# How Does Religiosity and Tourist Perception Play a Role in Attracting Interest in Visiting Halal Tourism Destinations?

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**Abstract**

This study aims to look at the influence of religiosity and tourists' perceptions of halal tourism on their intention to visit halal tourist destinations. With the quantitative method, the research respondents were 100 tourists who had visited halal tourist destinations. Data was collected through a questionnaire and then processed using the Partial Least Square method to analyze the validity of the data and test the hypothesis. The results of the study show that perceptions of halal tourism are able to attract visits to halal tourist destinations. However, religiosity (moderating variable) is not able to attract interest in visiting and is unable to moderate the increase in visitor perceptions of halal tourist destinations.

**Keywords:** *halal tourism, religiosity, tourist perceptions*

## INTRODUCTION

The tourism sector has its own charm as a potential that must be developed in a country. Progress in the tourism sector is able to encourage the growth of a country's economy. Several countries have made the tourism sector the backbone of the economy so that it is able to support economic activities in the country. Potential in Indonesia also has its own charm for tourists which has experienced an increase in visits and growth in the number of tourist attractions from year to year. The potential of the tourism sector in Indonesia has increased from year to year. It was noted that there was an increase in foreign tourist arrivals which had increased by 15% in 2019 (BPS, 2020).

Phenomena in the world of tourism in Indonesia are of particular concern after the emergence of the concept of halal tourism. This concept developed along with the issuance of Law No. 33 of 2014 concerning guarantees for halal products by the Halal Product Guarantee Agency from the Ministry of Religion. The study of this law was followed up by the Indonesian Sharia Council, the Indonesian Ulema Council, which issued Fatwa Number 108/DSN-MUI/X/2016 concerning Guidelines for Organizing Sharia-Based Tourism. The fatwa emphasizes tourist facilities such as hotels, saunas and SPA and how to manage tourist objects according to sharia (DSN, 2016). Thus, several concepts about halal tourism in Indonesia began to appear.

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The concept of halal tourism has developed in several countries, in order to facilitate Muslim tourists whose visits have increased (Mohsin, Ramli, & Alkhulayfi, 2016). The concept of halal tourism is tourism that emphasizes permissible, acceptable, permissible food products, personal aspects such as separation between men and women and values that are contrary to Islam (Samori, Md Salleh, & Khalid, 2016). Halal tourism is related to religious prohibitions that are contrary to tourism values that use western culture and tend to protect tourism from values that are not related to non-Muslims (Sriprasert, Chainin, & Rahman, 2014). As for some of the criteria for tourist destinations that use the halal concept include the use of religious attributes, prayer rooms, Muslim staff, separation between men, men and women, art that does not display the human form and funding that applies Islamic values and prescribes zakat (Eid & El-Gohary, 2015).

The implementation of Halal tourism is experiencing problems due to the assumption that Halal Tourism discriminates between Muslim and non-Muslim visitors. Halal tourism is considered as a concept synonymous with certain religions which tends to limit other religious groups (Liputan6.com, 2019). The concept of halal tourism is considered to actually eliminate local wisdom values that have developed over time (Sudirta dalam Travel.detik.com, 2019). The challenges faced by halal tourism include low income, visitor satisfaction and loss of competitive advantage and competitiveness with conventional tourism (Eid & El-Gohary, 2015). The tendency of people to respond to the phenomenon of halal tourism has a negative tendency because they have to apply Islamic sharia principles which tend to limit visitors, especially non-Muslims. The phenomenon of implementing halal tourism on Lake Toba has also experienced pros and cons because of the image of the public who tend to state that halal tourism is only devoted to certain religious groups that exclude other religions.

As a reference, around 20% of the 14.92 million foreign tourists who visited Indonesia in 2019 were Muslim tourists. According to the 2019 Global Muslim Travel Index (GTI) report, the quality of halal tourism in Indonesia in terms of accessibility, communication, environment and service ranks first among 130 Muslim tourist destinations. In fact, Indonesia won 12 out of 16 awards at the 2016 "World Halal Tourism Awards" in Abu Dhabi. Indonesia's success is certainly one of the new steps to continue to increase Muslim tourism in Indonesia (Kemenparekraf, 2021). In other countries, Japan is one of the countries that tries to facilitate Muslim visitors to visit their country due to the increasing number of visitors from Malaysia and Indonesia who are predominantly Muslim and perceive them as important market niches (Samori et al., 2016). Some countries that have a secular understanding actually provide facilities and guarantees for halal tourism being managed, for example Australia with Australia Halal Inc. and the United States with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) (Mohsin et al., 2016). Sriprasert et al., (2014) in the results of a study on Muslim tourists in Thailand explained that elements in halal tourism such as stickers/qibla directions, the existence of halal restaurants and the availability of mosques are the main needs for tourists.

