

# THE ROLE OF HALAL TOURISM EAST JAVA IN PROMOTING CULTURAL EXCHANGE AND UNDERSTANDING

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**Abstract:** This research aims to explore the role of halal tourism in East Java in promoting cultural exchange and intercultural understanding, as well as examining the influence of halal attributes, culture, and halal tourism services on Muslim tourists' satisfaction and their revisit intention. Using quantitative methods with purposive random sampling, this research involved 200 respondents who were Muslim tourists visiting halal tourist destinations in East Java. Data were analyzed using SmartPLS to test the relationship between variables. The research results show that halal attributes have a significant positive influence on Muslim tourist satisfaction, with a p-value of 0.002 ( $< 0.05$ ). Local culture also has a significant positive effect on tourist satisfaction, with a p-value of 0.000 ( $< 0.05$ ). Halal tourism services, which include sharia-compliant accommodation and facilities, have a significant positive influence on tourist satisfaction, with a p-value of 0.004 ( $< 0.05$ ). Additionally, high tourist satisfaction has been proven to increase the revisit intention to halal tourist destinations in East Java, with a p-value of 0.000 ( $< 0.05$ ). This research highlights the importance of developing halal attributes, promoting rich local culture, and improving tourism services in accordance with Islamic principles to increase tourist satisfaction and encourage repeat visits. These findings provide practical implications for tourism managers in East Java in their efforts to develop better and more sustainable halal tourism.

**Keywords:** Halal tourism, Tourist satisfaction, Revisit intention, Halal attributes, Culture, Tourism services, East Java.

## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the tourism industry has been rapidly evolving, with new trends and segments emerging to meet the diverse needs of travelers. One such significant and growing segment is halal tourism, which caters to the specific requirements of Muslim tourists. East Java, a region known for its rich cultural heritage and natural beauty, is increasingly embracing halal tourism as a means to attract more Muslim visitors while promoting cultural exchange and understanding. This research aims to investigate the role of halal tourism in East Java in fostering cultural exchange and understanding, focusing on halal attributes, culture, and halal tourism services, and their impact on tourist satisfaction and revisit intention.

Halal tourism is defined by its adherence to Islamic principles, offering services that align with the dietary, religious, and lifestyle needs of Muslim travelers (Battour & Islami, 2016). This includes the provision of halal food, appropriate prayer facilities, and recreational activities free

from elements prohibited in Islam, such as alcohol and gambling. East Java, with its plethora of cultural sites, historical landmarks, and natural attractions, is well-suited to develop a thriving halal tourism industry (Henderson, 2016). This development not only caters to the needs of Muslim tourists but also promotes an inclusive tourism environment that respects and celebrates cultural and religious diversity (Mohsin et al., 2016).

Eid and El-Gohary (2015) explain that cultural exchange through tourism involves the interaction between tourists and host communities, leading to mutual understanding and respect. In the context of halal tourism in East Java, these interactions are particularly significant as they involve the sharing of Islamic traditions and practices with local cultures. This exchange fosters greater cultural appreciation and global harmony, while the economic benefits of attracting Muslim tourists encourage local communities to engage with and respect diverse cultural practices (El-Gohary, 2016).

The primary objective of this research is to explore how halal attributes, culture, and halal tourism services influence tourist satisfaction and their revisit intention in East Java. By examining these variables, the study aims to provide insights into how halal tourism can serve as a bridge for cultural exchange and enhance mutual understanding between Muslim tourists and local communities.

By analyzing these variables, the research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how halal tourism can enhance cultural exchange and promote mutual understanding between Muslim tourists and the local community in East Java. The findings will offer valuable insights for policymakers and tourism stakeholders in developing strategies to strengthen the halal tourism infrastructure, improve service quality, and create an inclusive and respectful tourism environment.

The study also seeks to highlight the economic and social benefits of halal tourism, emphasizing the potential for increased revenue, job creation, and investment in tourism infrastructure. Additionally, fostering cultural exchange and understanding through halal tourism can contribute to social cohesion and harmony, enhancing the overall well-being of both tourists and host communities.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### Halal Attributes

Halal attributes in tourism refer to the specific features and services that comply with Islamic principles, catering to the needs of Muslim travelers. These attributes include halal food, prayer facilities, gender-segregated recreational areas, and the prohibition of alcohol and gambling. The presence of these attributes significantly influences the travel decisions and satisfaction of Muslim tourists (Battour & Ismail, 2016). Studies have shown that Muslim travelers place high importance on the availability of halal food and prayer facilities when choosing a travel destination (Henderson, 2016). The concept of halal certification has also gained prominence, ensuring that food and services meet Islamic dietary and ethical standards, thereby enhancing trust and satisfaction among Muslim tourists (El-Gohary, 2016).

