



ARTÍCULO

The Role of Brand Image and Facilities and Services in Halal Tourism and the Accessibility of Islamic Cultural Needs to Enhance Tourist Satisfaction and Halal Tourism Economic Growth in Malaysia and Indonesia

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The growth of halal tourism has been a key driver for economic growth and can be influenced by various factors, including the reputation, amenities, and services offered by halal tourism providers. This aspect requires the focus of recent studies, and the present article investigates the influence of brand image, facilities and services of halal tourism, and accessibility of Islamic cultural needs on the economic growth of halal tourism. The article also examines the relationship between tourist satisfaction, brand image, halal tourism facilities and services, accessibility to Islamic cultural needs, and halal tourism economic growth. The study used questionnaires to collect data from tourists traveling between Indonesia and Malaysia. The study also utilised the smart-PLS to examine the relationship between the constructs. The results demonstrated a positive correlation between the economic growth of halal tourism and its brand image, facilities, and services, as well as the accessibility of Islamic cultural needs. The results also revealed that tourist satisfaction plays a crucial role in connecting brand image, facilities and services of halal tourism, accessibility of Islamic cultural needs, and the economic growth of halal tourism. The study guides policymakers in developing policies to enhance economic growth in the halal tourism industry. It focuses on creating an appealing brand image, providing extensive facilities and services for halal tourism, and ensuring simple access to Islamic cultural needs.

Introduction

In the context of Malaysia and Indonesia, the factors that greatly contribute to satisfaction and economic growth in the context of halal tourism are the brand image, facilities, service, and accessibility to customers' Islamic needs. These factors have emerged as highly influential in this industry. Halal tourism has become increasingly popular in both countries, primarily because of the expanding Muslim population and the rising purchasing power of Islamic tourists (Ainin et al., 2020). The research aims to investigate the impact of perception of halal tourism destinations, quality of halal tourism facilities and services, and availability of Islamic cultural factors on tourist satisfaction. This, in turn, contributes to the development of the halal tourism industry in Malaysia and Indonesia. Juliana et al. (2023) have identified Malaysia and Indonesia as cultural and natural tourism destinations that are popular among Muslim visitors. Regarding marketing strategies, both countries have successfully established themselves as leaders in halal tourism through promotional events, accommodations, and policy implementation (Susilawati et al., 2022).

Halal tourism, which focuses on travel and tourism accommodations that adhere to Islamic Sharia requirements, has seen substantial growth. This is primarily driven by Muslim tourists seeking international destinations that can accommodate their religious needs (Khan & Callanan, 2017).

The government and the private sector in Malaysia and Indonesia have implemented a policy to provide halal tourism services, catering to the increasing demand in this sector. This aligns with the governments' initiatives to attract tourists from around the globe to visit these two countries. Karri & Dogra (2023) emphasised the challenge of overcoming the established reputation of a particular halal tourism destination. The strength and positivity of a brand image have a remarkable impact on attracting tourists and building their trust in the destination. This, in turn, leads to repeat visits and recommendations to other tourists. This highlights the importance of providing facilities, targets, and services that cater to the needs of Muslim travellers in order to fully embrace the concept of halal tourism. This establishment offers a range of amenities and services designed to cater to the needs of its guests. These include flavour facilities, edible products, provisions for prayers, and separate accommodations for males and females. The accommodation units are clean and meet the standards required for Muslim guests (Hall et al., 2019). Therefore, it is important for travel destinations to provide the necessary comforts and services to enhance the satisfaction of Muslim clients. It is worth mentioning that the provision and quality of these infrastructural facilities and services have a strong impact on tourists' satisfaction and their likelihood to revisit or recommend the destination to others (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2019).