This research seeks to examine how the community responds to the enactment of halal tourism. The concept of halal tourism obtained from a literature study is associated with positive public interest which is expected to facilitate the implementation of halal tourism needed by the people of Indonesia.

**Halal Tourism**

According to Duran in Akyol & Kilinc (2014) as Albarayrak and Ozkul also stated, that the tourism sector is increasing day by day. Halal tourism is a new product from the Muslim


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and non-Muslim markets. Meanwhile, what is included in halal tourism is food, various products, and services. This is a dynamic market with an increasing number of Muslim tourists. The global halal industry is a highly developed industry.

Meanwhile Duman in Akyol & Kilinc (2014) states that halal tourism is defined as "activities of Muslims who travel to and live in places outside their usual environment, not more than one year in a row to participate in activities of Islamic motivation, which are not related to the implementation of paid activities." from within the place visited". Same goes for the World Market Global Trends Report, World Travel Market (WTM, 2007), describes halal tourism as "tourism activities that are permissible according to Islamic law including behavior, clothing, and others". Likewise, according Battour & Ismail (2016), defines halal tourism as "any tourism object or action that is permitted according to Islamic teachings to be used or involved by Muslims in the tourism industry". Permissible by Islamic teachings, that is, Islamic law (Sharia) is the basis for providing products and services to customers (in this case Muslims), such as Halal hotels, Halal resorts, Halal food shops and Halal travel. He also mentioned that halal tourism is an opportunity and challenge for the future.

In general, halal tourism provides services and hotel management must be based on Islamic principles. According to the indicators of halal hotels Akyol & Kilinc (2014) including: (a) Not serving alcohol or consuming alcohol on the spot, (b) Halal food (slaughtered in the name of Allah SWT, no pork and certain items), (c) there is a Qur'an, prayer mats, and Qibla direction in every place rooms, (d) the bed and toilet are positioned so that they do not face the qiblah, (e) bidet in the bathroom, (f) the prayer room for Muslim staff, (g) closed staff clothing, (h) separate recreational facilities for men and women, (i) guest dress code, (j) Islamic fund income, (k) female staff for single women floors, and male staff only for single men floors, (l) no nightclubs, (m) art in hotels must not depict human beings, (n) television services are conservative, and (o) hotels must follow the principles of zakat (giving back to society).

**Religiosity**

Religiosity can be defined as individual commitment and involvement with religious beliefs and practices that exist in society (Sholihin, Hardivizon, & Wanto, 2022). Religiosity is positively related to the intention to undertake halal tourism, and that this relationship is mediated by perceptions of the importance of halal certification and the availability of prayer facilities (Ratnasari, Gunawan, Mawardi, & Kirana, 2020). In addition, religiosity is positively related to perceptions of the importance of environmental sustainability in halal tourist destinations, indicating that highly religious tourists may appreciate environmentally friendly practices and initiatives (Abror, Wardi, Trinanda, & Patrisia, 2019).

Recent research has explored the relationship between religiosity and Halal tourism, highlighting how religious factors can influence the decision-making and behavior of Muslim tourists. Bunakov et al., (2019) found that religiosity is positively related to the intention to participate in halal tourism, as well as with the importance of placing halal food and worship facilities. The role of religiosity also shapes the perceptions and attitudes of Muslim tourists towards tourism destinations and experiences. For example, a study by Sholehuddin, Munjin, & Adinugraha (2021) found that religiosity was negatively associated with perceptions of overcrowding and commercialization in tourist destinations, suggesting that highly religious travelers may prefer more serene and authentic travel experiences.

**METHOD**


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The research uses a quantitative approach and is carried out through surveys with questionnaires to collect research data (John W. Creswell, 2018). The research instrument that was distributed via the google form was tested through validity and reliability tests by looking at the outer loading and average variance extracted (AVE). The research questionnaire was obtained through the results of collecting references and literature related to halal tourism and religiosity. The research population is Indonesian people who have visited halal tourism. The research sample using the purposive sampling method was 100 respondents with the criteria namely students who had visited halal tourism and had a religious attachment to halal tourism as indicated by an interest in visiting the halal tourist spots again. Data analysis used PLS 3.0 to examine the effect of perceptions of halal tourism on the intention to visit halal tourism and religiosity as a moderating variable. Through the results of the outer loading analysis, it can be seen that the validity of the data and AVE can be seen the reliability value of the data. Through the results of the bootstrapping calculation, it will be known the p value of how each variable influences the interest in visiting halal tourism.

