

## **Halal Tourism Preferences: The Role of Brand Awareness, Attitudes, and Social Norms Among Muslim and Non-Muslim Travelers**

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### **Abstract**

This research focuses on the influence of brand awareness, attitudes, and social norms on the intentions of Muslim and non-Muslim tourists to visit Lombok as a Halal tourism destination. Lombok has been designated by the Indonesian government as a center for Islamic tourism, providing a complementary option to Bali's Hindu cultural tourism. The study utilized the Theory of Planned Behavior and gathered data via an online survey involving 123 participants, 56 non-Muslims and 67 Muslims. The results indicated that Halal brand awareness and social norms did not significantly impact non-Muslim tourists' intentions to visit Lombok. At the same time, brand awareness also did not affect Muslim tourists. Attitudes were identified as the main factor influencing their willingness to visit. Interestingly, the R-squared values differed notably between the two groups, with the variables accounting for 58.1% of non-Muslim tourists' decisions but only 39.9% for Muslim tourists. This research offers new insights into Halal tourism from both Muslim and non-Muslim perspectives.

**Keywords :** Muslim; Non-Muslim; Halal; Lombok; Indonesia; Tourist

### **INTRODUCTION**

The tourism industry has expanded significantly in recent decades, particularly since the end of the Covid-19 pandemic (Klaiqi et al., 2024; Langer & Schmude, 2024). Tourists are segmented according to their purpose of travel, such as medical tourism (Giannake et al., 2023), sports tourism (Zauhar, 2004), educational tourism (Sababhi, 2022; Basri et al., 2022), religious tourism (Hassan et al., 2024), Islamic tourism (Bastaman, 2018; Gabdrakhmanov et al., 2016), and halal tourism (Boğan, 2019; Junaidi, 2020). Research related to halal tourism generally discusses the perspective of Muslim tourists toward tourist destinations in non-Muslim countries (Aminah & Bhakti, 2022; Biancone et al., 2019; Han et al., 2019; Preko et al., 2022; Vargas-Sanchez et al., 2020). Several bibliometric research or literature reviews discuss this related research (Abdul Shukor & Kattiyapornpong, 2024; Basendwah et al., 2024; Fauzi & Battour, 2024; Prayag, 2020; Rasul, 2019; Rusydiana et al., 2021; Supardin et al., 2023; Yagmur et al., 2020).

Halal tourism is based on Islamic teachings and adheres to Islamic principles in a variety of activities (Battour et al., 2022). Many researchers have conducted studies on halal tourism and its effects. Wijaya & Sholeh (2020) concluded the increase in the regional economy by implementing halal tourism in Lombok. The existing halal branding makes Muslim and non-Muslim tourists feel safe, and they can enjoy halal services such as food, hotels, and facilities (Bastaman, 2018).

The object of this research is focused on Lombok Island, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. Based on the 2019 Indonesian Muslim Travel Index (IMTI), Lombok is recognized as the leading destination in Indonesia (Sismanto et al., 2022). The Indonesian government has designated Lombok as an Islamic tourism destination, presenting an alternative to the Hindu cultural tourism traditionally associated with the nearby island of Bali (Bastaman, 2018). Halal tourism branding aims to maintain Islamic culture in Lombok which is also known as the Island of a Thousand Mosques. This study aims to examine the extent to which brand awareness, attitudes, and social norms influence the preferences of both Muslim and non-Muslim tourists when selecting halal destinations.

### **Halal Tourism**

The definition of 'Halal tourism' varies depending on the researcher. Halal tourism consists of two words: halal and tourism. The term "halal" is derived from the Qur'an and initially refers to food that Muslims can

consume. Halal is derived from Arabic, written in the Qur'an, and interpreted as permissible under Islamic law (Ekka, 2024).

The term 'halal tourism' refers to tourism that takes into account values, and norms, and follows Islamic law, as provided by the host and followed by tourists (Ekka, 2024). Halal tourism is also defined as a tourist destination designed as an option aligned with Sharia principles, where efforts are made to prevent the contamination of forbidden (haram) elements within the tourist environment (Mansouri, 2014). The researchers' definitions are similar in the sense that halal tourism activities follow Islamic rules (Boğan & Sarıışık, 2019).

**Brand Awareness**

Consumer perceptions of halal tourism vary, they may associate it with halal food, halal facilities, or halal attractions (Rahman et al., 2019). Brand awareness is an important variable to consider in marketing because it refers to the appearance of a brand in the minds of customers (Shafaei, 2017). Brand awareness is a consumer's understanding and ability to recognize a brand (Rahman et al., 2019).

