

The Influence of Halal Awareness and the Image of Halal Destinations on Visit Intentions in Halal Culinary Tourism in Banten Province

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Abstract

Keywords: Halal awareness; halal destination image; halal destination intention; halal culinary tourism; PLS-SEM

Halal culinary tourism has become an increasingly important segment of the global tourism industry as Muslim tourists seek destinations that align with religious values while offering authentic culinary experiences. This study examines the relationship between halal awareness, halal destination image, and visit intention for halal culinary tourism in Banten Province.

This study uses a quantitative approach, data was collected from 147 respondents through targeted sampling and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results of the study show that halal awareness has a significant positive influence on the image of halal destinations and the intention of visiting in Banten Province.

The image of halal destinations also has a strong and positive influence on visit intentions, which confirms its central role in shaping tourist behavior decisions in Banten Province. The findings suggest that halal awareness serves as a fundamental cognitive mechanism that reinforces the perception of the destination and reduces perceived uncertainty, while the image of the halal destination consolidates this perception into a strong foundation for travel intentions. This study contributes to the halal tourism literature by empirically validating the integrated role of destination awareness and imagery in halal culinary tourism and offers practical insights for destination managers seeking to increase competitiveness through halal-oriented strategies.

INTRODUCTION

Halal culinary tourism has emerged as one of the most dynamic segments in the global tourism industry, driven by the rapid growth of the Muslim travel market and the growing demand for halal standards-compliant food experiences. (Yousaf and Xiucheng, 2018). In addition to meeting the requirements of a religious diet, halal culinary tourism allows tourists to interact with local culture, identity, and authenticity through food consumption. (Ainin et al., 2020). Many destinations with a majority of non-Muslim populations, such as Japan, South Korea, and Thailand, have strategically incorporated halal culinary offerings to attract Muslim tourists and increase the competitiveness of destinations. (Amalia and Gunawan, 2023). The expansion of the

global halal industry further strengthens the importance of halal culinary tourism as a sustainable contributor to national tourism development and economic growth. (Amid, 2024)

In this developing context, halal awareness and the image of halal destinations have become a central construction in shaping tourists' evaluation of halal culinary destinations. (Sitepu et al., 2023). Halal awareness reflects tourists' understanding and sensitivity to halal principles which significantly affects their confidence in consuming local food during the trip. (Mursid et al., 2025). The strong image of halal destinations, characterized by the visible availability of halal food, supportive facilities and halal-friendly services, enhances the perception of safety and comfort among Muslim tourists. (Zulvianti et al., 2022). Empirical studies consistently show that destinations with higher levels of halal awareness and a good halal image are more successful in attracting Muslim visitors and fostering positive travel perceptions. (Preko et al., 2022).

Intention to visit is the main outcome variable in tourism research in Banten Province because it reflects the psychological readiness of tourists to choose destinations and engage in travel behavior. (Som and Badarneh, 2011). Previous studies have shown that intention to visit is influenced by the image of the destination, perceived satisfaction, and expectations of experiences formed before travel. (Wu, 2015). However, the tourism literature also highlights a persistent gap between intentions and behaviors, where positive intentions do not always translate into actual visits due to uncertainty, unmet expectations, or trust issues. (Lee et al., 2014). Despite extensive research on halal tourism, empirical studies that specifically examine how halal awareness and halal destination imagery simultaneously affect visit intentions in the context of halal culinary tourism are still limited, suggesting a clear research gap. (Birch and Memery, 2020; Wut et al., 2023)

To overcome this gap, this study uses Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to examine the structural relationship between halal awareness, halal destination image, and intention to visit halal culinary tourism in Banten Province. (Kono and Sato, 2023). PLS-SEM is particularly suitable for this study due to its predictive orientation and its ability to handle complex models with latent constructs. (Zeng et al., 2021). This method has been widely applied in the fields of tourism, marketing, and behavioral research to assess cause-and-effect relationships and explain variance effectively. (Hair and Alamer, 2022) By applying PLS-SEM, this study aims to provide strong empirical evidence that deepens theoretical understanding and offers practical insights for the development of halal culinary destinations in the Banten Province region. (Valls Martínez et al., 2025)

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Halal Culinary Tourism Trends in Banten Province

