

The Role of Halal Tourism Standards in Enhancing Destination Attractiveness and Visitor Satisfaction among Muslim Travellers

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Abstract: *Halal tourism has become a visible part of the worldwide tourism industry, reflecting the constantly increasing mobility, purchasing power, and religiosity of Muslim travellers. Although the industry has been growing, the uniform application of halal tourism standards is still a question that is being pondered, and this draws attention to its attractiveness and visitor satisfaction. In response to this, the purpose of the research presented here is to explore the power of halal tourism standards to increase the attractiveness of a destination and the satisfaction of travellers in the Muslim category. In this study, a narrative review methodology was used to analyse and summarise existing literature concerning halal tourism standards, destination appeals, and visitor satisfaction. The results show several roles of halal tourism standards in enhancing destination attractiveness and visitor satisfaction among Muslim travellers, including: (a) significant positive impact of core halal attributes on destination attractiveness; (b) halal standards as a mediator for higher visitor satisfaction and loyalty; (c) enhanced inclusivity boosting competitiveness in non-Muslim-majority destinations; (d) moderating role of digital tools and certifications in amplifying satisfaction; and (e) link between halal standards, emotional attachment, and long-term destination loyalty. In conclusion, this study highlights the critical role of halal tourism standards in enhancing destination attractiveness and visitor satisfaction among Muslim travellers. For future research, empirical studies examining traveller perceptions across different cultural and regulatory contexts are recommended, alongside longitudinal analyses exploring the long-term impact of halal standards on destination loyalty.*

Keywords: Halal Tourism; Halal Standards; Destination Attractiveness; Muslim Traveller Satisfaction; Islamic Tourism

1. Introduction

Halal tourism has become a visible part of the worldwide tourism industry, reflecting the constantly increasing mobility, purchasing power, and religiosity of Muslim travellers. Halal tourism encompasses much more than just food; it includes a wide range of standards that govern the entire supply of tourism products, such as accommodation, transportation, leisure

activities, and service delivery, all of which must adhere to Islamic principles (Abdullah et al., 2025; Jabeen, 2025). As destinations compete to attract Muslim tourists, halal tourism standards have emerged as strategic tools that not only demonstrate respect for the culture but also ensure quality assurance and ethical service delivery. As a result, the deployment of halal standards are not only specific to Muslim-majority countries; they have also become increasingly important for various marketplaces within the global tourism industry (Hamdy & Eid, 2024).

Although the industry has been growing, the uniform application of halal tourism standards is still a question that is being pondered, and this draws attention to its attractiveness and visitor satisfaction. Different certification systems, service quality divergence, and a lack of knowledge of halal requirements are possible reasons that can erode the confidence of travellers and, hence, their overall experiences (Abdullah et al., 2025). In non-Muslim-majority tourist destinations, the presence of additional challenges that are, to some extent, rooted in the differences between the standards of halal tourism and the destination's overall goal is often addressed in a half-hearted or merely cosmetic fashion that can be equivalent to saying that halal standards are only for show. These same problems contribute to the apprehension of Muslim tourists, might bring about the tarnishing of the place's image, decrease satisfaction, and thus dampen repeat visits, resulting in a lower long-term experience of the place in the end (Hakim et al., 2025).

In response to this, the purpose of the research presented here is to explore the power of halal tourism standards to increase the attractiveness of a destination and the satisfaction of travellers in the Muslim category. For example, it examines current scientific evidence on how halal standards affect the minds, hearts, and behaviours of individuals (Abror et al., 2025; Pattaray & Herman, 2024). The study will greatly assist decision-makers in the target area, policy creators, and tourism managers by highlighting the importance of a strategic halal standard-orientated perspective, and it will also contribute academically by transforming one-sided arguments into a comprehensive and distinct analysis of the performance and sustainability of the halal tourism sector.

2. Review of Literature

Islamic tourism is the discovery of a very specific type of market in the tourism sector that helps Muslim tourists with their various needs, from food to worship. Therefore, Islamic tourism is a kind of breakthrough move to adapt faith-based travel to the world of global tourism. Moving forward, the very successful blending of the destination with Islamic requirements is the only way to improve the tourist feel and become a returning visitor. On the other hand, it may seem a bit complicated at first; however, it is a very simple way to help travellers eliminate uncertainty. Simplifying Islamic tourism standards enhances the connection and progress between cities and the Islamic world, ultimately leading to a permanent integration of the two markets. Consequently, destinations can attract Muslim tourists by creating a welcoming atmosphere that recognises their cultural and religious values and establishes reliable Islamic standards.