In addition, an important aspect of translation in the context of halal tourism is the provision of halal entertainment, Islamic events, and Islamic cultural shows. This is seen as crucial in meeting the cultural needs of Islamic travellers (Rasul, 2019). Their goal is to provide services and products that give Muslim travellers a taste of cultural beliefs. Therefore, the presence of cultural products related to Islamic culture in a particular country can greatly enhance a tourist's travel experience and deepen their connection with the destination (Adel et al., 2021). The present research aims to assess the extent to which Malaysia and Indonesia meet the cultural demands

of Islamic tourism and its impact on tourist satisfaction. The economic implications of enhancing customer satisfaction in B2C halal tourism services are substantial. Zhang et al. (2019) found that satisfying tourist experiences lead to increased visitor numbers, longer stays, and higher expenditures, which in turn stimulate employment and boost the economy. Moreover, satisfied tourists often recommend the destination to others in their social networks, thereby increasing its popularity and appeal (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2019). This research aims to assess the financial benefits derived from tourist satisfaction in the context of halal tourism in Malaysia and Indonesia. It seeks to provide insights on how both countries can enhance their concepts and practices to maximise economic gains in halal tourism.

The main focus of this study is to analyse the brand image of halal tourism and the quality of halal facilities and services in Malaysia-Indonesia, and how they impact tourist satisfaction. In addition, the study aims to investigate the availability of Islamic cultural needs and the satisfaction of tourists. Therefore, the research seeks to analyse the various factors that contribute to the economic growth of the halal tourism sector in these two countries. The ultimate goal is to provide development recommendations to policymakers and other stakeholders who are interested in this field. The research also provides solutions to the significant gaps present in the literature of halal tourism. Firstly, this study shifts its focus from isolated elements that have been previously studied, such as brand image and individual facilities and services of the destination. Instead, it emphasises the interconnection between all these factors and the importance of considering the accessibility of Islamic culture needs. Additionally, there is a lack of research comparing halal tourism between Malaysia and Indonesia, considering that both countries are significant contributors in this field.

In the next section of this study, we will thoroughly explore the existing literature, outline the research methodology, and perform a comprehensive empirical analysis of the proposed hypotheses.

Literature Review

Rahman et al. (2019) state that the brand image of halal tourism plays a significant role in driving economic development within the industry. At its core, the assertion that halal tourism operates as a segmented market structure highlights the fact that it caters to a specific niche within the tourism industry. This niche serves Islamic customers who seek services and travel experiences that align with Sharia principles (Khan et al., 2017). The heightened expectations in this context have led to the development of a distinct identity that promotes fundamental values such as honesty, safety, and consideration for diverse groups. According to Battour et al. (2022), once the necessary plans are in place and the tourist destination establishes a strong brand, Muslim tourists feel more assured about visiting places that provide halal services (Fernández et al., 2022). This trust is evident in the increased investment in travel to and within these destinations, which in turn has a positive effect on their economies. An optimistic view of halal tourism destinations leads to increased investment opportunities in the hospitality and food services industries, as well as other related sectors. This, in turn, is expected to contribute to economic growth (Khan et al., 2017).

In addition, according to Rahman et al. (2019), destinations

that actively promote themselves as halal destinations often see a rise in the influx of international tourists. This, in turn, contributes to the economic growth of these destinations by generating tourism revenues that are not limited to specific seasons. The approval of HS also has a positive impact on destination attractiveness beyond Muslim visitors. This could be because non-Muslims may prefer a tourist product that is certified halal, as it assures them of hygiene, ethical, and quality standards (Katuk et al., 2021). Due to this, there has been an increase in market recognition and a significant development in the overall tourism industry. In addition, the growing Muslim middle class globally, along with the subsequent rise in disposable income in targeted countries, has led to an enhanced economic significance of halal tourism. By focusing on enhancing and expanding its tourist attractions to cater to the preferences and requirements of this specific group, destinations can tap into a significant economic opportunity and experience sustainable growth over time (Battour et al., 2022; Kanchana, 2022). There are several advantages to be gained from halal tourism, such as the creation of employment opportunities, the establishment of new facilities and structures, and the enhancement of the overall reputation of the destinations that have embraced this form of tourism. Put simply, aside from drawing in more consumers to participate in halal tourism, a robust brand image also fosters a favourable atmosphere for the growth of other interconnected economic networks (Bt Mohamed Sadom et al., 2022). Therefore, we make a hypothesis that,

H1: The brand image of halal tourism has a positive effect on halal tourism economic growth.

