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From Values to Visits: Exploring the Economic Development Potential of Halal Tourism Through Islamic Destination Attributes

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Abstract

There is a growing acknowledgment of Halal tourism as a strategic sector for economic development in Muslim-majority countries. This research investigates how Islamic destination features, including worship amenities, halal compliance, and overall Islamic values, influence travelers' choices to halal destinations in Indonesia, moderated by tourism image. Using a quantitative method, this study analyzed data with structural equation modeling in SmartPLS 3, based on responses from 1,000 tourists visiting Indonesia's ten leading halal destinations. The results indicate that all three Islamic attributes significantly influence the positions of a tourist attraction, while only worship facilities directly affect visiting decisions. Destination image itself plays a mediating role in shaping tourist behavior. These results underline the importance of integrating Islamic values into tourism development strategies to enhance destination competitiveness. The study provides practical insights for government officials, including the standardization of halal certification in tourism facilities, the provision of adequate worship infrastructures at leading destinations, and the integration of halal tourism into national and digital marketing strategies. These analytical procedures enhance Indonesia's role as a worldwide frontrunner in halal tourism. The results further emphasize halal tourism's capacity to drive continuous local economic growth grounded in cultural and religious values.

Keywords: Economic Development; Halal Tourism; Islamic Destination Attributes; Policy Implication; Visiting Decision

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Introduction

Tourism has been promoted by many international organizations in recent decades as a means to stimulate development in different parts of the world (Baker, 2014; Cárdenas-García et al., 2015), including Indonesia. Tourism is considered an economic activity with the potential to encourage global economic growth because it complements other commercial activities. Its devote to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), foreign exchange earner, job creation and its impact on the environment is low (Cárdenas-García et al., 2015; Castro-Nuño et al., 2013; Durbarry, 2002; Jenkins et al., 2014).

The global tourism market industry is currently increasingly focused on working on the needs of the tourist market niche, one of which is halal tourism. n several countries, the Muslim market represents an alternative niche within the tourism sector. According to the 2024 Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) report, the volume of Muslim international travelers nearly reached pre-pandemic levels, totaling about 145 million. Projections for 2024 suggest that the Muslim travel market will surpass its pre-pandemic performance by approximately 3% to 5% (Mastercard, 2023). By applying Islamic teachings, halal tourism provides a foundation for social and community resilience when confronting disasters (Sofyan et al., 2022).

Although halal tourism is an attractive market segment and is in its infancy (Biancone et al., 2019; Moshin et al., 2020), current research on halal tourism is still lacking (Moshin et al., 2020; Vargas-Sánchez & Moral-Moral, 2019). Because Muslim tourists have distinct requirements shaped by Islamic rules and obligations, destination marketing must recognize and address these differences compared to other travelers (Fajriyati et al., 2020).

In traveling, Muslim tourists consider the availability of Islamic attributes that can meet their special needs while in tourist places. The availability of these ancient attributes can not be omitted by Muslim tourists (Fajriyati et al., 2020; Shafaei & Mohamed, 2015). The availability of worship facilities, the presence of halal food and drinks, tourist destinations that are free of gambling and alcohol, and Islamic morality are some of the attributes that Muslim tourists consider before visiting tourist attractions (M. Battour et al., 2011; Shakona et al., 2015).

Indonesia is a predominantly Muslim country, should be one of the most visited countries by Muslim tourists. The Muslim population in Indonesia in 2015 was 219,960,000 people, which means that 87.1% of Indonesia's population is

predominantly Muslim (Diamant, 2019). In addition, Indonesia's tourist attractions offer hundreds of choices. Efforts made by the Ministry of Tourism to strengthen and accelerate tourist destinations in Indonesia are by conducting research in collaboration with Crescentrating in 2018 to develop an index that is able to measure the growth of Provinces designated as Halal Tourism in Indonesia (Mastercard & CrescentRating, 2019).

The Indonesia Muslim Travel Index (IMTI) 2019 looks at four main sectors for each region, namely Access, Communication, Environment, and Services. These four areas are known as the ACES model. These four areas represent important points that the locus needs to focus on to scale up and become a more Muslim-friendly tourist destination. With this index, it is possible for Indonesia to develop a strategy in order to boost its Halal Tourism potential.

