becomes even more consequential as financial services become increasingly digital and algorithmically mediated in some areas. Opacity in decision systems can heighten perceived unfairness and uncertainty unless legitimacy and credibility cues are credible and consistent.

2.3 Product Value Trust as the Core Organismic Mechanism

A central premise of the model is that product value trust captures the internal resolution of the uncertainty necessary for adoption. Trust and value are conceptually distinct but tightly coupled in service relationships. A two-dimensional trust–value–loyalty model shows that trust does not simply substitute for value; rather, the two interact in explaining relational outcomes, implying that value assessments depend, in part, on confidence in provider integrity and competence (Chai, Malhotra, & Alpert, 2015). Evidence in digital commerce similarly indicates that e-trust and perceived value jointly predict repurchase intention, suggesting that perceived benefits become behaviorally consequential when customers believe that the provider will deliver reliably (Miao et al., 2022). Trust also plays a decisive role in social shopping and recommendation environments, where credibility and social influence shape trust formation, which subsequently drives consumer decision outcomes (Cahayani & Yuliati, 2020).

Within Islamic banking, this logic aligns with research showing that perceived value and satisfaction are important antecedents of trust, and that trust is directly relevant to customer outcomes (Abror et al., 2022). Therefore, product value trust represents more than generalized confidence; it reflects the belief that the bank’s products deliver meaningful value and that the institution will deliver that value fairly and consistently under the ethical expectations that customers attach to Sharia-compliant finance. This conceptualization is compatible with the broader value-to-trust pathways observed across contexts. For example, consumption values influence green purchase intentions through trust, illustrating a general mechanism in which value-based judgments become behaviorally effective when they are converted into a trust state (Amin & Tarun, 2021). Parallel evidence from sustainable product adoption suggests that trust and perceived value can operate in sequence, reinforcing the plausibility of trust as a key translation mechanism from evaluative beliefs to actions (Hussain, Khan, Qureshi, Bansal, & Pruthi, 2025).

From an SOR standpoint, treating product value trust as an organism is theoretically disciplined because it captures the “internal clearance” consumers require before engaging with complex, intangible, and risk-laden services. When product quality is difficult to verify *ex ante*, as is common in financial services, customers rely on signals and trust-building cues to build confidence. Trust-building factors identified in adjacent digital domains, such as transparency, reliability, reputation signals, and perceived competence, mirror the informational cues that customers use when evaluating banks (Michler, Decker, & Stummer, 2020). These streams justify positioning product value trust as the primary organismic state linking stimuli to the decision to become a customer.

2.4 Online Religious Leaders as a Stimulus: Credibility, Authority, and Interpretive Reassurance

Online religious leaders constitute a distinctive stimulus in Islamic banking because they can shape legitimacy judgments and interpretive frameworks. In emerging markets, the evaluation of brands endorsed by religious leaders depends on how the endorsement influences perceived credibility, meaning, and appropriateness; endorsement can simplify evaluation by functioning as a trusted heuristic under uncertainty (Arlı, Gupta, Sardana, & Sharma, 2023). Research on spiritual leaders as celebrity founders and endorsers similarly suggests that spiritual authority can be transferred to market offerings, shaping perceived authenticity and reliability. Beyond commercial endorsement settings, studies of expert and religious influencers show that opinion leadership and spirituality affect behavioral intentions, implying that religious influencer effects can extend beyond visibility into belief formation and behavioral readiness.

The Indonesian context strengthens this argument because digital religion reshapes how audiences encounter religious authority and how religious meanings circulate on platforms. Digital Islam creates new spaces for authority and religious commodification, changing the architecture through which religious messaging becomes salient in everyday consumption contexts. In Islamic banking, this implies that online religious leaders may influence adoption by shaping perceptions of Shariah credibility and the moral legitimacy of financial offerings. This interpretation aligns with evidence from Islamic marketing communication that distinguishes leader credibility from organizational credibility and shows that both can matter, although they may operate differently depending on offering characteristics and communication environments (Hati & Idris, 2019). Thus, online religious leaders can function as stimuli that reduce interpretive uncertainty and strengthen confidence that banking products align with valued religious and ethical principles.

