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Muslim-Friendly Tourism Facilities and Visiting Intention in Halal Tourism: The Mediating Role of Halal Certification Benefits

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ABSTRACT: Driven by the rising demand for services aligned with Islamic values, halal tourism emerged as a critical segment in Indonesia's hospitality industry. This shift forced destinations to recalibrate how they operationalized religious comfort and structural compliance for Muslim travelers. While existing literature heavily explored Muslim travel behavior through the lenses of destination attributes, religiosity, and perceived value, empirical insights remained sparse regarding how tangible faith-based facilities interacted with institutional trust signals such as halal certification to shape visiting intentions. To explore these dynamics, this study deployed a quantitative research design to evaluate the impact of Muslim-Friendly Tourism Facilities (MFF) on Visiting Intention (MVI), specifically examining the mediating role of Perceived Benefits of Halal Certification (PBH). Utilizing a purposive sampling approach, data were gathered from 250 Muslim respondents and subsequently analyzed via PLS-SEM using SmartPLS 4. The empirical findings substantiated that faith-based amenities shaped visitor behavior through both direct pathways and indirect mechanisms through certification perceptions. Given that the direct link between facilities and intentions remained statistically meaningful alongside the significant indirect path, the perceived benefits of halal certification functioned strictly as a partial mediator.

KEYWORDS: Muslim-friendly tourism; halal certification; perceived benefits; visiting intention; halal tourism

1. Introduction

The global rise of the Muslim consumer market fundamentally transformed halal tourism from a niche market into one of the fastest-growing segments in the hospitality sector. This evolution compelled destinations to strictly guarantee religious compliance, particularly through the provision of halal-certified food, clean prayer facilities, and ethical service touchpoints [1−4]. Within this landscape, Indonesia served as a critical focal point, leveraging its massive domestic Muslim population to capture global tourism momentum [1].

In Indonesia, halal tourism development was actively promoted through destination branding and service improvements. However, implementation at the destination level remained inconsistent. Many tourist areas still faced challenges in providing standardized

Muslim-friendly facilities, especially in terms of accessibility to prayer rooms, halal-certified food, and environmental cleanliness [5, 6]. These inconsistencies reduced Muslim tourists perceived trust and comfort, which ultimately influenced their intention to visit a destination.

While existing literature firmly established that destination attributes, religiosity, and perceived value governed Muslim behavioral intentions [2, 7, 8], these frameworks typically grouped Muslim-friendly features into broad destination categories. Consequently, they failed to isolate the explicit and direct predictive power of physical faith-based facilities. Furthermore, conventional studies frequently reduced halal certification to a binary trust signal that merely verified its presence or absence, thereby overlooking its nuanced role as a psychological catalyst of perceived benefits within the tourist decision-making matrix.

These limitations collectively exposed a multifaceted theoretical gap in the current literature. Foremost among these was the scarcity of empirical models that isolated localized Muslim-friendly facilities as distinct and measurable constructs capable of directly driving visiting intentions. Furthermore, the literature largely overlooked the critical mediating capacity of halal certification benefits, leaving a conceptual blind spot regarding how institutional assurances bridged physical infrastructure and traveler behavior. While structural equation modeling gained traction in halal tourism research, its application remained restricted; specifically, the nuanced underlying mechanism of perceived certification benefits remained substantially overlooked, particularly within the shifting dynamics of the Indonesian market [9−11].

From a theoretical perspective, this gap was important because tourist decision-making in halal tourism was influenced not only by physical attributes but also by cognitive evaluations of trust, certification, and perceived assurance. According to tourism behavior theory, travelers relied on both tangible cues (such as facilities) and institutional signals (such as certification) when making travel decisions under uncertainty [12, 13]. However, the interaction between these two components remained underexplored in halal tourism literature.

To bridge these conceptual divides, this research evaluated the structural impact of Muslim-Friendly Tourism Facilities (MFF) on Visiting Intention (MVI), explicitly modeling the mediating pathway of Perceived Benefits of Halal Certification (PBH). By synthesizing tangible service attributes and symbolic institutional assurances into a unified structural equation model, this study provided a more nuanced explanation of Muslim consumer behavior. Consequently, the following four core hypotheses were advanced for empirical testing:

H1: Muslim-Friendly Tourism Facilities (MFF) exerted a significant positive effect on the Perceived Benefits of Halal Certification (PBH).

