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Exploring the Importance of Halal Tourism: Cultural Influences on Travel Accommodation Choices Among Middle-Class "Santri" in West Java

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Abstract

This article aims to investigate the limited development of Syariah-certified hotels in Indonesia despite the country's substantial potential in the global halal tourism market. Indonesia has actively promoted halal certification in the accommodation and hospitality industries, supported by central and regional governments. These initiatives align with Islamic hospitality principles, including halal-certified food, the prohibition of alcohol, modest dress codes for employees, and gender-segregated facilities. However, despite the rising discourse on halal tourism, the number of Syariah-certified hotels remains disproportionately low. This study seeks to understand why this gap exists and how the Muslim community perceives Syariah-compliant accommodations. Observations and interviews with 38 middle-class santri groups in West Java, particularly in the Jabodetabek area, reveal that their choice of accommodation is influenced more by cultural factors than religious ideology. Despite being religiously literate, many santri do not prioritize Syariah hotels when traveling. These findings highlight a disconnect between the supply of and demand for Syariah hotels, providing insights into the cultural and practical challenges facing halal tourism development in Indonesia.

Keywords:

halal, tourism, behavior, santri, culture
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JEL: Z12, L83, 012

1. Introduction

In Indonesia and several other Muslim-majority countries, the term "halal," meaning lawful, was historically used to categorize food and practices deemed permissible for Muslims. However, in recent years, the concept of halal has been increasingly regulated and exercised by the state. Under the national halal product law, by the end of 2024, all food products in public markets must display an official halal certification issued by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. This policy represents one of the most significant efforts at "shariatization" of public life by the state, raising important questions about the pluralistic nature of halal concepts within Muslim societies. While the implementation of halal certification programs for food products and tourism services has gained momentum, there is growing concern that this approach promotes a singular, state-imposed understanding of halal, referred to as "halal ideology," primarily led by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI). This "halal ideology" adopts a hegemonic stance, which may not fully accommodate the diverse, culturally rooted interpretations of halal practiced in various Muslim communities across Indonesia (Amin, 2022; Hasyim, 2022).

In this halal ideology framework, the exclusive principles of Islamic law-making in halal labeling by the MUI as a state agent (MUI) are more often heard to be raised than the inclusive ones. For example, the strict and exclusive law-making principles such as "everything that is not known is equal to *syubhat*, which must be avoided are more often publicly discoursed than the other around more relaxing guiding rules, for example, "everything that is not clear is halal unless proven haram"(Hosen, 2015). Becoming the domain of state policy once halal was a category of *fiqh*, where Muslims independently decided which food he/she consumed, utilizing science (halal science); now it is a category of public ideology, where room for opposition is minimal. In the era of halal "positivism"(Yakin & Christians, 2021), halal, measured by scientific approaches, is conceptualized as an ideology putting on all types of processed materials such as food, cosmetics, medicines containing elements of pork and its derivatives, alcohol in general, and halal animal meat slaughtered by non-Muslims. Contrary to this ideology of "positivism," based on cultural backgrounds, the practice of Muslim communities is not always uniform with the direction of halal orientation that is more ideological (Amin, 2022). Especially in the tourism sector, which is now becoming a target of halal branding, Muslims, both as tourists and tourism business people, have been long engaged with their own local culture (local tourism culture). Local culture and traditions that are rooted more often shape tourism practices among Muslim communities (Ghofur, 2022). In line with the principle of "culture" that implies differences in society, this study focuses on examining the conception and Muslims' behavior of "halal" tourism that varies from one group to the others and the various cultural devices behind it (*cultural repertoire*).

Halal from Arabic means permissible or allowed, the opposite word of *haram,* which means forbidden or not allowed (Qardhawi, 1980). In terms of food and beverages, "halal" means food and beverages that are permitted for consumption by Muslims; that is, food or beverages that are not derived from or contain *haram* ingredients such as pork and *alcohol* (Ferrara, 2011; Muddasar & Saeed, 2020). Halal tourism, moreover, is often defined as tourist activities that are friendly to Muslim customs, so it is often called "Muslim-friendly tourism" (Jaelani, 2017). For lodging or hotels, which is the main halal tourism issue, must have a "halal" or Muslim-friendly certificate with several conditions: first, there is an occupant identity check procedure that does not allow men and women in one room unless they are legal spouses; second, do not provide alcoholic beverages; third, provide prayer facilities in public spaces and hotel rooms; also separate ablution and prayer places for men

and women (ROZALINDA et al., 2019).

