The Potential of Halal Tourism Industry Based on Local Wisdom in Uzbekistan

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ABSTRACT

Halal Tourism is one indicator of success in bringing in foreign exchange, especially in the tourism sector. In addition, halal tourism can provide security and comfort for Muslim tourists visiting the country. This study aims to find out the potential of the halal tourism industry in Uzbekistan, a country located in Central Asia, while developing halal tourism. The method in this study uses a qualitative approach using secondary data sources. This study shows that Uzbekistan has managed to rank 16 according to the Global Muslim Travel Index in 2021, up 4 places from the previous year. This is something good for the development of halal tourism in Uzbekistan. So that Uzbekistan can maintain the advantages of halal tourism with unique historical tourist attractions, visa exemptions, and delicious culinary tours. So, Uzbekistan can also improve its shortcomings in the communication sector and access connectivity and transportation infrastructure.

Introduction

In the last few decades, the development of the halal economy in the world has impacted the financial sector and Islamic banking. However, it also affects the tourism market activity. Halal tourism, which was initially referred to as the pilgrimage and umrah pilgrimage, is now experiencing a paradigm shift. Religious goals in halal tourism are no longer the main essence, but the travel process must be integrated with sharia principles (Nur Asnawi, 2018).

Tourism development is not exclusive because non-Muslim tourists can also enjoy sharia-compliant services. Halal tourism includes the existence of pilgrimage and religious tourist attractions and the
availability of supporting facilities, such as restaurants and hotels that provide halal food and prayer places. Tourism products and services and tourist destinations in sharia tourism are the same as tourism in general as long as they do not conflict with sharia values and ethics. The potential for sharia tourism in Indonesia is huge and can be an alternative to conventional tourism, it's just that the branding and packaging still don't have the right concept (“Halal La Carte,” 2020).

One of the countries in the world that is famous for its halal tourism is Uzbekistan. The country is located in the heart of Central Asia and is bordered by Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan. The country is about the same size as Sweden or California, with more than two-thirds of it being desert and steppes in the west. The only relief is the delta, where the Amu-Darya River empties into the remains of the Aral Sea. To the east, however, Uzbekistan tilts upward towards its neighboring mountains. (Adham Israilov1, Asterio T. Miranda, Jr. Ph.D2*, Juneth Lourdes F. Miranda, CPA, 2020). This is where the river of the country's lifeblood rises. Therefore, the richest agricultural lands and a large part of their population are located in mountain passes, in alluvial fields at their bases, and along the country's two major rivers - the Amu-Darya and the Syr Darya. The oldest and most historical cities include Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva. Moreover, one of the former Soviet Union countries, Uzbekistan now has about 23 million people. Most of them embraced Sunni Islam (Hanafi sect). Other religions that thrive here are Orthodox (Usmanova, 2019).

Uzbekistan is a country that has many religious tours full of history. This country is an old landmass in Central Asia with many legends, literature, and extraordinary exoticism. Identical to the endless desert accompanied by a row of camel caravans, graceful towers, madrasas, oriental architecture tombs, beautiful silk sheets, world-class gold embroidery, and a charming medieval Islamic culture scene. Due to its attractive tourism, Uzbekistan has climbed up to 10 positions higher on the Global Muslim Travel Index list, taking it from 32nd to 22nd position. In addition to surging up to 10 positions higher on the GMTI by CrescentRating, Uzbekistan is also included in the Top 10 List of “Most Attractive” destinations, as well as the “Destinations with a High Level of Security and Tolerance” by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation member states (GMTI, 2021).

Previous related research is about the Development of ziyarah tourism in the Republic of Uzbekistan within the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. The research above emphasizes the development of pilgrimage tourism in Uzbekistan, part of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. Meanwhile, this research will complement previous research by focusing on discussing the potential for halal tourism in Uzbekistan and the opportunities and challenges faced by Uzbekistan in developing its halal tourism industry. (Faridakhon Khamidova, 2020)

**Literature Review**

**Halal Tourism**

Tourism is an activity that does not just to have fun or go on a trip and get away from
the routine work. Still, apart from that, these activities also contain many elements of marginalization against weak parties through various ways ranging from soft ones, such as cooperation international management and lending of investment funds to eviction, etc. Meanwhile, Halal is defined as "that which is permitted, concerning that which does not exist restrictions, and enforces the law of Allah, and is permitted." According to Islamic teachings, the term halal means 'permissible' (Sharia law). Halal is one of the five actions (al-ahkam alkhamsah) that categorizes morality of human actions in Islam. Others become Fard (obligatory), Mustahab (recommended), Makruh (disliked), and Haram (forbidden) (Javeed Anam, 2018).