Specifically, halal tourism plays an important role in creating new meanings and experiences for Muslim visitors who are travelling. Wibawa et al. (2023) show that the incorporation of halal attributes has a positive effect on the overall destination image, and this, in turn, affects the tourists' intention to recommend and revisit. These are the instances when the traditional approach to Muslim tourism based on location increasingly aligns with the marketing of non-

Muslim destinations. The first step is to make sure that the information system embraces all the basic halal tourism attributes, and Juliana et al. (2023) underlined that there continues to be a challenge as well that entails the lack of any sort of homogeneity in the halal certification process and the limitation of the range of halal tourism products. Therefore, we must address these legal and business obstacles to enhance the market's adaptability. The writers also state that misunderstandings surrounding programs hinder the expansion of halal tourism; therefore, there is a need for full commitment to the process, as well as clear communication and specific infrastructure targets that align with the expectations of Muslim travellers, which are an essential part of the product.

Furthermore, the ability of tourists to adhere to halal standards plays a very crucial role in how destinations attract Muslim visitors. Empirical research conducted by Omo-Obas and Anning-Dorson (2022) argues that the affective, cognitive, and motivational dimensions of a visit significantly influence the primary outcomes of visitor satisfaction and the likelihood of future visits. Therefore, these dimensions must not only inform attractiveness campaigns but also serve as a source of sustained positive perceptions. These campaigns must also consider the respective needs of different generations of Muslim travellers to increase the meaningfulness of halal-related amenities. Moreover, Ünner et al. (2022) assert that standard approaches, which are widely advertised, often fail to meet the expected outcomes; therefore, these strategies must be aligned with the expectations of various cultural backgrounds. The situation is even more critical in the halal tourism sector, where travellers increasingly demand offerings that are not only tailored to their needs but also closely aligned with their religious and cultural beliefs.

The quality and quantity of halal food at the destination is also a key factor in visitor satisfaction. Zahra et al. (2025) further show that halal tourism qualities play a critical role in the satisfaction of tourists in places like Yogyakarta. This finding particularly endorses the argument that halal offerings made to meet religious needs are the primary reasons for joyful travels. The same thing was supported by Yacoub et al. (2025), who recorded that destinations in the Middle East, as well as North Africa, placed culture and religion as major concerns in the minds of Muslim travellers. These two major issues, which have emphasised to some extent, go together to explain the observation that travellers' perceptions should be well understood, especially in times of uncertainty. Such an observation is a major reason for someone to lose and, at the same time, gain a large "customer base." Additionally, the management of halal services can distinguish itself in a highly competitive market. The reasons for these effects include continuous feedback loops and knowledgeable clients, which together contribute to customer satisfaction and serve as a strong incentive for Muslim travellers to share their experiences with others.

The scholarly community has been focusing lately on the crossroads of technology and halal tourism. According to Battour et al. (2025), artificial intelligence significantly enhances halal tourism services by providing real-time assistance and personalisation. Technology allows destinations to better meet consumers' halal needs. The various AI tools and devices are very advantageous in monitoring the whole process of halal practices from the source to the customer. It is anticipated that Islamic industries will reap benefits from the implementation of cutting-edge technologies like AI, IoT, and blockchain. What is more, visitors and new entrants may quite significantly feel the positive impact of halal in that they experience full interoperability, be it in halal clothing or halal meat.

Furthermore, these factors can either be considered essential for obtaining the comprehensive halal travel services that visitors expect, or they can serve as complementary elements for an

enjoyable experience. journey on a halal lane with halal activities, attractions, and wider non-touristy opportunities. As a matter of fact, AI in hospitality will enable technologies, like IoT, to control the whole process starting from food sourcing until the checking-out stage in hotels. Technology can control every aspect of a hotel's service process. For instance, a digital door lock provider will recommend using a smartphone as a key to open electronic locks. Moreover, with the rise in digital marketing, smartphones provided by some hotels will replace room keys, while the whole process of services at a restaurant will be controlled by technology. Technology and computer algorithms power the touchless restaurant concept, based on preferences identified in the app for each individual mealtime.

In summary, the implementation of standardised halal tourism is a must, both to appeal to Islamic vacationers and to ensure their continued satisfaction along the journey. Research consistently points out that identifying the exclusive needs of tourists who practise Islam and incorporating halal properties into destination planning and marketing brings about successful results. The other beneficial news is that besides halal tourism, the adaptable marketing strategies and the very well-formed halal ecosystems have made the difference in the crowded tourism markets. On the contrary, subsequent studies strongly recommended linking halal standards to both service quality and technological innovation through a strategic business model that would serve as a key driver of the economy. Consequently, the upcoming halal tourism should be more strategised towards adopting integrated standards, marketing strategies that fit the context, and digital solutions to cater to the changing needs of Muslim travel, the latter being the most important factor nowadays in the global tourism market.