In Indonesia, halal tourism is formally defined in the MUI Fatwa Number 108/DSN-MUI/X/2016, which outlines the guidelines for organizing tourism based on Sharia principles. This fatwa is a foundation for standardizing halal tourism, encompassing hotels, spas, tourist attractions, and travel agencies (Hariani et al., 2017; Ramadhani, 2021). According to the fatwa, halal tourism refers to tourism that complies with sharia principles. It includes provisions for Sharia-compliant hotels, where female employees must wear Sharia-compliant attire and where service guidelines are established to ensure the delivery of Sharia-compliant services (Syahrial, 2020). However, there are diverse interpretations and practices of sharia, including halal tourism, which has been present for a long time in Indonesian society (Hasyim, 2022). These differences are particularly evident in issues like gender separation during rituals such as ablution or swimming. Despite the increasing prominence of halal tourism, the concept is still subject to varied interpretations. It is not universally practiced, reflecting a tension between the evolving global tourism lifestyle and the religious principles of Muslim communities (Makhasi & Rahimmadhi, 2020).

The cultural repertoire is illustrated as tool kits where everyone has one but with different functions (Swidler & Wood, 2003). Every Muslim also has toolkits that shape how he views, behaves, and responds to different situations, including unusual situations (for Muslim Ideology), such as travel behavior. The toolkits of the tourism world are different from the personal and social lives of Muslims (in general); therefore, we ask how they practice their toolkits as Muslims when traveling. Swidler differentiates culture as Ideology from culture as tradition and as common sense. Culture as an ideology provides explicit and self-conscious meaning, contrasting tradition, which is implicit and taken for granted. Ideology is more explicit, less embedded, and more open to challenge. Therefore, Citing Comorrof (1999: 24), Swidler accepts Williams' (1977) definition of Ideology as "an articulated system of meaning, values, and beliefs of a kind that can be abstracted as (the world view of social groups. Following Comorrof, Swidler states that Ideology is related to hegemony in a sense similar to that used by Gramsci and subsequently to Bourdieu's theory that power and domination are consciously or unconsciously established as elements of culture.

An *ideology* is an articulated self-conscious belief and ritual system aspiring to offer a unified answer to the problem of social action. On the other hand, culture as tradition is articulated cultural beliefs and practices, but ones that present themselves as fixed, expected parts of life. In other words, unlike Ideology, which inspires "universal" enthusiasm, tradition is more diverse than unified, partial than all-embracing. For instance, traditional wedding ceremonies may seem flat, forced, or even embarrassing. Tradition can display and reinforce group ties, but these groups do not need to be exclusive. However, like wedding ceremonies, most traditions display and regulate loyalty, reciprocity, and obligation degrees. It provides a widely shared system (Swidler, 2013). Many traditions are maintained long after the original rationales are forgotten. Examples are rings exchanged at a wedding, costumes for Halloween, or decorated eggs for Easter. Tradition may be given varied interpretations. Traditions are sustained more by practices than by beliefs. In addition, the practices often define informal groups (DiMaggio, 1997), establishing hierarchies and solidarities. Ideology usually defines a community. A group defending its boundaries will develop greater self-consciousness and intensity about its beliefs. The explicit practices demanded by the Ideology (distinctive clothing codes of secrecy, specialized jargon, or

ethical strictures) help members differentiate themselves from surrounding society (Kanter, 1972). In pure forms, Ideology almost always expresses a sectarian community, whether a commune, a religious community, a political movement, or a nation-state. The new halal conception, now exercised by the state through national regulation, has complied with the category of an ideology in our framework.

