Resistance of Halal Tourism: Perceptions, Challenges and Social Impacts

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Abstract

Halal tourism is regarded as a rapidly developing segment in the global number of tourists, mainly due to the rising Muslim population. This research seeks to establish the factors that have hindered the growth of halal tourism in Lombok, Indonesia and the local people's attitude on the subject, the problems that industry stakeholders face; and the culture and social impacts of halal tourism. The study methodology involves using qualitative research with documentation review and analysis as the data collection tool. The study shows that local communities have fears that the development of halal tourism will erode indigenous cultures while industry players highlight issues in meeting the costly halal standards. The findings of this research demonstrate the need to assess local culture compliance in the process of conceptualizing and developing halal tourism and other initiatives to ensure they do not interfere with cultural heritage standards and could foster sustainable tourism.

Keywords : *challenges, perceptions, resistance of halal tourism, social impacts*

1. INTRODUCTION

Halal tourism is well known as friendly Muslim tourism and has now become popular among tourism stakeholders. It has emerged as one of the fastest-growing segments in the global tourism industry (Ainin et al., 2020). This rising interest in halal tourism is partly driven by the global growth of the Muslim population (Battour & Ismail, 2016) and the increasing number of Muslim travelers seeking destinations that align with their beliefs and needs. Consequently, the importance of halal tourism cannot be underestimated. Destinations that provide services and facilities adhering to Islamic principles, such as halal food, prayer facilities, and a comfortable and safe environment, hold significant potential to attract Muslim travelers from around the world. Battour et al., (2017) support this perspective by asserting that catering to the religious needs of Muslim tourists can encourage them to visit specific destinations.

Halal tourism is described as the tourism industry that offers compliance with the services and facilities in accordance with the Islamic/Shariah law experience (Sánchez & Moral, 2020). This covers areas that include; food and beverages, tourism accommodation and other tourism related activities that are lawful according to Islamic Sharia law. Concerning food, halal tourism guarantees that the tourists get Halal food and also the food that has been processed with the Islamic standard.

In addition, there are hotels or lodgings that avail facilities like a direction to the Kaaba (Qibla) in rooms, prayer halls, and other services that will cater to the Muslim guests 'needs and comfort (Setiyawan & Adwiyah, 2020). Similarly, issues of timing and space, in that Halal tourism activities also do not clash with Islamic standards, for example, arrangements are made to allow visitors sufficient time to pray and certain activities are not carried out which are unlawful in Sharia.

Furthermore, halal tourism not only includes physical aspects and services but also considers non-physical aspects (Ratnasari et al., 2020; Rahmiati et al., 2019) such as a comfortable and safe environment, as well as the hospitality and acceptance of the local community towards Muslim tourists. All these aims to create a travel experience that is not only enjoyable but also aligns with Islamic beliefs and values (Meirezaldi, 2020).

One of the core elements of halal tourism is the availability of halal food, which adheres to Islamic dietary laws. The halal food control system, particularly in countries like Malaysia, plays a crucial role in ensuring the integrity of halal certification. Ahmad et al., (2018) highlighted that the Malaysian halal food control system is a model for other countries, emphasizing stringent regulatory frameworks that maintain the halal status of food products from production to consumption. Besides food accommodation is another important component that is fundament to the Halal tourism. These facilities offer services that are appropriate to the Islamic culture of their visitors for instance a picture showing the direction of the Kaaba, generously supplied prayer rugs and halal meals. Drawing from the work of (Aziz, 2018) the topic for the paper, Muslim friendly tourism in Malaysia entails that hotels and any other form of lodgings featuring in the country provide for the comfort of Muslims. Such accommodations are prayer rooms for the male and female, having two separate swimming pools as there are for males and females.

In connection with the study of (Yan et al., 2017), let us pinpoint that in development of Muslim majority countries, the effort was made by providing development Muslim friendly travel environment like, enhanced numbers of Halal restaurant, shariah compliance hotel, prayer facility and improving Muslim culture. These products are meant to provide comfort to the Muslims tourists, and enable them perform their routine prayers and activities while at the tourist destination.

Besides, not all the countries that are demanding for the Halal food are the Muslim dominated countries in the world. Similar to what Jia & Chaozhi, (2021) established in their work, non-Islamic destinations are experiencing a rise in the realization of the need to provide halal food to lure Muslim travelers. This trend is seen through the rising number of restaurants and eateries around the world that offer halal food products showing that there is a developing realization that Muslims require consumption of foods that are considered halal (Khan & Callanan, 2017).

