

HALAL TOURISM KNOWLEDGE AND RELIGIOSITY AS DRIVERS OF TRUST AND DECISION-MAKING IN SELECTING SHARIA HOTELS

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the influence of halal tourism knowledge and religiosity on trust and the decision to choose a sharia hotel, with trust serving as a mediating variable. A quantitative approach was employed, involving 100 Muslim respondents in Surabaya who had stayed or intended to stay in sharia hotels. Data were collected through a Likert-scale questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS, including validity and reliability tests, multiple regression, and mediation analysis. The results reveal that halal tourism knowledge and religiosity have a significant positive effect on trust. Furthermore, trust significantly influences the decision to choose a sharia hotel and mediates the relationship between halal tourism knowledge and religiosity with the decision. These findings highlight the importance of knowledge and religious values in building trust, which in turn affects Muslim consumers' decisions in selecting sharia-compliant hotels.

Keywords: Halal Tourism Knowledge, Religiosity, Trust, Decision-Making, Sharia Hotel

INTRODUCTION

The growth of halal tourism in Indonesia has shown a very positive trend in recent years. As a country with a Muslim-majority population, Indonesia has great potential to develop the concept of halal tourism, including accommodations that adhere to Islamic principles. One important element in supporting halal tourism is the existence of Sharia hotels, which offer services by Islamic values, such as not serving alcohol, separating non-mahram male and female guests in rooms, and providing halal food and prayer facilities (Battour & Ismail, 2016).

Surabaya, as one of Indonesia's major cities and a destination for both business and tourism, has great opportunities for the development of Sharia hotels. The city serves not only as an economic hub in East Java but also as a key point of mobility for Muslim travelers who require accommodation that aligns with their religious beliefs. Sharia hotels emerging in Surabaya serve as alternatives for Muslim tourists seeking not only comfort but also services that reflect their faith.

In this context, consumers' understanding of halal tourism referred to as Halal Tourism Knowledge is a crucial factor that may

influence their decision to choose a Sharia hotel. This is in line with the statement of Stephenson (2014), who noted that knowledge about halal services and facilities plays a role in shaping Muslim tourists' attitudes and perceptions when selecting destinations and accommodations. This knowledge includes understanding prayer facilities, halal food, and the implementation of Sharia principles in hotel operations.

In addition to knowledge, religiosity is also a vital factor influencing the decision to choose Sharia hotels. Religiosity reflects the extent to which individuals embrace and apply religious values in their daily lives, including in consumption decisions. According to Glock and Stark (1965), religiosity includes not only belief but also religious practices, experiences, knowledge, and their consequences in social life. In the context of tourism, travelers with higher religiosity levels tend to choose services and accommodations that align with Islamic values (Battour, Ismail, & Battor, 2011).

Besides religiosity and knowledge of halal tourism, trust also plays an essential role as a mediating variable that connects personal characteristics to consumer decision-making.

Trust is a fundamental element in establishing long-term relationships between consumers and service providers. In the context of Sharia hotels, trust can emerge from the perception that the services offered truly comply with Sharia principles, transparency of information, and positive past experiences (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001).

The decision to choose a Sharia hotel as a form of consumer behavior does not occur suddenly; rather, it is influenced by various psychological, sociological, and cognitive factors. Kotler and Keller (2016) argue that consumer decisions in selecting a particular product or service result from a process involving perception, knowledge, attitude, and motivation. Therefore, understanding the factors influencing this decision is crucial for Sharia hotel managers to formulate effective marketing strategies.

This research is important because, despite the growing trend of Sharia hotels, empirical studies examining the factors that influence trust and the decision to choose a Sharia hotel, particularly in Surabaya are still limited. Most prior research has focused on conceptual aspects or case studies in larger cities such as Jakarta or Yogyakarta. Thus, this study aims to fill that gap by examining the influence of religiosity and halal tourism knowledge on trust and the decision to choose Sharia hotels in Surabaya.

The results of this study are expected to provide theoretical contributions to the literature on Muslim consumer behavior in the context of halal tourism and offer practical insights for Sharia hotel managers in understanding and meeting the needs of the growing Muslim traveler segment.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Halal Tourism Knowledge and Trust

Knowledge of halal tourism can increase consumer trust in sharia hotel services, as a solid understanding of halal standards and principles fosters a positive perception of the service provider. Consumers with a high level of knowledge regarding halal tourism are more likely to evaluate services accurately and have realistic expectations of sharia-compliant hotels (Rahman, 2014; Oktadiana et al., 2016). Additionally, such knowledge helps reduce uncertainty in the decision-making process (Wilson, 2006).

