

Discourses of Muslim-Friendly Tourism (Indonesia Empirical Cases)

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Abstract:

The tourism sector in the period before the Covid-19 Pandemic contributed significantly to the country's revenues. In addition, as a country with the largest Muslim population in the world, Indonesia has the potential to develop Muslim-friendly tourism. Furthermore, the Indonesian government plans to make Indonesia the center of the world's Islamic economic and financial ecosystem. Therefore, this conceptual paper aims to know the concepts and services of Muslim-friendly tourism in Indonesia. The methods used using qualitative methods derived from research and scientific articles related to research questions are as follows: (i) How is the concept of Muslim-friendly tourism?; (ii) How to tour Muslim-friendly services?. The result of this conceptual paper is the concept of Muslim-friendly tourism and its implementation strategy. The implication of this research is to provide scientific characteristics both for academics and practitioners in tourism.

Introduction

Indonesia, as a tropical country, is a country full of blessings. Many blessings have been given by the Creator (Allah SWT), which include: abundant natural resources, fertile land, friendly climate, diverse cultural tribes and customs, and beautiful nature. Moreover, the blessings that have been bestowed must be utilized and possible to improve the community's welfare and maintain its sustainability. One of the capitals that can be used to improve the welfare of Indonesian people who are relatively easy to empower and manage is the natural beauty of Indonesia and cultural diversity that can attract tourists to travel in Indonesia.

Tourism is a sector that has promising potential in generating income for a country. The income can come from local tourists and foreign tourists. Therefore, the development of the tourism sector will contribute to the movement of the real sector. The development of the tourism sector is essential because it will add new jobs, the construction of infrastructure facilities that require labor, and the economic wheels of the environment around the tourist attractions. According to information from the ministry of tourism and creative economy, revenues sourced from the tourism sector contributed significantly to the country's revenues where before the covid-19 pandemic, in 2019, the tourism sector was able to contribute revenue for the country of Rp280 trillion, increased by Rp10 trillion from the previous year which reached Rp270 trillion (Susanto & Mahadi, 2020).

However, during the Covid-19 pandemic, revenues from the tourism sector also decreased significantly. At the beginning of 2020 (period January to April), tourism receipts dropped dramatically by Rp60 trillion. This is due to the decline of tourists coming to visit to travel (Putra, 2020). The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in revenues from the tourism sector experiencing a significant decrease, which is 90% (Kurnia & Jatmiko, 2020). The tourism sector is one of the sectors exposed or exposed to the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic, which is quite significant. This is because the tourism sector needs a physical platform to enjoy the attraction and the surrounding environment. Therefore, the restriction of human space that aims to mitigate the transmission of the

Covid-19 virus greatly impacted the decline in tourism coming to Indonesia (Jones & Comfort, 2020; Qiu et al., 2020; Safitri et al., 2020)

On the other hand, after the Covid-19 Pandemic, the prospective and potential market is that Muslim tourist visits to Indonesia will increase rapidly (Alfian et al., 2020). Muslims have become one of the target markets of tourism because, from year to year continues to increase in number. The growth of Muslims in the world is among the highest, as seen in figure 1 below:

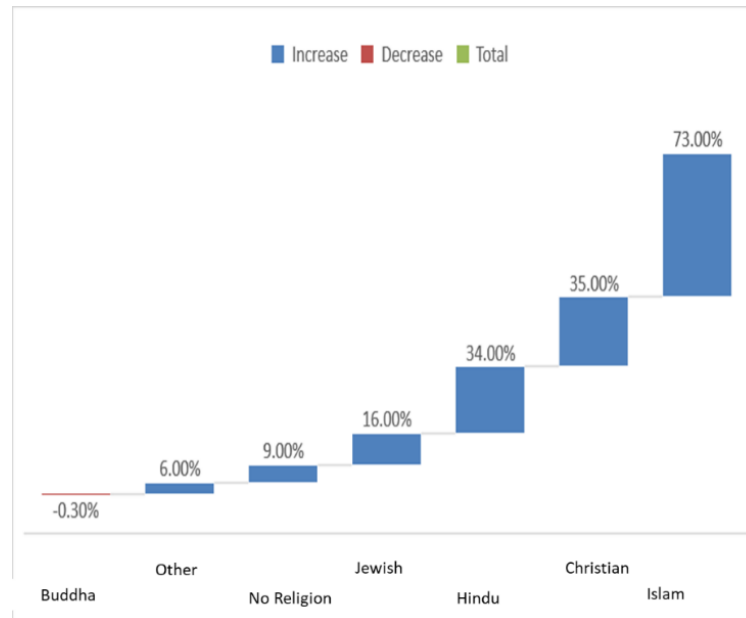


Figure 1. The Growth of Religious People in the World in 2017
Sources: PewResearch (2017)