Halal culinary tourism in Banten Province has grown rapidly as a result of the majority of Banten people being Muslims resulting in increasing global interest in halal-based tourism experiences. (VargasSanchez et al., 2020). The diversity of culinary heritage and strong Islamic cultural values place halal food as a strategic tourism asset that differentiates destinations and increases market competitiveness. (Kusumawardhani, 2024). The initiative of the local government of Banten Province is actively promoting halal culinary tourism by promoting areas such as Lombok and Aceh as halal-friendly destinations to attract domestic and international Muslim tourists. (Vargas-Sanchez et al., 2020). The development of digital regulations and governance further strengthens halal tourism by instituting a halal certification and supervision system in the tourism sector. (Santoso et al., 2022). Despite the challenges related to uneven promotion and limited public socialization, the local community generally showed positive support due to the perceived economic and socio-cultural benefits from the development of halal tourism. (Vargas-Sanchez et al., 2020). Halal culinary tourism is increasingly recognized as a sustainable driver for tourist satisfaction and long-term tourism growth in the Banten Province area. (Kusumawardhani, 2024)

2. Halal Awareness and Visit Intention

Halal awareness refers to the extent to which consumers understand and appreciate halal principles including halal production processes, ingredient integrity, and certification compliance with Islamic law. (Alam et al., 2025). This awareness is shaped by education, social influences, institutional regulations, and repeated exposure to halal-related information in various consumption environments. (Pratama et al., 2023). Visit intention represents a person's conscious willingness or plan to visit a particular destination that is formed through evaluative assessments, attitudes, and perceived social norms. (Bagozzi, 2010). In the context of halal culinary tourism, higher halal awareness reduces perceived uncertainty and increases the belief that religious and dietary needs will be respected during the trip. (Shaari et al., 2020). Awareness of the availability of halal-certified food increases trust and psychological comfort which positively influences the intentions of tourists' behavior towards halal culinary destinations. (Oemar et al., 2023). Halal awareness serves as a primary precursor to visit intentions by strengthening the perception of religious conformity and travel assurance among Muslim tourists. (Mursid et al., 2025).

Research Hypothesis:

H1:

Halal awareness has a positive effect on the intention of visiting halal culinary tourism.

Halal Awareness and Halal Destination Image

The image of a halal destination refers to the overall perception and mental representation of tourists of a destination's adherence to halal principles, including the availability of halal food, prayer facilities, and Muslim-friendly services. (Sukmayadi and Effendi, 2020). This picture consists of a cognitive evaluation of tangible halal attributes and affective responses that reflect emotional comfort and religious acceptance. (Yagmur and Aksu, 2020). Halal awareness plays an important role in shaping the image of halal destinations because informed travelers are better able to identify and interpret the halal cues embedded in destination offerings. (Amalia and Gunawan, 2023). When tourists have a high halal awareness, destinations that clearly communicate halal compliance tend to be considered credible, trustworthy, and in accordance with religious teachings. (Sitepu et al., 2023). This awareness strengthens positive destination associations and increases the perception of the reliability of halal branding strategies. (Amalia and Gunawan, 2023). Therefore, halal awareness indirectly contributes to the competitiveness of destinations by forming a good image of halal destinations in the minds of Muslim tourists. (Sitepu et al., 2023).

H2:

Halal awareness has a positive effect on the image of halal destinations.

Halal Destination Image and Visit Intention

The image of a halal destination significantly influences the intention of the visit by shaping tourist trust, emotional attachment, and the perceived value of a destination. (Yagmur and Aksu, 2020). When a destination is considered halal-friendly, tourists will feel more confident in fulfilling religious obligations, which increases their motivation to visit. (Amalia and Gunawan, 2023). Cognitive assessment of halal facilities combined with affective feelings of safety and respect together strengthens the intention of tourist behavior towards halal culinary destinations. (Yagmur and Aksu, 2020). Empirical studies consistently show that a positive image of halal destinations leads to stronger visit intentions and favorable word-of-mouth promotion among Muslim tourists. (Sitepu et al., 2023). This relationship shows that beyond the physical provision of halal services, the perceived image of halal compliance plays an important role in the travel decision-making process. (Amalia and Gunawan, 2023). Therefore, maintaining a strong image of halal destinations is essential to maintain visitor intentions and long-term competitiveness in the halal culinary tourism market. (Yagmur and Aksu, 2020).

H3:

The image of halal destinations has a positive effect on the intention of visiting halal culinary tourism.

