

Understanding How Trust Drives Saving Intention Toward Islamic Rural Banks

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – This study examines how trust drives saving intention toward Islamic rural banks (BPRS) by investigating the roles of Islamic financial literacy, perceived security, and Islamic financial inclusion as antecedents of trust.

Design/methodology/approach – A survey of 241 BPRS customers in Indonesia was analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM).

Finding/Results – Islamic financial inclusion and Islamic financial literacy significantly enhance customer trust, while perceived security does not. Trust, in turn, strongly and positively influences saving intention. Trust fully mediates the effects of inclusion and literacy on saving intention. These findings provide practical implications for Islamic rural banks and regulators to enhance Islamic financial literacy and financial inclusion in strengthening public trust.

Originality/Value – This study is among the early studies that position Islamic financial literacy and financial inclusion as determinants of trust in BPRS, while also demonstrating that perceived security is not always the primary determinant of trust. Therefore, this study fills a gap in the literature on customers' saving behavior in BPRS, which remains underexplored from the customer perspective.

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1. Introduction

Islamic Rural Bank (BPRS) is an important component of the Islamic financial system in Indonesia, focusing on serving micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and rural communities (Trinugroho et al., 2018; Sukmana et al., 2020). Based on Law No. 21 of 2008, BPRS does not provide payment services but plays a role in fund mobilization and financing distribution based on Islamic principles, such as profit-sharing and trade-based contracts (Mai et al., 2024; Fithria et al., 2021). The role of BPRS has become increasingly important as MSMEs contribute 61.9% to Indonesia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and absorb approximately 97% of the national workforce (Ariefianto et al., 2024). Nevertheless, MSMEs' access to formal financial institutions remains limited due to relatively stringent financing requirements (Setiawan, 2015; Akbar & Siti-Nabiha, 2022). On the other hand, although Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world, the market share of Islamic banking remains relatively low at approximately 7.3%–7.69%, while BPRS accounts for less than 2% of total national banking assets (OJK, 2025; Amanda, 2023).

The facts indicate that the ratio of savings to third-party funds in Islamic Rural Banks (BPRS) has tended to stagnate or even decline in recent years, while the level of Non-Performing Financing (NPF) has consistently remained above the regulatory threshold of 7% (Sudarsono et al., 2024). During the 2016–2022 period, the average NPF of BPRS ranged from 7.12% to 9.68% (Mai et al., 2024; Ariefianto et al., 2024). This condition suggests that the low saving intention in BPRS is closely associated with issues of customer trust. Trust reflects customers' confidence that the bank can manage funds securely, consistently, and responsibly (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Aleman, 2001). However, several studies have found that some customers still question the transparency and reliability of BPRS in managing deposit funds due to weak governance and supervision (Fithria et al., 2021; Kidron & Kreis, 2020). In fact, under the *mudharabah* contract, customers as fund owners also bear risks when fund management is conducted imprudently (Hati et al., 2020; Nugraheni & Widayani, 2020). Therefore, identifying the determinants of trust is essential to enhance saving intention in BPRS.

Islamic financial literacy has become an important factor influencing customers' decisions in choosing Islamic banking services (Riza, 2021). This literacy is not only about understanding banking products and services, but also about Islamic principles such as the prohibition of *riba*, *gharar*, and *maysir* (Chapra, 2008; Dusuki & Abdullah, 2007). However, the level of Islamic financial literacy in Indonesia remains relatively low. National data indicate that the Islamic economic literacy index has reached 43.42%, suggesting that a large proportion of society still lacks an adequate understanding of the fundamental principles of Islamic financial transactions (Guerra-Leal et al., 2022). This condition makes it difficult for the public to distinguish Islamic banking products from conventional banking products (Souiden & Rani, 2015; Wahyuni & Fitriani, 2017). In addition to literacy, perceived security has also become an important factor in building customer trust (Melnyk, 2023; Nepomuceno et al., 2014). In the context of Islamic Rural Banks, perceived security includes data security, transaction security, and customers' confidence that their funds are managed safely and properly supervised by the Financial Services Authority (OJK) and the National Sharia Board of the Indonesian Ulama Council (Sudarsono et al., 2024; Sholihin et al., 2018). Nevertheless, studies simultaneously

examining the effects of Islamic financial literacy and perceived security on customer trust in Islamic Rural Banks remain very limited.