The idea of now expanding halal tourism to other non-halal countries attracts unique prospects and risks. Which are true as observed by (Han et al., 2019), non-Muslim dominated countries such as South Korea have started to create provisions to support halal tourism. This incorporates options for Islamic meal products, prayer coverage and services that are tendered bearing in mind Islamic culture. However, challenges exist in implementing halal tourism in such places range from low knowledge on the part of halal compliance locals and vendors, to gaining training and accreditation (Olya & Al-ansi, 2018).

Saville & Mahbubi, (2021) examine consumer attitude towards Japan as a non-Islamic country and discovered that the availability of prayer place and more importantly, halal foods were important determinants for Muslim consumers. With reference to the study, an understanding can be made that such facilities are important for the improvement of travel experience for the Muslims and this market requires infrastructure and training to accommodate for their requirements.

The future of halal tourism is promising, with significant opportunities for growth and expansion. As more destinations recognize the potential of this market, there is a growing need for research and innovation in halal tourism practices. Rejeb et al., (2021) suggest that integrating modern technologies, such as the Internet of Things (IoT), into the halal food supply chain can

enhance transparency and trust among consumers, thereby boosting confidence in halal tourism products. Mostafa, (2020) provides a knowledge domain visualization review of halal food research, identifying key trends and themes that have emerged over the past three decades. This comprehensive analysis offers valuable insights into the evolving nature of halal tourism and highlights areas where further research is needed to support the industry's growth.

However, behind this potential, some previous related works show that there are challenges and resistance that need to be addressed to sustainably develop halal tourism. Therefore, research on resistance to halal tourism in Lombok is required in the development of inclusive and sustainable halal tourism. However, the researcher found previous work which focused on resistance of halal tourism, but the identification of resistance's factors still remained. Additionally, the setting of the previous research with the current research is distinguished. These limitations include a lack of empirical data describing local community perceptions, challenges faced by industry players, and the social and cultural impacts of halal tourism development which take place in a thousand Mosque Island – Lombok`.

Comparison between previous works with the purpose study

Name	Methodology	Title	Location
(Churiyah et al., 2020)	Qualitative - The Literature Analysis	Halal Tourism: Between Economic Opportunities and Social Acceptance	Indonesia
(Slamet et al., 2022)	Qualitative – 7 Respondents	The contestation of the meaning of halal tourism	Batu City, East Java
(Carboni & Janati, 2016)	Qualitative – 11 Respondents	Halal Tourism De Facto: A Case from Fez	Northern Africa
(Khan & Callanan, 2017)	Content Analysis - Literature Review	The "Halalification" of Tourism	Websites Of UK Based Tour Operators
(Mazlan et al., 2023)	Qualitative – Secondary Sources	Muslim Friendly Hotels As Islamic Tourism Products: Issues and Challenges	Malaysia
(Manurung & Manurung, 2024)	Qualitative – Respondents do not mention	Tourism Communication Strategy in Developing Halal Tourism In The Lake Toba Tourism Area Of North Sumatra	Lake Toba, North Sumatra
Current Research	Qualitative	Resistance of Halal Tourism in Lombok	Lombok

Sources: author's creation

Given the current constraints, it is necessary to conduct a thorough analysis of the Lombok society's resistance to halal tourism. This research will provide a deeper understanding of the challenges and obstacles hindering the growth of Halal tourism, and it will propose appropriate solutions to address these resistances. Therefore, this research's purpose is to analyze deeper challenges, perceptions, and social impacts of halal tourism.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

A qualitative research design is used to gain an in-depth understanding of the resistance to Halal tourism in Lombok. This approach allows for exploring the complex social, cultural, and economic factors that contribute to resistance through detailed, contextual analysis. Phenomenological approach is suitable as it focuses on understanding the lived experiences and perceptions of individuals (Pernecky & Jamal, 2010), regarding Halal tourism. It helps to uncover the essence of resistance from the perspectives of various stakeholders. Data collection methods are documents reviews and document analysis. The analysis and interpretation of data were carried out through the process of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Resistance to the development of halal tourism has become a significant topic in various academic and practical discussions, particularly in countries with a substantial Muslim population. This study focuses on local community perceptions, challenges faced by industry actors, and the social and cultural impacts of halal tourism development. The research utilizes various references to examine these dynamics, with a focus on how this resistance emerges, how it affects industry actors, and its long-term impact on local communities.