3. Methodology

In this study, a narrative review methodology was used to analyse and summarise existing literature concerning halal tourism standards, destination appeals, and visitor satisfaction. To carry out the study, different keywords were considered, namely, “halal tourism”, “halal standards”, “destination attractiveness”, “Muslim traveller satisfaction”, and “Islamic tourism”. The relevant studies were searched systematically in academic databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and major publisher platforms. During the review process, titles and abstracts were first screened, and then full texts were analysed to find repetitive themes, connections, and conceptual patterns. Since the narrative review was the most appropriate choice for gathering and putting together different theoretical and empirical data, it was agreed upon to move in this direction of exploring the current state of halal tourism research in a more context-focused and in-depth approach that encourages a critical discourse.

4. Results and Discussion

The results show several roles of halal tourism standards in enhancing destination attractiveness and visitor satisfaction among Muslim travellers, including: (a) significant positive impact of core halal attributes on destination attractiveness; (b) halal standards as a mediator for higher visitor satisfaction and loyalty; (c) enhanced inclusivity boosting competitiveness in non-Muslim-majority destinations; (d) moderating role of digital tools and certifications in amplifying satisfaction; and (e) link between halal standards, emotional attachment, and long-term destination loyalty.

Significant Positive Impact of Core Halal Attributes on Destination Attractiveness

The study found that the availability of halal-certified foods, prayer facilities, and alcohol-free environments, among other key halal tourism standards, is very positively perceived by

travellers when they assess destinations. There was a substantial difference in the appreciation of Muslim travellers between destinations that have strong halal infrastructure, such as Malaysia and Indonesia, and those that have very limited options, with the availability of halal food being the most critical factor that affects people's choice of a first destination. Moreover, the presence of properly maintained prayer facilities and alcohol-free zones increases the comfort and trust of travellers, which, in turn, contributes to a positive image of the destination. Therefore, these standards stand together as the two-fold criteria: the presence of them will simply demonstrate a destination's support for Muslim travellers while likely influencing the early decision-making of this group of travellers as well.

The incentives in the tourism sector are significantly influenced by the core principles of Halal, making it highly likely that Muslims will choose to visit the destination. One of the surveys conducted by Halal researchers demonstrated that there is a positive link between halal destination attributes (HDAs) and Muslim satisfaction and visit devotion primarily in locations like West Sumatra, Indonesia, mentioned by Battour et al. (2022). This link underscores the criticality of HDAs in pampering Muslim tourists with their specific needs and inspiring them to return to their destinations, as highlighted by the study of Juliana et al. (2022). Furthermore, the incorporation of these attributes into the tourism planning stage enables the practitioners to design a more cohesive and culturally aligned experience. This, in turn, may lead to the increase in customer retention rate. Hence, the financial support of HDAs can be considered a way of strengthening one's position and increasing the number of tourist visits in the long run.

More than that, scientific works have demonstrated that the three factors namely the need to travel, being religious, and the peculiar features of the Muslim destination are highly significant in determining the younger Muslim group's decision to visit Islamic tourist attractions. This fact not only highlights the importance of establishing Islamic values as a key feature of mainstream destinations but also aligns with the perspectives of primary sources, such as the study by Juliana et al. (2023). Additionally, recognising halal-friendly signs significantly influences travellers even in non-Islamic places, which supports the broader applicability of halal standards in tourism. Apparently, this phenomenon was also evident in the case of Soonsan and Jumani (2024). By accommodating Muslim travellers with diverse preferences, we are likely to foster a strong bond among them. As a result, localities that wisely blend halal essentials into their tourism promotion will attract and retain a growing share of what is becoming an increasingly significant market segment.

4.2 Halal Standards as a Mediator for Higher Visitor Satisfaction and Loyalty

The study's outcome is showing that the strict following of halal tourism standards plays the role of a mediator between the qualitative essence of travel and the visitors' overall happiness. The places where the entire system of halal requirements is available are rated much higher in terms of satisfaction when visited by Muslims. This further contributes to their emotional involvement, feeling of trip value, and intention to come back, along with getting more positive feedback and suggestions. In addition to that, these criteria facilitate the provision of services in a way that is uniform, thereby removing doubts and getting the visitors to show greater reliance on the place. In turn, the destination that focuses on halal is the one that can find itself in a situation of retaining the clients and hence is in a forceful position compared to other destinations in the increasingly globalised and thus very tough tourism market.