Based on the IMTI 2023 weights and criteria, the rankings for each region are as table 1:

Table 1. Rangking of The Provinces on IMTI 2023

Rangking	Destination
1	West Nusa Tenggara
2	Aceh
3	West Sumatera
4	Jakarta
5	Central Java
6	West Java
7	Yogyakarta
8	East Java
9	South Sulawesi
10	South Kalimantan

Sources: Indonesia Muslim Travel Index (IMTI) 2024

Based on the Top 5 destinations for Muslim travelers in 2024 the countries with the highest Muslim tourist visits in 2024 were Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Malaysia, Indonesia, and United Arab Emirates (Dinar Standart, 2024). What is interesting here is that Muslim tourists choose Russia and France as one of the most visited countries, even though both countries are Muslim as minorities. These 10 leading

Indonesian halal tourist destinations when compared to Russia and France, which have a small Muslim citizen, and the diversity of travelers in Indonesia should be able to attract more tourists (Subarkah et al., 2020). MasterCard CrescentRating, a research group that tracks Muslim-friendly travel, notes that Muslim travelers has grown by nearly 30% since 2016 (Mastercard & CrescentRating, 2019).

Previous research on halal tourism has been conducted in Muslim-majority countries, such as Malaysia (M. M. Battour et al., 2012), India (Haq & Medhekar, 2015), and Pakistan (Asif et al., 2023; Haq & Medhekar, 2015). To the best of the author's knowledge, scholarly investigations into halal tourism and Islamic attributes within Indonesia remain scarce, particularly those addressing the conditions of halal tourism across the nation's top ten destinations. This study seeks to fill that gap and thereby constitutes its primary contribution to the field.

While prior halal tourism research has been dominated by Muslim-majority settings such as Malaysia, Turkey, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, empirical evidence from Indonesia tends to be fragmented at the destination or provincial level, with limited large-sample, multi-destination modelling of Islamic destination attributes and their behavioral pathways. However, recent reviews emphasize that the definition and standardisation of halal tourism remain unresolved at the global level, creating inconsistencies in both academic discourse and industry practices (Abdullah et al., 2025). These definitional gaps make cross-country comparisons difficult and highlight the urgency of developing more universally accepted benchmarks to strengthen credibility and competitiveness in the halal tourism sector. Moreover, studies in non-OIC contexts (e.g., Europe, Russia, Japan) show that "halalness" is often a differentiating signal that shapes destination image and intentions; in contrast, we posit that in Indonesia, where Muslim norms are institutionalized, halalness and general Islamic morality may be perceived as baseline expectations rather than decisive motivators. Addressing these gaps, this study leverages a nationwide sample across Indonesia's top-10 halal destinations and tests a PLS-SEM model that (i) disentangles direct and mediated effects via destination image and (ii) benchmarks findings against recent international evidence. This perspective aligns with Hamdy et al. (2024), who introduced the Muslim-Friendly Tourist Destination Image (MFTDI) model, emphasizing the mediating function of destination image in connecting Islamic attributes with behavioral outcomes such as satisfaction, trust, and revisit intention. Through this framework, the present study identifies which Islamic attributes most strongly influence travel decisions within a Muslim-majority setting.

Moreover, Indonesia's continuous efforts to enhance the quality of its ten leading Muslim-friendly destinations have culminated in significant recognition, with the country ranked as the world's top Muslim-friendly tourist destination in 2024 according to the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI). This achievement is expected to invite world tourists to visit Indonesia. So it is important to study what factors influence the decision to visit tourist attractions in Indonesia. This research contributes to a better understanding of the decision to visit tourists towards Indonesia as a halal tourist destination, which is widely liked and recommended in all aspects.

Tourists typically engage in careful planning when deciding to visit a destination. The nature of tourism products requires direct experience at the site, as they cannot be sampled beforehand. The journey itself—departing from one's residence, traveling to the destination, and returning home—is regarded as an integral component of the purchased tourism product (Valentinov & Hajdu, 2021).

A tourist before deciding to visit to see how good or bad on the citizen`s opinion of destination in a tourist attraction is that is embedded in one's mind, the image of the destination in the minds of tourists is not always in harmony with the real conditions that exist in the destination itself and also the ratings given by tourists are different. Between one individual and another (Setyaningsih & Murwatiningsih, 2017), then in a tourist attraction in providing experiences according to needs, so that it will make the image of the destination easily recognizable and always remembered by tourists as a good image of a selected tourist attraction (Rahayu, 2015).

The rapid development of halal tourism and the increasingly fierce competition in this sector are an attraction for academics and the industrial world to review the importance of destination image (Liu et al., 2017). Image perception constitutes a crucial determinant of tourism development success and serves as an essential element in designing effective marketing strategies (Chen & Tsai, 2007).