By actively providing dedicated facilities and services for halal tourism, there is a great potential for creating valuable economic opportunities in this sector. Features like halal certified restaurants, prayer rooms, gender-segregated sports amenities, and clean accommodations are important for Muslim travellers (Vargas-Sánchez & Moral-Moral, 2019). In a study conducted by Hall et al. (2019) When destinations offer sufficient halal services, the popularity of tourist attractions tends to rise. This is because Muslims, who are committed to their religious obligations, can continue to practise their faith even while travelling. In this context, ensuring that all aspects of operation align with the principles of Islamic faith leads to increased satisfaction among tourists. This, in turn, increases the likelihood of them revisiting and recommending others to do the same. Thus, the arrival of Muslim tourists leads to increased expenditure in various sectors such as lodging, dining, retail, and transportation, among others (Vargas-Sánchez et al., 2019; Wen & Sumettikoon, 2024).

The economic impact extends beyond the financial expenditure associated with the trip. When it comes to setting up and offering halal facilities for the tourism sector, there is a need for resources such as capital, buildings, and manpower. This not only helps in addressing unemployment but also plays a role in stimulating economic growth (Rachmiatie et al., 2024). For instance, local businesses in the relevant sectors may experience increased growth as a result of the growing demand for halal products and services. This could lead to greater investment and development in the area. It plays a significant role in supporting small and medium-sized enterprises that drive various economic sectors by harnessing their entrepreneurial and innovative capabilities in the field of halal compliance. In addition, according to a study by Hsu et al. (2022), destinations that have well-established Super-Mosque halal tourism offerings attract tourists from various countries, including Muslim

majority nations and other countries with a significant Muslim population. It has the potential to broaden the range of tourist preferences and attract visitors from different locations, thus reducing the area's dependence on regional economic fluctuations. Therefore, we propose that,

H2: Halal tourism facilities and services has a positive effect on halal tourism economic growth.

According to Mukherjee et al. (2022), the success of halal tourism relies on meeting the essential cultural needs of Islamic travellers, which plays a vital role in driving economic prosperity for the industry. Halal tourism caters to the needs of Muslim travellers seeking tour options that align with their culture and religion. Enhancing the attraction of a destination for Muslim travellers are factors such as meeting the needs of Islamic culture, such as prayer facilities, halal food options, and respectful dress codes. Additionally, avoiding cultural references that may cause embarrassment further adds to the appeal of the destination (Jia & Chaozhi, 2020). Therefore, when these needs are consistently met, Muslim travellers feel a greater sense of appreciation and welcome, resulting in increased satisfaction and a higher likelihood of returning to these destinations. This results in an increase in visitors and a corresponding boost in spending, which in turn has a positive effect on the local economy (Osman et al., 2024). In addition, the presence of Islamic cultural amenities can enhance the length of tourists' stay by boosting their per capita spending. For example, a recent study by Jia & Chaozhi (2021) discovered that tourists who have convenient access to restaurants serving halal dishes and designated prayer areas are more inclined to support local businesses by dining out, taking local tours, and shopping, thus boosting the local economy. Equally important, these amenities make it an ideal choice for families and group tours who prioritise such accommodations, thereby contributing to a positive economic impact. Additionally, it highlights the importance of making Islamic culture accessible in order to appeal to a wider audience and provide greater comfort. Therefore, we say that,

H3: Accessibility of Islamic cultural needs has a positive effect on halal tourism economic growth.