Therefore, halal Tourism can also be said as sharia tourism as one of the systems in the Indonesia tourism sector which are specially created and intended for Muslim tourists whose implementation still adheres to the rules of sharia principles (Battour, Mohamed, 2016). The concept of halal has become a trend in the global economy ranging from food, beverage, financial, and lifestyle products. Many Islamic countries are starting to use this new concept as their mainstay sector as a new lifestyle trend. Several things become the motor of market growth Muslims globally, namely the young and large Muslim market demographics. In addition, the rapid economic growth of Muslim-majority countries, Islamic values encourage growth Islamic business and lifestyle, growth of trade transactions between countries Organization of the Islamic Conference, participation of multinational companies, technology and connectivity between countries (El-Gohary, 2016).

Halal Tourism Indicators

A tourist destination that can be considered halal tourism is that it must meet the primary needs of Muslim tourists, as quoted from Crescent Rating. A company that focuses on developing halal tourism has conducted studies in 130 countries, showing six basic needs of Muslim tourists (Aniqoh, 2020), namely: 1) Halal food (free of alcohol, pork, and the like). 2) Availability of worship facilities. 3) Bathroom with water for ablation. 4) Services during Ramadan, for example, iftar and sahur meals. 5) Inclusion of non-halal label if there is non-halal food. 6) Recreational facilities that maintain privacy do not mix freely.

Meanwhile, the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) (GMTI, 2021), a standard compiled by Crescent Rating, has also succeeded in identifying halal tourism standards in the world as follows: 1) Family-Friendly Destinations. 2) Tourist destinations should be family and child-friendly. 3) Public safety for Muslim tourists. 4) The number of Muslim tourist arrivals is quite crowded. 5) Services and Facilities at Muslim-Friendly Destinations. 6) Halal guaranteed food choices. 7) Access to worship is easy and in good condition. 8) Muslim-friendly airport facilities. 9) Adequate accommodation options. 10) Halal Awareness and Destination Marketing. 11) Ease of Communication. 12) Outreach and awareness of the needs of Muslim tourists. 14) Air transport connectivity. 15) Visa requirements.

Local Wisdom

Local wisdom develops from years of experience and trial and error problem solving by the people who work in their environment. The source of knowledge management related to their production comes from their local knowledge and
traditions derived from their ancestors. This local wisdom has been modified by accumulating practical experience and passed down from one generation to another. (Sarlawa, R., and Adiwijaya, 2019). Types of local wisdom are cultural artifacts of local communities such as food, housing, medicine, cloth, production methods, literature, songs, music, and many others. For example, in Yogyakarta, we have Javanese language, batik, agriculture, Joglo, and many others. So, local wisdom is knowledge found by local people through accumulated experience in trials and integrated with an understanding of nature and culture. (Marsellaa, E., and Putri, 2020)

Here are some requirements for local wisdom to be useful for the community. First, wisdom must be combined with understanding the surrounding nature and culture. Second, local wisdom is dynamic. It is flexible for global situations. Third, the use of local wisdom must effectively provide income, reduce costs/expenditures, improve production efficiency, and improve the quality of life. Fourth, elaborative but straightforward and comprehensive. Usually verbal. It is adapted to local conditions, culture, and environment. It is dynamic and flexible. It is adapted to the local needs of the people. This is following the quality and quantity of available resources. It copes well with change. Local wisdom can be in several types: food (specific to the place, according to the climate and raw materials in the place), medicine (for prevention and treatment), production techniques (to solve problems and reduce labor), housing (according to the climate), and raw materials), and fabrics (according to the climate and raw materials) (Sarlawa, R., and Adiwijaya, 2019)

The Method, data, and analysis

Based on the objectives, this research is descriptive research using qualitative data approach methods. The method used in this writing is studying library materials or secondary data from several relevant sources with the theme of this article. Some of these data were then analyzed descriptively qualitatively, meaning without using a formula but presented in descriptions and concepts. This data collection analysis is not intended to prove the hypothesis, but rather it is the formation of an abstraction based on the parts that have been collected. In this case, data analysis is carried out by understanding and compiling the data that has been collected systematically collected (Moleong, Lexy, 2005). The author traces the information sourced from electronic media and tourism literature on developments in Halal tourism in Uzbekistan. Then, collect data in government policies about tourism and its development up from the Ministry of Tourism of Uzbekistan. Lastly, it was analyzed by describing and interpreting the data (Rajagopal, 2011).