As an effort to increase tourism visits to Indonesia, Indonesia develops halal tourism by providing Islamic destination attributes. M. Battour et al. (2011) identify Islamic destination attributes as including the provision of worship facilities, the availability of halal food and beverages, restrictions on alcohol consumption and gambling, and the exclusion of adult content (soap operas, nightclubs, and TV channels), and women's dress code. The availability of Islamic attributes in tourist destinations in Indonesia, especially in Indonesia's 10 leading

tourist destinations, is expected to further encourage Muslim tourists, both domestic and foreign tourists, to visit Indonesia.

Scholarly attention to destination image analysis has been extensive, with substantial contributions to the understanding of tourist behavior (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Chi & Qu, 2008; Kocyigit, 2016). Image can reflect each individual's perception of the characteristics of a tourist destination and this is very important to note because it is related to tourists' expectations about a tourist destination before they visit it (Coshall, 2000). The importance of the image of a tourist destination on individual subjective perceptions, behavioral consequences and decisions to visit tourists has been universally recognized (Baker, 2014; Gallarza et al., 2002).

Literature Review

Halal Tourism

Derived from the Qur'an, the Arabic term halal refers to what is deemed permissible under Islamic teachings (Wilson, 2014). While its meaning is broad, the concept is frequently limited in practice to associations with food and beverages (Ulya et al., 2020). However, according to El-Gohary (2016), halal has a broad concept covering Muslim`s fundamental life. In the halal concept, a Muslim gets a product that is in accordance with Islamic teachings (Mohsin et al., 2016). Halal tourism products and services at least meet the basic needs of Muslim tourists, including adequate worship facilities and services such as prayer rooms and mosques around tourist attractions, accommodations that are attentive to Muslim tourists (sharia hotels), and halal food and drinks (M. Battour & Ismail, 2016; Subarkah, 2018).

The term halal tourism has a relationship with halal tourist destinations. Although related, the two have different meanings (Noviyani & Ratnasari, 2021). Halal tourism is the catering of the basic needs of Muslim tourists in tourist attractions, including adequate worship facilities and services such as prayer rooms and mosques around tourist attractions, warm welcome accommodation to Muslim tourists (sharia hotels), and halal food and drinks. Meanwhile, according to the DSN-MUI fatwa Number: 108/DSN-MUI/X/2016 concerning Guidelines for the Implementation of Tourism Based on Sharia Principles, tourism destinations are geographical areas within one or more administrative regions where halal tourism develops. They consist of attractions, worship facilities, public and tourism

amenities, accessibility, and local communities that are interconnected and support the implementation of tourism based on sharia principles (Mardianto et al., 2019).

Halal, as a label of tourism attraction, is a complementary product to the tourism industry without eliminating conventional types of tourism. In Indonesia, halal tourism is a new way to develop tourism that upholds Islamic culture and values without losing the uniqueness and authenticity of the region (Jaelani, 2017). So that halal tourism can be one way to maintain the values that already exist in society.

Attributes of Islamic Destination

Islamic attributes refer to the essential elements required to fulfill the needs of Muslim tourists, including the availability of halal food, access to prayer facilities (M. Battour et al., 2011), clothing model that covers the aurat (Zamani-Farahani & Henderson, 2010), and the prohibition of alcoholic beverages and gambling (Abror et al., 2021).

M. Battour & Ismail (2014), reveal that four elements make up the attributes of Islam. First, places of worship. These spiritual facilities are essential as they represent a fundamental need for Muslim travelers. Beyond that, other elements, such as social and political contexts, tourist attractions, infrastructure, and natural resources, also play a significant role in shaping the destination's image (Carazo et al., 2010). In addition, destination attributes basically refer to the characteristics of the destination that tourists select, identify, and evaluate their satisfaction. This includes advertising, personal experiences, social media, word of mouth, and so on (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

M. Battour & Ismail (2014), It is state that Islamic attributes can serve as key attractions for Muslim tourists, including the provision of halal-certified food, prayer facilities, adherence to Islamic values, the call to prayer (Azan), and related aspects. The core elements of Islamic morality emphasize modesty, which involves avoiding inappropriate content and practices, restricting access to adult entertainment, preventing unrestricted interaction between men and women, particularly in swimming pools, and ensuring appropriate dress codes for women who wear the hijab (M. Battour et al., 2011).

Tourism Destination Image

Tourist perception of a destination is known as the destination image. In improving tourism and tourism marketing, image is a significant influence that can

affect demand. Based on the image point of view, which consists of the level of objective enlightenment, impressions, prejudices, dreams, hopes, emotions, and thoughts, tourists need to choose their vacation destinations.