Tourist satisfaction plays a crucial role in the economic growth associated with the brand image of halal tourism. As per the research conducted by Sobari et al. (2022), establishing a strong brand image in the halal tourism industry by adhering to Islamic religious regulations and providing excellent services proves advantageous in attracting Muslim customers. If these tourists are familiar with the destination brand, they will experience an increase in satisfaction when they realise that the brand has fulfilled its promise. This satisfaction plays a crucial role in increasing the likelihood of repeat visits and positive word-of-mouth, which are essential for the long-term economic stability of halal tourism (Rahman et al., 2020). Happy clients spread the word among their community, making the site more appealing to others in the same network. In addition, as stated by Zhang et al. (2019), when tourists are highly satisfied, they tend to extend their stay in the area and make more purchases from local businesses, which in turn contributes to the local economy. There are clear chains of effects that result from increased spending. The increase in tourist satisfaction can also inspire further investment in the development and expansion of halal tourism amenities (Hariani & Hanafiah, 2024). The favourable experiences that contented travellers have to a destination enhance the reputation of the destination, thus making the idea of visiting the destination more attractive to a wider

audience. This, in turn, leads to a positive chain reaction of increased tourist arrivals, greater returns on investment in tourist-related businesses, and a boost to the overall economy (Jassim et al., 2024; Rahman et al., 2020). In light of tourist satisfaction, this analysis revisits the connection between the branding image of halal tourism and economic growth. In this manner, the brand image can be more effectively controlled based on the experiences of real tourists. This will help cultivate a group of devoted customers and contribute to the ongoing economic progress in the halal tourism sector. Therefore, we make a hypothesis that,

H4: Tourist satisfaction works as a mediator between the brand image of halal tourism and halal tourism economic growth.

This intermediary construct of tourist satisfaction is vital in strengthening the connection between the provision of halal tourism offerings and the generation of economic benefits related to halal tourism. Quality formal features play a crucial role in attracting Muslim tourists. This includes ensuring that restaurants, places of worship, and food are halal certified, as well as having hotels that comply with Islamic Sharia laws (Hall et al., 2019). When tourists have the opportunity to experience facilities and services that meet or exceed their expectations, it significantly enhances their level of satisfaction, as noted by Rasoolimanesh et al. (2019). This heightened satisfaction is important, as it increases the likelihood of customers returning and recommending our services to others, which are crucial factors for economic growth. Happy customers are more inclined to recommend the place to others, which can lead to increased visitor numbers (Ammer & Salim, 2024; Garner et al., 2022). In addition, tourists who are in a positive mood tend to extend their stay, which can lead to increased spending on various goods and services in the area, ultimately benefiting the local economy. This indicates that the increased spending has a ripple effect, benefiting other areas like accommodation, clothing, and transportation. Emphasising the appeal of being a Muslim-friendly destination can help attract a diverse range of Muslim tourists, thereby boosting tourist satisfaction (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2019). Expanding the country's image could lead to an increase in tourist visits and help to diversify and strengthen the tourism industry. Therefore, we say that,

H5: Tourist satisfaction works as a mediator between halal tourism facilities and services and halal tourism economic growth.

Ensuring tourist satisfaction is crucial for the successful integration of Islamic cultural requirements into the economic growth of halal tourism. Accommodating the Islamic cultural needs such as offering halal certified foods, prayer services, maintaining an appropriate dress code, and creating culturally sensitive surroundings can greatly enhance the overall experience for Muslim tourists (Dabphet, 2021). When these needs are fulfilled, the tourist will experience happiness and consequently develop a positive attitude, leading to a higher level of satisfaction. The satisfaction of tourists is crucial as it encourages them to revisit the destinations and recommend them to others, which is vital for the growth of halal tourism. Based on the research conducted by Hwang & Lee (2019), individuals who have a positive experience as tourists tend to

contribute more to the local economy of the destination they visit. This surge in spending benefits numerous companies in growing industries like hospitality, retail, and transportation, among others, leading to positive economic multipliers. In addition, the satisfaction of tourists presents a greater potential for attracting additional investment to enhance the accessibility of Islamic cultural resources. This, in turn, can lead to positive outcomes in terms of improvement and development (Nawi et al., 2019). The expressions of satisfaction from tourists contribute to and validate the perception of the destination as welcoming and knowledgeable about Islamic civilization (Zhang et al., 2019). This, in turn, enhances the reputation of the country, resulting in a rise in tourist traffic and ultimately leading to higher returns in the field of halal tourism. Therefore, we propose that,

H6: Tourist satisfaction works as a mediator between accessibility of Islamic cultural needs and halal tourism economic growth.