H2: Muslim-Friendly Tourism Facilities (MFF) exerted a significant positive effect on Visiting Intention (MVI).

H3: Perceived Benefits of Halal Certification (PBH) exerted a significant positive effect on Visiting Intention (MVI).

H4: Perceived Benefits of Halal Certification (PBH) significantly mediated the structural relationship between Muslim-Friendly Tourism Facilities (MFF) and Visiting Intention (MVI).

This conceptual framework integrated destination attribute theory with behavioral intention theory, arguing that physical service quality and perceived institutional trust jointly drove the

tourist decision-making matrix [14, 15]. By synthesizing these dual perspectives, the study offered a more profound and comprehensive paradigm of halal tourism behavior, particularly within Indonesia's emerging destinations.

2. Materials and Methods

This study employed an explanatory quantitative research design to empirically dissect the structural relationships among Muslim-Friendly Tourism Facilities, Perceived Benefits of Halal Certification, and Visiting Intention. Utilizing a quantitative framework was highly critical, as it facilitated rigorous hypothesis testing and decrypted complex causal pathways through advanced statistical modeling [6, 16]. Within the tourism and consumer behavior domains, this objective analytical approach yielded precise measurements of behavioral patterns, ensuring the empirical validation of the conceptualized latent constructs. The empirical evaluation relied on a cross-sectional survey design, capturing respondents' immediate perceptions and behavioral intentions within a real-world setting without variable manipulation. This approach proved highly effective in contemporary hospitality literature, as it allowed for the efficient and objective collection of consumer data from a specific target population during a defined timeframe [17, 18].

2.1. Research design and data.

The structural model evaluated three core latent constructs: Muslim-Friendly Tourism Facilities (MFF) as the exogenous independent variable, Perceived Benefits of Halal Certification (PBH) as the intervening mediator, and Visiting Intention (MVI) as the endogenous dependent variable. To operationalize these dimensions, MFF captured the presence of destination attributes tailored to Muslim travellers' faith-based requirements, focusing on certified culinary availability, dedicated prayer infrastructures, hygiene, and value-aligned hospitality [7, 8]. Concurrently, PBH was conceptualized as the tourist's subjective cognitive evaluation regarding the utility and credibility of formal certification in guaranteeing systemic compliance and destination trustworthiness [6, 19]. Ultimately, MVI operationalized the behavioural probability of a traveller selecting a specific destination for future visitation, a cognitive process driven by synthesized evaluations of perceived value and institutional trust [12, 13].

2.1.1. Research instruments and software.

Data were gathered via a structured questionnaire operationalized through a five-point Likert scale, anchored from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) [20, 21]. To ensure psychometric robustness, all measurement indicators were adapted from validated instruments in the existing halal hospitality and behavioural literature. Specifically, the four-dimensional facets of Muslim-Friendly Tourism Facilities—halal culinary availability, dedicated prayer infrastructures, overall hygiene, and service quality—were derived from [7, 8]. Measurement items for Perceived Benefits of Halal Certification were drawn from [6] to capture psychological trust, formal assurance, and perceived functional utility. Lastly, the endogenous construct of Visiting Intention was operationalized based on scale developments by [13, 12]. focusing on definitive visitation willingness, referral tendencies, and revisit intentions.

Prior to field distribution, the instrument underwent a rigorous content validity evaluation through expert reviews by senior academic scholars in tourism management. Furthermore, a localized pilot study was executed to verify semantic clarity and eliminate response ambiguities [18], thereby guaranteeing that all measurement items were contextually tailored and highly intelligible to the target respondents. Prior to field distribution, the instrument underwent a rigorous content validity evaluation through expert reviews conducted by senior academic scholars in tourism management. Furthermore, a localized pilot study was executed to verify semantic clarity and eliminate response ambiguities [18], thereby guaranteeing that all measurement items were contextually tailored and highly intelligible to the target respondents.