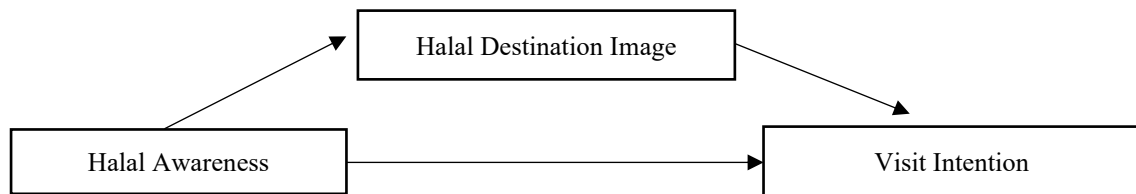


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

METHODS

This study uses a quantitative research design to examine the structural relationship between halal awareness, halal destination image, and visit intention to halal culinary tourism. Data was collected through a self-filled questionnaire and distributed to respondents who met certain inclusion criteria. Sampling techniques are aimed at ensuring that participants are relevant to the context of the study. (Hair et al., 2020). Respondents consisted of 147 individuals who had prior knowledge of halal food concepts and interests or experiences related to culinary tourism. This sample size exceeds the minimum requirements for Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) which is suitable for predictive research models and relatively small to medium sample sizes. (Hair et al., 2024).

The measurement instrument was developed using validated indicators adapted from previous halal tourism studies and consumer behavior. All constructs are measured using multiple reflective indicators that are assessed on a Likert type scale. Data analysis was carried out using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with a two-stage approach consisting of measurement model evaluation and structural model assessment. PLS-SEM was chosen because of its robustness in handling complex models, non-normal data distribution, and its strong predictive orientation. The measurement model was evaluated by examining the reliability of the indicators (charge factor), the reliability of the internal consistency (Cronbach alpha and composite reliability), and the convergent validity (the extracted mean variance). Discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio (HTMT). The structural model was evaluated using path coefficients, t-statistics, p-values obtained through bootstrapping, determination coefficients (R^2), and overall model fit measured by standardized average square root residues (SRMR). A bootstrapping procedure with a large number of resampling was applied to assess the statistical significance of the hypothesized relationship.

RESULTS

Evaluation of Measurement Models

The measurement model shows strong reliability and validity across constructs. All indicator load factors exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70 and demonstrate satisfactory indicator reliability. The halal awareness indicator has a strong charge on its construct with a charge ranging from 0.765 to 0.923 and confirms that the items adequately represent the underlying concept. Similarly, the halal destination imagery indicator shows a high charge between 0.767 and 0.914, while the visit intent indicator ranges from 0.817 to 0.929 and reflects a strong measurement quality. The reliability of the internal consistency is confirmed for all constructs as the Cronbach alpha value ranges from 0.902 to 0.925 and the composite reliability value ranges from 0.928 to 0.944, all well above the recommended minimum of 0.70. The convergent validity is also enforced with an average variance extracted (AVE) value that exceeds 0.70 for all constructs and indicates that each construct explains more than 70 percent of the variance in its indicator. These results confirm that the measurement model is reliable and shows strong convergent validity.

Table 1: Load Factor, CA, CR and AVE

Variables	Factor Loading	CA	CR	AVE
Halal Awareness		0.911	0.934	0.740
HA1	0.828			
HA2	0.898			
HA3	0.876			
HA4	0.923			
HA5	0.765			
Halal Destination Image		0.902	0.928	0.721
HDI1	0.767			
HDI2	0.875			
HDI3	0.878			
HDI4	0.914			
HDI5	0.802			
Visit Intention Toward Halal Culinary Tourism		0.925	0.944	0.772
VIHCT1	0.875			
VIHCT2	0.929			
VIHCT3	0.905			
VIHCT4	0.863			
VIHCT5	0.817			

The validity of the discriminator was assessed using the HTMT criteria. All HTMT values are below the conservative threshold of 0.90 and indicate that each construct is empirically different from the other. The HTMT value between halal awareness and halal destination image (0.841), halal awareness and visit intention (0.855), and halal destination image and visit intention (0.881)

confirmed that these constructs capture different conceptual domains. These results support the adequacy of the measurement model and reduce concerns of multicollinearity or overlap constructs.

Table 2: HTMT

Variables	Halal Awareness	Halal Destination Image	Visit Intention Toward Halal Culinary Tourism
Halal Awareness			
Halal Destination Image	0.841		
Visit Intention Toward Halal Culinary Tourism	0.855	0.881	

The overall fit of the model is acceptable as indicated by the SRMR value of 0.074 which is below the recommended limit of 0.08. This shows that the proposed model adequately represents the observed data. The value of the determination coefficient (R^2) indicates a strong explanatory power. Halal awareness explains 73.7 percent of the variance in the image of halal destinations and shows a substantial influence. Furthermore, halal awareness and halal destination imagery together explain the 85.4 percent variance in visit intentions for halal culinary tourism which reflects a very high level of prediction accuracy. These findings show that the model is very effective in explaining the behavioral intentions of tourists in the context of halal culinary tourism.