Another equally important factor is Islamic financial inclusion. National data indicate that Islamic financial inclusion remains relatively low, at 13.41%. To date, financial inclusion has been more often positioned as an outcome of trust rather than as a factor that shapes it (Vasile et al., 2021). This paradigm needs to be reconsidered, particularly in the context of Islamic rural banks (BPRS), which predominantly operate in rural and semi-urban areas. Most BPRS customers come from unbanked communities, such as MSMEs, farmers, and fishermen, who previously had limited access to formal financial institutions (Cull et al., 2018; Ledgerwood et al., 2013). When they gain access to financial services through simple procedures, nearby locations, and responsive service, positive experiences emerge that make them feel valued and well served (Hermes & Hudon, 2018; Zamore et al., 2019). These experiences gradually foster trust in BPRS. Previous studies have also shown that microfinance institutions with broader inclusive outreach tend to achieve higher customer loyalty (Beisland et al., 2019; Zamore et al., 2019). Therefore, financial inclusion should not merely be understood as access to financial services, but also as a process that shapes customer trust (Chen et al., 2017; Tisdell & Ahmad, 2018). Based on these arguments, this study positions Islamic financial inclusion as one of the antecedents of trust that drives saving intention toward BPRS.

Research on Islamic banking adoption continues to expand, and studies specifically examining saving intention toward Islamic Rural Banks remain limited (Mai et al., 2024; Ariefianto et al., 2024). Previous studies, such as Fithria et al. (2021) and Sudarsono et al. (2024), have primarily focused on governance and ownership structures of Islamic Rural Banks, while the customer perspective has received relatively limited attention. In fact, Islamic financial literacy, perceived security, and financial inclusion may be important factors in building customer trust in Islamic Rural Banks. However, the relationships among these factors, trust, and saving intention within the context of Islamic rural banking have not been widely examined empirically. Therefore, this study aims to develop a trust-based saving intention model for Islamic Rural Banks by integrating Islamic financial literacy, perceived security, and financial inclusion as the main antecedents. This study offers academic novelty by positioning perceived security and financial inclusion as determinants of trust within the context of BPRS in Indonesia, differing from previous studies that primarily focused on internal banking aspects or positioned financial inclusion as a consequence of trust. Furthermore, this study integrates the literature on Islamic banking, customer trust formation, and financial inclusion into a comprehensive framework to explain the mechanism underlying saving intention more holistically, while explicitly examining the mediating role of trust in the relationships among Islamic financial literacy, perceived security, financial inclusion, and saving intention. The findings enrich the literature by demonstrating that customer trust is shaped not only by institutional guarantees but also by customers' real experiences accessing BPRS services, thereby providing both theoretical contributions and practical implications for strengthening customer-oriented Islamic financial inclusion strategies. In addition, this study is expected to contribute theoretically to the Islamic rural banking literature and to provide practical insights for regulators and the Islamic rural banking industry to strengthen customer trust and promote sustainable Islamic financial inclusion.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis

2.1 Development Islamic Rural Bank (BPRS)

Islamic Rural Bank (BPRS) has distinct characteristics compared to Islamic commercial banks. Under Law No. 21 of 2008 and POJK No. 3/POJK.03/2016, BPRS are not permitted to provide payment traffic services; therefore, their primary activities focus on mobilizing savings and deposits as well as distributing financing to SMEs and rural communities (Mai et al., 2024; Fithria et al., 2021). The operational scope of BPRS, which is limited to specific cities and provinces, makes these institutions highly dependent on local customers who generally possess relatively low levels of financial literacy (Trinugroho et al., 2018; Sukmana et al., 2020). Furthermore, limited digital services mean that customer interactions with BPRS remain dominated by personal and face-to-face relationships (Ariefianto et al., 2024; Setiawan, 2015). Under these conditions, trust becomes a highly important factor, as customers tend to build trust through direct experience and social environmental influence rather than through banking systems or technology (Sholihin et al., 2018; Kidron & Kreis, 2020).

2.2 Saving Intention in Islamic Rural Banks (BPRS)

Saving intention is defined as an individual's conscious plan to allocate a portion of current income to savings products in formal financial institutions (Ajzen, 1991; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). In the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), intention is considered the closest predictor of actual behavior. In the context of Islamic finance, saving intention also reflects customers' readiness to use savings products perceived as secure, compliant with Shariah principles, and capable of fulfilling long-term financial needs (Lujja et al., 2016). In Indonesia, the intention to save in Islamic financial institutions has continued to increase alongside growing public awareness of Islamic-based financial services. Customers' decisions to save are influenced not only by religiosity, but also by trust, transaction security, service accessibility, and Islamic financial literacy. This issue becomes increasingly important in the context of Islamic Rural Bank (BPRS), whose customers are predominantly rural communities, micro-entrepreneurs, and lower- to middle-income groups. The characteristics of BPRS, which primarily serves customers with unstable incomes and relatively low literacy levels, require a different modeling approach (Trinugroho et al., 2018; Sukmana et al., 2020). Therefore, further studies examining the factors influencing saving intention among BPRS customers in Indonesia remain necessary.

