

Interest In Visiting Muslim Tourists In The Regency Mamasa: Muslim Friendly Tourism, Tourism Promotion and Religiosity

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of Muslim-Friendly Tourism and Tourism Promotion on Muslim tourists' interest in visiting Mamasa Regency, and to examine the role of religiosity as a moderating variable. The research method uses a quantitative approach with an associative research type. Data were obtained through distributing questionnaires to Muslim tourists and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on Partial Least Square (PLS). The results show that Muslim-Friendly Tourism and Tourism Promotion have a positive and significant effect on Muslim tourists' interest in visiting, while religiosity strengthens this relationship. The implications of this study emphasize the importance of improving halal facilities, optimizing digital tourism promotion, and integrating religious values into destination development strategies so that Mamasa can develop as a Muslim-friendly tourist destination in West Sulawesi.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a crucial sector that plays a significant role in driving the economic development of a region. In Indonesia, this sector continues to grow rapidly, including halal tourism, which is now gaining global attention. Halal tourism refers to tourist destinations that meet the needs of Muslim visitors by providing services such as halal food, prayer facilities, and accommodations that comply with Islamic law. This trend has encouraged many regions to develop the concept of Muslim-Friendly Tourism to attract both domestic and international Muslim tourists. (Ferdiansyah 2020) According to the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) 2024 report by Mastercard-CrescentRating, Indonesia has successfully maintained its top position alongside Malaysia. This achievement reflects Indonesia's significant potential for developing international halal tourism, supported by improved infrastructure, ease of access, and the availability of Muslim-friendly services such as halal food, prayer facilities, and sharia-compliant accommodations. (Index 2024)

As the tourism industry grows, Muslim-friendly destinations are becoming increasingly important, especially in countries with Muslim-majority populations. Muslim-friendly tourism is a subset of halal tourism that emphasizes the provision of Sharia-compliant services and facilities, including halal food, prayer rooms, and services that respect Islamic values and culture. (Rahtomo 2018) Therefore, destinations that offer amenities such as halal food, places of worship, and

services that respect Muslim cultural needs will have a significant competitive advantage. (Hasanah and Harun 2018)

In recent years, the trend of halal tourism, or Muslim-friendly tourism, has grown rapidly, as the number of Muslim travelers seeking destinations aligned with their religious values has increased. This growth is driven by the growing global Muslim population and changing traveler preferences for religiously-informed travel experiences. (Maulidi 2019) Indonesia, as the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, has enormous potential to develop the halal tourism sector. Its natural beauty, cultural richness, and strategic geographic location are key advantages. (Fadhlan and Subakti 2020) However, some regions still face challenges, such as Mamasa Regency in West Sulawesi, which despite having high natural and cultural tourism potential, still lacks halal facilities, places of worship, and optimal promotion.

According to the West Sulawesi Statistics Agency (BPS) report (2024), the number of tourist visits to Mamasa Regency is still much lower than other regencies in the same region, such as Polewali Mandar and Mamuju. Throughout 2024, total tourist visits to Mamasa were recorded at around 429,000 people, while Polewali Mandar reached more than 1.1 million tourists. This difference indicates that Mamasa still faces challenges in attracting tourists, especially Muslim tourists, due to limited halal facilities, a lack of places of worship, and suboptimal tourism promotion. Strategic steps such as improving halal facilities, local culinary certification, and digital tourism promotion are needed so that Mamasa can develop as a leading halal tourism destination in West Sulawesi. (Central Statistics Agency of West Sulawesi 2024)