Referring to figure 1 above, the growth of Muslims reached 73%, more than double the growth of Christians who reached 35%. This is certainly a prospect for Indonesia to have a Muslim-friendly tourism concept and service. In addition, Indonesia is also the country with the largest Muslim population globally, amounting to 209,120,000 people in 2010. Other numbers of Muslims in different countries can be shown in figure 2 below:

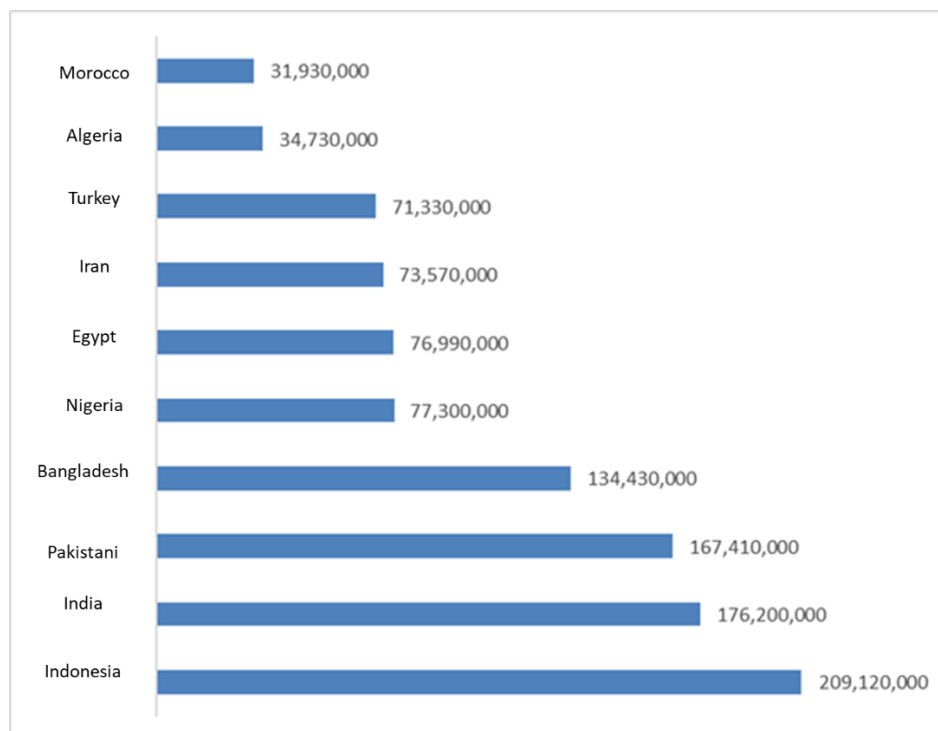


Figure 2. Number of Muslim Populations in Different Worlds
Source: Globalreligiustutures (2018)

Furthermore, referring to figure 2 above, from the total Muslim population in these countries, Indonesia's Muslim population reaches 20% of all Muslims. Thus, Indonesia can host local Muslim tourists and even bring in foreign Muslims with a Muslim-friendly concept and service. Based on these phenomena, the research formulation of this article includes: (i) How is the concept of Muslim-friendly tourism?; (ii) How to tour Muslim-friendly services?.

Furthermore, referring to the formulation of the problem, this conceptual paper aims to understand the concept of Muslim-friendly tourism and tourism services. Therefore, the implication of this conceptual paper is to add knowledge related to tourism in general and Muslim-friendly tourism in particular and can also be used as a reference in the writing of further research related to the tourism sector.

Method

The method used in this conceptual paper is to use previous research in journals, studies, and working papers issued by authorities who have authority and authority. The discussion method in this conceptual paper aims to answer research questions: (i) How is the concept of Muslim-friendly tourism?; (ii) How to tour Muslim-friendly services?.