Research Methods

This article analyses the influence of brand image, facilities and services of halal tourism, and accessibility of Islamic cultural needs on the economic growth of halal tourism. It also investigates the role of tourist satisfaction as a mediator between brand image, facilities and services of halal tourism, accessibility of Islamic cultural needs, and halal tourism economic growth. The study gathered data from tourists travelling between Indonesia and Malaysia through the use of questionnaires. The surveys were sourced from previous literature and included various items related to halal tourism. Specifically, the brand image of halal tourism was assessed using five items (Wisker et al., 2023), halal tourism facilities and services were evaluated using six items (Rahman et al., 2020), the accessibility of Islamic cultural needs was measured using eight items (Wisker et al., 2023), tourist satisfaction was examined using six items (Biswas et al., 2021), and the economic growth of halal tourism was analysed using four items (Suseno et al., 2023).

The study chose tourists who were travelling from Indonesia to Malaysia and Malaysia to Indonesia as the participants of the study. The surveys were distributed to the respondents through personal visits to the international airports. The researchers distributed a total of 546 surveys, but only 357 valid surveys were received, indicating a response rate of approximately 65.38 percent. Furthermore, the study employed the smart-PLS to examine the relationship between the constructs. This statistical tool is widely utilised for analysing primary data and is known for its ability to generate optimal results through the use of complex models (Hair Jr et al., 2020). In this study, three predictors were utilised: the brand image of halal tourism (BIHT), halal tourism facilities and services (HTFS), and accessibility of Islamic cultural needs (AICN). The article, on the other hand, focused on one mediating variable called tourist satisfaction (TS) and one predictive variable known as halal tourism economic growth (HTEG). These constructs are referenced in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Research Model.

Research Findings

The study examines the relationship between certain items known as convergent validity. The examination involves the use of Alpha and composite reliability (CR) tests, both of

which indicate values above 0.70. Furthermore, it undergoes evaluation through the use of average variance extracted (AVE) and factor loadings, both of which indicate values exceeding 0.50. The values suggest a strong correlation among the items. The values are provided in [Table 1](#).

Table 1: Convergent Validity.

Constructs	Items	Loadings	Alpha	CR	AVE
Accessibility of Islamic Cultural Needs	AICN1	0.842	0.905	0.923	0.601
	AICN2	0.794			
	AICN3	0.785			
	AICN4	0.690			
	AICN5	0.797			
	AICN6	0.781			
	AICN7	0.755			
	AICN8	0.753			
Brand Image of Halal Tourism	BIHT1	0.797	0.901	0.927	0.718
	BIHT2	0.876			
	BIHT3	0.854			
	BIHT4	0.892			
	BIHT5	0.812			
Halal Tourism Economic Growth	HTEG1	0.771	0.794	0.866	0.618
	HTEG2	0.793			
	HTEG3	0.795			
	HTEG4	0.785			
Halal Tourism Facilities and Services	HTFS1	0.881	0.922	0.939	0.720
	HTFS2	0.799			
	HTFS3	0.805			
	HTFS4	0.876			
	HTFS5	0.864			
	HTFS6	0.862			
Tourist Satisfaction	TS1	0.833	0.860	0.896	0.591
	TS2	0.824			
	TS3	0.732			
	TS4	0.776			
	TS5	0.759			
	TS6	0.676			

The study also examines the correlation between variables known as discriminant validity. The examination involves the use of Fornell Larcker and cross-loadings. Both tests indicate that the values revealing the correlation with the

variable itself are larger than the values revealing the correlation with other variables. The values suggest a weak correlation among the variables. The values can be found in [Table 2](#) and [Table 3](#).

Table 2: Fornell Larcker.

	AICN	BIHT	HTEG	HTFS	TS
AICN	0.776				
BIHT	0.600	0.847			
HTEG	0.647	0.648	0.786		
HTFS	0.463	0.537	0.600	0.849	
TS	0.534	0.472	0.666	0.467	0.769

Table 3: Cross-loadings.