Table 3: SRMR and R Squared

SRMR	0.074
R2 Halal Destination Image	0.737
R2 Visit Intention Toward Halal Culinary Tourism	0.854

Structural Models and Hypothesis Testing

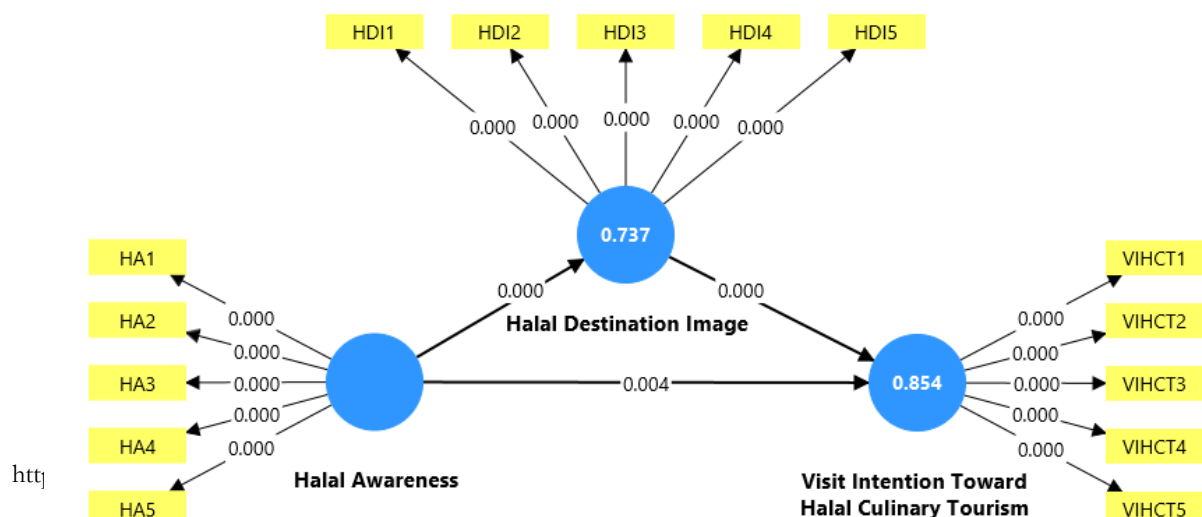


Figure 2: Boostarpping

Table 4: Path Analysis

Hypothesis	Path Analysis	T statistics	P values
H1	Halal Awareness -> Visit Intention Toward Halal Culinary Tourism	2.887	0.004
H2	Halal Awareness -> Halal Destination Image	21.939	0.000
H3	Halal Destination Image -> Visit Intention Toward Halal Culinary Tourism	3.724	0.000

The results of the structural model provide strong empirical support for all the hypotheses proposed. The pathway from halal awareness to visit intention was positive and statistically significant ($t = 2.887$, $p = 0.004$), supporting H1. This suggests that a higher level of halal awareness directly increases the intention of tourists to visit halal culinary destinations. The relationship between halal awareness and halal destination image was strong and significant ($t = 21.939$, $p < 0.001$), providing strong support for H2. These results confirm that halal awareness plays a dominant role in shaping tourists' perceptions and mental images of halal culinary destinations. Finally, the image of halal destinations had a positive and significant influence on visit intentions ($t = 3.724$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H3. These findings show that a good image of halal destinations significantly increases the desire of tourists to visit halal culinary destinations.

Discussion

Halal culinary tourism has emerged as a strategic segment in the global tourism industry driven by the growing demand of Muslim tourists for destinations that can accommodate religious, ethical, and lifestyle considerations in food consumption and travel experiences. (Anwar, 2025). In this context, travelers' decision-making is increasingly shaped not only by real offerings but also by cognitive awareness and symbolic perceptions associated with halal compliance and Islamic values embedded in destinations. (Amalia and Gunawan, 2023). Therefore, understanding how halal awareness translates into an image of a profitable halal destination and subsequently stimulates visitor intent is essential to explain tourist behavior in halal culinary tourism, especially as destinations compete to position themselves as trustworthy destinations and in accordance with values in an increasingly selective halal market. (Sci-fi et al., 2025)