Result and Discussion

Role of Ihsan Behavior in business

Uzbekistan is a country in East Asia famous for its cities that were once the Silk Road such as Bukhara, Khiva, and Samarkand. Not only that, this country also has a wealth of heritage and history that is worth visiting. Today, Uzbekistan is even home to 6 UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage and 4 UNESCO World Heritage sites (Adham...
Israilov1, Asterio T. Miranda, Jr. Ph.D2*, Juneth Lourdes F. Miranda, CPA, 2020). Moreover, the tourism potential in Uzbekistan is large enough to be developed as halal tourism. The following are ten tourist attractions in Uzbekistan which are quite famous for their history and uniqueness:

**Tashkent**

The first must-visit attraction while in Uzbekistan is Tashkent. Tashkent is an old city dating back centuries. It used to be called Chach, Shash, or Binkent. Tashkent was once a stop on the Silk Road trade route from Asia to Europe. In this city, you can see the beauty of historical places such as the Khazret-Imam Mosque, Genuine Muskhafe-Umsman Koran, Amir Temur Square & Museum, Kukeldash Madrassah, Old Town, to Independence Square.

**Samarkand**

The charm of the old buildings perched majestically in this city is guaranteed to lure travelers to come and come back again. Samarkand is also an important city in the history of Islam in Central Asia, you know. Some old buildings are still standing firmly to witness the glory of Islam in the past. Samarkand has several historical monuments. And the Turquoise Dome of Samarkand is the city's most remarkable architectural symbol.

**Registan Square**

Registan Square, a medieval educational or college complex consisting of three large madrasa buildings and one mosque. The Registan Square complex is a major tourist destination in Samarkand, which is never empty of foreign and local tourists. Currently, these rooms are used by traders to sell handicrafts and local specialties.

**Tomb of Imam Al Bukhari**

The Imam Al Bukhari Tomb Complex is located near Samarkand. The architectural composition of this complex uses traditions and national architecture. The unified complex consists of a tomb, mosque, administrative office, and several other buildings built around the courtyard's perimeter. The tomb of Imam Al Bukhari is located in the middle of the complex. It is a cube-shaped building covered in a 17-meter long dome. The door to the right of the tomb leads to the dahma. Which is a place of worship and continues downwards. Situated on a stilts, the theologian's tomb is covered with marble. The mosque is located on the left side of the inner courtyard, where about 1,500 Muslims can pray. (Standard, 2015) The building walls are decorated with glossy sheets of green, blue, and white, as well as marble, onyx, and granite. Likewise, with the floor, which is given a lot of decorations. The interior of the dome is covered with brightly colored ornamental patterns.

**Bukhara**

Bukhara is located not far from a long river that irrigates the entire Central Asian country. The Greeks called it the Oxus River. Arabs know him by the name Jeyhun. At the same time, Persian poets nicknamed him Mulyan. Now, Bukhara has transformed into a beautiful old city. Many tourists deliberately come to Uzbekistan just to visit the hometown of Imam Bukhari. In this city, tourists can enjoy a variety of beautiful buildings that witness the development of past Islamic civilization. Unique and beautiful buildings such as the Arc Fortress Fortress, Chashma Ayub, Ismail Samani Mausoleum,
Kalon Mosque, and Magoki Attori Mosque have remained firmly established in Bukhara for centuries. The number of historical heritage buildings makes this city a UNESCO world heritage site.

**Khiva**

Khiva has a very distinctive Middle Eastern architecture. The ancient city walls do not seem haunted. In fact, it makes the city's atmosphere seem like an antique and very good captured in photos. In Khiva itself will be given the sensation of 'back' to the past. Unique and exciting cities can easily be found in this one place. If you are tired of walking around Khiva, you can immediately come to the market, which serves a lot of merchandise. Starting from traditional food to clothes can also be purchased. Snacks with a very distinctive taste and deliciousness will certainly make you entertained and feel at home to be in Khiva for a long time.

