



Tourist Perceptions of Halal Tourism that Provides Tourist Satisfaction: a Case Study on Tourism in West Sumatra

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ABSTRACT: Indonesia as one of the countries with the largest Muslim population in the world has enormous potential to develop industry in the halal tourism sector. Halal tourism from year to year is growing continuously, considering the large number of Muslim tourists who travel but still prioritize the guidance of the Islamic religion. One of the regions in Indonesia that is encouraged to become a halal tourist destination is West Sumatra. However, until now, people's understanding of halal tourism is still different from one another. There are even some people who are worried that halal tourism is only for Muslims. This is a qualitative research with a case study approach. Data was collected by semi-structured interviews with 30 tourists, which were classified into domestic Muslim tourists, domestic non-Muslim tourists and foreign tourists. This is done in order to obtain data on how the perception of each tourist about halal tourism and what kind of halal tourism can provide tourist satisfaction. The result of this research shows that basically Muslim tourists, non-Muslims and foreign tourists agree with the implementation of halal tourism, especially in terms of halal food and drinks. Food does not contain pork or other non-halal ingredients and there is no non-halal activities or entertainments. The tourists also agree with the cleanliness factor, both in the object itself and the surrounding environment. However, there is still different perception among the informants regarding the dress code. Some Muslim tourists want visitors to wear clothes that are in accordance with Islamic ethics, while other visitors say that visitors are simply asked to dress modestly.

Keywords: Tourist perception, halal tourism, tourist satisfaction



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INTRODUCTION

Interest in halal tourism is experiencing increasing growth ([Battour & Ismail, 2016](#); Moshin et al., 2020). This increase is in line with the increase in Muslim tourists from year to year ([Bhuiyan et al., 2011](#); [El-Gohary, 2016](#); [Henderson, 2016](#); [Jia & Chaozhi, 2020](#); [Yusof & Shutto, 2014](#)). Data from Thomson Reuters and Dinar Standard states that the contribution to the world tourism market from the Muslim community reaches US \$ 151 billion. This amount represents 11.2% of total global tourism spending which is predicted to exceed US\$243 billion in 2021 ([Dinarstandard, 2016](#)).

Indonesia is a country that has a Muslim majority population. According to the Central Statistics Agency in 2010, there were 87.18% of Muslims in Indonesia, while the rest were Christians (6.96%), Catholics (2.91%), Hindus (1.69), Buddhists (0.72) and the rest follow other religions. Foreign tourists visiting Indonesia through all entrances in December 2021 totaled 163,619 visits or decreased by -0.28% compared to December 2020 which amounted to 164,079 visits ([Purwandani & Yusuf, 2021](#)).

The number of halal restaurants and sharia hotels is still limited, both in Muslim and non-Muslim majority countries. These limitations are also influenced by a lack of understanding regarding halal tourism ([El-Gohary, 2016](#); [Han et al., 2019](#); [Mohsin et al., 2016](#)). Therefore, education and training programs related to halal are needed. In addition, standardization in halal tourism is needed, namely in the form of halal certification in restaurants, hotels, and others ([Abror et al., 2019](#); [Ainin et al., 2020](#); [Suhartanto et al., 2021](#)). However, based on available data, the number of sharia accommodations is only 243, while the number of ordinary accommodations reaches 8,626 ([Widhasti et al., 2017](#)).

One of the regions in Indonesia that is encouraged to become halal tourism is West Sumatra, which offers a variety of destinations, ranging from flora, fauna, mountainous nature, hills, and delicious culinary delights. West Sumatra is in the top 10 as a Halal Tourism Destination area in Indonesia. Of the 10 provinces, West Sumatra is in 4th place after West Nusa Tenggara (Lombok), Aceh and Jakarta province.¹ But unfortunately, there are still doubts from many parties about the plan to make West Sumatra a halal tourism, including concerns from non-Muslim tourists that halal tourist destinations are only intended for Muslim tourists, but there are also concerns that all tourists who will visit must wear fully covered clothes. This is because there are still different public perceptions regarding halal tourism. In addition, there are still many things that must be addressed in order to get to halal tourism. Halal is synonymous with cleanliness, while there are still many tourist destinations that do not maintain the cleanliness of their area, such as environmental cleanliness, cleanliness of places of worship and prayer equipment provided.