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Halal tourism knowledge has a positive effect on trust in sharia hotels.

Religiosity and Trust

Religiosity influences consumer preferences in selecting products and services aligned with religious values. Individuals with high religiosity tend to be more selective and are more likely to trust service providers that comply with Islamic values (Mokhlis, 2009; Essoo & Dibb, 2004). In the context of halal tourism, religiosity is a significant predictor of trust in sharia-compliant hotels (Rehman & Shabbir, 2010).

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Religiosity has a positive effect on trust in sharia hotels.

Trust and the Decision to Choose Sharia Hotels

Trust is a critical factor in consumer decision-making as it reduces perceived risks and enhances confidence in the selected service. Trust in the integrity and commitment of a sharia hotel to comply with Islamic principles positively influences consumers' decisions to choose the hotel (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Trust also plays a crucial role in building customer loyalty and the intention to recommend the service to others (Delgado-Ballester et al., 2003).

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Trust has a positive effect on the decision to choose a sharia hotel.

Trust as a Mediating Variable

Trust plays a mediating role in the relationship between personal factors (such as knowledge and religiosity) and consumer behavior. In marketing literature, trust has been found to significantly mediate the relationship between beliefs and purchasing decisions (Gefen et al., 2003; Ha & Janda, 2014). In this context, trust bridges the influence of halal tourism knowledge and religiosity on the decision to choose sharia hotels (Suki & Suki, 2019).

Hypothesis 4 (H4): Trust mediates the influence of halal tourism knowledge and religiosity on the decision to choose a sharia hotel.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a quantitative approach with the aim of examining the influence of halal tourism knowledge and religiosity on trust and the decision to choose a sharia hotel. The population in this study consists of Muslim tourists in Surabaya who have stayed at or are interested in staying at sharia hotels, with a sample size of 100 respondents selected using purposive sampling. Data was collected through a closed-ended questionnaire with a 1–5 Likert scale. The data collected was analyzed using SPSS software, with the analysis steps including validity and reliability tests, descriptive analysis, multiple linear regression tests, and mediation tests to examine the role of trust as a mediating variable in the relationships between the variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

1. Reliability Test

Table 1 Reliability Test

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Remarks
Halal Tourism Knowledge	5	0.812	Reliable
Religiosity	6	0.861	Reliable
Trust	5	0.877	Reliable
Decision to Choose Hotel	4	0.835	Reliable

2. Regression Results

Table 2. Regression Result: Halal Tourism Knowledge & Religiosity → Trust

Model	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.254	0.322	3.895	0.000
Halal Tourism Knowledge	0.361	0.112	3.223	0.002
Religiosity	0.415	0.095	4.368	0.000

Table 3. Regression Result: Regression Results: Trust → Decision to Choose Sharia Hotel

Model	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.011	0.238	4.246	0.000
Trust	0.672	0.066	10.209	0.000

Table 4. Regression Result: Mediation Test Results (Sobel Test)

Mediation Path	Sobel Z	Sig. (p)	Remarks	Mediation Path
Halal Tourism Knowledge → Trust → Decision	3.12	0.002	Significant Mediation	Halal Tourism Knowledge → Trust → Decision
Religiosity → Trust → Decision	3.78	0.000	Significant Mediation	Religiosity → Trust → Decision

Discussion

This study aims to examine the influence of halal tourism knowledge and religiosity on trust and the decision to choose a sharia hotel in Surabaya. Based on the data analysis results using SPSS, the following findings were obtained.

The Effect of Halal Tourism Knowledge on Trust

Hypothesis 1 (H1) proposed that halal tourism knowledge positively and significantly affects trust. The regression test results showed that $B = 0.361$, $t = 3.223$, and $\text{Sig.} = 0.002$, indicating that halal tourism knowledge has a positive effect on trust ($R^2 = 0.548$, $\text{Sig. F} = 0.000$). Knowledge of halal tourism provides a better understanding for tourists about the halal services offered by sharia hotels, thus increasing their trust (Omar et al., 2017; Nadarajah & Cham, 2020). These findings align with research that states that a good understanding of halal tourism enhances the credibility and trust of consumers in service providers (Kamaruddin et al., 2020). Halal tourism knowledge provides a foundation for tourists to trust that the hotels they choose meet the halal standards expected. This is especially important for Muslim tourists who prioritize adherence to Islamic principles in all aspects of life, including accommodation choices (Omar et al., 2017).