2.3 Customer Trust (PT)

Customer trust refers to an individual's willingness to accept vulnerability based on optimistic expectations regarding the behavior of another party in situations characterized by interdependence and risk Kaabachi et al. (2019). Trust also refers to the subjective assumption that a party will fulfill its responsibilities (Riza et al., 2024). This is particularly important in financial transactions, where customers face uncertainty and the potential risk of loss. Grounded in the Commitment-Trust Theory (Morgan & Hunt, 1994), trust serves as a key factor in driving intention and long-term loyalty. According to Akhtar et al. (2019), in the banking industry, trust is closely associated with the development of long-term relationships and customer loyalty. Empirically, trust has been shown to exert a positive effect on intention (Akhtar et al., 2019; Parayil Iqbal et al., 2022; Riza et al., 2024). Other studies also indicate that when customers possess trust, they are more likely to continue using the services offered by an organization (Bhatnagr and Rajesh, 2024). In the context of Islamic Rural Banks (BPRS) in

Indonesia, trust in Islamic banking services encourages customers to strengthen their saving intention because they feel secure, comfortable, and perceive tangible benefits from the services provided.

2.4 Islamic Financial Literacy (IFL) and Customer Trust (PT) in Islamic Rural Banks

Islamic financial literacy is defined as an individual's ability to understand Islamic financial products, services, and principles, including the prohibition of *riba*, *gharar*, *maysir*, as well as the concepts of *zakat* and other forms of Islamic philanthropy (Riza, 2021). Unlike conventional financial literacy, which primarily focuses on profit and risk, Islamic financial literacy also encompasses spiritual and ethical values that influence customers' preferences toward financial institutions that genuinely comply with Sharia principles (Chapra, 2008; Dusuki & Abdullah, 2007). In the context of Islamic Rural Banks, low Islamic financial literacy remains a major challenge, as many customers are still unable to distinguish Islamic financial products. In fact, understanding contracts such as *mudharabah* is essential for customers to comprehend the profit-sharing mechanism and risks in Islamic banking (Hati et al., 2020; Nugraheni & Widayani, 2020). Adequate literacy fosters cognitive trust, namely the belief that Islamic Rural Banks possess the competence and integrity to operate in accordance with Sharia principles (Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Aleman, 2001). Conversely, low literacy levels make customers more dependent on social opinions or informal reputations that may not necessarily be accurate (Beckett et al., 2000; Maulana, 2016). Therefore, Islamic financial literacy is considered an important factor in building trust toward Islamic Rural Banks. Thus, the hypothesis is as follows:

H1 Higher Islamic Financial Literacy (IFL) enhances customer Trust (PT) in Islamic rural Bank

2.5 Perceived Security (PS) and Consumer Trust (PT) in Islamic Rural Banks

Perceived security in banking refers to customers' perceptions regarding a bank's ability to protect their data, transactions, and funds from cybercrime risks, system errors, and governance failures (Malaquias & Hwang, 2016; Koksal, 2016). In the context of Islamic banking, perceived security is not only related to technological security but also encompasses customers' confidence in bank governance, capital adequacy, and the effectiveness of supervision conducted by the Financial Services Authority (OJK) and the National Sharia Board of the Indonesian Ulema Council (Sudarsono et al., 2024; Sholihin et al., 2018). This issue has become increasingly important in Islamic Rural Banks (BPRS), considering the continuing cases of fraud and default that have led to the closure of several BPRS institutions each year (Mai et al., 2024; Ariefianto et al., 2024). OJK data further indicate that the non-performing financing (NPF) ratio of BPRS during the 2016–2022 period ranged from 7.12% to 9.68%, exceeding the regulatory threshold of 7% (OJK, 2022; Fithria et al., 2021). Such conditions may weaken customers' perceived security due to concerns over the potential loss of funds in the event of bank failure. Based on signaling theory, mechanisms such as deposit guarantees from the Indonesia Deposit Insurance Corporation (LPS), transparency in financial reporting, and Sharia compliance supervision may serve as positive signals that reduce information asymmetry and enhance customer trust (Connelly et al., 2010; Nepomuceno et al., 2014). Therefore, this study positions perceived security as an important factor shaping customer trust in BPRS. Thus, the hypothesis is as follows:

H2 Perceived Security (PS) significantly strengthens Consumer Trust (PT) toward Islamic rural banks