This research aims to explore the strategies and behaviors of Muslim tourists in response to the halal tourism ideology and its alignment with the broader tourism culture. Specifically, it investigates whether Muslim tourists prefer the ideological framework of halal tourism, which sometimes conflicts with mainstream tourism practices, or whether they adapt to the broader tourism culture that often challenges their beliefs, such as issues surrounding *aurat*, shirk, halal and haram foods, and mixed-gender interactions (El-Gohary, 2016). In line with Swidler's (1986) concept of "Culture in Action," this study distinguishes between culture as Ideology, which refers to normative and doctrinal values such as halal tourism regulations, and culture as a repertoire, which encompasses the practical skills, customs, and behaviors that individuals draw upon in their daily lives. This research seeks to understand how Muslim tourists navigate the tensions between these two forms of culture in the context of halal tourism.

2. Methods

The primary data in this study is information about the *repertoire of* respondents, including the background of economic status, social competence, habits, traditions, lifestyles, religious views, their conception of halal, values believed, and others that underlie their conception and behaviour of halal tourism. To gather this information, researchers collected data through observation methods and semi-structured interviews as part of an ethnographic strategy to understand the context of halal tourism business behaviour of the community in the research location. Field observations and interviews were carried out in 2021 and 2022.

We observed the behaviour of tourists and halal tourism services in Jakarta, Bogor, and Bandung (West Java). Following some Muslim tourists in restaurants, hotels, and recreational places of their choice; observing the interaction behaviour of Muslim tourists with fellow tourists or other than those of different religions or cultures in various "leisure" locations such as salons, health care, parties, weddings, birthdays, thanksgiving, etc.; observing the products and behaviour of halal tourism service providers; seeing and observing public spaces and interaction activities in canteens, food courts, malls, hospitals, and public activities where joint and mixed activities occur; also seeing the "halal" facilities they offer such as (if any) swimming pools, gyms, beauty salons, etc. By semi-structured interview, we mean an attempt to obtain information from interviews *both* in person and online by referring to the available question pointers (Denzin, etc, 2011).

The respondents were middle-class santri whom we interviewed offline and online. We sought the opinion of the middle-class group because people of this group are the main customers of the tourism industry. We are discussing tourism; therefore, we talk about the middle class, the largest market segment of the industry. Tourism, strongly associated with leisure, is not a primary basic need of the poor or lower-class group. It, however, is the needs of the middle- and upper-class people who are done with their basic life necessities. Tourism accommodation must cover transportation means (flights, cars, trains, yachts, or cruisers), convenient food places such as restaurants, cafes, breakfast and lunch buffets, and room accommodations (hotels). These are indeed leisure habits and lifestyles of the middle-

and upper-class societies.

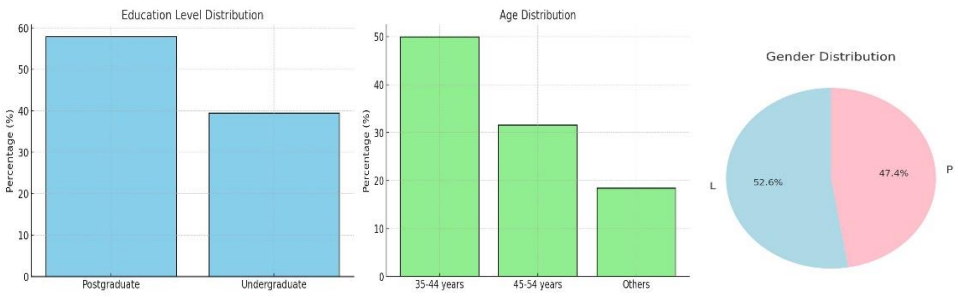
Santri, according to Geertz, is a group of Muslim societies in Java that observe and engage with their Islamic religiosity. Compared to the other Muslim groups in Java as Geertz categorized (priyayi and abangan), santri could be regarded as the hardcore segment of Muslim societies in Java. They are a group of Muslims who are considered to have a mature understanding of Islamic traditions (Ali, 2007; Wong & Aziz, 2011) theologically and have more independence than the *lower class* in their opinions. We chose the middle class because their socioeconomic conditions are more established, and they have the ability and experience to travel for business and personal purposes. While most Santri families could be aspiring middle-class groups, many of them, since the early 2000s, have reached the middle-class group's position (Mastuki, 2006).