Halal tourism has emerged as an important industry that significantly boosts a site's attractions among Muslim travellers and, at the same time, impacts visitor satisfaction and loyalty. Sodawan and Hsu (2022) believe that halal-friendly attributes are a means of increasing the

perceived value and trustworthiness of the destination, thereby resulting in the increase of the intention to visit the place. The results indicated that Muslim travellers were law-abiding, and they checked the halal service's quality and trustworthiness. Moreover, establishing halal as part of advanced marketing and service strategies strengthens the destination's position and attracts more devout travellers.

Moreover, another study has also mentioned that efficient branding, for instance, the halal logo, is capable of bringing in Muslim vacationers due to the halal food and service availability sign and adding more to the destination's attractiveness (Mulyadi et al., 2023). This is demonstrated in a study by Hendrawan and Muslichah (2023) that confirms that better management of halal tourism increases travellers' satisfaction, which is directly correlated with their loyalty. Moreover, the creation of Sharia-compliant hotels, which Mandalia and Hidayat (2022) address, caters to the specific needs of Muslim tourists. Consequently, this increases their satisfaction and fosters loyalty to the destination. In fact, enforcing a comprehensive set of halal rules will serve not only as a religious obligation but also as a strategic industry move to promote the destination in the market in accordance with tourism sector players.

4.3 Enhanced Inclusivity Boosting Competitiveness in Non-Muslim-Majority Destinations

The adherence to halal norms in non-OIC cities, such as Singapore, Hong Kong, and Thailand, has stood out as one of the major factors that have led to the attraction of Muslim tourists and their satisfaction without the adverse reaction from non-Muslim visitors. Travellers found the provision of prayer rooms and halal food to be very convenient, which in turn made those destinations more popular and gave businesses a competitive advantage in the market. They were also pleased to see that they were treated with cultural and religious sensitivity at the destinations and making it easy to follow their religious practices. Therefore, destinations that invest in halal amenities can retain their positions in the market, where they can derive added benefits from the fast-growing Muslim travel market. Additionally, providing such facilities not only demonstrates inclusivity and respect for diverse cultural needs but also improves tourists' overall impressions of the destination.

The integration of halal tourism standards is expected to enhance the appeal of non-Muslim-majority destinations among Muslim travellers. According to Wibawa et al. (2023), the presence of halal-certified restaurants plays a crucial role in attracting Muslim tourists, thereby giving destinations a competitive edge in the halal tourism market. Furthermore, according to Madnasir and Cahyani (2024), inclusivity in the tourism sector is considered a factor that benefits all tourists, serving to spread economic activities widely and significantly enhance overall tourist satisfaction. Consequently, the adoption of halal standards will be a source of both a niche market strategy and general service quality improvement. Additionally, the continuous introduction and promotion of halal offerings enhance the destination's overall image, making it seem reliable and trustworthy for international Muslim travellers.

Most countries without a Muslim majority are increasingly recognising the importance of incorporating halal food cultures into their tourism offerings. This strategy is a major attraction for Muslim tourists and also appeals to non-Muslims in places like Thailand and Japan, where the authorities have designed their cuisines to be included in the halal market (Sthapit et al., 2021). Consequently, the introduction of halal tourism standards not only promotes international recognition of the destination but also provides better experience for all visitors, thus resulting in an overall increase in satisfaction and sustainable tourism growth. Moreover, immersion in the halal cultural elements paves the path for the travellers to go through cross-

cultural learning and the tourist spot to gain in authenticity. Thus, halal tourism can be the connecting link between different visitor groups, who would see being inclusive through the platform, while the local community would be supported in its economic development.

4.4 Moderating Role of Digital Tools and Certifications in Amplifying Satisfaction

The study indicated that the halal agencies' certifications and the use of digital resources, like apps that identify and categorise only halal establishments and services, will both reduce the halal standard's impact on satisfaction and thus also the negative effect of halal standards on satisfaction. To be more precise, among Muslim travellers, those who have the said certification in their place of visit and have been assisted by AI in their itinerary were found to be less worried, see a higher price as well as be more satisfied. This is more pronounced in the youth sector and among those who are tech-inclined and are investigating how to blend the principles of their religion and their daily life. Also, technology works for the benefit of the travellers by decreasing uncertainty and the need for decision-making, making the whole travel experience more convenient. Therefore, by providing these guarantees and services, destinations enhance their chances of gaining the trust of Muslim travellers. Eventually, this can encourage repeat visits and solidify their reputation as leaders in providing competitive halal tourism options.