This study aims at answering the question of how the public's perception of the definition of halal tourism and what efforts must be made so that halal tourism can provide satisfaction to its visitors. This research will contribute to the government, especially local governments, and for tourism stakeholders.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of halal tourism

The word halal comes from Arabic *balla, yabillu, billan, wahalalan* which has the meaning justified or allowed by sharia law. Has a meaning as something that is allowed or permitted by Allah ([Al Qardhawi, 1994](#)). The word is a major source that is not only related to food or food products, but also enters all aspects of life, such as banking and finance, cosmetics, work, tourism, and others ([Ahmad et al., 2021](#)).

The definition of halal tourism has been put forward by many experts, halal tourism is an activity in tourism that is 'permitted or permitted' according to Islamic teachings ([Battour & Ismail, 2016](#)). Meanwhile, the emphasis on tourism products and services that meet the needs of Muslim tourists after the teachings of Islam ([Mohsin et al., 2016](#)). Halal tourism also offers tour packages and special destinations to meet the considerations and needs of Muslims ([Ahmed & Akbaba, 2018](#); [Rasul, 2019](#)).

The term Islamic tourism/halal tourism was first introduced to the public in 2000 at the OIC meeting. It was introduced as an alternative to meet the demand for a tour based on a lifestyle that suits the needs of a Muslim ([Samsudin & Othman, 2017](#); [Shafaei, 2017](#); [Suid et al., 2018](#)).

Halal Tourism Concept

Indonesia in developing halal tourism adopts the criteria of the Global Muslim Travel Index as a reference for developing halal tourism ([Asthu & Adwiyah, 2020](#); [Nisthar & Mustafa, 2019](#)). For this reason, an agency was formed under the auspices of the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia which has the authority and responsibility in regulating tourism in Indonesia, a special agency called the Team for the Acceleration of Halal Tourism Development (TP3H) a team that is given the authority to help the government map, develop and provide regional guidelines that are has the potential to develop halal tourism, this team then established three general criteria in developing halal tourism, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1
General Criteria for Halal Tourism

No	Category	Indicator
1	Tourist Destinations (Nature, Culture, Artificial)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. There is a choice of tourist activities, arts, and culture that do not lead to pornography and polytheism b. If possible, hold at least one halal lifestyle festival c. The tour guide dress well and modestly d. There is a choice of separate beach attractions and baths for men and women and/or has a rule that visitors are not allowed to wear scanty clothes
2	Hotel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Halal food available b. There are facilities that make it easy to worship, such as mosques, prayer rooms and washing facilities c. Available services during the month of Ramadan to meet the needs of <i>sahur</i> and <i>iftar</i> d. The absence of non-halal activities such as gambling, alcoholic beverages, and discotheque activities e. Recreational swimming pool and fitness/gym facilities are available separately for men and women f. If the hotel provides spa facilities, male therapists are for male customers and female therapists are for female customers. Therapy does not use ingredients that contain pork, alcohol or their derivative products
3	Travel Agent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Providing tour packages that meet the general criteria for Halal Tourism b. Does not offer non-halal activities c. Have a list of halal food and beverage providers d. Tour guides understand and are able to implement sharia values in carrying out their duties e. Dress modestly and attractively in accordance with Islamic ethics

Source:

Team for the Acceleration of Halal Tourism Development

([Widhasti et al., 2017](#))

The concept of halal tourism is understood as the values of Islamic teachings that are implemented as a basis for traveling without discriminating against non-Muslim tourists. Halal tourism is used as a soft power to attract Muslim tourists ([Kusumaningrum et al., 2017](#)).

Halal tourism as any tourist object and behavior that involves Muslims using Islamic teachings as guidelines in the tourism industry ([Battour & Ismail, 2016](#)). Halal tourism is a tourist trip that has services in accordance with Islamic sharia, as well as a tour of choice for Muslim tourists to avoid conventional tourism that provides alcoholic beverages, food with pork elements, and tourist attractions that do not separate men and women ([Mohsin et al., 2016](#); [Ramli, 2011](#)).

It can be concluded that the term halal tourism is tourism that wants to provide tourist services and facilities to Muslim tourists that can also be enjoyed by non-Muslim tourists, which at least fulfills three basic needs in Muslim tourists, namely: the existence of adequate worship facilities and services, accommodation that is friendly to Muslim tourists (sharia hotels), food and beverages with halal guarantees through the certification of certain bodies that have the authority to do so, as well as tourist destinations such as natural, cultural, artificial tourism equipped with facilities or infrastructure for worship, such as the existence of a mosque or prayer room around tourist attractions.