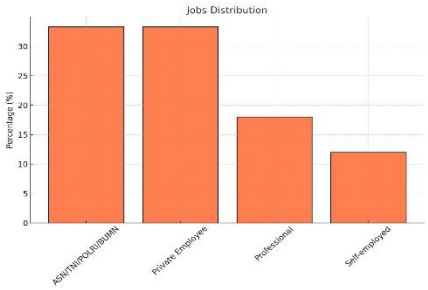
3. Result and Discussion

Respondent's Cultural Repertoire

The cultural repertoire determines the views and practices of respondents regarding halal tourism, which we will present in the final part of this discussion. The profile of the respondents' cultural repertoire that we will convey explains that their tourism practices are determined not only by the current halal "ideologies" that they agree with but also because of the skills, habits, traditions, and lifestyles they have lived so far. Why they do not choose a "new" conception of halal ideology that has a more precise distinction and strengthens their identity as Muslims is due to the following cultural factors, which we refer to as cultural repertoire.

The respondents were interviewed about Islamic hotels residing in West Java and Jakarta (Jabodetabek). They are productive Indonesians (25-50 years old) from various ethnicities (majority Javanese and Sundanese) who often stay at least once a year in hotels in the Indonesian regions. We interviewed a total of 38 respondents. All respondents interviewed were Muslim members of the middle class, primarily undergraduates and postgraduates who already have permanent jobs, mainly state civil apparatus (ASN), private employees, and entrepreneurs or business people. Respondents were "santri" with more than three years of formal Islamic learning experience in either Madrasahs or *pesantren*. They are considered to represent Muslim communities that hold strong traditions. Respondents were obtained on a snowball basis. Each known respondent was asked to recommend 1-3 acquaintances who could be asked for opinions and share their experiences about *sharia hotels* or halal hotels. In detail, the following is their data (see graph 1):





Graph 1. Profil of Respondents

Detailed data from respondents can be seen in table 1 below.

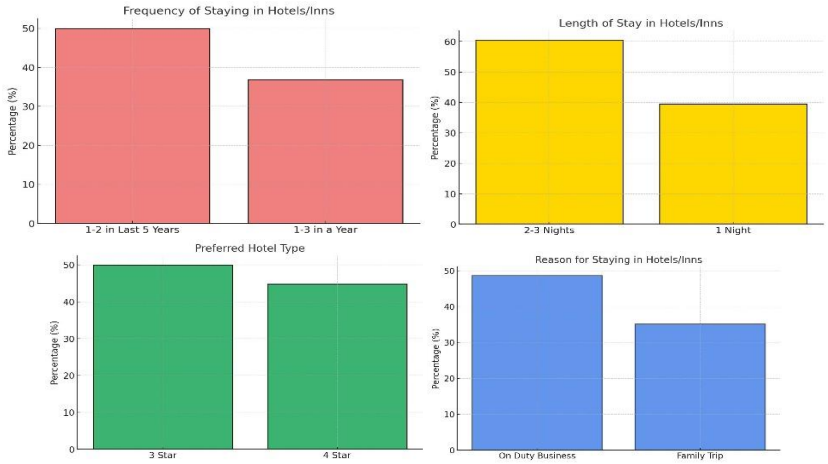
Table 1. Profile of Respondents

BACKGROUNDS	WEST JAVA
Total number of respondents	38 people
Education level	Postgraduate (57.89%), Undergraduate (39.47%)
Age	35-44 years (50%), 45-54 (31.58%)
Gender	L, P (52.63%),
Jobs	ASN/TNI/POLRI/BUMN (33.33%), Private Employee (33.33%), Professional (18, 18%), Self-employed 12 ,12%
Total participants: 38 people. The number of L and P is quite balanced	Dominated by postgraduate graduates at home and abroad

Source: Data processed 2024

Traveling Status

Traveling status determines the choice of hotel type because it is related to hotel payments made by corporate (business) or paid personally (family trip) (Chen et al., 2009; Hariani et al., 2017; Yang et al., 2017). Consistent with the types of respondents successfully interviewed, travelers generally stay in three- and four-star hotels for two nights. The cost of the stay is borne by the company/organization (business trip) and personal (family trip), with a relatively balanced ratio of both. Traveling status, which includes the type of hotel, length of stay, and reason for travel, strengthens the evidence of the social status of respondents, travelers who come from the middle class (established) (see graph 2.).



Graph 2. Traveling Status

Detailed data from respondents can be seen in table 2 below.

