

## **Moderating Role of Values in Religiosity and Brand Switching from Israel-Affiliated Brands among Gen Z**

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### **Abstract**

This study examines the influence of religiosity on Indonesian consumers' brand switching behavior, particularly regarding brands affiliated with the Israeli-Palestinian issue. Using SEM-PLS analysis with 178 respondents obtained through snowball sampling, the results reveal that religiosity positively and significantly affects consumers' tendency to switch from Israeli-affiliated brands to local alternatives. Furthermore, functional, emotional, social, and epistemic values significantly strengthen this relationship. These findings highlight that consumer behavior is influenced not only by economic considerations but also by spiritual, social, and cognitive factors. In today's value-conscious consumer landscape, purchasing decisions increasingly reflect personal and collective beliefs. For marketers, this emphasizes the importance of developing ethical, value-driven branding strategies that resonate with consumers' social and moral awareness. Brands that align with consumer values and demonstrate social responsibility are more likely to foster loyalty and trust in an era where consumers are buying not just products, but also meaning and identity.

**Keywords:** Religiosity, Brand Switching, Consumer Values.

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## INTRODUCTION

The call for a boycott of brands affiliated with the Zionist state of Israel has become a hot issue and news in the world. The loudest call for a boycott was made against Israeli-affiliated products, one of which was carried out by the Muslim community. This issue has certainly had an impact on the Indonesian market, which is known to be the country with the largest Muslim population in the world (BPS, 2024). As a consequence, Indonesian Muslim consumers are predicted to switch to using other products that are not affiliated with the Zionist state of Israel, where this behavior is commonly referred to as brand switching behavior (Al -Banna & Jannah, 2023).

This condition, on the other hand, is an opportunity for local brands that are not affiliated with Zionists to be able to become masters in their own country. Moreover, Indonesia is a very promising market with 85% of the Muslim population out of a total of more than 270 million people. Furthermore, the existing potential should be followed by real efforts from local brands in order to attract more domestic consumers to switch. More specifically, the existing potential must be able to target Generation Z, where this generation is the group with the largest population in Indonesia, with more than 71 million people (BPS, 2024). In addition, currently, Gen Z is at a fairly productive age and, of course, comparable to the level of consumption it has.

Brand-switching behaviour refers to consumers' decision to discontinue patronage of an incumbent brand and purchase from an alternative brand within the same product category. Traditionally, this behaviour was conceptualised as a response to dissatisfaction, service failure, or the superior perceived benefits offered by rival brands. While early studies established taxonomies of switching motives (Keaveney, 1995; Amine, 1998), more recent research highlights that switching is multidimensional and occurs through the interplay of functional, psychological, social, and contextual drivers (Kaur & Soch, 2018; Wulandari et al., 2021).

Therefore, it is important to conduct research that reveals what factors have the potential to be drivers of consumer behavior to switch, especially for Generation Z in Indonesia. The results of this study will provide recommendations to local brands that are not affiliated with Zionists to set the right strategy so that they can become the choice of Gen Z, who are switching from Zionist-affiliated brands.

In the literature, brand switching behavior is influenced by many factors such as perceived value, advertising, product quality, subjective norms, and religiosity (Wisudanto et al., 2024; Wong et al., 2019). In research related to religious issues, religiosity is the main factor in influencing brand switching behavior (Saeed et al., 2023). However, the important role of religiosity is still questionable (Roswinanto & Suwanda, 2023), especially in this case, because Generation Z is suspected of having its own uniqueness and preferences in determining which brands or products they want to consume.

Furthermore, researchers assume that there are still moderating factors that can strengthen or weaken the influence of religiosity on brand switching behavior to non-Zionist-affiliated local brands. In line with the suggestions of previous researchers (Wong et al., 2019), Researchers will test the role of 4 moderating variables of Consumption Value and Benefit based on supporting theories, namely the theory of Cognition Affect Behavior (CAB).