The notion of image is typically understood as more than an attitudinal construct; it encompasses an individual's cognitive representation of overarching beliefs, emotions, and perceptions regarding a specific object or objective (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997). Destination image is elaborated as an individual's mental representation of knowledge (beliefs), feelings, and overall perceptions of a particular destination (Chen & Tsai, 2007). The image of a tourist destination can differ from one person to another (Asyafri, 2019). Echtner & Ritchie (1991) revealed that destination image refers to the response of a place or a person's perception of the modelling area. Within halal tourism, multiple interrelated indicators shape Muslim tourists' holistic perception of a destination and influence their decision-making process (Al-Ansi & Han, 2019).

There are four components of a destination image, namely:

1. Functional characteristic attributes are functional physical attributes associated with a place as a tourist destination. These attributes include: condition of tourism object, condition of parking amount, price level of tourism object, climate, infrastructure condition, and beach condition.

2. Holistic functional characteristics are functional and holistic physical attributes associated with a tourist destination. These attributes include: cleanliness, personal safety, and ease of access.

3. Psychological characteristic attributes, are physical attributes that are psychological in nature associated with a tourist destination. These attributes include: the friendliness of the population, environmental sustainability, and reputation.

4. Psychological-holistic characteristics, are physical attributes that are psychological and holistic related to a tourist destination. These attributes include: general feelings of visitors, and tourism development.

Destination image contributes to the important roles in behavior: to determine the decision-making process of destination choice and with post-decision-making behavioral conditions including participation (experience), evaluation (satisfaction) and future behavioral intentions (intention to return and willingness to recommend) (Chen & Tsai, 2007).

After visiting a tourist destination, it will affect the image and will result in a change in the image of the destination in question because there is information and direct experience. So it can be concluded that the image of a destination is a description of how the condition of a tourist destination can affect a person's impression or perception. If the image of a destination is good, it can encourage tourists to visit a tourist attraction.

Visiting Decision

The decision to visit a service or tour offered uses the concept of a purchase decision (Arista, 2017). The decision to visit is the result where tourists actually decide to visit their preferred tourist destination from a variety of alternative destinations (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Nurhasanah et al., 2019; Sudaryono, 2016).

The decision to visit a tourist place is one part of tourist behavior (Surya et al., 2019). Tourist behavior refers to the actions exhibited by travelers in selecting, purchasing, utilizing, and assessing products, services, ideas, and experiences to fulfill their needs and desires (Reisinger & Dimanche, 2010; Surya et al., 2019).

Recently, the decision to visit halal tourist destinations has been discussed and a considerable demand for halal tourism has been noted. Things that influence the decision to visit halal tourist destinations include the Attributes of Islamic Destination, which consists of worship facilities, Halalness, and general Islamic morality; and Tourism Destination Image.

Methods

In actualizing the procedures, this research adopts a quantitative approach with primary and secondary data sources. The data collection method used is in two ways, namely, survey and literature study. The survey method is carried out by distributing a list of structured questions (questionnaires) consisting of four sections: (1) respondent demographic profile, (2) attributes of Islamic destinations, (3) tourism destination image, and (4) visiting decision. These sections were designed to directly support and measure the variables aligned with the research objectives. The questionnaire was distributed online via Google Forms through three channels: (1) email, obtained through cooperation with halal tourism communities and mailing lists of previous Muslim travelers, (2) social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, by targeting relevant groups and hashtags like 'Halal Tourism Indonesia', 'Wisata Halal Nusantara', and 'Muslim Travelers Community', and (3) WhatsApp groups consisting of members who had

shared prior experiences visiting halal tourist destinations in Indonesia. These targeted distribution strategies ensured the respondents were aligned with the criteria of having visited one or more of Indonesia's top 10 most-wanted halal tourist attractive.

The population of this research is tourists who travel to the 10 best halal destinations in Indonesia. Since accurate data on the size and location of this population are not available, probabilistic sampling techniques cannot be used. The sampling technique in this study used the Proportional Random Sampling technique. Each tourist destination is a sample. The number of samples for each destination is 100 respondents. So the number of samples of this research is 1000 respondents.