H1a: There is a positive influence of brand awareness on behavioral intention to visit halal tourism destinations in Muslim tourists

H1b: There is a positive influence of brand awareness on behavioral intention to visit halal tourism destinations in non-Muslim tourists

**Social Norm**

Social Norms refers to a person's perception of social pressure to perform or refrain from performing a behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Previous research has shown that Social Norms positively influence behavioral intentions, such as the intention to choose halal tourism (Saifudin and Puspita, 2020). This study expects a positive relationship between the intentions of Muslim and non-Muslim respondents to travel to halal tourism destinations.

H2a: There is a positive influence of social norms on behavioral intention to visit halal tourism destinations in Muslim tourists

H2b: There is a positive influence of social norms on behavioral intention to visit halal tourism destinations in non-Muslim tourists.

**Table 1. Demographic of Respondent**

| Characteristics        | Amount | Percentage |
|------------------------|--------|------------|
| <b>Age</b>             |        |            |
| <= 25 yr               | 22     | 17.9%      |
| >25 yr                 | 101    | 82.1%      |
| <b>Amount of Visit</b> |        |            |
| Once                   | 75     | 61%        |
| 2-3 times              | 36     | 29.2%      |
| More than 4 times      | 12     | 9.7%       |
| <b>Gender</b>          |        |            |
| Women                  | 65     | 52.8%      |
| Men                    | 58     | 47.2%      |
| <b>Religion</b>        |        |            |
| Islam                  | 67     | 54.5%      |
| Christian              | 42     | 34.1%      |
| Hindu                  | 8      | 6.5%       |
| Budha                  | 4      | 3.3%       |
| Other                  | 2      | 1.6%       |
| <b>Purpose</b>         |        |            |
| Travelling             | 82     | 66.7%      |
| Working                | 26     | 21.1%      |
| Others                 | 15     | 12.2%      |
| <b>Education</b>       |        |            |
| Secondary/Diploma      | 28     | 22.8%      |
| Undergraduate          | 38     | 30.9%      |
| Postgraduate           | 57     | 46.3%      |

**Attitude**

Attitude is a predictor variable of behavioral intention that indicates a positive or negative evaluation of feelings toward a condition (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011). This is supported by previous research, which found that attitude has a significant positive influence on the behavioral intention of halal cosmetics (Abd Rahman et al., 2015; Divianjella et al., 2020).

H3a: There is a positive influence of attitude on behavioral intention to visit halal tourism destinations in Muslim tourists

H3b: There is a positive influence of attitude on behavioral intention to visit halal tourism destinations in non-Muslim tourists.

**METHODS**

The data in this study were gathered using a questionnaire distributed to respondents who had visited Lombok at least once. The questions were divided into five sections: respondent demographics, brand awareness, social norms, attitude, and intention to return to Lombok. The questionnaire was distributed randomly online from July to August 2023. The study included 228 respondents, but only 123 (53.9%) with various demographic characteristics could be processed. There were 46.1% of the questionnaires were not processed because they had never visited Lombok before, so they were considered not to meet the respondent qualifications. The majority of respondents were women (N = 65; 52.8%), with 58 men (47.2%) participating. This study will compare the perceptions of Muslims and non-Muslims, so the sampling was designed proportionally based on the respondents' religion, Muslim respondents (N = 67; 54.5%) and non-Muslim respondents (N = 56; 45.5%), which is nearly balanced.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This section outlines the findings of the study on halal tourism preferences, focusing on the impact of brand awareness, attitudes, and social norms on the choices of Muslim and non-Muslim travelers. Utilizing a structural model analyzed through Smart PLS, the findings offer insights into the varying influences these factors have on each group's decision-making process. Smart PLS software was utilized to develop models, including Figure 1 (Muslim tourists) and Figure 2 (non-Muslim tourists).