Table 2. Traveling Status

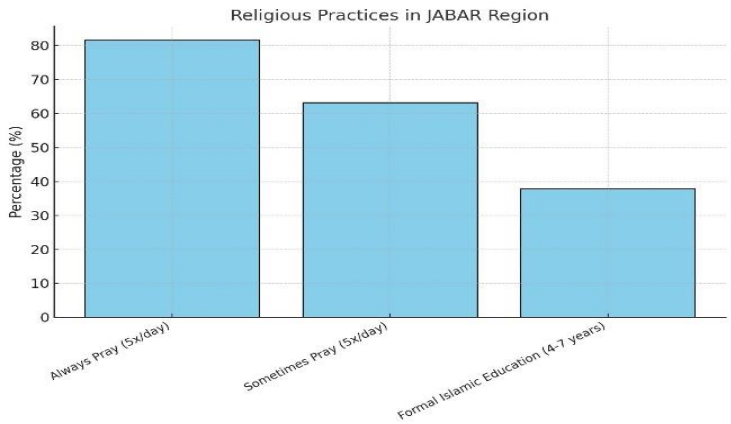
TRAVELING STATUS	WEST JAVA
How often do you stay in hotels/inns?	Ever 1-2 in the last five years 50% 1-3 in a year 36.84%
length of stay	2-3 nights (60.53% 1 Night 39.47)
Hotel type	3 Star (50%) 4 stars (44.74%)
Reason for staying	On duty business 48.65 % Family Trip 35 14%
Lodging status, length of stay, and reason for stay indicate the establishment of economic status	more on business trips; employees stay varied

Source: Data Processed 2024

Religious Observance

A good Muslim is defined as a devout Muslim who practices the commandments of the religion and avoids the prohibitions of the religion. However, in the practical details, many personal, cultural, and social considerations cause Muslims to appear not to do what the religion commands. Tourism and Islam are two words that are often conflated (El-Gohary, 2016). As mentioned in the concept of halal tourism earlier, many activities in tourist sites are ambiguous or not allowed in Islam. This survey shows the travel behavior among Muslims, whether they are disobedient or devout in their religion.

Sociologically, the measurement of religious observance (practicing Islam) in this survey is described by regularity and frequency in performing rituals (worship), socializing with fellow Muslims such as being a member or administrator of an Islamic organization, and often attending religious forums (Hassan, 2007). It can be seen that the majority of respondents are devout Muslims. More than 80% consistently and often perform the five daily prayers. More than 50 percent of respondents often and sometimes attend Islamic study forums at mosques or Islamic organizations and generally have, sometimes, and often become committees, organizers of organizations organizing Islamic activities. These data show that the respondents' Islamic level is relatively high (see graph 3.).



Graph 3. Religious Observance

Islamic Education Experience

Previous studies suggest that the experience of formal Islamic education is essential in shaping the moderate culture of society. The longer the experience of attending formal Islamic education, the more moderate the religious views and behavior (Sirry, 2020). Conversely, the less formal the religious education experience, the more open the possibility of being influenced by "new" religious understanding sources (Hasan, 2019; Jahroni, 2007; Suyanto et al., 2019). The experience of attending formal Islamic education is considered necessary in determining their religious attitudes. Research findings state that the longer the formal education experience, the more moderate the religious views (Amin, 2012; Wahid, 2015). This interview also considers formal Islamic education as an essential variable contributing to a person's attitude and behavior (Umar & Woodward, 2020), including in the choice of hotel to stay. Most of the respondents have 4-7 years of formal Islamic education experience (Tsanawiyah (junior high school) and Aliyah (high school) level) or Aliyah and college. This level is considered sufficient or good religious understanding compared to the average Indonesian.

Traditionalist and Modernist

In cultural and socio-political studies, the categories of traditionalist Muslims associated with NU and modernists associated with Muhammadiyah are often used as units of social analysis. Traditionalist communities are considered more robust in their attitudes and practices with religious practices that are still mixed with local culture, while modernists, on the contrary, are considered less accommodating of local culture in their expressions of Islamic practice (Ali, 2007; Bruinessen, 1999; Noer, 1986).