Table 2. Variable and Indicators

Variable	Indicators
Worship Facilities (WF)	1. Prayer facilities are available at the tourist attractions I visited.
	2. Separate restrooms for men and women are available.
	3. Hotels near the tourist attractions comply with Islamic law.
	4. Qurans are available at the hotel I stayed at.
	5. Sharia-compliant entertainment is available.
	6. Artwork that does not depict the human form is available.
	7. Mosques/prayer rooms have Qibla directions.
Halalness (HNS)	1. The tourist destinations I visited provided food that was guaranteed halal.
	2. The tourist destinations I visited provided drinks that were guaranteed halal.
	3. Halal food and drinks were available at the hotel where I stayed.
	4. Halal food and drinks were guaranteed by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI).
	5. The restaurant's environment, as well as the food and drinks, were well-maintained (healthy and clean).
General Islamic Morality (GIM)	1. Tourists at the tourist destinations I visited dressed modestly in accordance with Islamic ethical values.
	2. There was a prohibition on immoral acts at the tourist destinations I visited.
	3. Tour guides at the tourist destinations I visited dressed modestly in accordance with Islamic ethical values.
	4. Tour guides at the tourist destinations I visited had good morals.
Tourism Destination Image (TDI)	1. The tourist destination I visited had a good reputation.
	2. The tourist destination I visited had adequate accommodations.

Variable	Indicators
	3. The services offered met tourist preferences.
	4. The people living around the tourist destination I visited were friendly.
	5. The tourist destination I visited had a pleasant atmosphere.
	6. The tourist destination I visited had interesting natural attractions.
	7. The tourist destination I visited had interesting cultural attractions.
	8. There was a tour guide who explained the tourist destinations.
Visiting Decision (VD)	1. The agreement to visit a tourist destination because it shares my culture
	2. The choice to visit a tourist destination because it is in my hometown
	3. The decision to visit a tourist destination because I follow community trends (friendship groups)
	4. The result to visit a tourist destination because I was invited by friends or family
	5. The accord to visit a tourist destination because I was fascinated by its natural attractions
	6. The need to visit a tourist destination because I wanted to visit a new tourist spot

This study applies Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach. PLS-SEM serves as an effective method for identifying and validating relationships among constructs, as well as for providing explanations of these relationships. In this sense, it is widely recognized as a valuable tool for theory development within management research (Hair et al., 2022; Richter et al., 2016). In addition, the rationale for choosing PLS-SEM path modelling PLS-SEM path modelling, if appropriately applied, is indeed a "silver bullet" for estimating causal models in many theoretical models and empirical data situations (Hair et al., 2011). The software used to perform data analysis is SmartPLS 3.0. In the use of PLS, there are several evaluation models: structural (outside in) and measurement model (outside model). In the measurement model, convergent validity, discriminant validity, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) were tested. In evaluating the structural model, the R-squared (R^2) path coefficient test was performed.

Results and Discussion

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity in a reflective measurement model is assessed through the correlation between indicator scores and their corresponding construct scores. An indicator is regarded as valid when its outer loading value exceeds 0.60 (Ghozali, 2014).

In evaluating the measurement model, in this study all constructs have a loading factor > 0.60, so that it meets the validity. The measurement model looks like the following figure 1:

Figure 1. Outer Model Tester
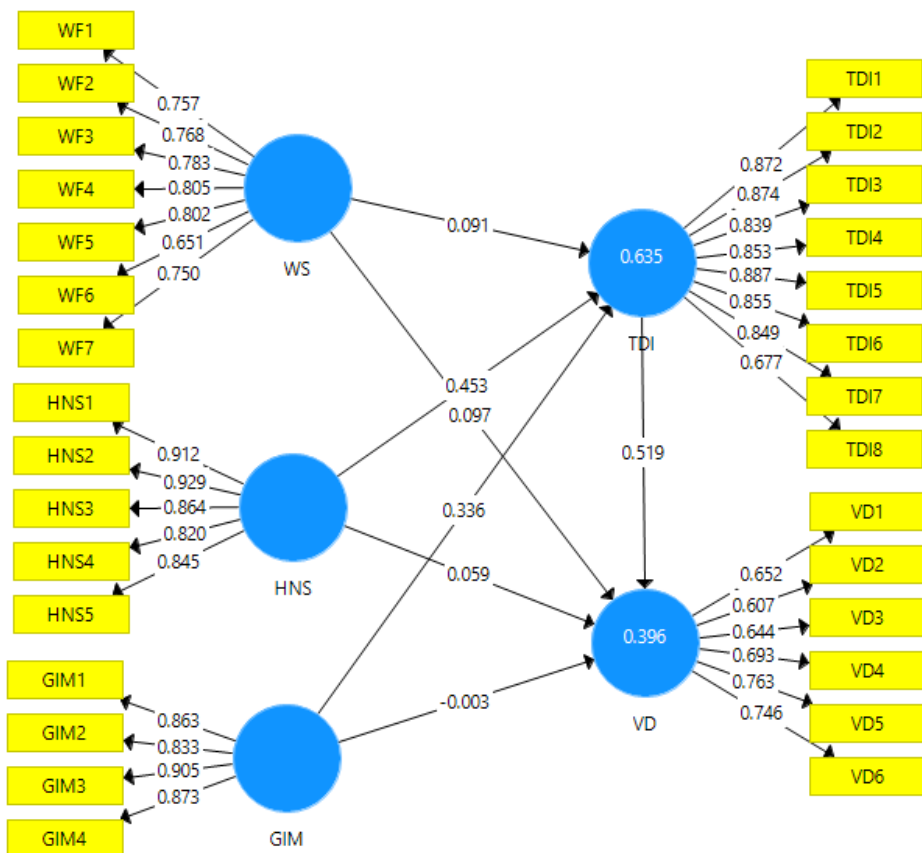
Discriminant Validity