Within the model, the strongest theoretical basis for the online religious leader pathway is credibility transfer into product value trust. Evidence on social shopping demonstrates that perceived credibility and social processes shape trust in recommendations, which then carries downstream behavioral consequences (Cahayani & Yuliati, 2020). Related work in community-based group buying highlights that group leaders play dual roles as information anchors and trust conduits, improving conversion by making decisions feel safer in uncertain environments (Ying, Ji, Shi, & Wang, 2022). Although these studies are not specific to Islamic banking, they converge on a general mechanism: trusted leaders can transform exposure and attention into trust and trust into adoption-related behavior. Applied to Islamic banking, online religious leaders can increase product value trust by legitimizing product value claims and providing moral reassurance that reduces uncertainty among consumers.

The model also retains a direct path from online religious leaders to the decision to become customers. This is theoretically defensible because leader influence can operate through social norms and identity signaling, beyond trust. Religious influence can shift consumer decisions in high-involvement contexts by shaping perceived appropriateness and normative expectations, which can affect behavior even after controlling for trust. Religious leader endorsement can also influence decision heuristics, suggesting a behavioral channel that is not fully reducible to trust (Arli et al., 2023). In practice, endorsements from a respected online religious figure may prompt immediate approach behavior, such as trial, inquiry, or account opening, before consumers develop trust through repeated interaction.

2.5 Management Performance as a Stimulus: Institutional Credibility and Capability Signals

Management performance operates as a second stimulus that customers interpret as an institutional signal of competence, reliability, and quality of governance. Consumers often infer service reliability from cues regarding organizational competence, responsiveness, and consistency. Institutional credibility research conceptualizes credibility as a measurable property linked to transaction costs and institutional structures; credibility shapes stakeholders' judgments about the cost and reliability of engaging with an institution (Fan, Yang, Liu, & Wang, 2019). Related work argues that credibility judgments are not solely determined by formal institutional design; rather, credibility is often inferred from perceived performance and how it is communicated, and institutional form may be less relevant than commonly assumed when stakeholders judge performance (Ho, 2020).

In nonprofit contexts, the credibility of performance measurement is shaped by organizational factors and influences stakeholder trust, supporting the idea that performance perceptions function as credibility signals (Lee, 2021). Systematic review evidence further indicates that internal reputation mechanisms connect credibility antecedents to organizational outcomes, implying that perceived managerial capability can translate into confidence and supportive behavior (L. H. Lee & Abdullah, 2024). In Islamic banking, perceived management performance communicates whether the institution can deliver the promised value under ethical and service expectations. The ethical aspects of Islamic banking emphasize governance and integrity, and customers may interpret managerial competence and consistent conduct as signals that the bank is trustworthy in delivering Shariah-consistent value (Gilani, 2015).

Evidence from Indonesian Islamic business relationships underscores competence and integrity as key drivers of trust; although this evidence is primarily B2B, the underlying logic generalizes to consumer contexts where customers must infer trustworthiness under information asymmetry (Wijaya, Moro, & Belghitar, 2023). Accordingly, management performance is expected to increase product value trust because it provides the capability and reliability cues that reduce perceived risk. Leadership and organizational research suggest that leadership can influence trust and organizational performance through mechanisms that reflect reliability and knowledge processes (Koohang, Paliszkiewicz, & Goluchowski, 2017). In service and digital commerce, trust is strengthened by reputation and quality cues, which can shape perceived risk and purchase intention within SOR structures (Ubed & Raharjo, 2024). Given that perceived risk is a key predictor of financial adoption, management performance that signals effective governance, dependable service delivery, and credible operational capability should reduce uncertainty and strengthen product value and trust.

As with online religious leaders, the model includes a direct effect of management performance on the decision to become a customer. This is reasonable because performance perceptions can influence adoption through pragmatic evaluations, such as expectations of efficiency, convenience, and service responsiveness, which may not be fully captured by the trust construct. Evidence from mobile banking adoption underscores the role of multi-criteria evaluation of service attributes in shaping adoption intentions, consistent with performance-related cues that influence decisions more directly. Additionally, research on credibility suggests that performance judgments can independently shape stakeholder behavior without necessarily being translated into a narrow trust construct (Ho, 2020; C. Lee, 2021). Thus, a direct effect acknowledges that customers may adopt a bank because it is perceived as well-managed and operationally dependable, even as trust continues to develop through experience.