Results and Discussion

Muslim-friendly tourism concept

Revenue from the tourism sector will increase along with local and foreign tourists coming to visit to travel. However, the essence of tourist attraction is not to pursue the number of tourists who come. However, they are disappointed but improve the quality, so that the tourists stay longer and spend more money and be satisfied with their travel (Abuharris, 2014; Neal et al., 2007). Furthermore, the definition of Muslim-friendly tourism is a set of interrelated tourism ecosystems and synergize harmoniously that aims to provide facilities or facilities and services that support so that tourists feel comfort and security and travel experiences in harmony with Islamic values to meet their needs and desires (Nugroho et al., 2019). Furthermore, so that the quality of tourism and the concept of Muslim-friendly tourism can be adequately implemented and have sustainable competitiveness, then several essential aspects must be achieved, which include:

- Indonesia should be an investment destination for Muslim-friendly tourism;
- The wealth and diversity of national tourism resources must be professionally managed.;
- There is attention and positive attitude from all communities and stakeholders towards the development of Muslim-friendly tourism.

Indonesia, in developing the concept of Muslim-friendly tourism, must consider the factors below to accelerate Indonesia as a Muslim-friendly tourist destination which among others:

- The market potential of foreign tourists and local Muslim tourists is prospective and continues to increase;
- Improving the reputation of Muslim-friendly tourism through the formation of a positive image formed through various events and international level award forums obtained;
- The importance of the role of adaptive media and information and communication technologies;
- Establishing a broader marketing partnership built among tourism actors;
- Strengthening Indonesia's promotion that focuses on the advantages of Muslim-friendly tourism and increasingly diverse promotional media;
- The need for Wonderful Indonesia Brand Equity is constantly strengthened in the international world.

Indonesia as a Muslim-friendly tourist destination has been planned for a long time. The milestone was initiated in 1974 where the Establishment of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI). The milestone details of the efforts that have been made to make Indonesia a destination for Muslim-friendly tourism are below:

- 1975: Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) was formed;
- 2012: Soft launching of Syariah Tourism through Syariah Tourism guidelines book;
- 2013: Global Halal Forum "Wonderful Indonesia as Muslim Friendly Destination" Syariah Tourism grand launching;
- 2014: Ministry of tourism identifies syariah tourism destination. Halal products assurance law was passed
- 2015: Indonesia wins three awards in World Halal Travel Award in Dubai. We launched Muslim Visitor Guides in English and Arabic. In addition, we embarked on a destination marketing project to promote Indonesia with a halal trip via influencer marketing, blog articles, and video.
- 2016: Halal tourism acceleration and development team within the tourism ministry was established—criteria and decision for halal tourism destination development. Indonesia wins 12 of 16 world halal tourism awards.
- 2017: New halal products certification agency (Badan Penyelenggara Jaminan Produk Halal-BPJPH) was formed;
- 2018: Launch of Indonesia Muslim Travel Index (IMTI 2018);
- 2019: Launch of Indonesia Muslim Travel Index (IMTI 2019).

Milestones above must be followed up with the right strategies to make Indonesia a Muslim-friendly tourist destination. As for the strategies that can support the realization of Indonesia as a Muslim-friendly tourist center, shown in figure 3 below:

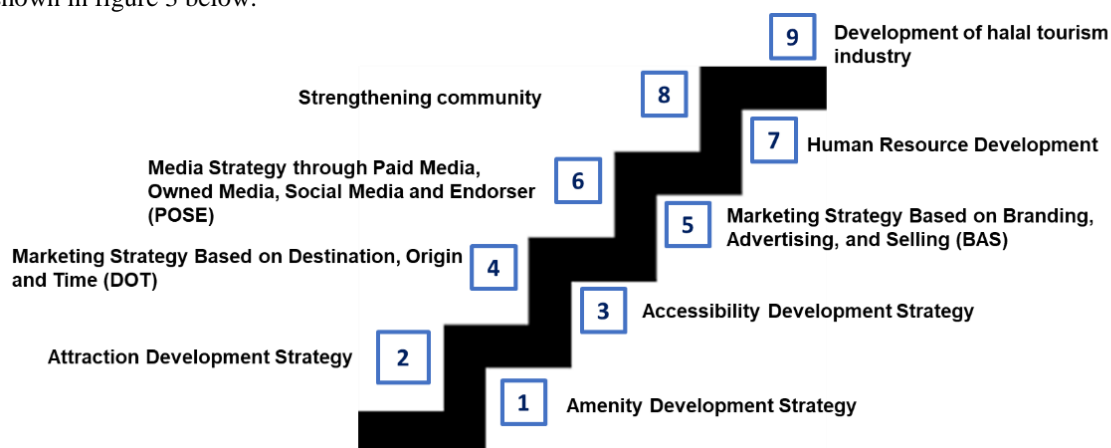


Figure 4. Strategies to Realize Indonesia as a Muslim Friendly Tourist Destination

Source: Nugroho (2021)

Based on figure 3 above, the strategies that must be implemented are as follows:

- Amenity development strategy is a strategy to meet the supporting facilities of tourist attractions. As for the supporting facilities such as clean public toilets, the availability of comfortable places of worship, adequate parking areas are critical support facilities to be met by tourist service providers;
- Attraction development strategy is a strategy to attract tourists to visit. The factors that motivate tourists interested in visiting are as follows:
 1. Something is interesting to see, and this is usually the main reason for tourists to come to visit a tourist attraction;
 2. Something is interesting to do, the availability of facilities at a tourist attraction that motivates tourists to come to carry out activities or activities that make tourists comfortable;
 3. Something is interesting to buy. Usually, tourists are also interested in buying handicrafts and unique souvenirs available at these attractions;
 4. Something is interesting to know, and tourists visit tourist objects because they want to know something like history or stories related to these attractions.
- Accessibility Development Strategy is a strategy related to the access and transportation of tourists to reach tourist attractions. The supporting facilities provide and develop road transportation systems, rivers, lakes and crossings, sea transportation, air freight, and rail transportation. Ease of access (accessibility) is an essential factor in improving travel comfort for tourists.
- There is an integrated marketing strategy owned by the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia which includes:
 1. Marketing Strategy Based on Destination, Origin and Time (DOT);
 2. Marketing Strategy Based on Branding, Advertising, and Selling (BAS);
 3. Media Strategy through Paid Media, Owned Media, Social Media, and Endorser (POSE).
- Professional human resource development strategies and adequate competence to support Muslim-friendly tourism are essential. This is because providing quality services will provide a good travel experience so that tourists who visit will feel at home and have the potential to return and provide recommendations to relations to come to visit;
- The strategy of strengthening the community is an effort to improve literacy to the community around the tourist attraction so that the surrounding community also supports the activities and activities of tourists so that they feel comfortable and safe;
- The strategy of developing Muslim-friendly tourism is to develop destinations or tourist attractions following sharia principles.

Muslim friendly tourism service

The key to Muslim-friendly service is to provide their needs and wants when they travel. Some of the needs for Muslims that are important to know when they run a tourist trip illustrated in the picture are as follows:

Need to Have	Good to Have	Nice to Have
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Halal food service; Shalat (prayer) facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water usage friendly washrooms; Ramadhan (fasting) services & facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No non-halal activities; Recreational facilities and services.

Figure 4. Muslim Tourist Needs

Source: Nugroho (2021)

Furthermore, based on figure 4 above, it can be identified the needs of Muslim tourist services into several categories based on the urgency and need to form visitors as follows:

- Important categories, namely Muslim-friendly tourism objects, must provide halal food and beverage services and the availability of facilities for worship;
- The category is quite essential; namely, Muslim-friendly tourism objects must provide clean and comfortable sanitation facilities, toilets, or bathrooms and provide sahur and fasting services during the month of Ramadan;
- Additional or complementary categories, namely Muslim-friendly tourism objects that do not provide activities that are not following sharia principles and provide comfortable and safe recreation and tourism activities for Muslims.

Furthermore, in addition to the service needs of Muslim tourists, there are also main components of Muslim-friendly tourism services, which can be illustrated in Figure 5 below:

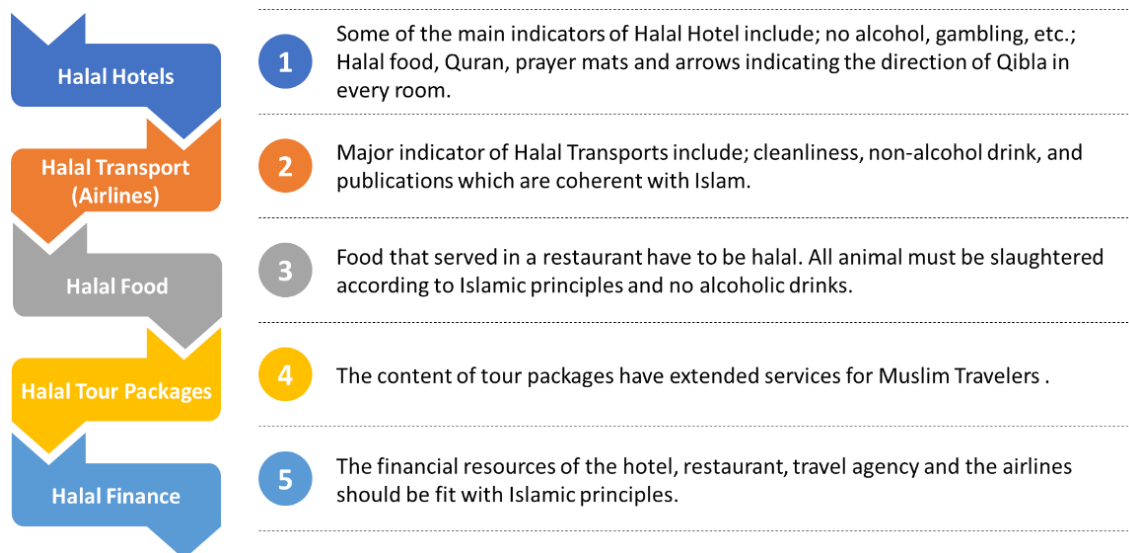


Figure 5. Main Components of Muslim Friendly Tourism

Source: Akyol & Kilinc (2016)

The need to carry out worship and sharia principles when Muslim tourists travel must be met by tour operators. The primary services needed by Muslim tourists listed in Figure 5 above can be explained as follows:

- Halal hotel services, namely providing hotel services following Islamic principles. Examples of these services include: not providing drinks containing alcohol, not providing gambling venues, providing halal food, containing the Koran, prayer rugs, and arrows that show the Qibla direction in each room;
- Halal transportation services, namely providing travel transportation services under sharia principles. Examples of these services include cleanliness of transportation equipment during the tour, not offering or providing alcoholic beverages during the trip, and not providing non-halal food during the trip;
- Halal food and beverage services, namely providing food and beverages that comply with sharia principles. Examples of these services include: all animals must be slaughtered under Islamic principles and must not drink alcoholic beverages;
- Travel services must comply with sharia principles. For example, in carrying out tourist trips, Muslim tourists can carry out worship and sharia principles both from the use of hotels, transportation, consumption of food and beverages that have met the halal requirements;
- Islamic financial services are financial transaction services under Islamic principles that support Muslim tourists on their travels.

Based on these main service components, these components are a system that cannot be separated from one another. In addition, tourism trends during the Covid-19 pandemic have also changed. If the primary service system for Muslim-friendly tourism is illustrated during the Covid-19 pandemic, it is shown in Figure 6 below:

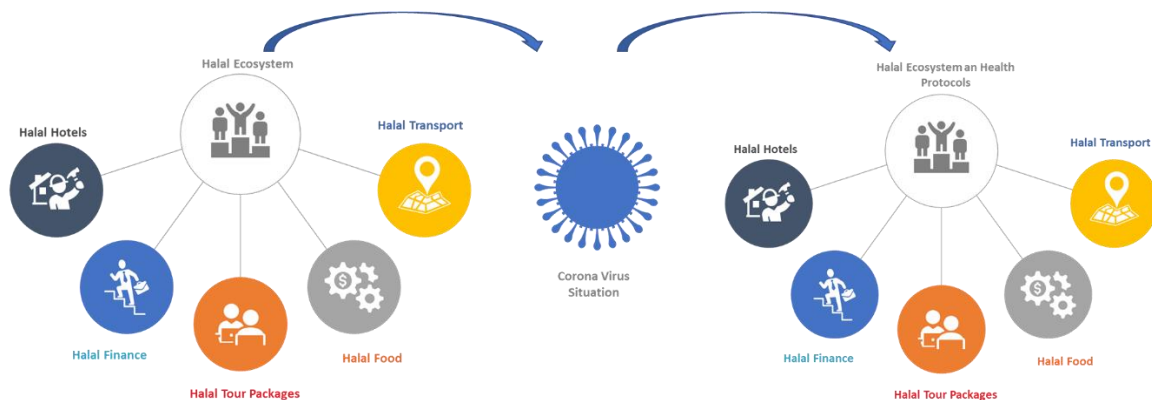


Figure 6. The Main Service System for Muslim Friendly Tourism during the Covid-19 Pandemic
Source: Various sources reprocessed by the author

Referring to Figure 6 above, during the Covid-19 Pandemic, all recreational activities and travel must comply with health protocols. Therefore, tour operators and tourism objects must provide masks, hand soap, and provisions for maintaining distance, checking body temperature, and conducting a Covid-19 test before traveling long distances.

Conclusion

The tourism sector before the Covid-19 pandemic had a significant contribution to the country's revenues. However, at the time of the current Covid-19 pandemic, the tourism sector was among the sectors that suffered losses. Therefore, as a nation with the largest Muslim population globally, Indonesia must have a Muslim-friendly tourism concept and service that has bright potential and prospects in the future.

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