Furthermore, tourism promotion is crucial for attracting visitors and increasing a destination's competitiveness. Effective promotion helps showcase a region's potential and advantages, builds a positive image, and influences tourists' decisions to visit. (Sari and Suyuthie 2020) In the context of Mamasa Regency, its vast natural and cultural potential has not been matched by optimal promotion. Therefore, digital promotion strategies, the development of halal tourism packages, and collaboration with travel agents need to be strengthened so that Mamasa can be recognized as a Muslim-friendly tourist destination in West Sulawesi. Research by Denada Batari Basuki (2022) shows that both promotional efforts and service quality positively and significantly influence tourist interest in visiting. Effective promotion and good service increase the attractiveness of a destination and encourage tourists to return. These findings are relevant for the development of halal tourism, where the promotion of Muslim-friendly facilities and quality services can increase Muslim tourist interest. (Denada nd)

Muslim tourists' interest in choosing a destination is influenced by several factors, particularly the provision of facilities that meet their needs, such as halal food, prayer areas, and accommodations that comply with Islamic principles. Destinations with these facilities make tourists feel safe and comfortable. Furthermore, tourism promotion through digital media and official publications also helps create a positive image of the destination and encourages interest in visiting. (Taufiqiyah et al. 2024) The growing interest of Muslim tourists presents an opportunity for Mamasa Regency to develop Muslim-friendly tourism as a strategy to increase regional competitiveness. Digital promotion through social media is an effective means of highlighting Mamasa's tourism potential. With support from the government and tourism stakeholders in providing halal facilities and integrated promotion, Mamasa has the potential to become a natural and cultural tourism destination that can accommodate the needs of Muslim visitors.

Religiosity plays a significant role in shaping a person's behavior and decisions, including when choosing a tourist destination. For Muslim tourists, factors such as the availability of halal food

and prayer facilities are key considerations. Tourists with high levels of religiosity tend to be more selective about destinations that support their religious needs and Islamic values. Research by Sri Ramadhan et al. (2024) shows that the higher a tourist's religiosity, the stronger the positive influence of halal tourism on their satisfaction and loyalty. (Ramadhan et al. 2024) Therefore, developing halal tourism that takes religious aspects into account can increase Mamasa's attractiveness and strengthen its image as a Muslim-friendly destination.

Although extensive research on halal tourism has been conducted, there remains a gap in examining the role of religiosity as a moderating variable between Muslim-Friendly Tourism and Tourism Promotion on Muslim tourist visitation intentions. This study aims to address this gap by analyzing the role of religiosity in strengthening the relationship between these two variables and contributing to the development of tourism strategies that meet the needs of Muslim tourists, particularly in Mamasa Regency, where halal facilities are still limited.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative method with an associative approach, aiming to analyze how the research variables are interrelated and influence each other. Data were collected by administering a questionnaire to respondents, namely Muslim tourists who had previously or would potentially visit Mamasa Regency, West Sulawesi. The sampling technique used purposive sampling, with 180 respondents. (Sugiyono 2016) Data analysis in this study used SmartPLS 3.0 with the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method to simultaneously test the relationship between latent and manifest variables. The analysis was conducted through three main stages: the outer model, the inner model, and hypothesis testing. (Harahap 2020) In the outer model stage, the research instrument is tested to ensure its validity and reliability. This is done through convergent validity, discriminant validity, and composite reliability tests. An indicator is considered valid if the outer loading value exceeds 0.70 and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is more than 0.50, while the instrument is considered reliable if the Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values are above 0.70. Next, in the inner model stage, the analysis focuses on the relationship between latent variables by referring to the R-Square value, which indicates how well the model explains the dependent variable, with strength categories of 0.75 (high), 0.50 (moderate), and 0.25 (low). (G. et al. 2015) The final stage is hypothesis testing, which uses the bootstrapping method to measure the significance of the relationship between variables. A relationship is considered significant if the t-statistic is greater than 1.96 and the p-value is less than 0.05, indicating that the influence between the variables is statistically proven. (NA et al. 2022)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data processing in this study was analyzed using the SEM-PLS approach through several stages of analysis. The first stage was evaluating the outer model to test the validity and reliability of each indicator. The next stage was evaluating the inner model to assess the relationships between latent variables and ensure the suitability of the research model. Afterward, hypothesis testing was conducted using the bootstrapping method to identify the level of significance of the influence between variables. Research data was collected using questionnaires distributed both online using Google Forms and directly in the field, with a total of 180 respondents serving as the research sample.