2.6 Product Value Trust as the Proximal Driver of Adoption

The relationship between trust and adoption-related outcomes is robust across service and digital contexts. Trust and value jointly explain relational outcomes in service settings Chai et al. (2015), and in e-commerce, e-trust and perceived value predict repurchase intention, highlighting the behavioral relevance of trust when interaction is ongoing and risk exposure persists (Miao et al., 2022). Recommendation-based environments similarly show that trust is a key channel through which information and social influence translate into behavior (Cahayani & Yuliati, 2020). In Islamic banking, trust is empirically associated with perceived value and satisfaction and is implicated in broader relational chains that matter for customer outcomes across segments (Abror et al., 2022). These converging findings justify treating product value trust as the most proximal predictor of the decision to become a customer in the model.

This trust-centric logic becomes more compelling as the financial services environment becomes more digital and algorithmic. Algorithmic decision-making in consumer credit can elevate normative concerns and perceived unfairness unless institutions maintain legitimacy, transparency, and accountability. Even without explicitly modeling algorithmic transparency, this broader shift strengthens the rationale that adoption in modern financial services depends on whether customers perceive the institution's value propositions as both credible and safe, precisely what product value trust is intended to capture.

2.7 Conceptual Framework

SOR theory implies that stimuli influence responses through organismic states, and empirical SOR applications have repeatedly confirmed mediated pathways. In social commerce, marketing mix variables influence customer value, which predicts loyalty outcomes (Wu & Li, 2018). In online shopping, reputation and website quality affect internal states such as perceived risk and emotion, which then shape purchase intentions. In virtual reality tourism, stimuli influence the internal states that drive behavioral intentions (Kim et al., 2020).

This broader evidence supports the modeling of product value trust as the mediating mechanism through which online religious leaders and management performance shape the decision to become a customer. Online religious leaders can influence adoption through normative pressure and identity-aligned

heuristics that may persist even after accounting for trust. Religious leader endorsement can reduce deliberation costs and shift decision heuristics, potentially triggering adoption before trust is consolidated through such repeated interactions (Arli et al., 2023). Influencer research similarly indicates that opinion leadership and spirituality can affect behavioral intentions, implying channels that may not be fully captured by trust. Likewise, management performance can influence adoption directly through perceived service convenience and operational excellence, pragmatic criteria that customers incorporate when evaluating financial services.

Credibility judgments based on observed performance can also guide behavior, even when consumers do not explicitly translate those judgments into a narrow trust construct (Ho, 2020; C. Lee, 2021). Therefore, partial mediation is not a methodological compromise but a theoretically grounded structure for capturing multiple influence channels. Figure 1 illustrates the model used in this paper. The model advances Islamic banking adoption research by specifying a parsimonious yet theoretically disciplined pathway: two strategically actionable stimuli, online religious leaders as a digital authority cue and management performance as an institutional capability cue, shape a central organismic mechanism, product value trust, which then drives the decision to become a customer.

This model builds on established Islamic banking evidence that trust is closely connected to perceived value and satisfaction and is consequential for customer outcomes (Abror et al. (2022), while also leveraging trust–value insights from the broader service and digital commerce literature (Chai et al., 2015; Miao et al., 2022). It further integrates emerging evidence on religious leader endorsement and digital religion, highlighting how religious authority, especially in contemporary Indonesia, shapes consumer evaluations and decisions (Arli et al., 2023). It links management performance to institutional credibility and reputation mechanisms that shape stakeholder confidence and engagement (Fan et al., 2019; C. Lee, 2021; L. H. Lee & Abdullah, 2024).