According to Wibawa et al. (2023), the demand for and the proliferation of halal food establishments and halal tourism play a crucial role in the growth of Muslim tourists and diverse tourism, as it is exceptionally significant to their individual choice when they go to non-Muslim countries. Besides this, Slamet et al. (2022) point out that the availability of the halal food and tourism sector is actually a market-side force that can steer the course of tourists' actions. At first glance, these concepts seem very distant and unrelated. But they all converge in the common factor of market demand for halal food, with the third mentioned element being the means of supplying the former. The uniqueness of the first and the second elements becomes particularly evident in the context of services and goods produced respectively.

Moreover, the effective distribution of data about halal products with the help of digital platforms is what makes it possible for Muslim tourists to check on halal compliance in an easier way, as highlighted by Ekka (2023). This kind of available information is greatly relevant in making the perceived value of the place more attractive, which is supported by Juliana et al. (2022) as the variable that links customer satisfaction and repeat visits. In the same vein, focused digital platforms provide travellers a chance to schedule their trips most efficiently. Thus, they face fewer ambiguities and halal compliance issues. As a result, locations that invest in both digital excellence and transparency in the certification process can provide the smoothest and most enjoyable travel experiences. Finally, this enhances sustainability and attractiveness in the halal tourism market simultaneously.

4.5 Link Between Halal Standards, Emotional Attachment, and Long-Term Destination Loyalty

It was demonstrated that halal tourism standards significantly affected the development of close-knit emotional connections among Muslim travellers, which, in turn, led to more satisfied and loyal customers. The most impactful elements, such as single-gender facilities and halal recreational areas for families, contributed to an astonishing overall experience, which further increased tourists' attachment to the destination and their intention to revisit and recommend it. Additionally, halal compliance was identified as a driving force behind the growth of sustainable tourism. Furthermore, the emotional sentiment built through the use of halal services strengthens the perception of the value of the travel experience, making destinations

more attractive to Muslim visitors. As a result, such ties can be a way to advocate for tourism over a long period, as cheerful tourists turn into agents who are the advertising mechanisms for the destination through their communities and friend circles.

Halal standards should be adopted in tourism because they boost Muslim tourist loyalty and make destinations more attractive. A study conducted by Nugroho et al. (2025) found out that the presence of halal facilities and services complying with the Sharia greatly influenced tourist satisfaction and loyalty among the halal tourism practitioners. This finding coincides with the study by Hung et al. (2021), which showed that satisfied and loyal tourists are the outcomes of favourable tourism experiences. Therefore, the installation of recognisable and unequalled halal standards meets practical needs and conveys respect for the cultural and religious values that are the basis for accepting the destination's image. Furthermore, by enforcing the application of halal rules across all services, the destination can emerge from the shadows, distinguishing itself from competitors and making its offerings to Muslim tourists even more compelling.

Furthermore, the emotional bond that comes with the feeling of being well is actually a constant element that intensely backs up gratification and consequently maintains consumer loyalty, as underlined by Bagheri et al. (2024). Thus, following halal rules can compensate for the emotional aspect of the relationship, improving visitors' feelings and creating a loyal customer base. Additionally, the emotional link can also be a factor that gives rise to repeat visits and good word-of-mouth, which are the main building blocks of sustainable tourism development. Therefore, the tourist destinations that wisely incorporate halal norms into their services and offerings will be the closest to both currently satisfying and long-term engaging Muslim clients.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study highlights the critical role of halal tourism standards in enhancing destination attractiveness and visitor satisfaction among Muslim travellers. The synthesis of existing literature demonstrates that halal standards function not only as operational guidelines but also as trust-building mechanisms that shape destination image, emotional attachment, and long-term loyalty. When properly applied, these standards foster inclusive tourism development, competitive differentiation, and ongoing visitor engagement in both Muslim and non-Muslim majority destinations. For future research, empirical studies examining traveller perceptions across different cultural and regulatory contexts are recommended, alongside longitudinal analyses exploring the long-term impact of halal standards on destination loyalty. Further investigation into the integration of digital technologies and adaptive certification frameworks may also deepen our understanding of how halal tourism can evolve to meet the changing expectations of Muslim travellers.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare a potential conflict of interest in that Bushroh Yahya and Mohd Amzari Tumiran are spouses. However, this relationship did not influence the study design, data collection, analysis, interpretation of findings, or the decision to publish the results. The research was conducted with full academic integrity and independence.

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