**Jizzakh**

Jizzakh is located at the northern foot of Mount Nuratau, near the Sanzar river. This city includes the route traversed by the Silk Road. Jizzakh offers beautiful and charming natural scenery. However, there are still settlements and ancient forts.

**Nukus**

This area that borders Russia is not a popular tourist destination, but it is worth visiting because it has a unique historical heritage, namely the Savitsky Gallery. The Museum of Forbidden Art houses a prominent collection of 20th-century Russian artists, including Sokolov's work, Komarovskiya da Amaravella. A curator collected the artwork from the Karakalpakstan State Museum of Art in the Sixties.

**Fergana**

The Fergana Valley was one of the places where the Khanate civilization developed in the 19th century. An area that was once part of the cultural trail, the Silk Road. The mirror of the high civilization of the past is preserved until now in the Palace of Khudayar Khan, the grandest palace in the era of the Kokand Khanate Dynasty (1709-1876 AD) in Kokand City, Fergana Valley. Kokand was the main fortress city, reigning the Kokand Khanate Dynasty for 150 years. Although not as famous as the Khanate Dynasty in Bukhara, there were at least 29 khans who ruled from this city according to historical records.

**Gates of Hell, Uzbekistan**

Hell's gate (Hell&gate) is often depicted where the fire burns with a terrible level of heat. Conditions that almost look like this can be found in a gaping fire pit in Uzbekistan, Central Asia. The position is near the small town of Davas, so it was so hot. The locals called it the "gate of hell". A bonfire about the size of a football field with a depth of more than 30 meters: the hole was first discovered in 1975 when it was not as big as it is today.

**Uzbekistan's position in GMTI 2012**

In the 2021 Global Muslim Travel Index table above, Uzbekistan is ranked 16th in the world with a score of 65 out of the highest score of 100, where the first place is Malaysia. Uzbekistan has experienced a significant increase in its ranking in GMTI from the previous year, 2019 at the 30th level, 2020 at the 20th level, and currently ranked 16th.
The indicators in GMTI include access with a weighted value of 10%, Communication (20%), environment (30%), and Service (40%). A good score in GMTI Uzbekistan is in Environment and Service, while a bad score is in Communication, so this must be improved (GMTI, 2021).

The advantages of Uzbekistan in Halal Tourism Industry

Uzbekistan has been named the favorite destination of 2020 by the travel website Lonely Planet. In recent years, Uzbekistan has become one of the most sought-after countries by world travelers. Here are some reasons why Uzbekistan is a favorite tourist destination (Faridakhon Khamidova, 2020).

Visa Free

Uzbekistan is one of the countries that has waived visas for international tourists since 2018. The granting of a Visa on Arrival is one of Uzbekistan's strategies in promoting international tourism (Juan Eduardo Campo, 2009) to attract foreign tourists to visit the country. With the enactment of the visa-free regime in 2018-2019, the flow of tourists from Indonesia increased by 170%, Malaysia by 158%, Turkey by 154%, Muslim tourists from the UAE by 153%.

Tour to Historic Places

Many historical places in Uzbekistan can be visited. Some of the most legendary places are Tashkent, Samarkand, Registan Square, and Bukhara, which is always a favorite place. And this country has also been dubbed the country of pilgrimage because there is a tomb of Imam Bukhari, a scientist whose name is always associated with Bukhara. The great scholar whose real name is Abu Muhamm ad bin Ismail bin Ibrahim bin mughirah bin Bardzibah al Ju'fi al Bukhari is a famous narrator of famous hadith. His book Sahih Bukhari is the standard reference for fiqh experts. Then Ibn Sina is a medical expert whose name is still fragrant today. The father of modern medicine is a prolific scholar, aka gave birth to many books of his thoughts. There are 450 books counted. Most of them explore philosophy and medicine. One of the most famous is Qonun fi at tibb (Saad, S, Kassem, M. & Scott, 2010).

Appetizing Culinary

Cuisine in Uzbekistan has a distinctive aroma because the spices are very strong. Some of the most popular menus in Uzbekistan are Palov, Shurpa, and Mutton. Because the population is predominantly Muslim, finding halal food in Uzbekistan is very easy (Haleem, 2017).