2.6 Islamic Financial Inclusion and Consumer Trust (PT) in Islamic Rural Banks

Financial inclusion is understood as the access, usage, quality, and benefits of formal financial services for society (Vasile et al., 2021). Most previous studies have positioned financial inclusion as an outcome of trust or as an indicator of macroeconomic policy (Guerra-Leal et al., 2022; Dawood et al., 2019). However, this study offers a different perspective by viewing financial inclusion as customers' direct experience in accessing BPRS services, which gradually shapes trust. This perspective is grounded in Experiential Learning Theory, which explains that individuals develop beliefs through real experiences. In the context of BPRS, experiences such as the ease of opening an account, more flexible financing access, and friendly services serve as tangible evidence that BPRS is a trustworthy institution that remains close to the community (Cull et al., 2018; Ledgerwood et al., 2013). These positive experiences subsequently foster affective trust, namely a sense of security and comfort in conducting transactions due to the absence of significant prior negative experiences (Beisland et al., 2019; Zamore et al., 2019). Furthermore, the inclusive characteristics of BPRS, such as its proximity to local communities, the involvement of local-based marketing personnel, and more flexible requirements, further strengthen the perception that BPRS exists to serve the needs of lower-income communities (Akbar & Siti-Nabiha, 2022; Tisdell & Ahmad, 2018). Therefore, this study positions financial inclusion as an experiential antecedent that plays an important role in building trust and encouraging saving intention toward BPRS. Hence, the hypothesis is as follows:

H3 Islamic Financial Inclusion (IFI) positively contributes to Consumer Trust (PT) in Islamic rural banks

2.7 Consumer Trust (PT) and Saving Intention (SI) in Islamic Rural Banks

Trust is a crucial factor in the relationship between customers and banks, particularly in long-term savings products that involve risk (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Sekhon et al., 2014). In the context of Islamic banking, trust reflects customers' confidence that the bank is capable of managing funds securely, transparently, and in accordance with Sharia principles (Hati et al., 2020; Nugraheni & Widayani, 2020). According to the Commitment-Trust Theory, trust serves as the primary mechanism linking various antecedent factors to customer behavior, including saving intention (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). The role of trust becomes increasingly important in Islamic Rural Bank (BPRS) because *mudharabah* savings products do not provide fixed returns, requiring customers to trust that their funds are managed honestly and professionally (Sholihin et al., 2018). When the level of trust is low, customers tend to prefer conventional banks or keep cash at home (Rizvi et al., 2020; Zouari & Abdelhedi, 2021). Several previous studies have also demonstrated that trust is a key factor influencing saving intention in Islamic banking, particularly among Muslim customers who are sensitive to Sharia compliance and fund security aspects (Aysan et al., 2018; Nugraheni & Widayani, 2020). Customer trust can be understood as a psychological mediator that explains the relationship between Islamic financial literacy, perceived security, financial inclusion, and saving intention. Therefore, the higher the level of customer trust in BPRS, the stronger the customers' intention to save, as trust creates a sense of security, comfort, and confidence in the benefits and Sharia compliance of the services offered.

H4 Consumer Trust (PT) significantly drives Saving Intention (SI) toward Islamic rural banks.

3. Methodology

This study employed a quantitative approach using a cross-sectional survey design to examine the causal relationships among the constructs proposed in the model. The target population consisted of all customers and prospective customers of Bank Perekonomian Rakyat Syariah (BPRS) in Indonesia. The selection of BPRS as the unit of analysis was based on its unique characteristics as an Islamic microfinance institution serving SMEs and rural communities with varying levels of financial literacy. To determine the minimum sample size, this study referred to the guideline proposed by Hair et al. (2019), which recommends a ratio of 5 to 10 observations per indicator. With a total of 32 indicators (after excluding outliers), the minimum required sample size ranged from 160 to 195 respondents.

To reduce the risk of sampling bias, which is a common concern in sampling techniques (Bhutta, 2012), the online survey was initially pilot-tested on a small group of 20 respondents from diverse age groups and professional backgrounds. To minimize social desirability bias, clear instructions were provided to participants, as recommended by Podsakoff et al. (2012). Respondents were informed about the academic purpose of the study, the importance of providing objective responses, and the absence of right or wrong answers. This approach encouraged participants to respond sincerely and helped reduce potential bias (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2022).

A total of 241 complete and valid responses were collected, exceeding the recommended thresholds for studies employing structural equation modeling (SEM). Although there is no universal agreement regarding the minimum sample size for SEM, Kline (2015) notes that the median sample size reported in previous studies across various disciplines is approximately 200. Hair et al. (2019) further explain that the required sample size depends on the complexity of the structural model and the specifications of the measurement model, generally ranging from 100 to 500 respondents. Therefore, the sample size used in this study exceeds the minimum requirements for SEM analysis (Kline, 2015; Hair et al., 2019).