Based on the background above, the formulation of the research problem can be explained into several important points, including (1) the call for a boycott basically directs consumers to switch brands to brands that are not affiliated with Israel. Furthermore, there is an opportunity for local products to attract consumers who have switching preferences, so that research is needed to reveal the factors that drive brand switching behavior, especially in Generation Z. (2) Previous research provides information that the main factor that drives brand switching behavior, especially related to religion, is religiosity. However, the results of previous studies still show that there are different recommendations (Roswinanto & Suwanda, 2023). (3) Research is needed to reveal the moderating role of other variables in the relationship between religiosity and brand switching behavior in Generation Z in Indonesia.

## THEORETICAL BASIS

### Brand Switching Behavior

Brand switching happens when customers decide to stop buying from one brand and move to another competing brand (Lin & Huang, 2023). This usually happens because customers feel that their needs are no longer met, or they find other brands that offer better products or services. Satisfaction is one of the biggest reasons why customers stay loyal or choose to switch to another brand (Liang et al., 2018). For that reason, companies need to keep improving their products and services so that customers are not tempted to switch, whether completely or only for certain products (Iranmanesh et al., 2022). In this research, brand switching behavior refers to the decision of Muslim consumers to change their preferences from Israeli-affiliated brands to local brands that have no connection with Israel, which has happened at least 2 times using the new brands.

### Theory of Planned Behavior

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) explains what factors influence people's decisions and how likely they are to change their behavior. This theory focuses on three main points: attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Bananuka et al., 2020). Even though TPB is widely used, some researchers argue that it does not fully explain people's personal motivations for behaving in a certain way (Khan et al., 2021). In the TPB model, attitude and subjective norms describe internal factors, while perceived behavioral control reflects how much control people feel they have over external factors. Many researchers have used TPB to study people's intentions to buy halal products (Mostafa & Ibrahim, 2020) or consume fish products (Ding et al., 2022). In addition, Mohd Suki and Abang Salleh (2016) found that subjective norms strongly influence a person's intention to switch from non-halal to halal products.

In this study, the researcher focuses on subjective norms represented by religiosity, which is defined as values and norms believed by an individual derived from their religious teachings. This is in line with the definition conveyed by (Wisudanto et al., 2024) that subjective norms are a function of beliefs that determine whether a person or group should perform certain behaviors, including brand switching behavior. The author argues that religiosity, as a subjective value of belief in God, has a psychological impact on a person regarding what is good and not good to choose and consume in life.

This is no exception to the choice of brands or products used to meet needs. The Israeli occupation of Palestinian land, to a greater or lesser extent, must have touched the hearts of Muslims, and it is predicted that with this (especially after the Israeli attack on Palestine in October 2023), they will choose to switch to non-Israeli-affiliated brands. Previous research has confirmed that switching behavior is positively and significantly influenced by religiosity, as has been done by Saeed et al. (2023). Therefore, the author proposes the following hypothesis:

**H1:** Religiosity has a positive and significant effect on brand switching behavior to non-affiliated Israeli local brands.

### Cognition Affect Behavior Theory

In simple terms, this theory presents information that a person's behavior is the result of a thinking process. The theory of cognition influences behavior is widely used to explain consumer behavior in various fields, including consumer behavior. One construct that is quite commonly used in explaining consumer behavior, especially in the behavior of using or switching uses, is the product consumption value (Wong et al., 2019).