So far, although it is no longer a heated debate, there are still those who interpret halal tourism as a concept of Islamization of regulations or Islamization of concepts. Whereas based on the definition, according to experts, halal tourism needs to be understood as a concept to present an integrated tourism system that is clean, healthy, safe and comfortable. The integration of the tourism system is what in the halal context is meant, namely ensuring that the place is clean, the food is clean and healthy.

Tourist Satisfaction

There are five main dimensions of customer satisfaction ([Irawan, 2003](#)), namely: (a). Price. For sensitive customers, usually low prices are an important source of satisfaction because they will get high value for money. This price component is relatively unimportant for those who are not price sensitive. (b). Service Quality. Service quality is highly dependent on three things, namely systems, technology and people. Customer satisfaction with service quality in this case is related to the attitude and behavior of the officers at tourist attractions. (c). Product Quality. Visitors will feel satisfied after visiting a tourist destination if the quality is good. (d). Emotional Factors. Emotional Factor is shown by visitors for the satisfaction they get in enjoying a tourist destination that creates a sense of pride and confidence. (e). Efficiency. Ease of accessing tourist destinations and ease of payment can make visitors more satisfied if it is relatively easy, comfortable and efficient to get a product or service.

Customer satisfaction is a person's feeling of pleasure or disappointment that arises after comparing his perception or impression of performance that is below expectations, customers are not satisfied ([Kotler & Armstrong, 2018](#)). However, if the performance exceeds expectations, the customer is very satisfied and happy. Overall customer satisfaction indicates an attitude toward a service provider, or an emotional reaction to the discrepancy between what customers expect and what they receive ([Hansemark & Albinsson, 2004](#)). Customer satisfaction is a customer's evaluation of a product or service in terms of whether the product or service has met customer needs and expectations ([Zeithaml et al., 2018](#)).

Indicators of consumer satisfaction are the attributes forming satisfaction consist of: (1) Conformity with tourist expectations (products expected by customers and those felt by customers), (2) Interest in returning (because of satisfactory service, because value and benefits obtained, because of the facilities provided, (3) Willingness to recommend ([Kotler & Keller, 2016](#)). This is the willingness of customers to recommend products that they have felt to friends or family (suggesting friends or relatives to buy products because of satisfactory service, because the supporting facilities provided are adequate, because of the value or benefits obtained after consuming a product or service).

METHOD

This research uses case study method. A case study is a detailed examination of the subject or location of a document or a particular event. Limit a technical matter by deepening its identity. Case studies are a suitable strategy to use in the subject matter of a research question regarding 'how or why', if the researcher still has little opportunity to control the events to be studied, and if the focus of the research lies in contemporary phenomena (present) in the context of real life (Yin, 2012). The researcher uses a case study research method. Case studies are empirical research that examines phenomena in an unclear background (Yin, 2012). The typical style of the case study method is being able to relate to various forms of data, including interviews, observations, documents and equipment (Yin, 2012).

Data collection was carried out by semi-structured interviews with 30 people consisting of 10 domestic Muslim tourists, 10 domestic non-Muslim tourists, and 10 foreign tourists that consisted of 2 tourists from the Netherlands, 2 from Germany, 3 tourists from Japan, 2 tourists from Korea, and 1 tourist from the Czech Republic. The interviews were conducted to obtain data and information related to how people perceive the definition of halal tourism and what efforts must be made so that halal tourism can provide satisfaction to its visitors. This categorization is also intended to see how they understand the meaning of 'halal tourism'.

The data analysis consists of three streams of activities that occur simultaneously (Miles & Huberman, 1994), namely: data reduction, data presentation, conclusion drawing/verification, namely: (a) Data reduction. Data reduction is defined as the process of selecting, focusing on simplifying, abstracting, and transforming rough data that emerges from written notes in the field. Data reduction takes place continuously as long as a qualitative research-oriented project takes place; (b) Presentation of Data. Data presentation is an organized collection of information that provides the possibility of drawing conclusions and taking action (Miles & Huberman, 1994). They believe that better presentations are a key means of valid qualitative analysis, which includes: various types of matrices, graphs, networks and charts; (c) Drawing conclusions. Drawing conclusions is only part of an activity from a complete configuration. Conclusions were also verified during the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The final conclusion does not only occur during the data collection process, but needs to be verified so that it can truly be accounted for.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data obtained from interviews with both domestic and foreign tourists are:

1) Tourist perception about halal tourism

The results of interviews with 10 Muslim tourists show data that among the Muslim tourists there are still differences in perceptions about halal tourism. Five Muslim tourists said that halal tourism must be reflected first from the officers who must wear clothes or uniforms that reflect Islam, namely men wearing polite and not revealing clothes (wearing long pants, and long-sleeved shirts/T-shirts). Likewise, female officers must wear clothes that follow Islamic rules (long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and must wear a *hijab*). These closed clothes are not only intended for officers in 'halal tourism' but also to visitors. So anyone who will visit 'halal tourism' in West Sumatra must follow the applicable regulations. This is not in line with the

previous study which states that the concept of halal tourism is understood as the values of Islamic teachings which are implemented as a basis for traveling without discriminate against non-Muslim tourists ([Kusumaningrum et al., 2017](#)).

Meanwhile, the results of interviews with five other domestic Muslim tourists produced different opinions. Instead, these tourists said that “halal tourism” should not be made to create discrimination and divisions between religious communities. Tourist attractions must be made in accordance with the goal of making everyone happy, able to enjoy the holiday atmosphere by bringing a positive impression.

“Halal tourism is more aimed at implementing Islamic law in terms of cleanliness, halal food and drinks sold, and lodging that is ensured in accordance with Islamic law. Regarding clothing, the important thing is to be polite, and the most important thing is not to let halal tourism create discrimination between religins.” (EM – Teacher/Indonesian Muslim tourist)

“In my opinion, halal tourism is more intended to the cleanliness of the place and the environment, the existence of places of worship with clean prayer equipment, non-alcoholic food and drinks and lodging must be ensured free from non-halal activities such as gambling or night clubs. If there is a swimming pool or spa, it must be separated between men and women as well as the staff who serve it, male staff for male customers, and female staff for female customers. Regarding clothing, the important thing is to be polite and halal tourism must be enjoyed by all people, not only certain circles. ” (RA – students / Indonesian Muslim tourist)

This opinion is very much in line with that described by Team for the Acceleration of Halal Tourism Development that halal tourism is more defined as the application of Islamic law, but it must still be enjoyed by all people ([Widhasti et al., 2017](#)).

Meanwhile, from 10 non-Muslim tourists and 10 foreign tourists who were interviewed, it is found that if halal tourism will be implemented in West Sumatra, it would later impose a policy of having to wear the hijab for female visitors, this is like a form of coercion and of course it is against human rights. Domestic non-Muslim tourists are also disappointed if the West Sumatra Regional government enforces this regulation.

“I, as a non-Muslim, feel worried if the West Sumatra local government makes its area a halal tourism if the perception of halal tourism is not uniform. Currently, there are still differences of opinion about halal tourism. There are those who say that halal tourism is specifically for Muslims, there are also those who say that if you want to enter halal tourism you must wear Muslim clothes and must wear a hijab. If this is true, I am afraid that it will trigger a conflict between Muslims and non-Muslims. (AF, housewife/ Indonesian non-Muslim tourist)

“I have been to West Sumatra three times, and every time I visit Indonesia I always go to West Sumatra to enjoy the nature in Bukittinggi, Lembah Anai, Ngarai Sianok

and others. I don't mind wearing slightly covered clothes which is called to be 'polite' but I really do mind if as a visitor I have to wear a hijab because I'm a non-Muslim. I hope the Indonesian government will be wiser and clearer in defining 'halal tourism'.
(AR, Dutch artist, tourist)

2) Tourist Satisfaction

Regarding tourist satisfaction, researchers use five dimensions of customer satisfaction (Irawan, 2003). The results of interviews with 30 tourists consisting of 10 domestic Muslim tourists, 10 non-Muslim tourists and 10 foreign tourists are summarized in the following table.