The respondents participated in this survey are presented in Table 1. As shown in the table, 37% of the respondents were male, while 63% were female. In terms of age distribution, the dominant group was 21 years old, followed by respondents aged 22 years. This distribution is consistent with previous studies emphasizing the significance of this age group. Thaker et al. (2022) argued that exploring the perceptions of individuals and customers aged between 20 and 50 years may generate greater policy implications. Finally, regarding bank account ownership, 68% of the respondents held accounts in Islamic commercial banks.

Table 1. Demographic attributes of the respondents

Criteria	Descriptions	Total	Percentage
Gender	Male	45	19%
	Female	196	81%
Age	18-20	11	5%
	21-30	124	51%
	31-40	75	31%
	41-44	31	13%
Education	Senior high school	54	22%

	Diploma/undergraduate degree	179	74%
	Postgraduate	8	3%
Income	< Rp 3.000.000	40	17%
	Rp 3.000.001 - Rp 5.000.000	101	42%
	Rp 5.000.001 - Rp 10.000.000	76	30%
	Rp 10.000.001 - Rp 15.000.000	24	9%
	> Rp 15.000.000	0	0%
Have a Islamic Bank account	Have a Islamic Bank account	164	68%
	Have an account at another bank	77	32%

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 Measurement model

To ensure the validity of the model constructs employed in this study, a series of validity and reliability tests were conducted. Indicator validity determines the extent to which the variance of an indicator is explained by the latent variable, and a loading factor above 0.7 is considered acceptable (Hair et al., 2019). As presented in Table 2, all items across the research variables achieved loading factor values ≥ 0.7 , ranging from 0.706 to 0.860, indicating that all variable items in this study are valid. In addition, model reliability was assessed using Average Variance Extracted (AVE) > 0.5 and Composite Reliability (CR) > 0.6 (Hair et al., 2019). Furthermore, construct reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, and all variables exceeded the critical threshold of > 0.7 (Masrizal et al., 2025; Yasin et al., 2025), with values ranging from 0.802 to 0.921. These results demonstrate that the variable constructs satisfied the reliability criteria and exhibited adequate validity for the latent variables.

Table 2. Research constructs with factor loadings and reliability

	Outer Loadings	Alpha	AVE	CR	rho_A
Islamic Financial Inclusion		0,899	0,623	0,920	0,902
IFI.1	0,797				
IFI.2	0,837				
IFI.3	0,787				
IFI.4	0,780				
IFI.5	0,755				
IFI.6	0,816				
IFI.7	0,749				
Islamic Financial Literacy		0,891	0,597	0,912	0,925
IFL.1	0,755				
IFL.2	0,792				
IFL.3	0,751				
IFL.4	0,723				
IFL.5	0,803				
IFL.6	0,820				
IFL.7	0,762				
Perceived Security		0,921	0,615	0,935	0,923
PS.1	0,750				

PS.2	0,797				
PS.3	0,806				
PS.4	0,860				
PS.5	0,822				
PS.6	0,732				
PS.7	0,716				
PS.8	0,835				
PS.9	0,722				
Saving Intention		0,802	0,628	0,871	0,807
SI.1	0,807				
SI.2	0,766				
SI.3	0,844				
SI.4	0,750				
Perceived Trust	0,706				
Tr.1	0,740	0,822	0,585	0,875	0,827
Tr.2	0,803				
Tr.3	0,765				
Tr.4	0,798				
Tr.5	0,714				

Source: Data processing result, compiled by authors (2026)

Furthermore, this study employed two classical approaches to discriminant validity, namely the Fornell–Larcker criterion (Table 3) and the HTMT ratio (Table 3), to obtain a more comprehensive assessment. In the Fornell–Larcker criterion, the square root of the AVE value must be higher than the variance shared with other latent variables (Munikrishnan et al., 2024). As presented in Table 3, each construct demonstrates a square root of AVE value that exceeds any correlation values within its corresponding row and column. This finding indicates that each construct does not exhibit high correlations with other constructs. The second discriminant validity assessment was conducted based on Henseler et al. (2015), which suggests that all HTMT values should be below 0.90. In the present study, the HTMT values for all constructs ranged from 0.297 to 0.767, thereby satisfying the recommended threshold. Thus, the constructs are sufficiently distinct from one another and do not exhibit excessively high intercorrelations.