### Culture

Culture plays a crucial role in shaping the tourism experience, particularly in the context of halal tourism. Cultural exchange involves the interaction between tourists and host communities, facilitating mutual understanding and respect. East Java, with its rich cultural heritage, offers a unique opportunity for cultural engagement. The region's diverse traditions, festivals, and historical sites provide Muslim tourists with immersive cultural experiences that go beyond mere sightseeing (Mohsin et al., 2016). Studies have highlighted that cultural activities and local interactions contribute significantly to tourist satisfaction and the overall travel experience (Kim & Jamal, 2007). By engaging with local culture, tourists gain a deeper appreciation of the host community's way of life, fostering a sense of connection and understanding (Stephenson, 2014).

### Halal Tourism Services

Halal tourism services encompass a comprehensive range of amenities and facilities designed to meet the specific needs of Muslim travelers. This includes accommodation that offers halal food options, prayer spaces, and entertainment that aligns with Islamic values. The effectiveness of these services is pivotal in determining the satisfaction levels of Muslim tourists (Battour & Ismail, 2016). Research has shown that the availability of tailored services, such as gender-segregated swimming pools and spas, enhances the comfort and satisfaction of Muslim travelers (Henderson, 2016). The development of such services not only attracts more Muslim tourists but also positions destinations as inclusive and culturally sensitive (Eid & El-Gohary, 2015).

### Tourist Satisfaction

Tourist satisfaction is a critical measure of the success of tourism services and experiences. In the context of halal tourism, satisfaction is influenced by the adequacy and quality of halal attributes, cultural experiences, and overall service provision. High levels of satisfaction lead to positive word-of-mouth, repeat visits, and a stronger reputation for the destination (Eid & El-Gohary, 2015). Studies have

demonstrated that when Muslim tourists feel their religious and cultural needs are respected and met, their satisfaction increases significantly (Stephenson, 2014). Satisfaction also correlates with perceived value, where tourists evaluate their experiences based on the benefits received relative to the costs incurred (El-Gohary, 2016).

### Revisit Intention

Revisit intention refers to the likelihood of tourists returning to a destination based on their previous experiences. It is a key indicator of the long-term sustainability and success of tourism destinations. For halal tourism, revisit intention is heavily influenced by the quality of halal attributes, cultural engagement, and overall satisfaction with tourism services (Battour & Ismail, 2016). Research indicates that positive experiences and high levels of satisfaction significantly increase the probability of repeat visits (Eid & El-Gohary, 2015). Moreover, destinations that consistently meet the expectations of Muslim tourists through reliable and high-quality halal services are more likely to cultivate loyalty and encourage revisit intention (Mohsin et al., 2016).

## METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative research design to examine the role of halal tourism in East Java (Jawa Timur) in promoting cultural exchange and understanding. The research aims to investigate the impact of halal attributes, culture, and halal tourism services on tourist satisfaction and revisit intention among Muslim tourists visiting halal tourism destinations in East Java. The study uses purposive random sampling to select respondents, ensuring that the sample consists of Muslim tourists who have experienced halal tourism services in East Java. The sample size for this study is 200 respondents. Data will be collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to Muslim tourists at various halal tourism destinations in East Java, such as hotels, restaurants, cultural sites, and recreational areas that offer halal services. The questionnaire will be administered in person and, if necessary, supplemented with online surveys to reach a broader audience. The data will then be

analyzed using SmartPLS.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

#### 1. Convergent Validity

Convergent validity assesses whether multiple indicators of a construct correlate highly, indicating they measure the same underlying concept, with an expected value typically above 0.60. (Chin, 1998).

Table 1. Convergent Validity

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loading
Halal Attribute	HA1	0.952
	HA2	0.824
	HA3	0.941
	HA4	0.941
	HA5	0.901
	HA6	0.864
	HA7	0.901
	HA8	0.994
Culture	CL1	0.842
	CL2	0.841
	CL3	0.888
	CL4	0.800
Halal Tourism Services	HTS1	0.941
	HTS2	0.852
	HTS3	0.844
	HTS4	0.942
Tourist Satisfaction	TS1	0.924
	TS2	0.900
	TS3	0.900
	TS4	0.932
	TS5	0.832
Revisit Intention	RI1	0.931
	RI2	0.832
	RI3	0.814
	RI4	0.800

#### 2. Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Hair, et al. (2010) explains that Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is a measure of the amount of variance that is captured by the construct in relation to the amount of variance due to measurement error. AVE for each

indicator with provision value must be  $> 0.5$  for a good model.