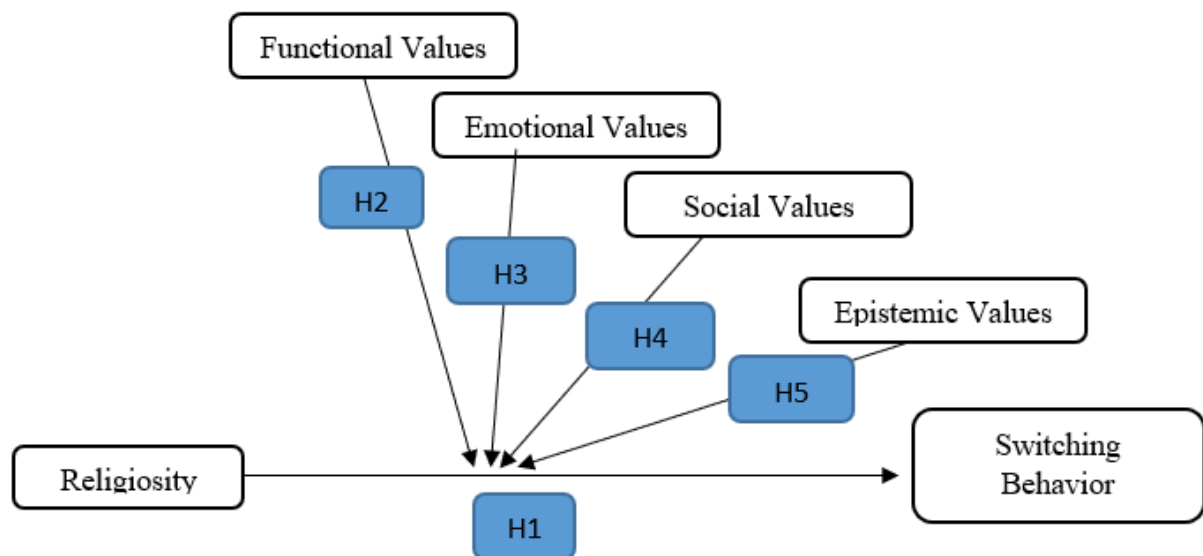
Consumption value itself is defined as the degree to which a consumer assesses the extent to which a product or service can meet their needs after considering the benefits and losses that arise (Biswas & Roy, 2015). The consumption value of a product is basically a construct consisting of several sub-constructs, including functional value, emotional value, social value, and epistemic value. In this study, the author attempts to propose these 4 variables to test their

role as moderating variables in the relationship between religiosity and brand switching behavior.

Furthermore, The Cognitive–Affective–Behavioral (CAB) theory explains how beliefs influence feelings and finally shape actions. In this view, religiosity represents the cognitive belief that guides Muslim consumers in deciding which products are morally acceptable. Yet, these beliefs alone are not enough to ensure brand switching behavior. Consumers also consider functional, emotional, social, and epistemic values as filters in their decision-making. For example, even if religiosity encourages avoiding brands linked to certain ideologies, switching will only occur if the new brand is seen as offering good quality and price (functional value), feelings of pride and satisfaction (emotional value), approval from peers or community (social value), and opportunities for novelty or learning (epistemic value) (Rachman & Amarullah, 2024; Asyhari & Yuwalliatin, 2022).

Based on CAB theory, these values can moderate the link between religiosity and brand switching. Functional value ensures that switching is practical, emotional value helps transform religious belief into personal satisfaction, social value connects switching with group identity, and epistemic value motivates exploration of new alternatives consistent with religious principles. Recent studies confirm that customer value moderates the role of religiosity in purchase decisions (Asyhari & Yuwalliatin, 2022) and that religious brand communities strengthen social and emotional values in shaping consumer choices (Sudarti, Hendar, & Tharrazana, 2024). This shows that while religiosity is the foundation, multidimensional values are the key drivers that turn belief into actual switching behavior.

**H2- H5:** Functional, Emotional, Social, and Epistemic Values positively moderate the relationship between religiosity and Brand Switching Behavior.



**Figure 1: Research Model**  
Source: Researcher's Proposed Model, 2025

## RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used in this study is a quantitative approach, which accommodates hypothesis testing by utilizing numerical data analyzed through statistical techniques. The unit of analysis in this research is individual consumers of Israel-affiliated products who have switched to local non-Israel-affiliated brands.