Table 3. Discriminant validity

Fornell-Larcker Criterion					
	IFI	IFL	PS	SI	Tr
IFI	0,789				
IFL	0,266	0,773			
PS	0,709	0,425	0,784		
SI	0,627	0,426	0,628	0,793	
Tr	0,585	0,448	0,514	0,610	0,765
Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)					
	IFI	IFL	PS	SI	Tr

IFI				
IFL	0,297			
PS	0,767	0,460		
SI	0,736	0,471	0,730	
Tr	0,665	0,484	0,583	0,742

Source: Data processing result, compiled by authors (2026)

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing in this study was conducted using the bootstrapping method. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 3 by reporting the coefficient values and effect sizes using the f^2 values. Based on the f^2 values, the effect size of the omitted construct on a particular endogenous construct can be classified as small, medium, and large, represented by 0.10, 0.15, and 0.35, respectively (Cohen, 1988). Based on Table 3 and Figure 1, the results indicate that Islamic financial inclusion has a positive and significant effect on customer trust in Islamic rural banks (BPRS) ($\beta = 0.465$, $t = 7.851$, $p < 0.001$). The effect size, categorized as moderate ($f^2 = 0.190$), suggests that the accessibility, affordability, and positive customer experiences in using BPRS services are capable of enhancing customer trust. These findings indicate that ease of access, service proximity, and the responsiveness of BPRS play an important role in strengthening customer trust in the reliability of the bank (Beisland et al., 2019; Zamore et al., 2019). Therefore, the hypothesis stating that Islamic financial inclusion positively affects trust is accepted.

Table 4. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Estimate	T Statistics	P Values	Result	F2	Size Effect
IFI -> Tr	0,465	7,851	0,000	Accepted	0,190	Medium
IFL -> Tr	0,300	6,454	0,000	Accepted	0,130	Weak
PS -> Tr	0,056	0,807	0,420	Rejected	0,002	No Substantial
Tr -> SI	0,610	14,815	0,000	Accepted	0,591	Large

Note(s): Significance of p-value: $p > 0.05$ (ns): Non-significant; $p < 0.05$: *; $p < 0.01$: **; $p < 0.001$: ***

$f^2 < 0.010$: no substantial effect; $0.010 \leq f^2 < 0.150$: weak effect; $0.150 \leq f^2 < 0.350$: medium effect; $f^2 \geq 0.350$: large effect

Source: Data processing result, compiled by authors (2026)

Islamic financial literacy has a positive effect on trust ($\beta = 0.300$, $t = 6.454$, $p < 0.001$), although the effect size is relatively weak ($f^2 = 0.130$). This finding indicates that customers with a better understanding of Sharia principles tend to exhibit higher levels of trust toward Islamic rural banks. However, the contribution of Islamic financial literacy to trust remains lower than that of financial inclusion, which may be attributed to the still limited level of Islamic financial literacy among the public (Riza, 2021). Therefore, the hypothesis stating that Islamic financial literacy positively affects trust is accepted.

Perceived Security does not significantly affect trust ($\beta = 0.056$, $t = 0.807$, $p = 0.420$, $f^2 = 0.002$), indicating that data protection, transaction security, and deposit guarantees have not yet become primary factors in building customer trust in Islamic rural banks. This may occur because the majority of BPRS customers still rely on face-to-face interactions and possess limited understanding of digital security features, leading them to place greater emphasis on

direct relational experiences rather than formal security mechanisms (Melnyk, 2023; Sudarsono et al., 2024). Therefore, the hypothesis stating that Perceived Security positively affects trust is rejected.