	AICN	BIHT	HTEG	HTFS	TS
AICN1	0.842	0.602	0.595	0.428	0.446
AICN2	0.794	0.510	0.537	0.432	0.407
AICN3	0.785	0.379	0.424	0.308	0.460
AICN4	0.690	0.383	0.451	0.326	0.388
AICN5	0.797	0.504	0.571	0.393	0.447
AICN6	0.781	0.524	0.509	0.358	0.365
AICN7	0.755	0.348	0.388	0.263	0.422
AICN8	0.753	0.431	0.504	0.335	0.372
BIHT1	0.492	0.797	0.466	0.457	0.302
BIHT2	0.540	0.876	0.566	0.449	0.395
BIHT3	0.529	0.854	0.605	0.457	0.388
BIHT4	0.521	0.892	0.567	0.493	0.464
BIHT5	0.460	0.812	0.528	0.421	0.431
HTEG1	0.514	0.541	0.771	0.445	0.540
HTEG2	0.410	0.541	0.793	0.459	0.661
HTEG3	0.562	0.462	0.795	0.521	0.450

HTEG4	0.558	0.489	0.785	0.464	0.429
HTFS1	0.390	0.481	0.545	0.881	0.425
HTFS2	0.384	0.431	0.525	0.799	0.397
HTFS3	0.441	0.456	0.449	0.805	0.354
HTFS4	0.384	0.466	0.510	0.876	0.386
HTFS5	0.389	0.457	0.532	0.864	0.436
HTFS6	0.373	0.442	0.483	0.862	0.371
TS1	0.497	0.443	0.604	0.374	0.833
TS2	0.372	0.319	0.536	0.373	0.824
TS3	0.435	0.418	0.525	0.451	0.732
TS4	0.429	0.359	0.494	0.289	0.776
TS5	0.332	0.260	0.459	0.298	0.759
TS6	0.367	0.344	0.423	0.352	0.676

The study also examines the correlation between variables known as discriminant validity. The Heterotrait Monotrait (HTMT) ratio is used for examination, and the test reveals

that the values are below 0.85. The values suggest a weak correlation among the variables. The values are provided in Table 4.

Table 4: Heterotrait Monotrait Ratio.