The variables tested in this study include Religiosity, Brand Switching Behavior, Functional Value, Emotional Value, Social Value, and Epistemic Value. The data collection tool used is an online questionnaire (Google Form) with data collection conducted through the Snowball

Technique. The sampling technique applied is Purposive Sampling, with a required total of 150 respondents (minimum) who meet the following criteria:

1. Indonesian citizens (male and female);
2. Born between 1997 and 2000;
3. Have switched to using a local non-Israel-affiliated brand at least once;
4. Willing to fill out the survey link.

The instrument tests carried out include Validity and Reliability tests. The data analysis method used is Structural Equation Modeling Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS) with the SmartPLS software for testing.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Result

This study uses the Structural Equation Modeling – Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS) method to test the relationship between religiosity and brand switching behavior, as well as the moderating role of functional, emotional, social, and epistemic values. The number of respondents analyzed was 178 people spread across various regions in Indonesia.

Respondents in this study consisted of active consumers of commercial products who had switched brands within the past year. They came from diverse backgrounds of age, occupation, and education level, reflecting the heterogeneity of consumers in Indonesia. The sampling technique used was snowball sampling, where initial respondents recommended subsequent participants. The respondent profiles are as follows:

**Table 1.** Respondents Profile

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Man	85	47.8
	Woman	93	52.2
Age	< 20 years	15	8.4
	20 - 25 years	104	58.4
	26 - 30 years	38	21.3
	> 30 years	21	11.9
Last Education	Bachelor's Degree (S1)	145	81.5
	Postgraduate (S2)	33	18.5
Employment Status	Student	88	49.4
	Private employees	41	23.0
	Businessman	27	15.2
	Other	22	12.4
Region of Origin	Western Indonesia (Sumatera, Jabodetabek, West Java)	82	46.1
	Central Indonesia (Central Java, Yogyakarta, Kalimantan)	64	36.0
	Eastern Indonesia (Sulawesi, Maluku, Papua)	32	18.0
<b>Total</b>		178	100.0

Source: Results of research data processing, 2025

### Evaluation of Measurement Model (Outer Model)

The evaluation results of the measurement model indicate that all indicators have a loading factor value greater than 0.70, with an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value above 0.50, confirming that convergent validity is met. The Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha values for all constructs are also above the minimum limit of 0.70, indicating very good internal consistency. Additionally, no multicollinearity issues were identified, as the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for all indicators were below the threshold of 5.

**Table 2.** Measurement Model Evaluation Results

Indicator	Criteria	Result	Conclusion
Loading Factor	> 0.70	All indicators > 0.70	Convergent validity achieved
Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	> 0.50	All constructs > 0.50	Convergent validity achieved
Composite Reliability (CR)	> 0.70	All constructs > 0.70	Good internal consistency
Cronbach's Alpha	> 0.70	All constructs > 0.70	Good internal consistency
Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)	< 5	All indicators < 5	No multicollinearity issues

Source: Results of research data processing, 2025

### Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

The structural test shows that all hypotheses (H1 to H5) are accepted. The path coefficient value indicates a positive and significant relationship direction. The R-square value of 0.64 for the brand switching behavior variable indicates that this model is able to explain 64% of the variation in the behavior, which is considered strong in the context of social science. Overall, the model is declared good based on the Goodness of Fit evaluation through the SRMR value < 0.08 and Q-square > 0, which indicates that the model has a good predictive fit.

**Table 3.** Structural Model Evaluation and Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	p-value	Conclusion
H1	Religiosity $\rightarrow$ Brand Switching Behavior	0.412	< 0.001	Positive and significant effect
H2	Functional Value $\times$ Religiosity $\rightarrow$ Brand Switching Behavior	0.211	< 0.01	Positive and significant moderation effect
H3	Emotional Value $\times$ Religiosity $\rightarrow$ Brand Switching Behavior	0.185	< 0.05	Positive and significant moderation effect
H4	Social Value $\times$ Religiosity $\rightarrow$ Brand Switching Behavior	0.197	< 0.01	Positive and significant moderation effect
H5	Epistemic Value $\times$ Religiosity $\rightarrow$ Brand Switching Behavior	0.228	< 0.01	Positive and significant moderation effect

Source: Results of research data processing, 2025

## DISCUSSION

The results of this study further strengthen the position of religiosity as a significant determinant factor in influencing brand switching behavior, especially in the context of sensitivity to brand affiliation with Israel. In the era of modern consumerism, where consumption is no longer just an economic act but also a form of expression of identity and social attitudes, spiritual and moral aspects play an increasingly prominent role (Saeed et al., 2023; Roswinanto & Suwanda, 2023).