The validity of the indicators that constitute a latent variable can also be evaluated using discriminant validity, which is assessed through the HTMT (Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio) criterion (Heterotrait Monotrait Ratio <0.90), so it is said to be valid.

Table 3. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	GIM	HNS	TDI	VD	WF
GIM					
HNS	0.757				
TDI	0.771	0.800			
VD	0.540	0.546	0.653		
WF	0.781	0.730	0.681	0.523	

Composite Reliability

A measurement can be said to be reliable if the composite reliability value is > 0.70

Table 4. Composite Reliability

	Composite Reliability
GIM	0.925
HNS	0.942
TDI	0.950
VD	0.842
WF	0.906

Table 4 shows that the composite reliability value of all constructs has shown a value greater than 0.70, so that it meets the reliability requirements based on the composite reliability criteria.

Inner Model Evaluation

The Inner Model test is used to evaluate the overall model with analytical tools in terms of R-Square (R2) = 0.744, Q-Square Predictive Relevance (Q2) = 0.646, and Goodness of Fit (GoF) = 1.443 (large). The overall model performed very well.

Table 5. R Square

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
TDI	0.635	0.634
VD	0.396	0.393

Testing the relationship between latent constructs as hypothesized in the study was carried out through a resampling process using the bootstrapping method, according to Figure 2 below:
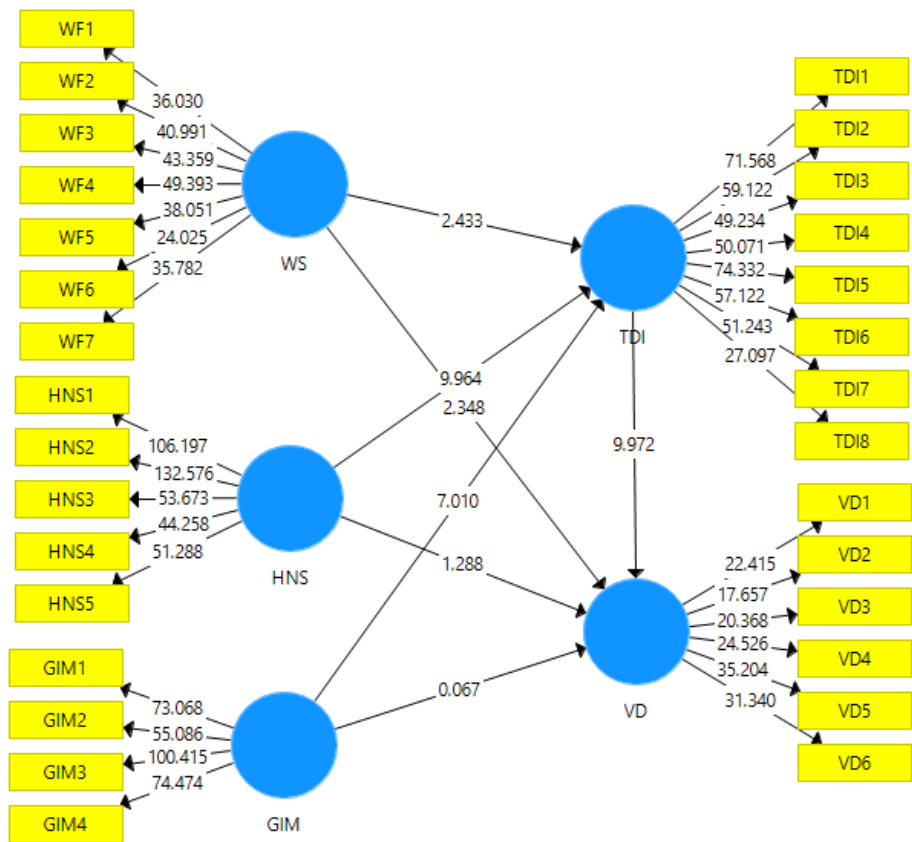
Figure 2. Hypothesis Testing Results