Table 2
Tourist Satisfaction with Halal Tourism

No	Aspects	Informants' Perception		
		Domestic Muslim Tourist	Domestic Non Muslim Tourist	Foreign Tourist
1.	Price	a. Affordable prices b. The price is in accordance with the facilities provided	a. Affordable prices c. The price is in accordance with the facilities provided	Facilities must be able to meet the needs of tourists and the price is also affordable
2.	Service Quality	Officer: a. Must be neat and wear clothes that are in accordance with Islamic law b. Must be friendly, helpful and responsive <hr/> Food & Beverages a. Food and drink must be halal b. There are no non-halal shows/entertainment <hr/> Pool or Spa: There must be a separation between men and women	a. Officer: b. Must be friendly, helpful and responsive, wear polite clothes c. Food does not contain pork and Drinks are not alcoholic d. There are no non-halal activities/entertainment	a. Rarely seen officers even though there must be a supervisor b. Officers must be responsive, helpful and friendly

<p>3. Product Quality</p>	<p>a. Tourist attractions must be well maintained</p> <p>b. The environment around tourist destinations must be clean</p> <p>c. Places of Worship and prayer equipment must be clean</p> <p>d. Clean toilets and sufficient water supply</p> <p>e. Rules for visitors: Some visitors said they had to wear clothes that fit Islamic law. Other Muslim tourist say visitors just dress politely.</p>	<p>a. Tourist attractions must be maintained</p> <p>b. Clean environment</p> <p>c. Clean toilet</p> <p>d. Sufficient water supply</p> <p>e. Rules for visitors: Visitors dress properly</p>	<p>a. Tourist attractions must be maintained</p> <p>b. The surrounding environment must be clean</p> <p>c. The number of toilets must match the size of the tourist attraction</p> <p>d. Toilet must be clean</p> <p>e. Water supply must be sufficient</p> <p>f. Rules for visitors: Visitors wear polite clothes</p>
<p>4. Emotional Factor</p>	<p>If tourists enjoy visiting the destinations, they will recommend them to others</p>	<p>If tourists enjoy visiting these destinations, they will recommend them to others</p>	<p>If tourists enjoy visiting these destinations, they will recommend them to others</p>
<p>5. Efficiency</p>	<p>Easy access to the location</p>	<p>Easy access to the location</p>	<p>a. Easy access to the location</p> <p>b. Ease of payment</p>

Source: results of researchers' interviews with tourists

From the table above, it is known that regarding the price aspect, these three categories of tourists have the same perception, namely the price must be affordable in accordance with the facilities provided. In the aspect of service quality, there are quite sharp differences, namely for domestic Muslim tourists it is very important for officers to wear clothes or uniforms that are in accordance with Islamic law (Battour & Ismail, 2016; Ramli, 2011). Meanwhile, for non-Muslim tourists and foreign tourists, the officers simply wear polite clothes (Widhasti et al., 2017).

Regarding the product quality aspect, these three categories of tourists agree that cleanliness is the main factor in halal tourism, both in the tourism objects, the environment, the supply of clean water and for Muslim tourists, especially the cleanliness of places of worship and worship equipment. However, there is a sharp difference in the rules for visitors. Not all Muslim tourists agree that all visitors must wear clothes that are in accordance with Islamic law and for women must wear the hijab, but it is enough to wear polite clothes. Likewise for non-Muslim tourists and foreign tourists, they agree to wear polite clothes because halal tourism is not only for Muslims but also for all without discriminating against non-Muslim tourists ([Kusumaningrum et al., 2017](#)). In the emotional factor aspect, all interviewed tourists agreed that if tourists feel happy visiting the halal destination, they will recommend it to others, and it is also important for tourist destination managers to make trips that are easily accessible, if necessary, payment system conveniences can be implemented.

CONCLUSION

From the results of the research conducted, it can be concluded that basically Muslim tourists, non-Muslims and foreign tourists agree with the implementation of halal tourism, especially in terms of halal food and drinks, food does not contain pork or other non-halal ingredients and there is no non-halal activities or entertainments, such as gambling or night clubs. The tourists also agree with the cleanliness factor, both in the object itself and the surrounding environment, including places of worship.

The different perception is more visible in the dress code where some Muslim tourists want visitors to wear clothes that are in accordance with Islamic law, while other visitors say that visitors are simply asked to dress modestly. If the expectations of tourists can be met, then tourists will get satisfaction. However, if you look at the current conditions, the government and relevant stakeholders need to socialize first regarding the definition of halal tourism so that the wider community understands its meaning better. The limitation of this research is that this research does not explore the problem of socializing halal tourism. For this reason, researchers suggest that future research researchers make research related to halal tourism socialization strategies with different approaches.

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