2.2. Population and sample.

The target population for this empirical inquiry comprised Muslim tourists who possessed familiarity with or had personally visited the Kampoeng Radjoet Binong Jati tourism industrial sector in Bandung. To ensure the acquisition of high-quality data, a purposive sampling technique was deployed, establishing strict inclusion criteria: respondents had to possess relevant travel experience and demonstrate clear awareness regarding faith-based or Muslim-friendly hospitality offerings [22]. Through this sampling framework, a final sample of 250 valid responses was secured for structural estimation. The adequacy of this sample size was theoretically justified through the PLS-SEM "10-times rule," which mandated that the minimum sample threshold should achieve at least tenfold the maximum number of structural paths directed at any single latent construct within the model [23, 24]. Given that the inner model specified a maximum of two structural paths directed at the dependent variable, the baseline requirement of 20 observations was substantially exceeded, thereby ensuring high degrees of freedom. Furthermore, this sample size aligned with statistical power mandates in variance-based structural equation modeling; datasets exceeding 200 observations were sufficiently robust to detect medium-to-large effect sizes, generating highly stable parameter estimations and minimizing standard error inflation [23].

2.3. Data collection procedure.

Primary data acquisition was executed through a dual-channel distribution approach, utilizing both online and self-administered offline structured questionnaires between February and April 2026. Prior to the full-scale field administration, a localized pilot study was conducted to secure semantic clarity and refine item comprehension. To initiate the main data collection phase, a total of 270 questionnaires were purposely distributed to eligible Muslim tourists who possessed direct visitation experience at Kampoeng Radjoet Binong Jati, Indonesia. Of the distributed instruments, 260 responses were successfully retrieved, yielding a strong response rate of 92.6%. Following a rigorous data screening and filtering process to eliminate incomplete responses or straight-lining patterns, 250 questionnaires were certified as valid and retained for the final structural analysis. This filtering mechanism strictly enforced the baseline inclusion criteria, ensuring that the analytical dataset consisted exclusively of Muslim respondents possessing authentic firsthand experiential perceptions of the destination.

2.4. Data analysis technique.

The empirical data were subjected to Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) utilizing the SmartPLS 4 statistical software. This variance-based approach was deployed primarily because of its superior predictive capabilities and robust handling of complex structural frameworks involving multiple simultaneous mediating pathways without requiring stringent multivariate normality assumptions [23, 25]. Following established methodological protocols, the analytical evaluation was executed through a systematic two-step procedure. First, the measurement model (outer model) was assessed to guarantee psychometric property robustness, specifically evaluating indicator loadings, convergent validity, internal consistency reliability, and discriminant validity. Second, upon securing outer model adequacy, the structural model (inner model) was evaluated. This phase leveraged a non-parametric bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples to compute path coefficients, evaluate explanatory power, and statistically validate the significance of both the direct and indirect mediation hypotheses.

2.5. Ethical considerations.

Ethical integrity was rigorously maintained throughout the research process by enforcing strict protocols for respondent anonymity and voluntary participation. To protect participant privacy, the data collection instrument was designed to exclude all personal identifiers, ensuring that individual responses remained entirely untraceable. All captured data were securely processed and utilized exclusively for academic research purposes, strictly adhering to established institutional ethical guidelines regarding data management and participant protection [16].

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results.

This section delineated the empirical findings derived from the two-step evaluation framework of variance-based structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), as methodologically advocated. Following these rigorous psychometric protocols, the data analysis was systematically bifurcated. First, the measurement model (outer model) was subjected to verification to establish construct reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity, ensuring that the latent operationalizations were statistically sound [26]. Second, upon confirming outer model adequacy, the structural model (inner model) was evaluated using a non-parametric bootstrapping procedure to test the hypothesized causal linkages and the definitive nature of the indirect mediation pathways [23, 25].