	AICN	BIHT	HTEG	HTFS	TS
AICN					
BIHT	0.658				
HTEG	0.761	0.761			
HTFS	0.504	0.590	0.699		
TS	0.599	0.525	0.794	0.519	

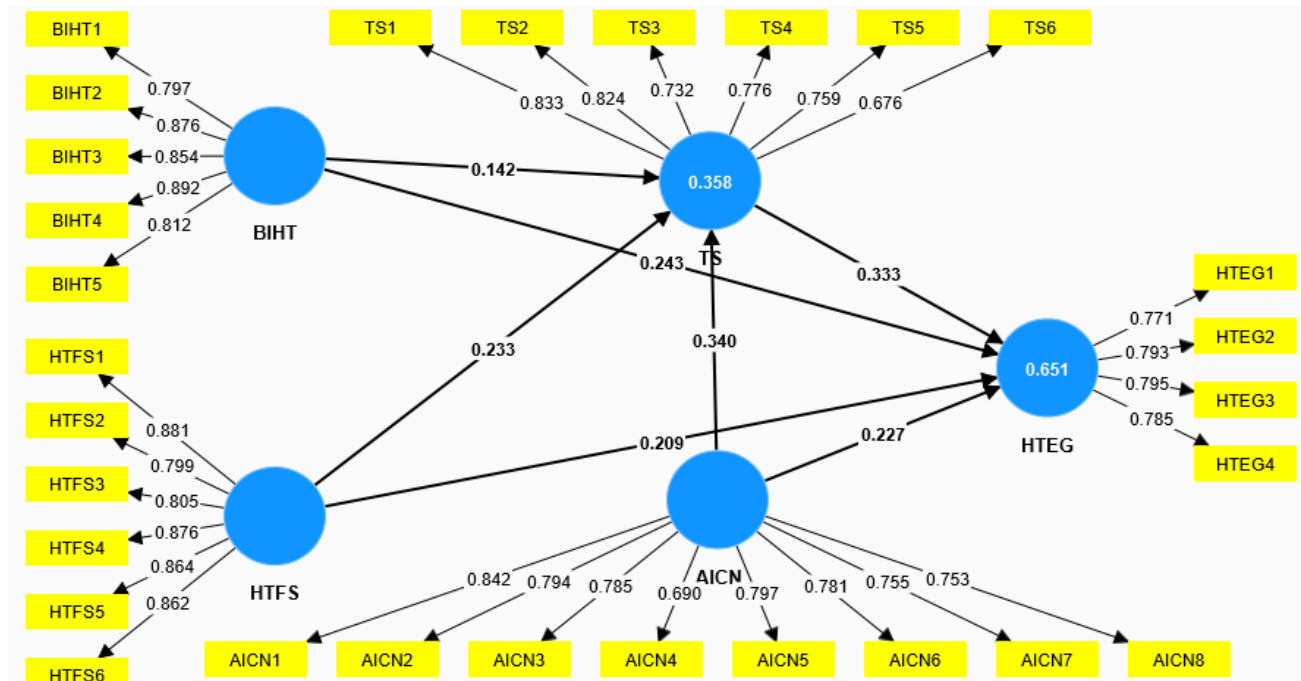


Figure 2: Measurement Assessment Model.

The study looks into the direct association initially through path analysis. The results showed that the brand image, facilities, and services of halal tourism, as well as the accessibility of Islamic cultural needs, are positively linked

to the economic growth of halal tourism. This confirms the hypotheses H1, H2, and H3. The associations are provided in Table 5.

Table 5: Direct path analysis.

Relationships	Beta	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values
AICN -> HTEG	0.227	0.053	4.278	0.000
AICN -> TS	0.340	0.068	5.018	0.000
BIHT -> HTEG	0.243	0.046	5.267	0.000
BIHT -> TS	0.142	0.060	2.353	0.019
HTFS -> HTEG	0.209	0.042	4.957	0.000
HTFS -> TS	0.233	0.057	4.100	0.000
TS -> HTEG	0.333	0.047	7.086	0.000

Secondly, the study examines the indirect relationship between variables through the use of path analysis. The

findings also revealed that tourist satisfaction plays a crucial role in connecting brand image, facilities and

services of halal tourism, accessibility of Islamic cultural needs, and the economic growth of halal tourism. The

results support hypotheses H4, H5, and H6. The associations are provided in Table 6.

Table 6: Indirect Path Analysis.

Relationships	Beta	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values
AICN -> TS -> HTEG	0.113	0.030	3.772	0.000
BIHT -> TS -> HTEG	0.047	0.022	2.131	0.034
HTFS -> TS -> HTEG	0.078	0.021	3.618	0.000

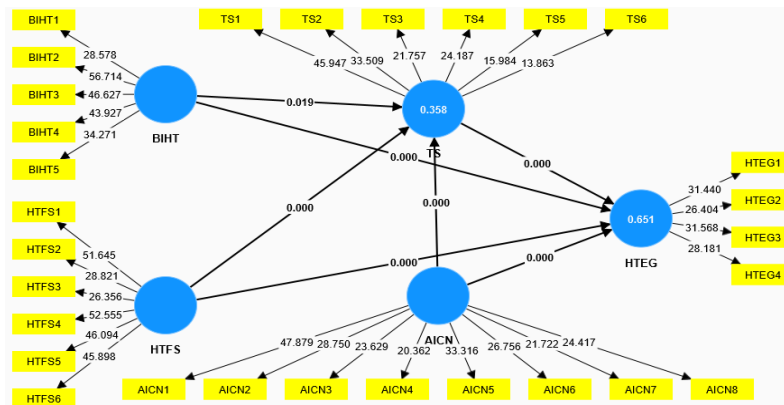


Figure 3: Structural Assessment Model.