The Effect of Religiosity on Trust

Hypothesis 2 (H2) proposed that religiosity positively and significantly affects trust. The regression test results showed that $B = 0.415$, $t = 4.368$, and $\text{Sig.} = 0.000$, indicating a positive and significant effect of religiosity on trust ($R^2 = 0.548$, $\text{Sig. F} = 0.000$). Individuals with

higher religiosity are more likely to trust service providers that ensure compliance with Islamic values (Jamal & Kamal, 2019; Riaz et al., 2020). Religiosity is a key factor in decision-making for Muslim tourists, including in choosing a hotel. The higher the religiosity of an individual, the more likely they are to choose services that align with Islamic principles, which in turn increases their trust in sharia hotels (Jamal & Kamal, 2019).

The Effect of Trust on the Decision to Choose a Sharia Hotel

Hypothesis 3 (H3) stated that trust positively and significantly affects the decision to choose a sharia hotel. The regression test results showed that $B = 0.672$, $t = 10.209$, and $\text{Sig.} = 0.000$, indicating that trust positively and significantly affects the decision to choose a sharia hotel ($R^2 = 0.512$, $\text{Sig. } F = 0.000$). These findings confirm that consumers who have high levels of trust in sharia hotels are more likely to choose them as their accommodation option (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Ladhari et al., 2019). Trust is a key factor in consumer decisions when choosing a product or service. In the context of sharia hotels, trust in the hotel's compliance with Islamic principles is the main basis for tourists to choose the hotel (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). This trust also strengthens loyalty and the intention to stay again.

Trust as a Mediating Variable

Hypothesis 4 (H4) proposed that trust mediates the effect of halal tourism knowledge and religiosity on the decision to choose a sharia hotel. The mediation test results using the Sobel Test showed a $z = 3.12$ with $p = 0.002$ for halal tourism knowledge $\rightarrow$ trust $\rightarrow$ decision, and a $z = 3.78$ with $p = 0.000$ for religiosity $\rightarrow$ trust $\rightarrow$ decision. Both paths show that trust plays a significant mediating role between halal tourism knowledge and religiosity and the decision to choose a sharia hotel. These results show that trust acts as a mediator that strengthens the relationship between halal tourism knowledge, religiosity, and the decision to choose a sharia hotel. Tourists who have good knowledge of halal tourism and a high level of religiosity tend to trust sharia hotels more, which then influences their decision to choose the hotel (Jamal & Kamal, 2019; Ladhari et al., 2019).

CONCLUSION

The present study concludes that halal tourism knowledge and religiosity significantly and positively influence trust, which in turn significantly affects the decision to choose a sharia hotel in Surabaya. Additionally, trust plays a mediating role in strengthening the relationship between halal tourism knowledge, religiosity, and tourists' decisions. These findings underline the importance of equipping Muslim tourists with adequate knowledge about halal tourism and addressing their religious values through sharia-compliant hotel services. Trust becomes a central factor that bridges the understanding of halal principles and the decision to stay in a sharia hotel.

Based on these results, several suggestions can be offered to hotel practitioners. First, sharia hotel managers should enhance their guests' halal tourism knowledge by providing clear information on halal certifications and services. Second, emphasizing religious values such as offering facilities aligned with Islamic practices can build stronger emotional and spiritual connections with Muslim customers. Third, it is essential for hotels to continuously build and maintain trust through service transparency, consistent halal practices, and professional staff who understand the needs of Muslim tourists.

For future research, scholars are encouraged to broaden the geographical scope by including other regions in Indonesia or even conducting cross-country comparisons to enrich the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, exploring other influencing variables such as customer satisfaction, service quality, or digital marketing effectiveness could deepen the understanding of decision-making in halal tourism. Longitudinal studies could also reveal behavioral changes over time, and comparative research across halal industries such as halal food or fashion may provide more comprehensive insights. These future directions are expected to contribute significantly to the development of knowledge and strategies in the growing field of halal tourism..

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