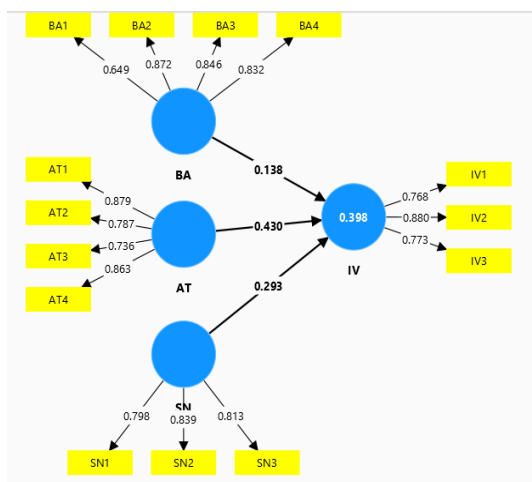


Figure 1. Model for Muslim tourists

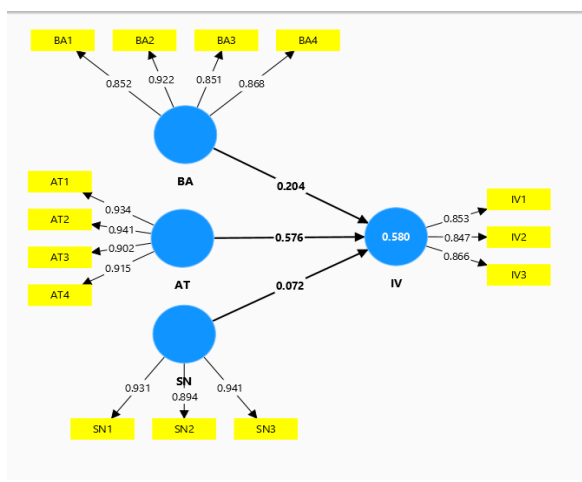


Figure 2. Model of Non-Muslim tourists

**Test of the measurement model (outer model)**

The measurement model test includes convergent validity, discriminant, and composite reliability tests. The result of these tests presented in Table 2. Cronbach's Alpha all of the variables larger than 0.7, which mean they are reliable.

**Test for convergent validity**

The correlation between indicator scores and their constructs is used for validity testing. If one indicator in the construct changes, the construct's other indicators will also change.

**Table 2. Output Outer Loading**

|                       | Cronbach's Alpha |       | Composite reliability |       | Composite reliability (rho_c) |       | Average variance extracted (AVE) |       |
|-----------------------|------------------|-------|-----------------------|-------|-------------------------------|-------|----------------------------------|-------|
|                       | M                | NM    | M                     | NM    | M                             | NM    | M                                | NM    |
| Brand Awareness (X1)  | 0.811            | 0.897 | 0.810                 | 0.910 | 0.877                         | 0.928 | 0.641                            | 0.764 |
| Social Norm (X2)      | 0.752            | 0.915 | 0.757                 | 0.983 | 0.857                         | 0.945 | 0.667                            | 0.851 |
| Attitude (X3)         | 0.837            | 0.942 | 0.850                 | 0.945 | 0.890                         | 0.958 | 0.670                            | 0.852 |
| Decision to Visit (Y) | 0.737            | 0.817 | 0.764                 | 0.819 | 0.849                         | 0.891 | 0.654                            | 0.732 |

M (Muslim); NM (non Muslim)

We can summarize from Table 2 that Brand Awareness (X1) demonstrates good reliability and validity for both groups, with higher values observed in the non-Muslim group. Variable Social Norm (X2) exhibits very high reliability for the non-Muslim group, indicating that social norms are more consistent among non-Muslims compared to Muslims. While Attitude (X3) shows higher reliability in the non-Muslim group, with strong validity for both groups. Dependent Variable, Decision to Visit (Y) reflects good reliability for both groups, though slightly higher for the NM group. Overall, the data indicate that the constructs used in this study possess good levels of reliability and validity for both groups, with generally higher results for the non-Muslim group. This may suggest differences in how Muslim and non-Muslim groups process information related to halal tourism.

### Test of Structural Model

**Table 3. R-Square**

|                   | R-Square |       | RSquare adjusted |       |
|-------------------|----------|-------|------------------|-------|
|                   | M        | NM    | M                | NM    |
| Decision to Visit | 0.399    | 0.580 | 0.371            | 0.556 |

M (Muslim); NM (non-Muslim)

Table 3 illustrates the proportion of variance in the dependent variable ("Decision to Visit") attributed to the independent variables in the model. For Muslim respondents (M), the R-Square value is 0.399, indicating that the model explains approximately 39.9% of the variance in their decision to visit. In contrast, for Non-Muslim respondents (NM), the R-Square value is 0.580, indicating that the model explains 58% of the variance in their decision to visit. This higher value suggests that the model is more explanatory for non-Muslim respondents. The model explains a larger proportion of the variance in the decision to visit for non-Muslim respondents compared to Muslim respondents. This suggests that the factors included in the model are more predictive of non-Muslims' decisions to visit than those of Muslims.

### CONCLUSION

The study's findings indicate that Muslim and non-Muslim tourists have different intentions to visit Lombok, which has been branded as a halal tourist destination. Social Norms do not predict significant behavioral intention among non-Muslim tourists. This is consistent with Akter & Hasan (2022) in intentions of halal tourism and Jain (2020) research of luxury goods purchase intensity. Meanwhile, for both Muslim and Non-Muslim tourists, the effect of brand awareness is not supported influencing the intention to visit Lombok as a halal tourism destination brand. Meanwhile, the perception of brand awareness among Muslim and non-Muslim tourists is unsupported by its impact on the intention to visit Lombok as a halal tourism destination brand.

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