Outer Model Analysis

The outer model evaluation in this study was conducted using SmartPLS 3 and focused on three main aspects. First, convergent validity, measured by the outer loading factor and Average

Variance Extracted (AVE) values. An indicator is declared valid if its loading factor value is greater than 0.7 and its AVE value exceeds 0.5. Second, discriminant validity, used to ensure that each construct has clear empirical differences, can be tested using cross-loading and the Fornell-Larcker criteria. Third, composite reliability (CR), which assesses internal consistency between indicators within a construct. A good CR value is usually greater than 0.7 and the results can be seen through the R-Square value of the model..(G. et al. 2015)

Convergent Validity

This validity test is used to measure the extent to which indicators in a variable are connected to the measured factor. This can be analyzed by examining the Outer Loading value of the indicator. An individual's reflection measure is considered high if its correlation with the measured construct is >0.7 , and the AVE value is above >0.5 ..(Wardhana 2022)

Table 1
Outer loading value of each variable

Indicator	Muslim Friendly Tourism (XI)	Tourism Promotion (X2)	Interest in Visiting (Y)	Religiosity (Z)
X1.1	0.834			
X1.2	0.852			
X1.3	0.840			
X1.4	0.835			
X1.5	0.840			
X2.1		0.974		
X2.2		0.916		
X2.3		0.848		
X2.4		0.963		
Y.1			0.939	
Y.2			0.958	
Y.3			0.968	
Y.4			0.729	
Z.1				0.809
Z.2				0.868
Z.3				0.824
Z.4				0.878

Z.5				0.857
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Source: Output from data processed with Smart PLS.3 2023

Convergent validity is measured not only by the outer loading values of each indicator but also by the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value. The AVE value provides an indication of how much variation in an indicator can be explained by the latent construct. A higher AVE value indicates stronger convergent validity. The AVE test results are shown in the following table:

Table 2
AVE (Average Variance Extracted) Value

Construct	AVE value
Muslim Friendly Tourism (X1)	0.706
Tourism Promotion	0.845
Interest in Visiting (Y)	0.817
Religiosity (Z)	0.719

Source:
Output from

processed with Smart PLS.3 2023

data

The test results show that all variables in this study exhibit strong convergent validity. The Muslim Friendly Tourism variable (X1) is measured using five indicators with loading factor values above 0.70 and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of more than 0.5, indicating that all indicators are valid in representing the construct. The Tourism Promotion variable (X2) is also declared valid because all four indicators have outer loading values above 0.70 and AVE values exceeding 0.5. Furthermore, the Muslim Tourist Visit Intention variable (Y) with four indicators shows similar results, where all indicators have outer loading values above 0.70 and AVE above 0.5, so it is declared convergently valid. Similarly, the Religiosity variable (Z) measured through three

indicators has an outer loading value of more than 0.70 and AVE exceeding 0.5, so it is suitable for use in explaining the construct of religiosity accurately.

Discriminant validity

Discriminant validity testing is a step used to ensure that each construct or concept of a latent variable clearly differs from other latent variables. In this study, discriminant validity testing was conducted in two stages: cross-loading and the Fornell-Larcker criterion. The results are as follows:

Table 3
Cross Loading Value

Indicator	Muslim Friendly Tourism (XI)	Tourism Promotion (X2)	Interest in Visiting (Y)	Religiosity (Z)
X1.1	0.834	0.433	0.627	0.596
X1.2	0.852	0.429	0.726	0.826
X1.3	0.840	0.391	0.700	0.817
X1.4	0.835	0.439	0.634	0.599
X1.5	0.840	0.520	0.668	0.468
X2.1	0.752	0.974	0.607	0.785
X2.2	0.714	0.916	0.642	0.812
X2.3	0.549	0.848	0.468	0.615
X2.4	0.820	0.963	0.752	0.883
Y.1	0.751	0.520	0.939	0.840
Y.2	0.812	0.526	0.958	0.843
Y.3	0.840	0.520	0.968	0.864
Y.4	0.447	0.469	0.729	0.689
Z.1	0.702	0.388	0.622	0.809
Z.2	0.781	0.546	0.499	0.868
Z.3	0.753	0.810	0.642	0.824
Z.4	0.811	0.543	0.559	0.878
Z.5	0.840	0.390	0.700	0.857

Source: Output from data processed with Smart PLS.3 2023

Based on the table above, the discriminant validity test was conducted using the Cross Loading method, where the results indicate that each indicator in a construct must have a higher

value compared to indicators in other constructs. Next, the second stage was carried out using the Fornell-Larcker Criterion. To ensure good discriminant validity, the square root of the AVE (Average Variance Extracted) in each construct must be greater than its correlation with other latent variables. The results of the Fornell-Larcker Criterion test are shown in the table below:

Table 4
Fornell Larcker criteria value

Indicator	Muslim Friendly Tourism (X1)	Tourism Promotion (X2)	Interest in Visiting (Y)	Religiosity (Z)
<i>Muslim Friendly tourism (X1)</i>	0.840			
<i>Tourism Promotion(X2)</i>	0.775	0.919		
<i>Interest in Visiting (Y)</i>	0.895	0.676	0.904	
<i>Religiosity (Z)</i>	0.819	0.835	0.842	0.848

Source: Output from data processed with Smart PLS.3 2023

From the table above, it can be seen that each variable has a higher value when measured alone than when measuring other variables in the same column. This indicates that the variables are clearly distinct from each other. Thus, the research model can be said to have met the requirements for discriminant validity. This means that each construct in the model has the ability to differentiate itself sufficiently from other constructs, thus validating the measurement instrument used in explaining the concept under study.

Composite Reliability

Reliability testing measures the consistency of measurements in a research instrument. Reliability testing is conducted by examining two indicators: Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability. Constructs with Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values greater than 0.7 are considered to have good reliability. The following are the Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values in this study:

Table 5
Cronbach's Alpha and Coefficient Reliability Values

Indicator	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
<i>Muslim Friendly tourism (X1)</i>	0.897	0.923
<i>Tourism Promotion(X2)</i>	0.939	0.956
<i>Interest in Visiting (Y)</i>	0.921	0.946
<i>Religiosity (Z)</i>	0.905	0.927

Source: Output from data processed with Smart PLS.3 2023

The table above shows that all variables meet reliability standards, as the Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values are both above 0.70. This indicates that the indicators in each construct consistently measure the intended latent variable. In other words, this research instrument can be considered reliable because it produces stable and consistent results in accordance with the concept it represents.

Inner Model

Inner model analysis, or structural modeling, explains the influence between latent variables within a model. To measure this, the R-square value is used, which indicates the predictive strength of the relationship between exogenous and endogenous variables. The R-square value indicates the extent of influence the independent variable has on the dependent variable. The R-square criteria are 0.75 (strong), 0.50 (moderate), and 0.25 (weak). (Wardhana 2022) The following are the results of the R-Square test using SmartPLS:

Table 6
R-Square Value

Indicator	R-Square
Interest in Visiting (Y)	0.953

Source: Output from data processed with Smart PLS.3 2023

Hypothesis Testing with Bootstrapping

After evaluating the outer and inner models, the next step is hypothesis testing using bootstrapping. This test assesses the direction of the relationship between variables using the t-statistic and p-value. With a 5% significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$), the hypothesis is accepted if the t-statistic is > 1.96 and the p-value is < 0.05 . Furthermore, the confidence interval must not include zero for the relationship between variables to be valid. (NA et al. 2022) The following hypothesis test was conducted using the Bootstrapping method, which was used to test the significance of the direction of the relationship between variables in the research model:

Table 7
Hypothesis Testing with Bootstrapping

Path	Original sample (O)	T-Value	P-Value	Hypothesis
<i>Muslim-Friendly Tourism-> Visiting Interest</i>	0.152	1,982	0.009	H1- Accepted
<i>Tourism Promotion - >Visiting Interest</i>	0.453	1,967	0.002	H2- Accepted

Muslim-Friendly Tourism-> Religiosity -> Visiting Interest	0.275	2,315	0.039	H3-Accepted
Religiosity -> Tourism Promotion -> Visit Interest	0.058	1,460	0.145	H4-Rejected

Source: Output from data processed with Smart PLS.3 2023

Based on the results of hypothesis testing using the bootstrapping method, it was found that the Muslim Friendly Tourism variable (X1) had a positive and significant effect on Visit Interest (Y) with a t-statistic value of 1.982 and a p-value of 0.009, so the hypothesis was accepted. Furthermore, the Tourism Promotion variable (X2) also showed a positive and significant effect on Visit Interest (Y) with a t-statistic value of 1.967 and a p-value of 0.002, which means the second hypothesis was also accepted. Meanwhile, the Religiosity variable (Z) was proven to moderate the relationship between Muslim Friendly Tourism (X1) and Visit Interest (Y) with a t-statistic value of 2.315 and a p-value of 0.039, which indicates that the level of religiosity is able to strengthen the influence of Muslim-friendly facilities on tourist interest. However, religiosity did not moderate the relationship between Tourism Promotion (X2) and Visit Interest (Y) because it had a t-statistic of 1.460 and a p-value of 0.145, so its influence in the relationship was declared insignificant.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis using SmartPLS, this study concludes that Muslim-Friendly Tourism has a positive and significant impact on Muslim tourists' interest in visiting Mamasa Regency. The better the implementation of Muslim-friendly tourism principles, such as the availability of halal food, prayer facilities, and sharia-compliant accommodations, the higher the interest in visiting. Meanwhile, Tourism Promotion also significantly influences interest in visiting, but in a negative direction, indicating that promotions that do not emphasize Muslim-friendly values are not able to optimally attract Muslim tourists. This confirms that the effectiveness of promotions is largely determined by the relevance of their content to the needs and preferences of Muslim tourists.

Furthermore, the research findings reveal that religiosity plays a role in strengthening the influence of Muslim-Friendly Tourism on visit intention, but does not moderate the relationship between Tourism Promotion and visit intention. This means that tourists with a high level of religiosity are more attracted to destinations that provide facilities in accordance with Islamic principles, while existing promotions do not sufficiently emphasize religious aspects. Overall, this study emphasizes the importance of implementing the concept of Muslim-Friendly Tourism systematically and integratedly, integrating Islamic principles into tourism promotion strategies to enhance the quality of Mamasa's charm as a competitive, inclusive, and sustainable Muslim-friendly tourist destination.

Based on research findings regarding the influence of Muslim-Friendly Tourism, Tourism Promotion, and the moderating role of religiosity on Muslim tourist interest in Mamasa Regency, several important recommendations are available. The local government is advised to enhance the development of tourist destinations based on Muslim-Friendly Tourism principles by providing

prayer facilities, halal food, and sharia-compliant accommodations, as well as effective digital promotions that align with the tourist experience on the ground. Promotion should also highlight the advantages of destinations relevant to Muslim tourists through digital media and collaboration with religious communities. Muslim tourists are advised to plan their visits by considering the availability of Muslim-friendly facilities, utilizing official government information, and respecting local culture. Meanwhile, future researchers can expand this study by adding variables such as tourism experience, service quality, or perceived security, and conducting research at other destinations to achieve more comprehensive and generalizable results.

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