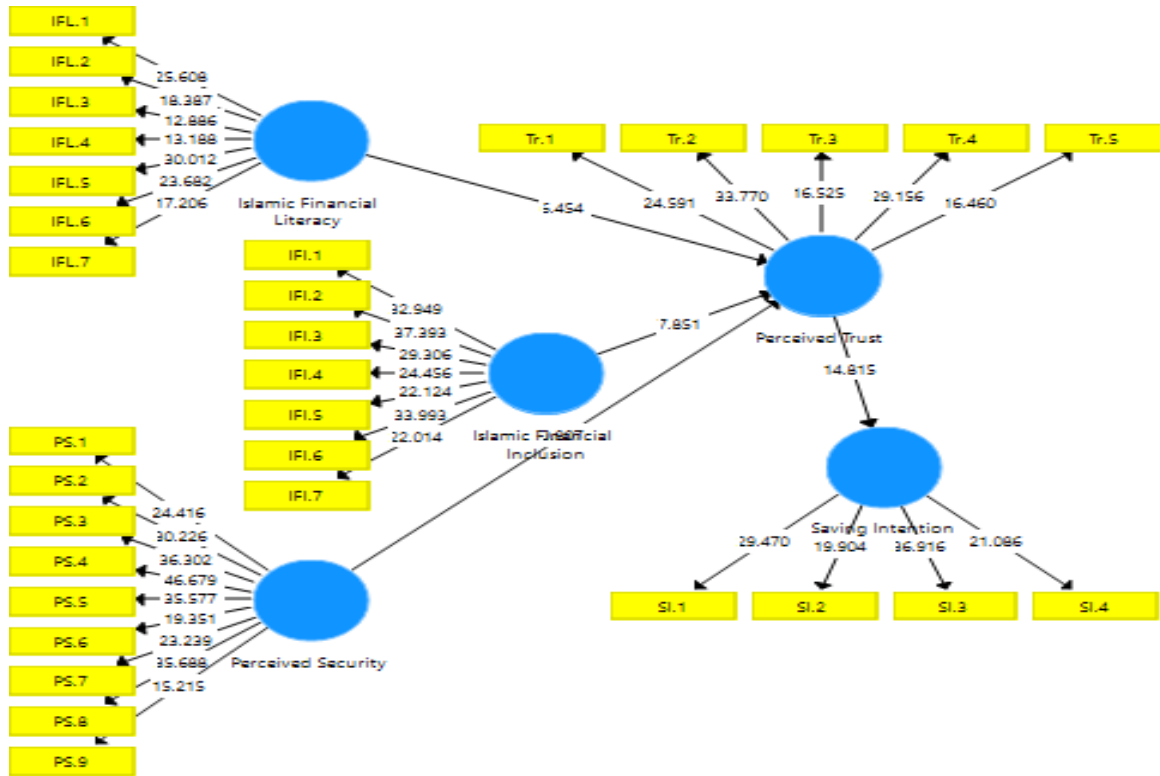


Figure 1. P-value coefficients of the proposed model
 Source: Data processing result, compiled by authors (2026)

Consumer Trust demonstrates a strong positive effect on saving intention ($\beta = 0.610$, $t = 14.815$, $p < 0.001$, $f^2 = 0.591$), indicating that trust serves as a key determinant in encouraging customers' intention to save in Islamic rural banks (BPRS). This finding suggests that customers are more likely to exhibit stronger saving intentions when they believe that BPRS manages funds fairly, transparently, and in accordance with Sharia principles. The large effect size further confirms the central role of trust in explaining saving intention (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Hati et al., 2020). Therefore, the hypothesis stating that CT positively affects SI is accepted.

Table 5. RSquare (R^2) & Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

Paths	R Square	Level of Determination	Q2	Level of Predictive Relevance
SI	0,372	Moderate	0,228	Small
Tr	0,435	Moderate	0,243	Small

$R^2 < 0.25$: Weak level; $0.020 \leq R^2 < 0.50$ = Moderate Level; $0.50 \leq R^2 < 0.750$: High level
 $0.10 \leq Q^2 < 0.249$ = Small Level; $0.25 \leq Q^2 < 0.499$ = Medium Level; $0.50 \leq Q^2$: Large level

Source: Data processing result, compiled by authors (2026)

To ensure that the external model tested in this study is robust, a goodness-of-fit (GoF) assessment was conducted using R^2 , followed by an analysis of predictive relevance through the Q^2 test. Table 5 presents the model fit assessment, where the Saving Intention (SI) construct

demonstrates an R^2 value of 0.372 and a Q^2 value of 0.228. These results indicate that Trust (Tr), as the predictor of SI in this study, simultaneously explains the model at a moderate level (R^2), while its predictive accuracy is categorized as small. Furthermore, the Trust (Tr) variable shows an R^2 value of 0.435 and a Q^2 value of 0.243, indicating that its determining variables, namely Islamic Financial Inclusion (IFI), Islamic Financial Literacy (IFL), and Perceived Security (PS), exhibit moderate explanatory power with a small predictive relevance. Therefore, the endogenous variables in this study are simultaneously influenced by the exogenous variables within the proposed model.

Discussion

This study aims to understand how trust drives customers' saving intention toward Islamic Rural Banks (BPRS) by examining three main determinants of trust, namely Islamic financial literacy, perceived security, and Islamic financial inclusion. The study is grounded in the commitment-trust theory proposed by Morgan and Hunt (1994), as well as the experiential learning perspective developed by Kolb (1984). These findings confirm that financial inclusion is not merely a policy objective, but also plays a crucial role in building customer trust. When customers experience easy access to services, such as simple account opening procedures, nearby branch locations, uncomplicated requirements, and friendly services, their level of trust in Islamic Rural Banks (BPRS) increases significantly. Through proactive outreach programs, village-based banking agents, and simplified procedures, BPRS demonstrate a tangible presence in rural communities and SMEs that have long been underserved by financial services. This positive inclusion experience fosters stronger affective trust than financial literacy education alone, as customers directly experience the benefits of interacting with BPRS. These findings are consistent with the experiential learning perspective, which emphasises that direct experience shapes individual beliefs and attitudes (Kolb, 1984). For rural communities that were previously excluded from formal financial services, positive interactions with BPRS become an important foundation for building trust (Beisland et al., 2019; Zamore et al., 2019). Therefore, inclusive practices such as expanding services to remote areas, simplifying administrative procedures, and involving marketing personnel from local communities should be regarded as key strategies for strengthening customer trust in BPRS (Cull et al., 2018; Ledgerwood et al., 2013).