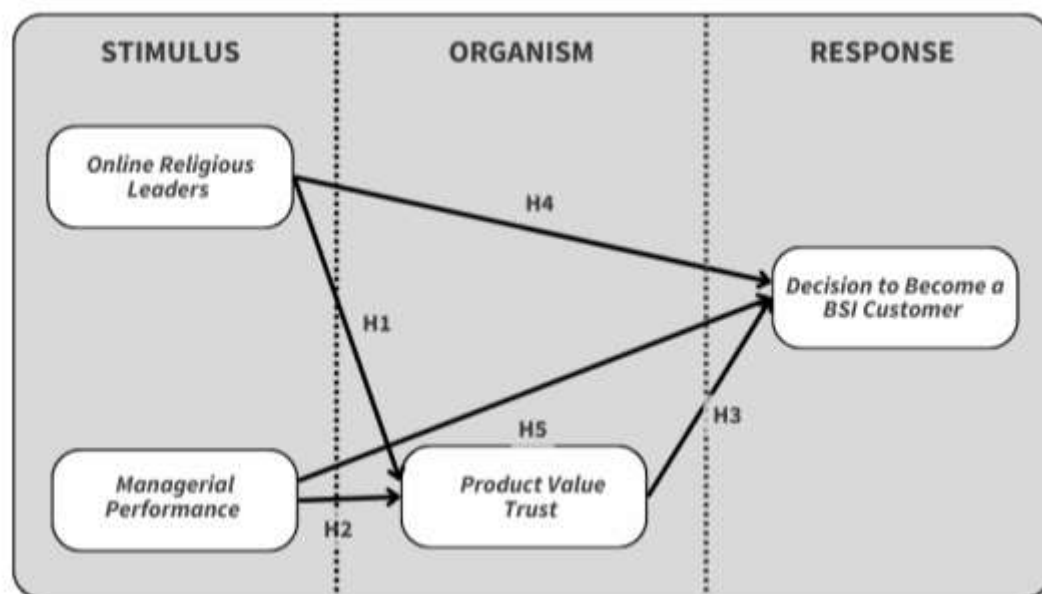


Figure 1. Conceptual model

The core gap addressed is that Islamic banking adoption research often includes religiosity, image, satisfaction, trust, and value as a broad set of parallel predictors, but less frequently integrates digital religious authority and perceived management performance as distinct external stimuli within a single SOR mechanism centered on product value trust. This gap is especially salient in Indonesia, where online religious authority is evolving rapidly and may shape how customers interpret Sharia legitimacy and institutional credibility in banking decisions. Emphasizing product value trust also aligns the model with risk-based decision logic in financial services and the growing importance of legitimacy and credibility in increasingly digital and algorithm-mediated financial environments.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study uses a quantitative explanatory survey design to test the proposed causal relationships between exogenous drivers and endogenous decision outcomes in the context of Islamic banking. The explanatory approach is appropriate because the objective is to evaluate the hypothesized effects simultaneously, including the indirect mechanism operating through Product Value Trust (Mulyani, Diana, & Yuliana, 2025).

3.2 Sample and Data Collection

The empirical setting comprises Bank Syariah Indonesia (BSI) customers residing in the Jakarta–Bogor–Depok–Tangerang–Bekasi (Jabodetabek) area, selected because of its centrality in banking activity and intensive digital interaction, which increases the likelihood of exposure to online religious leader's content. Respondents were recruited using purposive non-probability sampling because the study required participants who could meaningfully evaluate the focal constructs rather than a purely random draw. The inclusion criteria were: (1) active BSI customers (savings and/or financing), (2) have accessed social media content featuring Online Religious Leaders, and (3) domiciled in Indonesia, with a concentration in Jabodetabek to preserve contextual fit. In total, 325 valid responses were obtained.

The sample size was aligned with the common guidance for SEM applications in complex models to support stable estimation and adequate statistical power. Data were collected through a combination of online and offline methods to broaden the reach and reduce coverage bias. Online distribution relied on digital survey forms, while offline distribution was conducted through direct questionnaire administration to customers at BSI branches and agreed-upon locations. The instrument was piloted with 30 initial respondents to support early assessment and refinement. Respondents received an explanation of the study and confidentiality assurance to support ethical participation (Mukti, 2025).

3.3 Variable Operationalization and Analytical Tools

All constructs were measured using structured and closed-ended questionnaires. Responses were captured using a five-point Likert-type scale to quantify perceptions and evaluations consistently across constructs. Operationalization follows the standard principle that latent concepts must be defined using observable indicators, as follows. In the model, the exogenous constructs are Online Religious Leaders and Managerial Performance, the mediating construct is Product Value Trust, and the dependent construct is the Decision to Become a Customer of BSI. The model was estimated using Structural Equation Modeling in a Partial Least Squares framework (SEM-PLS) to accommodate multiple latent variables and the indirect effect structure.