Table 6. Path Analysis and Hypothesis Test

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
GIM -> TDI	0.336	0.334	0.048	7.010	0.000
GIM -> VD	-0.003	-0.003	0.046	0.067	0.946
HNS -> TDI	0.453	0.455	0.046	9.964	0.000
HNS -> VD	0.059	0.060	0.046	1.288	0.198
TDI -> VD	0.519	0.519	0.052	9.972	0.000
WF -> TDI	0.091	0.091	0.038	2.433	0.015
WF -> VD	0.097	0.099	0.041	2.348	0.019

Discussion

The importance of this research apart in providing knowledge of the concept of Islamic tourism, the results of this study indicate that worship facilities, halal food, and Islamic morality have an impact on the image of the destination, and the visiting tourists.

The hypothesis testing results indicate that worship facilities positively influence both the image of the tourism destination and tourists' decisions to visit Indonesia's leading halal destinations. These findings are consistent with previous studies, Chahal & Devi (2015), Sudigdo (2019), and Sudigdo & Khalifa (2020). In addition, Firdaus & Erwindasari (2018) and Zaenuri (2012), also state that facilities are one of the factors for tourists to visit a tourist attraction. The existence of religious facilities is a dominant factor in encouraging tourists to visit certain tourist destinations.

The detailed results of the argument that the availability of worship facilities and complementary services plays a central role in shaping destination image. Adequate prayer spaces, ablution facilities, and supporting amenities do not merely fulfill religious obligations but also serve as visible indicators of Muslim-friendly quality that enhance trust and strengthen the attractiveness of the destination (Nurhayati et al., 2025).

This implies that the availability of comprehensive worship facilities—such as prayer spaces, gender-segregated restrooms, access to the Qur'an, sharia-compliant hotels, and arts and entertainment aligned with Islamic principles—

enhances the image of a tourism destination, thereby encouraging tourists to visit these attractions.

Furthermore, there is a relationship between halalness and the image of the destination. Maintained cleanliness in the environment around tourist attractions and the availability of halal food and drinks, both at tourist attractions and hotels around tourist attractions, are important factors that affect the image as a halal tourist destination in Indonesia. This is in accordance with research conducted by Rahman (2014) and Sudigdo & Khalifa (2020), which revealed that there is a correlation between halalness and destination image.

The results show that general Islamic morality has a positive effect on the image of tourist destinations. This is also in line with the findings of Kim (2014), which revealed that Muslim tourists' preferences for Islamic imagery are brand perceptions that influence destination choice. A strong relationship with Islamic values has proven to have a positive impact on the image of the destination.

The results of the H5 test contradict several previous studies related to the influence of halal food on tourist visiting decisions. Research conducted by Rahman (2014) revealed that Islamic tourists are instructed to follow Islamic teachings, which directly and indirectly influence their decisions to visit tourist destinations. M. Battour et al. (2011) stated that the attributes of Islam are able to become the main attraction for Muslim tourists, where the availability of halal-certified food is halal certified, places of worship, Islamic morality, Azan, and others are in place.

The results show that general Islamic morality has no effect on visiting decisions, so H6 is rejected. Although tourists recognize the importance of modest dress codes, avoidance of gambling, and prohibition of adult content, these are often viewed as background norms rather than decisive factors. In the Indonesian context, where Islamic norms are institutionalized, tourists assume morality will naturally be upheld. Consequently, tangible and directly experienced factors—such as worship facilities, halal certification, and service quality—become more decisive in influencing visit intentions. In non-Muslim majority contexts such as Japan and several European countries, however, halal assurance and Islamic morality act as critical differentiating signals that build trust and attract Muslim visitors (Royanow et al., 2024). These results are partly consistent with Hamdy & Eid (2024), who developed the Muslim-Friendly Tourist Destination Image (MFTDI) model and demonstrated that cognitive, affective, and Islamic attributes positively influence visit intention. Similar to their study, the present research affirms the mediating role of destination image in linking Islamic attributes with behavioral outcomes. A

notable difference, however, lies in the role of general Islamic morality: while Hamdy & Eid (2024) found it to be a positive predictor, in Indonesia, it is perceived as a baseline expectation and thus exerts no significant effect. This contrast underscores the contextual distinction between Muslim-majority and non-Muslim destinations in shaping the salience of Islamic attributes. This finding diverges from earlier works such as Batrawy (2015) and M. Battour et al. (2011), which argued that Islamic morality enhances visit intention. This demonstrates the contextual specificity of Indonesia compared to the universal applicability of Islamic attributes in non-Muslim destinations.