3.1.1. Evaluation of measurement model (outer model).

Prior to estimating the structural paths, the reflective measurement model was rigorously evaluated to confirm that all latent constructs exhibited sufficient psychometric validity and reliability, ensuring that the empirical indicators accurately captured their respective underlying variables [26, 23]. The outer model encompassed three reflective constructs: Muslim-Friendly Tourism Facilities (MFF), Perceived Benefits of Halal Certification (PBH), and Visiting Intention (MVI). Initial assessment of the measurement framework indicated high indicator reliability, as all standardized outer loadings substantially exceeded the conservative

threshold of 0.70 [23]. As presented in Table 1, within the MFF construct, the availability of verified halal food and dedicated prayer facilities emerged as the most dominant indicators, yielding the highest outer loadings. Statistically, this signified that these specific items held the strongest variance extraction over the latent variable. In the context of halal tourism—particularly within an artisan industrial destination such as Kampoeng Radjoet Binong Jati—these parameters were highly suitable because fabric and textile shoppers prioritized basic religious compliance, including clean prayer spaces and permissible culinary options, during prolonged visits. This finding aligned with destination attribute literature, which posited that core Islamic amenities served as non-negotiable determinants of destination attractiveness rather than mere secondary supplements [3, 7, 8].

Table 1. Construct reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity.

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_a)	Composite Reliability (rho_c)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker)
MFF	0.907	0.909	0.930	0.728	**0.853**
MVI	0.926	0.927	0.944	0.772	**0.879**
PBH	0.915	0.915	0.936	0.746	**0.864**

The internal consistency evaluation demonstrated robust reliability across all latent domains, with Cronbach's Alpha, rho_a, and rho_c values all remaining well above the 0.90 threshold, as shown in Table 1. This high reliability profile confirmed strong internal cohesion among the measurement scale items [24]. Similar ultra-high reliability configurations within Islamic hospitality frameworks were documented by [10] and [28], confirming that reflective scales for faith-based attributes remained highly stable and psychometrically robust when deployed in diverse Indonesian empirical settings. Convergent validity was fully substantiated, as the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for all three constructs exceeded the universally accepted 0.50 benchmark [27, 23]. As detailed in Table 1, this implied that each latent variable captured more than 70% of its indicators' variance, ranging from 0.728 to 0.772, leaving minimal residual error. This clean variance extraction matched contemporary halal tourism studies in which rigorous item-purification processes successfully yielded highly convergent behavioral intention models [2].

Lastly, discriminant validity was established utilizing the Fornell-Larcker criterion, proving that MFF, PBH, and MVI were empirically unique and conceptually distinct domains without problematic statistical cross-loadings [26]. As presented in Table 1, the square root of the AVE for each construct (bold values in the Fornell-Larcker column) consistently surpassed any correlation with opposing variables. In tourism behavioral research, securing this empirical separation was crucial because it guaranteed that tourists' practical assessments of physical facilities (MFF) were cognitively isolated from their institutional trust perceptions (PBH) and future behavioral goals (MVI), thereby avoiding multicollinearity biases during path estimation [12]. Consequently, the measurement model demonstrated pristine psychometric properties, establishing a strong baseline for inner model structural analysis. Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework employed in this study.

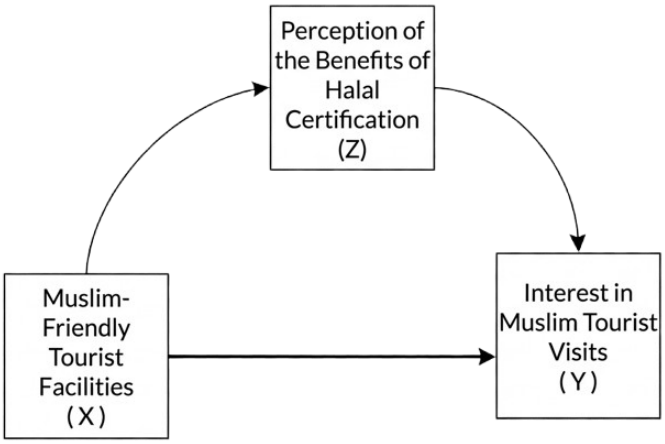

Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

Furthermore, discriminant validity testing using the Fornell-Larcker criterion demonstrated valid results. The square root of the AVE for each latent construct (bold values in the Fornell-Larcker column) is consistently greater than the correlation value of that construct with any other construct in the model. This ensures that each latent variable is unique and distinct from the other constructs.