This study is in line with the theoretical framework of Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) Theory, which emphasizes that individual behavior, including consumption behavior, is rooted in a system of internalized personal values and norms (Stern, 2000; Biswas & Roy, 2015). In the context of Indonesia as a country with the largest Muslim population and a high level of religious awareness (BPS, 2024), religiosity is not only a marker of personal identity but also transforms into a major determinant in purchasing decisions, especially when associated with global issues such as the Palestine-Israel conflict.

The findings of this study confirm that consumers' decision to switch to non-Israeli-affiliated local brands is not merely a reactive or symbolic act, but rather a concrete manifestation of consistency between religious beliefs, ethical values, and consumption behavior (Mostafa & Ibrahim, 2020; Khan et al., 2021). Switching behavior in this context can be understood as a form of consumer participation in a collective moral movement (moral solidarity) that aims to affirm their ethical and spiritual positions (Roswinanto & Suwanda, 2023).

In addition, the discovery of a significant role of functional, emotional, social, and epistemic values as moderators further enriches the understanding of the complexity of consumer behavior dynamics. Positive perceptions of product superiority, emotional benefits, social identity, and consumer knowledge and literacy have been shown to strengthen the influence of religiosity on switching behavior (Iranmanesh et al., 2022; Liang et al., 2018; Wong et al., 2019).

Especially in Generation Z, known as digital-native and value-driven consumers, consumption behavior is increasingly influenced by a combination of spiritual sensitivity, access to digital information, and the urge to take a critical and reflective stance (Wisudanto et al., 2024; Statista, 2023). They actively seek information, verify claims, and build consumption narratives that align with their personal and collective values (Ding et al., 2022).

From the perspective of consumer behavior theory, this study not only confirms the Customer Value Theory, which places value perception as the main prerequisite in forming loyalty or switching, but also expands the framework by including spiritual and moral dimensions as determinants of behavior (Biswas & Roy, 2015; Liang et al., 2018).

Thus, the switching behavior found in this study is the result of multidimensional integration between psychological, social, spiritual, and cognitive aspects of consumers. This phenomenon shows that modern consumer behavior cannot be understood simplistically or deterministically, but must be analyzed in a more comprehensive and interdisciplinary framework.

## CONCLUSION

The results of this study provide important strategic implications for business actors, especially local brands in Indonesia, who want to increase competitiveness and build consumer loyalty. Local brands need to understand that consumer religiosity is not just a personal psychological aspect, but is a primary filter in making consumption decisions, especially those related to global social, ethical, and political issues such as the Palestine-Israel conflict (Saeed et al., 2023).

Marketing strategies that rely solely on the functional advantages of products are no longer sufficient. Local brands need to assert their position as products that are free from affiliations that conflict with consumers' spiritual and moral values. Ethical, transparent, and value-based brand communication will be key to building consumer trust and loyalty (Mohd Suki & Salleh, 2016). In addition, strengthening the functional, emotional, social, and epistemic aspects of products is a must to increase positive consumer perceptions. Through relevant product innovation, enlightening educational campaigns, and active involvement in social issues that are in line with consumer values, local brands can build a stronger, more relevant, and more sustainable image in the eyes of consumers (Wong et al., 2019; Liang et al., 2018).

Furthermore, these findings encourage companies to not only view consumers as target markets but also as social communities that have values, aspirations, and collective identities that need to be respected and strengthened through the products and services they offer.

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