Subsequent test results found that the image of the destination had a positive effect on visiting decisions. This shows that the attitudes and actions of tourists towards a tourist attraction are strongly influenced by the image of that destination. In the context of halal tourism in Indonesia, this can be explained by the fact that Muslim tourists not only seek natural beauty and cultural uniqueness, but also assurance that their religious needs are accommodated. A positive image of a halal destination—such as Lombok, Aceh, or West Sumatra—often includes perceptions of easy access to prayer facilities, the availability of halal-certified food, family-friendly environments, and a community atmosphere that upholds Islamic values. When tourists are confident that these attributes are consistently present, their trust and comfort increase, which directly strengthens their intention to visit. Thus, destination image serves as a psychological guarantee that the travel experience will align with both leisure expectations and religious obligations, making it a decisive factor in visiting decisions.

Thus, destination image serves as a psychological guarantee that the travel experience will align with both leisure expectations and religious obligations, making it a decisive factor in visiting decisions. Recent evidence also shows that digital platforms and social media branding play an essential role in reinforcing destination image and cultivating tourist loyalty. Online reviews, travel vlogs, and influencer content significantly shape positive perceptions of halal destinations, thereby enhancing trust and repeat visitation (Hoque & Arif, 2025). This is in line with Hamdy et al. (2024), who conceptualized destination image as a mediating construct in the MFTDI model, emphasizing its role as the pathway through which Islamic attributes translate into trust, satisfaction, and ultimately loyalty. This study also shows that Islamic attributes should not be treated as isolated variables, but as reinforcing factors that strengthen destination image. In line with Jameel et al. (2025), halal food, prayer facilities, and moral environment serve as catalysts that

enhance the relationship between image and tourist loyalty. Their contribution lies more in consolidating a positive perception of the destination, which then fosters satisfaction and repeat visitation, rather than acting as direct standalone drivers.

This is supported by the results of research, which states that the relationship between destination image and visiting decisions, according to Mohaidin et al. (2017), Safitri et al. (2020), Jalilvand & Samiei (2012), Sudigdo & Khalifa (2020), and Whang et al. (2016), shows that the image of the destination affects the decision to visit.

Conclusion

The decision of tourists to visit a tourist destination is influenced by several things, including the availability of halal food, places of worship, and general Islamic morality. With this special need, which can be called an 'Islamic Destination Attribute', if available in a tourist destination, it will form the image of a Muslim-friendly tourist destination, so that tourists are interested in visiting a tourist destination. This study aims to see the effect of the attributes of Islamic destinations on the decision to visit the 10 best halal destinations in Indonesia. The first result is that worship facilities affect the tourism destination image, the second halalness affects the tourism destination image, the third general Islamic morality affects the tourism destination image, the four worship facilities affect the decision to visit, the fifth halalness does not affect the decision to visit, the sixth general Islamic morality does not affect the decision to visit, and the seven tourism destination images affect the decision to visit. The limitation in this study is that it only examines the 10 best halal destinations in Indonesia.

The practical implication of this research is that by knowing the factors that influence tourist visiting decisions, stakeholders in Indonesian sharia tourism can take more concrete steps, such as standardizing halal certification across accommodation and culinary services, ensuring the availability of adequate worship infrastructures in priority destinations, and strengthening digital marketing strategies that emphasize halal-friendly branding. These specific measures will provide a clearer roadmap for preparing a master plan to increase the competitiveness of Indonesia's halal tourism sector. The competitiveness of Indonesian sharia tourism so that the government's vision of making Indonesia a world-class halal tourism destination can be achieved. The social implication of this research is to contribute to a better understanding of the decision to visit tourists

towards Indonesia as a halal tourism destination, which is widely liked and recommended in all aspects.

Recommendations for further research are to expand the scope of halal tourism destinations both in Muslim countries but also in non-Muslim countries. Future research should also integrate halal tourism with sustainability and technological innovation, in line with global SDGs, so that Islamic values are not only reflected in compliance aspects but also become the foundation for environmentally responsible and technology-driven tourism development.

In addition, future studies should explicitly consider technology as a critical variable in shaping Muslim tourist behavior. Recent studies demonstrate that AI assistants and digital innovations can moderate the relationship between Islamic attributes and travel intention, reducing uncertainty and enhancing destination attractiveness. Integrating such technological dimensions will strengthen theoretical contributions and provide practical guidance for developing smart, sustainable halal tourism ecosystems.

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