## RESULTS

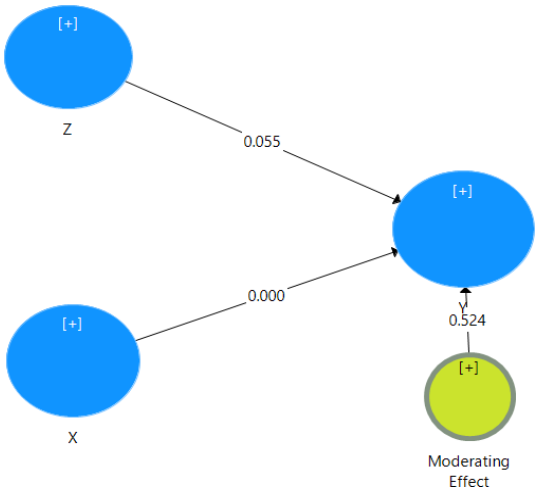
The results of the validity and reliability tests in table 1 can be seen on the validity and reliability of the research instrument.

**Table 1- Instrument Test Results**

| No | Variable | Item | Outer Loading | AVE | Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Perception Halal Tourism (X) | X1 | 0.898 | 0,701 | Valid and Reliable |
| | | X2 | 0.842 | | |
| | | X3 | 0.779 | | |
| | | X4 | 0.776 | | |
| | | X5 | 0.883 | | |
| 2 | Religiosity (Z) | Z1 | 0.941 | 0,715 | Valid and Reliable |
| | | Z2 | 0.894 | | |
| | | Z3 | 0.878 | | |
| | | Z4 | 0.907 | | |
| 3 | Visit Interest (Y) | Y1 | 0.857 | 0,819 | Valid and Reliable |
| | | Y2 | 0.806 | | |
| | | Y3 | 0.873 | | |

Based on the results of the validity and reliability tests it is known that each item has an outer loading value above 0.8 so that it can be said that the instrument has a fairly high validity while the reliability based on the AVE value is also above 0.5 so that the instrument can be said to be reliable (Hair, Anderson, Black, & Babin, 2009). Hypothesis testing is shown in Figure 1 below.


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**Picture 1. Hypothesis Test Results**
(Source: Data processed, 2022)

The conclusion of the results of testing the hypothesis is shown in Table 2 below.

**Table 2 - Hypothesis Test Results**

| Hypothesis | Influence of Variables | P-Value | Status |
|---|---|---|---|
| H1 | Halal Tourism -> Interest | 0.000 | Accepted |
| H2 | Religiosity -> Interest | 0.055 | **Rejected** |
| H3 | Religiosity Moderation | 0.533 | **Rejected** |

**(Data processed, 2022)**

The explanation of the results of the hypothesis testing is as follows 1) Perceptions of Halal Tourism have an influence on Interest in Visiting Halal Tourism seen from the P-Value below 0.05 so that it can be said that understanding of Perceptions of Halal Tourism is able to increase encouragement of interest in visiting halal tourist destinations. 2) However, Religiosity has no impact on Interest in Visiting Halal Tourism. In addition, religiosity is not able to moderate or strengthen people's perceptions of halal tourism so that it does not raise the desire to visit halal tourism.

## DISCUSSION

The results of the study show that perceptions of halal tourism are able to build tourist interest in visiting tourist destinations that have implemented the halal concept. Halal tourism has the same concept as conventional tourism, but offers services and facilities that comply with sharia principles, such as halal food, courtesy and more guaranteed privacy. One of the factors that can influence the interest of Muslim tourists to visit halal tourist destinations is their perception of the halal services and facilities offered by these destinations. The results of this study are in accordance with the study by Lestari, Saidah, & Putri (2022) which states that the perceived attributes of halal tourism such as infrastructure, tourism services, natural attractions, cultural attractions, and security have a positive and significant effect on tourist interest in visiting halal tourist destinations in Indonesia as well as awareness of halal tourism and halal tourism certification have a positive and significant effect on tourist intentions. to visit halal tourist destinations in Indonesia.


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However, religiosity does not have a significant impact on the interest in visiting halal tourism. This is not in accordance with research Sudarsono, Ash Shidiqie, & Tumewang (2021) which explains that the more religious a person is, the more likely they are to intend to visit halal tourist destinations. Religiosity contributes directly to pro-environmental behavioral intentions. In addition, factors such as environmental cognition and emotions also mediate the relationship between religiosity and pro-environmental behavioral intentions thus finding that religiosity has a greater impact on pro-environmental behavioral intentions when tourists have higher levels of environmental cognition (Wang, Wang, Li, & Zhou, 2020).

## CONCLUSION

The results showed that perceptions of halal tourism were able to attract interest in visiting halal tourist destinations while religiosity as a moderating variable did not have a significant effect. Thus, it can be concluded that visits to halal tourism are more emphasized on the desire to obtain Islamic values in tourism activities, such as wanting to get adequate worship facilities and obtain halal food and drinks. A person's level of religiosity has no impact on whether that person wants to visit or not because basically the desire to enjoy halal tourist destinations itself makes people want to visit that place.

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