The application of halal tourism in Uzbekistan is inseparable from the religious side and the point of view of sustainable resources, both human resources and natural resources. From a religious point of view, the orientation of halal tourism is earning income in the form of foreign exchange and direct income in the community and prioritizing Islamic principles, values, and ethics/morals. Islamic values and ethics that the implementation of sharia tourism/halal tourism must avoid polytheism (believing in other than Allah), immorality, evil and create material and spiritual benefits.

All aspects of halal tourism, including tourist destinations, means of transportation, hotels and accommodations, restaurants and cafes, and travel service bureaus, must become a halal ecosystem. The halal ecosystem can make halal tourism into sustainable tourism, meaning that in terms of natural resources,
business people, the community around tourist objects will benefit from the development of tourism which is certainly halal.

However, the development of halal tourism requires a professional workforce with an Islamic perspective. Therefore, the government, the private sector, civil society, and many parties are important for advancing sustainable halal tourism. Halal tourism is very good for supporting and creating jobs and foreign exchange, which is quite high, especially with an environmentally friendly, sustainable concept. The development of existing tourism will greatly help advance the regions, so the regional and central governments always monitor regions that have implemented the concept of halal tourism so that their Islamic values are always maintained and are friendly to the environment.

Weaknesses of Uzbekistan in Halal Tourism

Language is the most important communication tool in human life wherever they are. The existence of language cannot be separated from social life in society to communicate and understand each other. (A. Mohsin, N. Ramli, 2016) The national language spoken in Uzbekistan is Uzbek with a completely different type of language from other Middle Eastern languages. Uzbekistan has a high level of complexity when compared to Indonesian and English. There are more than five types of tier in Uzbekistan according to the situation of use and with whom we are talking. The language spoken by the majority is still Russian by the people here. This is because many Russians still live in Tashkent and did not return to Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union 27 years ago. Uzbekistan's language skills are divided into two. First, the original Uzbek people without Russian blood ancestry can speak two languages, namely Uzbek and Russian.

Second, Russian people or people of Russian and Uzbek descent, on average they only understand Russian and are reluctant to learn Uzbek. This condition also has a serious impact on the world of education in Uzbekistan. Based on this fact, classes in schools and colleges are divided into two types, namely Uzbek-language classes and Russian-language classes. This is intended to accommodate people who do not understand the Uzbek/Russian language. (G. Musa, S.M. Mohezar, 2016) The language barrier is one of the shortcomings in Uzbekistan in the halal tourism sector because as one of the halal tourism in the world, they should also learn English to talk to foreign tourists. As explained above, in GMTI, Communication is one indicator of assessment in halal tourism.

In addition to language, access to tourist attractions is also an indicator of assessment in GMTI. Access roads to tourist attractions in Uzbekistan are not good, so they must be repaired. For example, the khokim areas of Surkhandarya, and Kashkadarya were finally given instructions from the government to ensure the improvement of the pilgrimage sites, improve the condition of the roads leading to them, and create all comfortable conditions for pilgrims. Currently, Uzbekistan access is still getting a poor rating, namely connectivity 39 and transport infrastructure 74. Therefore, if Uzbekistan wants to develop its religious tourism, it must improve access by increasing connectivity and
infrastructure.

Conclusion

Uzbekistan is a country located in Central Asia that has unique halal tourism or pilgrimage tourism because of the many graves of great Muslim scholars in Uzbekistan such as Imam Bukhari or Ibn Sina. In its tourism development, Uzbekistan is quite successful. This is evidenced by an increase in the ranking of halal tourism in GMTI. In 2019, it was ranked 30, 2020 ranked 20 and 2021 ranked 16. The government’s policy in increasing halal tourism is through visa exemption for foreign tourists to become an advantage. tourism in Uzbekistan, besides that there are other advantages in historical places and culinary tours that are quite unique. To promote Uzbekistan tourism, the government collaborates with television media, promotions through the website and targets 2020-2021 as the year of visiting Uzbekistan.

Recommendations

In GMTI, access and Communication in Uzbekistan get a poor score. So improving access to connectivity and infrastructure is important for the Uzbekistan government to do. In addition, the provision of English language training is also very important, because Communication is important to provide comfort for foreign tourists. In addition, adding to the list of countries for visa exemption when visiting Uzbekistan and promoting Uzbekistan tourism in various media is a very important strategy in increasing the halal tourism industry in Uzbekistan.

References