The analysis proceeded in two stages: (1) assessment of the measurement model, and (2) evaluation of the structural model. The measurement model quality was evaluated using convergent validity and internal consistency analyses. Convergent validity was assessed using outer loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE), while reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability (CR), applying conventional cutoffs (α and CR > 0.70; AVE > 0.50). Structural model evaluation focused on the magnitude and significance of the hypothesized paths, specifically the direct effects of Online Religious Leaders and Managerial Performance on the Decision to Become a customer, their effects on Product Value Trust, and the effect of Product Value Trust on the decision outcome, along with the corresponding indirect effects through the mediator variable.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Respondents Profile

Data were collected from Bank Syariah Indonesia (BSI) users in the Jabodetabek area using a mixed-mode approach that combined online distribution (Google Forms) and offline questionnaire administration (paper-and-pencil). A total of 353 responses were returned; after screening for completeness and response validity, 325 questionnaires were retained for analysis, and 28 were excluded due to missing or inconsistent data. The final sample size was considered adequate for estimating the proposed SEM-PLS model and for testing both the direct and indirect effects.

Table 1. Respondent characteristics

| No | Characteristics | Category | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|----|-------------------|-------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1 | Gender | Male | 275 | 84.61 |
| | | Female | 50 | 15.39 |
| 2 | Age | ≤ 25 years | 118 | 36.31 |
| | | 26–35 years | 106 | 32.62 |
| | | 36–45 years | 101 | 31.07 |
| 3 | Area of Residence | Bekasi | 67 | 20.62 |
| | | Bogor | 67 | 20.62 |
| | | Depok | 67 | 20.62 |
| | | Jakarta | 64 | 19.69 |
| | | Tangerang | 60 | 18.45 |
| | Total | | 325 | 100.00 |

Table 1 shows that the sample was predominantly male, with 275 respondents (84.61%) compared to 50 female respondents (15.39%). In terms of age, the largest proportion of participants were aged 25 years or below (118 respondents; 36.31%), followed by those aged 26–35 years (106 respondents; 32.62%) and 36–45 years (101 respondents; 31.07%). The profile indicates that most BSI users represented in this study fall within the productive age group. Geographically, the responses were distributed relatively evenly across Jabodetabek. Bekasi, Bogor, and Depok each contributed 67 respondents (20.62%), Jakarta accounted for 64 respondents (19.69%), and Tangerang accounted for 60 respondents (18.45%) in the sample. This pattern supports the study's intent to maintain a balanced coverage across the main metropolitan areas of Jabodetabek.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 reports the descriptive statistics for the four constructs included in the model: Online Religious Leaders (TA), Management Performance (KM), Product Value Trust (KP), and the Decision to Become a Customer (KMN). Respondents reported favorable perceptions of TA, KM, and KP, as indicated by mean-per-item values exceeding four on a five-point scale. In contrast, the mean-per-item score for KMN is comparatively lower, suggesting that although respondents generally evaluate the stimuli and trust mechanisms positively, the final adoption decision reflects a more cautious or heterogeneous tendency across individuals. This pattern is consistent with the view that banking adoption represents a high-involvement decision in which favorable perceptions do not automatically translate into immediate commitment to the bank itself.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics

| Variable | N | Min | Max | Mean | Std. Deviation | No. of Items | Mean per Item |
|-----------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-------|----------------|--------------|---------------|
| Online Religious Leaders (TA) | 325 | 30 | 64 | 56.11 | 7.05 | 13 | 4.31 |
| Management Performance (KM) | 325 | 29 | 63 | 55.94 | 7.04 | 13 | 4.30 |
| Trust in Product Value (KP) | 325 | 35 | 74 | 63.51 | 9.18 | 15 | 4.23 |
| Decision to Become Customer (KMN) | 325 | 30 | 73 | 56.30 | 14.73 | 15 | 3.75 |

Table 2 shows the results of the table (N = 325) indicate generally favorable perceptions of the model constructs, with the two stimuli and the trust mechanism rated higher than the decision outcomes. Online Religious Leaders (TA) had a mean of 56.11 across 13 items (mean per item = 4.31; SD = 7.05), suggesting that respondents largely agreed that online religious leaders exerted a meaningful influence. Management Performance (KM) is similarly high (mean = 55.94; 13 items; mean per item = 4.30; SD