3.1.2. Evaluation of structural model (inner model) and hypothesis testing.

After confirming the measurement model, the structural model was assessed using bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples. This procedure is widely used in PLS-SEM to ensure the stability and robustness of path coefficients [23, 24]. The R^2 values indicated strong explanatory power, with PBH at 0.836 and MVI at 0.891. According to [23], R^2 values above 0.75 indicate substantial explanatory strength in behavioral research models. Similar high explanatory power has also been reported in halal tourism studies involving destination attributes and behavioral intention [9, 10]. These results suggested that Muslim-Friendly Tourism Facilities and Perceived Benefits of Halal Certification were strong predictors of tourist intention in halal tourism contexts. This finding aligned with previous studies showing that destination attributes significantly shape Muslim travel behavior through cognitive evaluation and perceived trust [19, 3]. Figure 2 presents the structural model and path coefficients.

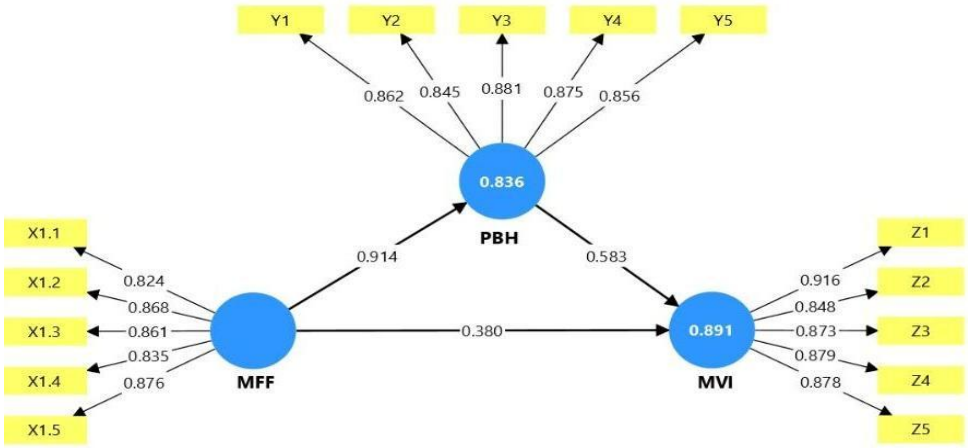

Figure 2. Structural Model and Path Coefficients.

In addition to explanatory power, the model also demonstrated strong predictive relevance, indicating that the structural model was not only capable of explaining relationships but also suitable for prediction purposes in halal tourism behavior. This strengthened the robustness of the model in explaining Muslim tourists' decision-making processes. The hypothesis testing results, as presented in Table 2, showed that all proposed relationships were supported. Muslim-Friendly Tourism Facilities had a very strong influence on Perceived Benefits of Halal Certification. This suggests that when destinations provide clear halal-supporting facilities such as halal food availability, prayer rooms, cleanliness, and proper service standards, tourists tend to perceive halal certification as more meaningful and trustworthy. In the halal tourism context, these physical facilities act as visible proof that strengthens tourists' confidence in certification systems.

Table 2. Hypotheses testing results (direct and indirect effects).

Hypotheses	Structural Path	Original Sample	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics	P Values	Hypotheses Status
H1	MFF⟶ PBH	0.914	0.915	0.024	38.757	0.000	Supported
H2	MFF⟶MVI	0.380	0.392	0.128	2.969	0.003	Supported
H3	PBH⟶MVI	0.583	0.571	0.130	4.498	0.000	Supported
H4	MFF⟶ PBH ⟶ MVI	0.533	0.522	0.115	4.627	0.000	Supported

Furthermore, Muslim-Friendly Tourism Facilities also had a positive and significant effect on Visiting Intention. This means that the completer and more accessible the halal-friendly facilities are, the higher the likelihood that Muslim tourists choose to visit the destination. Although this effect was not as strong as its influence on perceived benefits, it still showed that tangible tourism attributes play an important role in shaping travel decisions. Previous studies in halal tourism also confirmed that physical attributes such as prayer facilities and halal food availability significantly influence tourist intention and satisfaction. To test the mediating role of halal certification perceptions, an analysis of specific indirect effects was conducted. The bootstrapping estimation results showed a significant indirect effect from MFF to MVI through the mediation of PBH (Original Sample = 0.533; T = 4.627; P = 0.000), thereby supporting H4. Since both the direct effect (MFF → MVI) and the indirect effect were significant, Perceived Benefits of Halal Certification (PBH) acted as a partial mediator in this structural model.