Islamic Financial Literacy (IFL) positively affects customer trust. These findings are consistent with previous studies on both general and Islamic financial literacy conducted (Riza, 2021). However, the relatively weak effect may be attributed to the still low level of Islamic financial literacy in Indonesia, particularly among customers of Islamic Rural Banks (BPRS). This low level of literacy is caused by the lack of formal financial education and limited understanding of the fundamental principles of finance, as highlighted (Guerra-Leal et al., 2022). BPRS customers, who predominantly live in rural areas, have unstable incomes and limited access to information, and tend to rely more on direct experience than theoretical understanding in building trust. They place greater trust in service convenience, savings deposit collection services, and the consistency of profit-sharing payments that they directly experience, rather than in abstract explanations of contracts and Sharia principles. Nevertheless, customers still understand concepts such as the prohibition of *riba*, contracts in financial transactions, and Islamic financial products and services. Therefore, cognitive-based literacy education efforts are considered less effective because they do not fully align with the socio-economic realities

and preferences of rural customers, making experience-based financial inclusion a more dominant strategy in building trust.

Contrary to the initial expectation and most of the digital banking literature (Melnik, 2023; Kidron & Kreis, 2020), perceived security (PS) does not significantly affect customer trust in Islamic rural banks; therefore, the third hypothesis is rejected. This finding indicates that customers of Islamic rural banks still rely more heavily on direct interaction, face-to-face services, and personal relationships than on digital security aspects (Trinugroho et al., 2018; Sukmana et al., 2020). The limited digital infrastructure of most Islamic rural banks reduces customer exposure to modern security features such as two-factor authentication and fraud detection systems. As a result, perceptions of security are shaped more by institutional factors, including employee honesty, physical office security, and bank stability (Sudarsono et al., 2024; Sholihin et al., 2018). In addition, customers may perceive basic security as already guaranteed through regulations, making it less influential in building trust. Thus, although security remains important, it is not the primary determinant of trust within the relationship-based context of Islamic rural banks. Therefore, Islamic rural banks should prioritize strengthening financial literacy and financial inclusion to enhance customer trust.

The hypothesis proposing that trust positively affects saving intention received the strongest empirical support. This finding is consistent with the commitment-trust theory proposed by Morgan and Hunt (1994) and previous studies in Islamic banking (Hati et al., 2020; Nugraheni & Widyani, 2020; Aysan et al., 2018). The results indicate that trust, developed through financial literacy and financial inclusion, serves as the primary factor driving customers' intention to save in Islamic rural banks. This suggests that financial literacy and inclusion do not directly increase saving intention but instead operate through the formation of trust. Conversely, because perceived security does not influence trust, it also has no indirect effect on saving intention. When customers understand that Islamic banks manage funds safely, fairly, and in accordance with Sharia principles while also promoting financial inclusion, they are more likely to maintain their savings, increase deposit amounts, and recommend the bank to others. These findings emphasize that trust should become the primary strategic asset of Islamic rural banks through transparent governance, consistent profit-sharing distribution, and strong community relationships.

5. Conclusion and Suggestion

This study demonstrates that Islamic financial inclusion exerts the most dominant influence on building customer trust in Islamic rural banks, compared with Islamic financial literacy, while perceived security does not have a significant effect, and that trust strongly encourages saving intention. Management and regulators should prioritise expanding inclusive financial access, such as through banking agents, easier service accessibility, simplified procedures, and responsive services, to strengthen customer trust and saving intention. On the other hand, Islamic financial literacy remains important as a supporting factor through more practical and applicable educational initiatives, while perceptions of banking risk, including fund security, data privacy, transactions, services, and Sharia compliance, must continue to be maintained in order to foster long-term customer relationships. Furthermore, this study is limited by its cross-sectional design and the exclusion of variables such as religiosity, bank reputation, and social environmental factors. The sample coverage also does not fully represent all regions in Indonesia. Therefore, future studies are recommended to employ longitudinal designs,

expand geographical coverage, and integrate social factors to enrich the understanding of the dynamics of trust and saving intention in Islamic Rural Banks in Indonesia.

6. Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations, particularly in its inability to fully explain causal relationships and the limitation of the sample, which does not yet represent all customers of Islamic Rural Bank in Indonesia. In addition, future research is recommended to explore social environmental factors such as customer characteristics, qualitative approaches, and more objective measures of Islamic financial literacy to strengthen the robustness of the findings. Nevertheless, this study makes an important contribution by explaining the role of trust in shaping saving intention in BPRS and by supporting the development of Islamic financial inclusion in Indonesia.

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