= 7.04), indicating positive evaluations of BSI's managerial performance. Trust in Product Value (KP) also showed strong endorsement (Mean = 63.51; 15 items; mean per item = 4.23; SD = 9.18), reflecting substantial confidence in the value delivered by BSI products, although responses were slightly more varied than those for TA and KM. In contrast, the Decision to Become Customer (KMN) is comparatively lower (Mean = 56.30; 15 items; mean per item = 3.75; SD = 14.73), implying that even with high perceived influence, performance, and trust, respondents' adoption decisions are more moderate and heterogeneous.

4.3 Measurement model evaluation

Prior to testing the structural relationships, the measurement properties of the retained constructs were assessed using the following steps: As summarized in Table 3, internal consistency reliability was supported for all constructs, with Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values exceeding the conventional thresholds. Convergent validity is also evidenced by AVE values above 0.50 and acceptable outer loading ranges, indicating that the indicators adequately capture the intended latent constructs. Collectively, these results confirm that the measurement model is robust and suitable for subsequent structural model interpretation.

Table 3. Reliability and validity

| Variable | Cronbach's Alpha | Composite Reliability | AVE | Outer Loading Range |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-------|---------------------|
| Online Religious Leaders (TA) | 0.935 | 0.943 | 0.562 | 0.707 – 0.779 |
| Management Performance (KM) | 0.934 | 0.943 | 0.559 | 0.716 – 0.783 |
| Trust in Product Value (KP) | 0.956 | 0.96 | 0.618 | 0.764 – 0.816 |
| Decision to Become a Customer (KMN) | 0.97 | 0.973 | 0.703 | 0.821 – 0.860 |

Table 3 shows discriminant validity was evaluated using the Fornell–Larcker criterion and HTMT ratio. Table 4 indicates that the square root of the AVE for each construct exceeds its correlation with the other constructs, supporting construct distinctiveness.

Table 4. Fornell-Larcker criterion

| Variable | Product Value Trust (KP) | Customer Decision (KMN) | Management Performance (KM) | Online Religious Leader (TA) |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Product Value Trust (KP) | 0.786 | | | |
| Customer Decision (KMN) | 0.582 | 0.838 | | |
| Management Performance (KM) | 0.311 | 0.46 | 0.748 | |
| Online Religious Leader (TA) | 0.313 | 0.436 | -0.083 | 0.75 |

Table 5 further corroborates this conclusion, as the HTMT values remain below the recommended upper bound. These diagnostic checks suggest that the constructs in the model are empirically distinguishable and that multicollinearity due to construct overlap is unlikely to bias the structural estimates.

Table 5. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

| Variables | Product Value Trust (KP) | Customer Decision (KMN) | Management Performance (KM) | Online Religious Leader (TA) |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Product Value Trust (KP) | , | | | |
| Customer Decision (KMN) | 0.602 | , | | |
| Management Performance (KM) | 0.324 | 0.481 | , | |
| Online Religious Leader (TA) | 0.328 | 0.456 | 0.106 | , |

4.4 Structural Model Results

The structural path estimates, including both direct and indirect effects, are shown in Table 6. The results show that Product Value Trust (KP) exerts a positive and statistically significant effect on the Decision to Become a Customer (KMN), indicating that trust in the value of BSI products is a central mechanism shaping adoption decisions. In addition, both stimuli are significant predictors of KP: Online Religious Leaders (TA) and Management Performance (KM) each display positive and significant effects on Prod. These findings suggest that perceptions of religious authority communicated through online channels and perceived managerial effectiveness contribute to strengthening customers' trust in the bank's product value proposition.