3.2. Discussion.

The empirical findings of this study offered critical insights into the behavioral mechanics of Islamic hospitality, demonstrating that Muslim-friendly tourism facilities (MFF) played a foundational role in shaping both cognitive perceptions and future behavioral intentions. Tangible attributes, most notably verified halal food availability, dedicated prayer infrastructures, and destination cleanliness, acted as prominent environmental cues that significantly elevated the perceived reliability of a hospitality ecosystem [7, 8]. Beyond mere physical convenience, these localized amenities served as immediate sensory touchpoints that

reduced situational anxiety for faith-based travelers, allowing them to navigate destinations with psychological comfort.

However, the structural estimation revealed that the behavioral path from physical infrastructure to tourist intention was not a simple linear progression. Instead, this relationship was partially mediated by the Perceived Benefits of Halal Certification (PBH), exposing a sophisticated dual-process evaluation mechanism. This partial mediation configuration demonstrated that while physical attributes possessed independent power to directly influence visitation intentions, their strategic value was significantly amplified when validated by formal institutional assurance [26−29]. This behavioral pattern indicated that modern Muslim tourists operated simultaneously on two evaluative levels: a pragmatic assessment of tangible destination features and a higher-level cognitive validation of symbolic trust signals.

This dual reliance aligned with emerging frameworks in contemporary halal tourism, where formal certification mechanisms function not merely as administrative compliance indicators but as psychological trust catalysts that strengthen destination credibility [19, 3]. For a niche segment of highly pragmatic travelers, the visual confirmation of physical amenities may be sufficient to prompt an immediate travel decision. However, for the broader market, the presence of physical facilities functions as essential real-world evidence that legitimizes the abstract assurances provided by halal certification. Without concrete infrastructure, certification benefits risk being perceived as symbolic or disconnected from practice; conversely, without formal certification, high-quality facilities may lack institutional credibility.

Consequently, a fragmented approach that isolates infrastructure development from certification governance would inherently weaken a destination's competitive advantage. Strategic improvements in physical hospitality assets would not fully translate into visiting intentions unless supported by rigorous and transparent certification frameworks. Ultimately, this study demonstrated that long-term tourist retention and market competitiveness depend heavily on the seamless integration of tangible faith-based service attributes and formal institutional signals, providing a comprehensive paradigm for understanding consumer decision-making in the emerging halal tourism landscape.

4. Conclusions

Overall, Muslim-friendly facilities and halal certification both played important roles in shaping tourists' intention to visit halal destinations. Their combined effect suggested that physical facilities and institutional assurance should be developed in tandem to strengthen tourist confidence and interest. The findings indicated that facilities such as halal food availability, prayer rooms, cleanliness, and Muslim-friendly services increased tourists' comfort and trust when visiting halal tourism destinations. In addition, perceptions of halal certification also played a significant role in strengthening tourists' confidence and encouraging their intention to visit. The mediation analysis showed that the Perceived Benefits of Halal Certification partially mediated the relationship between Muslim-Friendly Tourism Facilities and Visiting Intention. This meant that providing Muslim-friendly facilities alone was not sufficient if it was not supported by clear and trusted halal certification. Therefore, halal tourism destinations should give balanced attention to both service facilities and certification standards to enhance tourist attraction and competitiveness. This study had several limitations. The research was conducted in only one tourism destination area, so the findings

may not fully represent other halal tourism destinations in Indonesia or other countries. In addition, this study used a cross-sectional approach, which captured respondents' perceptions at a single point in time. Future studies are recommended to include broader research locations and additional variables such as destination image, tourist satisfaction, or tourist loyalty to provide a deeper understanding of Muslim tourist behavior in halal tourism contexts.

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Author Contribution

EF: Conceptualization, Methodology, Data Collection, Data Analysis, Writing – original draft.
BS: Supervision, Validation, Writing review & editing.
GMD: Supervision, Methodology validation, Writing – review & editing.

Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no competing financial, personal, or professional relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.

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