Halal awareness emerged as a fundamental cognitive mechanism that shapes the way Muslim tourists evaluate destinations, particularly in the context of halal culinary tourism, as it reflects the ability of tourists to recognize, interpret, and trust the halal-related attributes embedded in a destination. (Anwar, 2025). A high level of halal awareness allows tourists to distinguish between destinations that only claim to be halal-friendly and destinations that truly institutionalize halal principles across food, services, and governance structures, thereby strengthening the perceived credibility of the destination. (Amalia and Gunawan, 2023). From an empirical perspective, halal awareness serves as an information filter that reduces ambiguity and uncertainty regarding halal compliance, which is especially important when tourists travel outside of areas where the majority of the population is Muslim. Sitepu et al., 2023). When tourists have a strong halal awareness, they tend to interpret visual cues such as halal certification, ingredient transparency, prayer facilities, and halal-oriented branding as signals of authenticity, rather than just superficial marketing tactics. (Gaffar et al., 2024). This increase in interpretive capacity explains why halal awareness consistently shows a positive influence on the image of halal destinations, as it transforms isolated halal attributes into coherent and trustworthy mental representations of destinations. (Anwar, 2025). Further empirical studies show that destinations that actively communicate the halal culinary narrative through digital platforms strengthen halal awareness which in turn increases the perception of destination reliability and moral alignment. (Wijaya, Wijaya, et al., 2025) As halal awareness increases, tourists are cognitively associating the destination not only with the availability of functional food but also with broader Islamic values such as cleanliness, ethical sources of foodstuffs, and spiritual comfort, thus improving the overall image of the destination. (Hariani et al., 2026)

The influence of halal awareness on the intention of visits to halal culinary tourism operates through rational evaluation mechanisms and affective affirmations that make it a strong antecedent of behavioral intentions. (Sitepu et al., 2023). Travelers with strong halal awareness show greater confidence in decision-making because they perceive the risks associated with food intake, cross-contamination, and religious non-compliance to be lower, which empirically increases their desire to visit halal destinations. (Sci-fi et al., 2025). Halal awareness also reinforces the perception of self-control and efficacy during the trip as tourists believe that they can navigate culinary options without sacrificing religious obligations, thereby reinforcing the intention of the visit. (Anwar, 2025). Previous findings show that halal conscious travelers are more responsive to halal culinary information and destination narratives, which reinforces the motivational attraction factor in the destination selection process. (Amalia and Gunawan, 2023). Additionally, halal awareness fosters trust in destination providers because it allows travelers to evaluate the credibility

of the institution rather than relying solely on assumptions or stereotypes. (Gaffar et al., 2024). This trust-building role is very important in halal culinary tourism where consumption involves intimate and repetitive interactions with the local food ecosystem, thus increasing the importance of halal assurance. (Wijaya, Zunairoh, et al., 2025). Therefore, halal awareness not only influences intentions but actively legitimizes the decision to visit by aligning consumption behavior with religious identity and moral responsibility. (Hariani et al., 2026).

The image of the halal destination itself exerts a direct and strong influence on the intention of visiting halal culinary tourism because it includes a holistic evaluation of tourists on the functional qualities, symbolic meaning, and emotional safety associated with the destination. (Anwar, 2025). A positive image of halal destinations indicates that halal compliance is embedded systematically and not only sporadically, which empirically increases the confidence of tourists to enjoy halal culinary dishes without the need to worry excessively. (Sci-fi et al., 2025). Destination imagery serves as a heuristic shortcut in travel decision-making that allows travelers to infer service reliability, cultural sensitivity, and religious accommodation from accumulated impressions, rather than from isolated attributes. (Amalia and Gunawan, 2023). Empirical evidence shows that when the image of a halal destination is strong, tourists develop positive emotional expectations, including comfort, belonging, and spiritual peace that significantly increase visit intent. (Hasan, 2024). This emotional pathway complements the cognitive pathway, which suggests that the image of the destination influences intention not only through perceived qualities but also through anticipated affective outcomes. (Wijaya, Zunairoh, et al., 2025). In addition, the image of established halal destinations enhances word-of-mouth credibility and social validation that reinforces tourists' belief that their choice of visit is socially and religiously appropriate. (Gaffar et al., 2024). The image of halal destinations serves as a strategic asset that transforms halal culinary tourism from a special offer into an attractive and common travel motivation. (Hariani et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that tourists' intention to engage in halal culinary tourism is basically formed by the interaction between internal halal awareness and external destination signals that indicate halal credibility. Halal awareness equips travelers with the cognitive ability to evaluate halal authenticity which reduces uncertainty and strengthens confidence in making travel decisions that align with religious values. This awareness gains behavioral significance when reinforced by a clear and positive halal destination image that synthesizes perceptions of halal food availability, institutional commitment, and emotional comfort into an integrated assessment of destination suitability. The findings show that visit intent is not driven by halal attributes in isolation, but by

how convincingly the destination translates halal principles into an image that tourists perceive as trustworthy, consistent, and value-worthy. In this case, the image of halal destinations acts as a bridge that transforms personal religious consciousness into concrete travel motivation that highlights that the competitiveness of halal culinary destinations depends on their ability to align cognitive assurances with symbolic and emotional assurances in the minds of tourists.

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