Just as the character of the majority of Muslim communities in Indonesia, in general, the tendency of respondents' *cultural background* comes from "traditionalists" and modernists who are not puritanical (not Salafi / Wahabi followers). This Puritan tendency is shown in their religious expressions in the following activities/rituals practiced by traditionalist Muslim communities (NU), often opposed by puritanical Islamic groups, such as grave pilgrimage, *dhikr* with loud voices, and celebrating mawlid.

Visiting the "sacred" graves of the pious, which is often done by traditionalist Muslim communities (NU) in Indonesia, is often considered by certain groups (post-Islamists) as an unfounded religious practice (Wahid, 2015; Woodward, 2011). Sometimes even to the point of being considered heresy and *khurafat* (absurd religious practices). So, the antithesis of this thesis is that those who carry out these practices are traditionalist Muslims. In the history of Islamic discourses among traditionalists by certain modernists, many are considered heresy and *khurafat* (Woodward, 2011). Our respondents generally have a favorable view of grave pilgrimage and *selamatan* rituals; it is evident that respondents who chose "PERMITTED" and "SUNNAH" were more dominant. Few saw these practices as *Makruh*(hated) or haram (forbidden); similarly, other practices such as attending or organizing mauled events (prophet PBUH birth anniversary), Qunut, and *dhikr* in *Jahr* (clear). The positive answers to these practices indicate that most respondents have a moderate Islamic culture. This conclusion is reinforced by their responses to the question about wearing the veil for Muslim women. In terms of wearing the *cadar*, which is considered

sunnah to be obligatory among most Islamist groups, it is categorized (by the majority of respondents) as a Mubah / permissible practice, not sunnah, let alone obligator (Nisa & others, 2012).

View of religious discourse

Religious views are considered an essential factor in influencing individual attitudes and practices. In this regard, sociologists of Muslim societies generally classify exclusive and inclusive (moderate) practices (Brown & Fadl, 2006; Modood, 2010; A. Wahid, 2006). Religious moderation correlates with positive Muslim views on practices or opinions on democracy, human rights, and state protection for minority groups (Brown & Fadl, 2006). Therefore, in this research, we asked about the following practices: (1). Indonesia's constitution and system of government should be based on sharia (Quran and Sunnah); (2). Muslims should CHOOSE leaders from fellow Muslims; (3) Women should not be leaders in public organizations; (4) Shia and Ahmadiyah are illicit cults (not Islam) and should be banned in Indonesia; (5) America and Britain contribute to the advancement of democracy in Indonesia.

Positive answers to questions 1-4 indicate Islamist sentiments (Roy, 2004), while positive responses to question 5 indicate a more democratic Muslim sentiment (Mujani & Liddle, 2009). The majority of respondents in this study were moderate enough to show an opposing/critical attitude toward the ideas of intolerance (see See table 3).

Table 3. Religion Activity

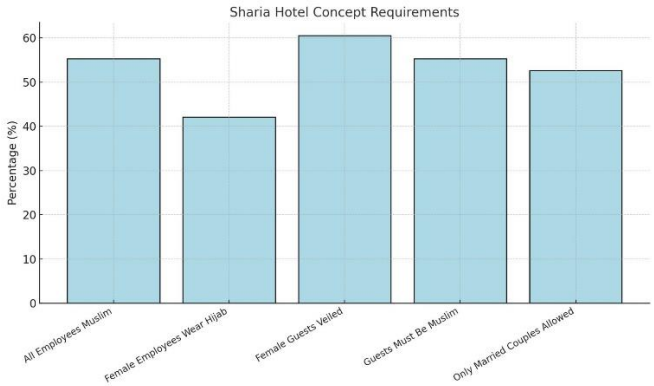
ASPECT	JABAR
Formal Islamic education	4-7 years (37.84), 0 (29.73)
Cultural repertoire: Traditionalists, Modernists, Islamists	Pilgrimage = Permissible (51.43%) Sunnah (45.71) Slametan = Mubah (55.26%) Sunnah (31.58) Maulid = May (47.37). Sunnah (28.95) Qunut = Sunnah (50%) allowed (42.11%) veil = Boleh (57.89) Sunnah (23.68%) May (60.53%), Sunnah (18.42) Traditionalist in ritual
Indonesia's constitution and system of government must be based on sharia (Quran and Sunnah)	TS (48, 65%), STS (21.62), S (21.62) TS (47.37%) S (23.68%) SS (15.795) STS (13%)
A Muslim must CHOOSE leaders from fellow Muslims	TS (55.26), STS (31.38)
Women should not be leaders in a public organization	TS (44.74), STS (15.79)
Shia and Ahmadiyya are cults (not Islam) and should be banned in Indonesia.	S (50%), TS (36, 84)
US and UK contribute to democratic progress in Indonesia	Moderate Islam
Choosing a Sharia hotel when traveling	No (68.42), Yes (31.58%)
Sharia Hotel is (quite inclusive)	Provide additional facilities for Muslims
Legal decision from MUI (differentiating Sharia and Fiqh)	fatwa (94.74%)