Table 6. Path analysis

| Endogenous | | Path | | β (Std.) |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| Product Value Trust (KP) | | Online Religious Leaders (TA) → KP | | 0.341 |
| Product Value Trust (KP) | | Managerial Performance (KM) → KP | | 0.339 |
| Decision to Become a BSI Customer (KMN) | | Product Value Trust (KP) → KMN | | 0.352 |
| Decision to Become a BSI Customer (KMN) | | Online Religious Leaders (TA) → KMN | | 0.357 |
| Decision to Become a BSI Customer (KMN) | | Managerial Performance (KM) → KMN | | 0.38 |
| | | | | |
| Endogenous Construct | | R ² | | |
| Product Value Trust (KP) | | 0.212 | | |
| Decision to Become a BSI Customer (KMN) | | 0.536 | | |
| | | | | |
| Predictor → Outcome | | Direct Effect | Indirect Effect (via KP) | Total Effect |
| TA → KMN | | 0.357 | 0.12 | 0.477 |
| KM → KMN | | 0.38 | 0.119 | 0.499 |

Table 6 shows information beyond the mediated pathway, the results indicate significant direct effects of TA and KM on the KMN. This implies that online religious leader influence and perceived management performance shape customer decisions not only through trust formation but also through additional channels consistent with social influence and institutional credibility mechanisms. The mediation analysis reported in Table 6 provides further evidence that Product Value Trust carries a

meaningful portion of the influence of TA and KM on KMN, as both indirect effects are positive and statistically significant.

Regarding predictive power, the R^2 values reported in Table 6 indicate that the model explains a substantial proportion of the variance in endogenous constructs. The predictors accounted for a meaningful share of variance in Product Value Trust and a substantial share in the Decision to Become a customer, supporting the explanatory strength of the framework for this dataset. The findings provide consistent support for the proposed stimulus–organism–response structure, in which Online Religious Leaders and Management Performance act as key stimuli, Product Value Trust functions as the primary organismic mechanism, and the Decision to Become a customer constitutes a behavioral response.

4.5. Discussion

The structural results provide consistent support for a stimulus–organism–response (SOR) mechanism in explaining Islamic bank adoption: Online Religious Leaders (TA) and Managerial Performance (KM) operate as external stimuli that strengthen Product Value Trust (KP) as the central organismic state, which then drives the Decision to Become a BSI Customer (KMN). This logic aligns with SOR arguments that external cues shape behavior primarily by altering internal evaluations (Wu & Li, 2018). Empirically, KP is a significant proximal predictor of KMN ($KP \rightarrow KMN: \beta = 0.352$), indicating that customers' decision to adopt BSI depends strongly on whether they trust the *value* embedded in BSI's products and not merely on their exposure to external cues.

This result is consistent with service and digital evidence that trust becomes behaviorally decisive when quality is difficult to verify ex-ante and perceived risk remains significant (Chai et al., 2015; Miao et al., 2022). This also fits the Islamic banking evidence linking trust with perceived value and customer outcomes (Abror et al., 2022). Beyond the trust mechanism, the model shows that Online Religious Leaders (TA) contributes to adoption through *two* channels. First, TA strengthens Product Value Trust ($TA \rightarrow KP: \beta = 0.341$), implying a credibility transfer from the online religious authority to confidence that BSI's products deliver meaningful and acceptable value. Second, TA is directly associated with adoption decisions ($TA \rightarrow KMN: \beta = 0.357$).

The presence of both paths indicates partial mediation, where trust exerts some influence but not all. The indirect effect reported in Table 6 confirms this mediated channel ($TA \rightarrow KP \rightarrow KMN: 0.120$), producing a substantial total effect (TA's total effect on KMN: 0.477). This pattern is theoretically plausible in Islamic financial settings because religious cues can reduce interpretive uncertainty (Sharia legitimacy) while also operating through norms, identity alignment, and heuristic simplification in high-involvement decision-making. This is also consistent with religious endorsement research, which shows that credibility and legitimacy cues can shift evaluation and decision readiness. Arli et al. (2023), and digital Islam dynamics that increase the reach and salience of religious authority via platforms.

Managerial Performance (KM) exhibits a parallel but slightly stronger overall influence on adoption. KM significantly increases Product Value Trust ($KM \rightarrow KP: \beta = 0.339$) and directly strengthens the adoption decision ($KM \rightarrow KMN: \beta = 0.380$). The indirect pathway through trust is again meaningful ($KM \rightarrow KP \rightarrow KMN: 0.119$), yielding the largest total effect among the two stimuli (KM total effect on KMN: 0.499). Substantively, this supports the interpretation of perceived managerial performance as an institutional capability and credibility signal: customers infer operational reliability, governance quality, and service dependability from visible performance, and these perceptions increase trust in product value and directly justify adoption.