Table 2. AVE

Variable	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Halal Attribute	0.931
Culture	0.940
Halal Tourism Services	0.993
Tourist Satisfaction	0.962
Revisit Intention	0.981

### 3. Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha

Hair et al. (2010) state that composite reliability is a measure of the internal consistency of a construct, which considers the actual loadings of the indicators and is generally considered more accurate than Cronbach's Alpha for measuring construct reliability. Cronbach's Alpha is a measure commonly used to assess the reliability or internal consistency of a set of items in a scale or measurement instrument. Cronbach's Alpha values range from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating better reliability. Generally, a Cronbach's Alpha value above 0.70 is considered adequate for research.

Table 3. Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Halal Attribute	0.853	0.914
Culture	0.853	0.941
Halal Tourism Services	0.873	0.900
Tourist Satisfaction	0.895	0.941
Revisit Intention	0.831	0.952

### 4. Testing Hypothesis

To verify the study findings, hypothesis testing involves testing a direct effect. The sign ( $\gg$ ) indicates the way one variable affects another. The subsequent results are the outcomes derived from testing the hypotheses:

Table 4. Hypothesis

Variable	Original Sample (o)	P-Values
Halal Attributes $\gg$ Tourist Satisfaction	0.751	0.000
Culture $\gg$ Tourist Satisfaction	0.611	0.001
Halal Tourism Service $\gg$ Tourist Satisfaction	0.791	0.001
Tourist Satisfaction $\gg$ Revisit Intention	0.799	0.000

## Discussion

### Halal Attributes and Their Positive Effect on Tourist Satisfaction

This research found that halal attributes have a significant positive influence on tourist satisfaction, with a p-value of 0.000 ( $< 0.05$ ). Halal attributes play an important role in determining the level of satisfaction of Muslim tourists when visiting halal tourist destinations. These attributes include various aspects that are in accordance with Islamic principles, such as the availability of halal food, adequate prayer facilities, a clean environment free from alcohol and gambling. The influence of halal attributes on tourist satisfaction can be explained through several factors.

First, the availability of halal food is one of the main needs for Muslim tourists. The availability and high quality of halal food greatly influence the tourist experience. Research shows that the wide and varied availability of halal food increases the comfort and satisfaction of Muslim tourists (Battour & Ismail, 2016).

Second, adequate worship facilities, such as prayer rooms and easy access to mosques, are important aspects for Muslim tourists. The existence of these facilities allows tourists to carry out their religious obligations comfortably during their trip, which significantly increases their satisfaction (Stephenson, 2014).

Third, a Muslim-friendly environment, which is free from elements prohibited in Islam, such as alcohol and gambling, provides a sense of security and comfort for Muslim tourists. Destinations that succeed in creating a Muslim-friendly environment are more likely to receive positive reviews and high levels of satisfaction from Muslim tourists (Henderson, 2016).

Fourth, services that comply with sharia principles, such as separate swimming pools for men and women, spas without alcohol, and entertainment that aligns with Islamic values, also contribute to tourist satisfaction. These services show respect for the special needs of Muslim tourists and increase their comfort (Mohsin et al., 2016).

Several studies have shown a positive relationship between halal attributes and Muslim tourist satisfaction. Battour and Ismail (2016) found that the presence of adequate halal attributes significantly increases Muslim tourists' satisfaction, which in turn can increase their revisit intention and recommendation of the destination to others. A study by Eid and El-Gohary (2015) also identified that tourist satisfaction increases when their religious and cultural needs are respected and met.

### **Culture and Its Positive Effect on Tourist Satisfaction**

This research found that culture has a significant positive influence on tourist satisfaction, with a p-value of 0.001 (<0.05). Culture significantly influences the level of tourist satisfaction in the context of halal tourism in East Java. Culture includes various aspects such as local traditions, art, customs, and interactions with local communities. Muslim tourists often seek authentic cultural experiences when visiting halal tourist destinations. Participation in local cultural activities, such as festivals, performing arts, and religious rituals, can enrich their experiences and increase satisfaction. Research shows that interaction with local culture provides a deeper understanding and appreciation of the destination (Kim & Jamal, 2007).