Discussions

This study aims to explore the interplay between brand image, facilities, services, and Islamic cultural needs in the halal tourism sector in Malaysia-Indonesia. By examining these factors, we can gain a deeper understanding of how they contribute to tourist satisfaction and ultimately drive economic growth. The study presents significant findings that contribute to the research objectives, providing insights into the factors that contribute to improving the travel experience of Muslim tourists from these regions. Firstly, the research reveals that brand image plays a vital role in shaping the halal tourism industry. More specifically, the research work highlights the significant impact of maintaining a positive brand image on the perceptions and satisfaction of tourists. When examining branding strategies in Malaysia-Indonesia, it is important to highlight the appeal of branding that emphasises sharia compliance, cultural diversity, and hospitality to Muslim tourists (Khan et al., 2017; Yuhua et al., 2022). They are seen as a destination that is friendly to halal practices, thanks to their appealing marketing messages and promotions that are endorsed by Islamic authorities. Karri et al. (2023) also provide support for the statement. This analysis strongly supports the argument that an improved brand image of halal tourism captures the interest of tourists and leads to increased levels of perceived satisfaction. The availability of well-equipped and high-quality facilities and services that cater to Muslim clients is considered important in this study. According to a study by Al-Ansi et al. (2023), it is crucial to prioritise the provision of Halal food and beverage, prayer services, and suitable accommodations in order to meet the needs of Muslim guests. Based on the study, it is evident that the inclusion of these amenities significantly enhances the comfort and convenience for travellers, resulting in increased satisfaction levels (Zhang et al., 2019).

The study highlights the significance of catering to the cultural needs of Muslim visitors, such as providing entertainment services, religious activities, and cultural shows. These considerations play a vital role in enhancing the overall travel experience. Based on the findings of the study, tourists who visited the cultural attraction reported higher levels of satisfaction and a stronger connection to the site they visited. According to a recent study by Tasci

et al. (2022), the focus of halal tourism goes beyond just meeting the spiritual and cultural needs of tourists. It also emphasises the importance of presenting destinations in a visually appealing way. Malaysia and Indonesia, with their rich Islamic cultures and welcoming societies, have the potential to further enhance their offerings of Islamic cultural attractions for tourists.

The results demonstrate that the promotion of cultural facilities and attractions associated with Islamic culture can significantly increase tourist satisfaction and their desire to revisit the region in the future. The study provides support for the claim made by Zhang et al. (2019) that increased satisfaction, including religious needs, among Muslims contributes to the expansion of tourism. This, in turn, results in higher revenues for the economy through increased visitor numbers, longer stays, and greater expenditure. Happy tourists also have a favourable message to share about the destination. They will enthusiastically recommend the place to others, both online and through word of mouth. This will in turn attract more visitors, ultimately enhancing the destination's reputation (Nuryanah et al., 2024; Pestana et al., 2020). The ripple effect is clearly visible, highlighting the significance of operators/owners of the facilities and service providers in the Halal tourism industry to prioritise quality assurance and standardisation.

Study Implications

This study has significant implications as it explores the requirements for Malaysia-Indonesia's halal tourism. It provides valuable insights for those responsible for developing the industry and highlights key factors that contribute to traveller satisfaction and economic growth. These findings can provide valuable insights for making targeted improvements in the realm of halal tourism, leading to an enhanced experience for Muslim travellers in terms of accommodation and other services. The implementation strategies mentioned above have the potential to enhance tourist loyalty, stimulate economic growth in the tourism sector, and position Malaysia-Indonesia strategically in the global Halal tourism value chain. The study guides policymakers in developing policies to enhance economic growth in the halal tourism industry.

It focuses on creating an appealing brand image, providing extensive facilities and services for halal tourism, and ensuring easy access to Islamic cultural needs.

Limitations

In addition to its implications, there are certain limitations associated with this study on halal tourism in Malaysia-Indonesia. The narrow focus on these two countries may limit the generalizability of the findings to other culturally and economically diverse contexts. It is important to note that the data sources used for this study may have inherent biases and occasional inaccuracies. Nevertheless, the evaluation of the study may not fully take into account other factors that can impact tourist satisfaction and economic growth. Therefore, it is recommended that future research should aim to enhance the geographic scope, utilise a broader array of data collection methods, and consider additional variables to further bolster the findings.

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