3.1 Community Perceptions of Halal Tourism

Concerning perceiving attractiveness of the concept, local community has multiplex construct of their perceptions based on culture, religion and their own perception of the halal tourism. For this reason, whereas some locals may believe that the promotion of halal tourism is an economic factor that can offer added values to the development of a given region. However, on the other hand, there are also such concerns that, for instance, the

concept of halal tourism can act against local culture and traditions and renegotiate changes in the indigenous inhabiting modes of living.

As Churiyah et al., (2020) argued that Indonesia society refuses the Halal Tourism concept due to the low comprehension of the Halal Tourism concept. Other challenges also include a lack of understanding (Slamet et al., 2022) and awareness about the concept of halal tourism among industry players, and resistance from some community members who may view halal tourism as a threat to local culture and traditions. In conjunction, the loose definition and lack of full institutionalization can also create mistrust or suspicion among Muslims (Carboni & Janati, 2016). Additionally, there is no clear and consistent use of terminology (Khan & Callanan, 2017; Mazlan et al., 2023). Similarly, communication issues and lack of understanding about halal tourism can be a trigger for the stagnant implementation of halal tourism (Manurung & Manurung, 2024).

The community resistance towards halal tourism is like a distrust and apprehension that eventually their social and cultural structure will change as witnessed in Lombok Indonesia. According to (Akhtar et al., 2020), resistance to halal tourism is most likely to stem from a disconnect between the advertised halal factors and the end user norms in the community. For instance, in regions where the dominant population is non-Muslim, the introduction of halal tourism might be regarded as Islamization process of introducing the beliefs system of the religion on the people.

Negative perceptions of halal tourism can significantly impact the success of its implementation. When communities feel that halal tourism threatens their cultural identity, they are likely to resist in various ways, such as refusing to participate in tourism activities or even organizing opposition movements. Al-Ansi & Han, (2019) indicate that local dissatisfaction with halal tourism can lead to a decline in destination image and tourist loyalty. This occurs because local community perceptions can influence the tourist experience. When tourists sense a lack of harmony between themselves and the local community, they are likely to have a less satisfying experience and may not return to the destination.

Other several factors influenced community perceptions of halal tourism including the level of religiosity, knowledge about halal tourism, and previous experiences with tourism or Muslim tourists are discussable. A study by (Dewi et al., 2022) found that communities with a better understanding of the halal concept tend to be more accepting of halal tourism, compared to those with less understanding of the concept.

Furthermore, the level of individual religiosity also plays a crucial role. Alam et al., (2023) found that highly religious individuals tend to be more supportive of halal tourism, while less religious individuals or those with different religious beliefs tend to be more skeptical of this initiative.

Moreover, the "halalification" of tourism, as discussed by (Khan & Callanan, 2017), raises questions about the authenticity and sustainability of such efforts. There is a risk that some destinations may adopt superficial or tokenistic measures to appeal to Muslim tourists without fully understanding or committing to the underlying principles of halal tourism. This can lead to dissatisfaction among tourists and damage the destination's reputation in the long term. Busaini et al., (2023) highlight the importance of achieving a balance in the halal tourism market, where the supply of halal products and services meets the expectations and needs of Muslim tourists. Their study on the equilibrium of the halal tourism market emphasizes the need for continuous improvement in service quality and the importance of addressing any gaps in the market to maintain competitiveness.

After a brief discussion of the concept of Halal tourism, this essay highlighted the various social and cultural effects meaningful mainly in areas that are nascent. When consumers agree to engage in halal tourism, this comes with numerous other cultural encounters and interconnections in the concerned areas. In a study of Moshin et al., (2020) examine the attitude of the local people towards the concept of halal tourism in the non-Muslim countries of the world, the authors found that despite the possibility of potential economic impact there is a threat of cultural misunderstanding and intolerance.

3.2 Challenges Faced by Industry Actors

One of the main challenges faced by halal tourism industry players is compliance with complex halal regulations that often vary from one country to another. Hashim & Shariff, (2016) highlight that industry players often struggle to understand and implement halal standards regulated by various certification bodies. This issue is exacerbated by the lack of adequate training and resources to ensure compliance with these standards.

Hasri et al., (2016) emphasize the importance of relevant regulatory policies in governing the halal concept, particularly in the design of halal food establishments. They found that awareness and understanding of these regulations are still low among industry players, leading to inconsistent implementation and sometimes causing confusion among consumers.

In regards, challenges are experienced when implementing the concept of halal tourism, especially concerning standardization and certification. Due to absence of standard or certification, the services and facilities about the halal tourism may differ from region to region or country to country. Some of the literatures source such as (Henderson, 2016) says that although Malaysia and Singapore are set with good and stricter Halal certification standards, other countries may face the challenge in implementing the same with regards to different perception of what constitutes halal.