This aligns with credibility arguments that performance-based credibility reduces transaction costs and increases willingness to engage (Fan et al., 2019), and with evidence that stakeholders often rely on perceived performance to form credibility judgments and behavioral support, even when formal institutional attributes are not front of mind (Gilani, 2015). In Islamic banking, this pathway is reinforced by the sector's ethical and governance expectations, where integrity and consistent conduct shape perceived trust (Gilani, 2015). Practically, this result means that operational excellence functions not only as a service outcome but also as a trust input: reliability and smooth execution make the product

value proposition believable and “safe enough” for adoption. The explanatory power of the model was non-trivial.

Table 6 shows that TA and KM jointly explain 21.2% of the variance in Product Value Trust ($R^2(KP) = 0.212$), whereas the full model explains 53.6% of the variance in the adoption decision ($R^2(KMN) = 0.536$). This indicates that while trust formation is influenced by these two stimuli, the adoption decision is shaped by a broader set of factors captured through both direct paths and the trust pathway, consistent with SOR applications, in which organismic mechanisms and direct stimulus effects coexist. This descriptive pattern reinforces an important behavioral implication: respondents rated TA, KM, and KP highly (mean-per-item > 4), yet the rating for KMN was lower (mean-per-item ≈ 3.75).

This gap suggests a conversion problem typical of financial services: favorable perceptions do not automatically translate into commitment because adoption is a high-involvement, risk-sensitive decision. In such contexts, trust operates as a final “clearance” mechanism that enables consumers to move from positive impressions to action, consistent with financial decision evidence, emphasizing uncertainty reduction and perceived risk management as prerequisites for adoption. Within this study’s SOR framework, Product Value Trust is the mechanism that converts religious credibility cues and managerial capability signals into a decision-ready evaluation.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Conclusions

This study examined customer adoption of Bank Syariah Indonesia (BSI) using a streamlined stimulus-organism-response (SOR) framework, which integrates Online Religious Leaders and Management Performance as external stimuli, with Product Value Trust positioned as the central internal mechanism driving customer decisions. The results consistently support the proposed model, indicating that Product Value Trust plays a significant role in driving adoption in Islamic banking. Both external stimuli—Online Religious Leaders and Management Performance—contribute to strengthening Product Value Trust, which subsequently has a positive impact on the decision to adopt Islamic banking services. Mediation analysis further supports this framework, showing that trust in product value is the key mechanism that translates external cues into adoption decision-making. This study highlights that religious authority and institutional performance function as distinct but complementary stimuli, ultimately shaping customer decisions. For Islamic banks, these findings suggest that digital religious engagement should be considered a credibility strategy, whereas operational reliability and consistency in service delivery are essential for building trust and customer loyalty.

5.2 Research Limitations

This study has some limitations that should be considered in future research. First, the study was conducted with a sample drawn from the Jabodetabek area, which may not fully represent the diverse demographic and socioeconomic conditions across Indonesia. Future research should expand the geographic scope to examine whether these findings hold true in other regions. Second, the study used cross-sectional data, which limits the ability to infer causal relationships. Future studies should employ longitudinal research designs to observe changes in customer adoption and trust over extended periods. Moreover, external factors such as economic conditions and government policies that might influence customer adoption of Islamic banking were not considered in this study. Future research should investigate these factors to provide a more comprehensive view of the adoption process. Finally, while this study uses the SOR framework effectively, future research could refine the model by adding variables such as social influence and technological innovation to explore their roles in shaping customer adoption in the Islamic banking context.

5.3 Suggestions and Directions for Future Research

The findings of this study offer several suggestions for both theoretical and practical implications. Islamic banks are recommended to leverage online religious leaders as part of a credibility strategy while also focusing on operational excellence. Banks should ensure that their offerings align with Sharia principles to strengthen Product Value Trust and drive higher adoption rates. Practitioners and policymakers should encourage the integration of Sharia-compliant digital content into marketing

strategies, allowing banks to build credibility and trust, thus improving customer retention and satisfaction. For future research, it is suggested to expand the study across a broader regional scope within Indonesia, as this study focused on customers in the Jabodetabek area only. Additionally, future studies should incorporate behavioral adoption metrics to provide more insights into customer decision-making and further assess the generalizability of this model across diverse customer segments.

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