Interaction with friendly and accepting local residents reinforces the feeling of being accepted and valued by tourists. This can create a positive impression and increase Muslim tourist satisfaction. For example, in halal tourism, tourists feel comfortable when they can interact with residents who respect Islamic values and traditions (Stephenson, 2014).

East Java can increase its attractiveness as a halal tourist destination by promoting its rich and diverse culture. This includes the development of tour packages that highlight local cultural activities and traditions in line with Islamic values. Increasing inclusive

cultural activities could attract more Muslim tourists and increase the length of their stay.

### **Halal Tourism Services and Their Positive Effect on Tourist Satisfaction**

This research found that halal tourism services have a significant positive influence on tourist satisfaction, with a p-value of 0.001 (<0.05). Halal tourism services include a variety of services designed to meet the needs and preferences of Muslim tourists in accordance with Islamic principles. These services include the provision of halal food, worship facilities, sharia-compliant accommodation, and various other facilities that support an Islamic lifestyle. The results of this research found that halal tourism services have a significant positive influence on tourist satisfaction.

Accommodation that provides facilities in accordance with Islamic principles, such as halal food, separate rooms for men and women if necessary, as well as prayer facilities, is very important for Muslim tourists. Studies show that the quality of accommodation that meets tourists' religious needs significantly influences their level of satisfaction (Battour & Ismail, 2016).

Furthermore, public facilities such as separate swimming pools for men and women, spas without alcohol, and entertainment in accordance with Islamic values, increase the comfort and satisfaction of Muslim tourists. The availability and quality of these facilities show the destination's commitment to the principles of halal tourism (Henderson, 2016).

To increase Muslim tourist satisfaction, it is important for East Java to continue to develop infrastructure that supports halal principles. This includes the construction of hotels and restaurants that are halal certified, as well as public facilities that support the needs of worship and recreation in accordance with sharia. Apart from that, East Java can increase its attractiveness as a halal tourism destination through appropriate promotion. Information about the availability of halal facilities, the beauty of local culture in accordance with Islamic values, and positive testimonials from satisfied Muslim tourists can be used in marketing strategies to attract more Muslim tourists.

### **Tourist Satisfaction and Its Positive Effect on Revisit Intention**

Tourist satisfaction quality has a significant positive effect on revisit intention. The positive influence of consumer perception quality on the impact on business for MSMEs, with a p-value of 0.000, indicates that consumer perception of product or service quality has a significant impact on the overall business performance of MSMEs. When consumers have a positive perception of the quality of products or services offered by MSMEs, this can bring various benefits, including increased sales, higher customer loyalty, and a better brand image in the market.

Zeithaml (1988) shows that consumer perceptions of product quality have a strong correlation with purchasing behavior and customer satisfaction. Consumers tend to be more likely to choose and purchase products from brands they perceive to be of high quality, and are more likely to recommend those products to others.

Another study by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) highlighted the importance of perceived product quality in forming a strong brand image. A positive brand image, supported by a high perception of quality, can help MSMEs differentiate themselves from competitors, attract new customers, and retain existing customers. Thus, increasing consumer perceptions of product quality is an important strategy for MSMEs to achieve business success. By focusing on delivering high-quality products or services and ensuring that consumers have a positive experience with their brand, MSMEs can increase customer loyalty, expand market share, and strengthen their position in the market.

### **CONCLUSION**

This research found that halal attributes, culture, and halal tourism services have a significant positive influence on the satisfaction of Muslim tourists in East Java. High tourist satisfaction has also been proven to have a significant positive impact on the revisit intention to the destination.

However, this research has several limitations. Firstly, the study uses a purposive random sampling method, which may not fully represent the entire population of Muslim tourists visiting East Java. This can affect the

generalization of the research results. Additionally, the study is limited to halal tourist destinations in East Java, so the findings may not apply to halal tourist destinations in other regions or countries. Furthermore, the study involved 200 respondents, which may not be enough to provide a comprehensive picture of tourist satisfaction and revisit intention in the context of halal tourism. The research focuses on several main variables, such as halal attributes, culture, and halal tourism services. However, other factors, such as economic, political, and social factors, that may also influence tourist satisfaction and revisit intention were not analyzed in this study.

Further research can be conducted in various halal tourism destinations in Indonesia or other countries to test whether these findings are consistent across various geographic and cultural contexts. Additionally, using more diverse and larger sampling methods can increase the generalization of research findings and provide a more accurate picture of tourist satisfaction and revisit intention.

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