Another challenge faced by industry players is the high cost associated with halal certification and managing the halal supply chain. Kwag & Ko, (2019) note that the design of a halal food logistics network requires careful planning to ensure that products remain halal throughout the supply chain, often increasing operational costs.

Additionally, industry players face challenges in ensuring the availability of appropriate halal ingredients at every point in the supply chain. Farouk et al., (2021) mention that the production of halal meat requires different processing methods compared to non-halal meat, which can add complexity and cost.

Marketing halal tourism requires a different approach compared to general tourism, especially since this market segment has specific preferences and needs. Alam et al., (2023) suggest that hotels targeting Muslim tourists need to develop marketing strategies that specifically highlight facilities and services aligned with halal principles.

Moreover, industry players also face challenges in raising consumer awareness about halal products and services. A study by (Mohsin et al., 2016) shows that although there is significant interest in halal tourism, consumer awareness of what halal tourism actually entails and its benefits remains low.

3.3 Social Impacts of Halal Tourism Development

The development of halal tourism can bring significant social changes to local communities. In some cases, these changes may be seen as positive, such as the increase in job opportunities and infrastructure development. However, there is also a risk that these social changes could lead to the disintegration of local culture, especially if halal tourism is not implemented with consideration for the local cultural context. Ryan, (2016) reveals that in some cases, halal tourism has led to changes in social interaction patterns within local communities, with an increase in interactions between local residents and Muslim tourists. While this can be an opportunity to enrich cultural exchange, there are also concerns that these interactions could lead to the erosion of traditional values.

One of the main concerns often raised by local communities is the impact of halal tourism on their cultural identity. Izberk-Bilgin & Nakata, (2016) state that the globalization of the halal concept can lead to cultural homogenization, where local cultures begin to lose their distinct characteristics as they are adapted to universal halal standards. Demirci et al., (2016) also note that the adoption of the halal concept in regions that are not predominantly Muslim can lead to cultural tensions, where local communities feel pressured to conform to norms that are not in line with their traditions.

Local communities often respond to the social and cultural impacts of halal tourism in various ways. Some communities may choose to adopt the changes brought by halal tourism, seeing it as a way to remain relevant in the era of globalization. However, there are also

communities that choose to resist these changes, either through organized resistance movements or by individual refusal to participate in halal tourism activities. According to Said et al., (2014), the community's response to halal tourism largely depends on the extent to which they feel involved in the tourism development process. Communities that feel involved in planning and decision-making tend to be more accepting of the changes, while those who feel marginalized tend to be more resistant.

In Indonesia, Lombok is one of the destinations recognized as a halal tourism destination. It is highlighted by Muharis et al., (2023) that the opportunity for halal tourism in West Nusa Tenggara is extremely huge, seeing the intensity of visits every year is so high, especially middle eastern tourists. Lombok, with its stunning natural beauty, rich local culture, and predominantly Muslim population, has all the potential to become a top destination for Muslim travelers. Its products which encompass various services and facilities specifically designed to meet the needs of Muslim tourists (Addina et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the existence of halal tourism in Lombok has gained national and international recognition. It has received several awards as a top halal tourism destination, to strengthen the region's commitment and seriousness in developing the halal tourism sector (Taqwiem et al., 2020). This success is not separated from the support of the local government, tourism industry players, and the local community, who together create a conducive environment for the development of halal tourism (Zaenuri et al., 2022).

4. CONCLUSION

Resistance to halal tourism is a complex phenomenon involving various factors, including local community perceptions, challenges faced by industry actors, and the social and cultural impacts of halal tourism development. Understanding and addressing this resistance requires a holistic approach that considers the needs and interests of all stakeholders.

To reduce resistance, it is important for halal tourism developers to engage local communities in the planning process and ensure that tourism development does not undermine local cultural values. Additionally, industry actors need to continuously adapt to regulatory and logistical challenges, as well as develop effective marketing strategies to increase consumer

awareness and acceptance of halal tourism. Ultimately, the success of halal tourism will heavily depend on how well a balance between economic benefits, adherence to halal principles, and the preservation of local culture can be achieved.

For further researcher, it might be useful to look at how different stakeholders such as government agencies, local population, religious authorities, and tourism businesses work and may, consequently, identify the best strategies for mitigating resistance. Subsequent research could examine the multi-stakeholder partnerships for potential and utilization of the partnership to address barriers and facilitate the advancement of inclusive halal tourism.

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