Sharia hotel concept	
All employees must be Muslim	1. TS (55.26)
Female employees must wear hijab	2. S (42,11) 3. TS (60, 53)
Female guests must be veiled	4. TS (55.26) STS (28.95)
Guests must be Muslim	5. S (52.63), STS (36.84)
Only married couples can stay in the same room.	** Moderatism
Musholla/disabled facilities	Disabled 68, 42%
Separate swimming pools for men and women or Clean and pure water	Clean water 76.32 %
Facilities Musholla RTH, commercial	Mushalla 47.37%. GREEN SPACE 42.11%
Quality sleep / Prayer in congregation	Sleep well (86.64%)
Stop check in during prayer time / 24 hours receptionist service	24-hour receptionist (76.32%)
Decoration of the haram mosque /Mecca	Local decoration (65.79%)
Murattal, insturmentalia, local	Instrumentalia, (44.74%)
In-room coffee facilities/mat	Prayer mat (52.63%)
Sharia Certificate / Trip Advisor	Trip Advisor Certificate (63.16)

Source: data processed 2024

Shariah hotel = Friendly Hotel

The results of the interview data processing show that most JABODETABEK respondents did not choose sharia-labeled hotels when staying with a large enough percentage (68.42%). This condition is not only caused by the small number of starred Sharia hotels but also by other reasons related to their meaning or conception of halal tourism or Sharia hotels. Respondents were presented with a choice of answers to questions related to hotel services and facilities as stipulated by MUI in the concept of Islamic hotels, including the following necessities: All employees are Muslim; female employees wear hijab; female guests wear hijab (see Graph 4).



Graph 4. Sharia Hotel

Against this statement, the majority (55.26%) of respondents disagreed that female hotel employees must wear hijab. We also questioned the respondents about the reasons,

and the respondents answered with various reasons such as "*the waiter does not have to be Muslim and does not have to wear a headscarf; the hotel has a public; it should not be a homogeneous hotel; it should show the typical culture of Indonesia which is plural; "only those who wear a headscarf can work in a sharia hotel" does not show the plural culture of Indonesia;* A respondent from Bangka stated *"today why are there people who narrow themselves with only one group; then when will they stay in touch with other different groups. Isn't the Quran's command to know each other? If there are people who do not wear the hijab, we also need to know them."*

When asked the reason for "aurat" Alya from Ciputat explained, "*aurat is a concept very much related to adat (custom)*." It seems that the respondents' answers are related to the statements of most respondents who disagree with the concept of Sharia hotels. "the employees in the hotel do not wear hijab; it has become a custom (professional habit). When asked if all hotel employees must be Muslim, the same answer was also given. Most respondents' answers were negative. "*It is a place where people who want to rest or stop. Why should we limit the number of people who stop by? Isn't that a funny concept?*" Said Fadil, a graduate of a state university in Jakarta.

Regarding the requirement for married couples staying in the same room, the majority of respondents, up to 95 percent (100% women), agreed, but not all agreed that the hotel checked the guest's marital status documents. An equal number of respondents agreed that the hotel should check the identity/proof of marriage of the couple staying and those who did not. The necessity of husband and wife staying overnight seems to be related to a "belief" that must be personally implemented. Meanwhile, the document check policy is an administrative procedure unrelated to personal beliefs. For those who reject the reasoning "it will be inconvenient for visitors,"; "it will not be effective, all documents can be engineered," not friendly to foreign tourists," they have their customs. "what if the couples in a "siri" (secret) marriage status."

When asked about the hotel service time that stops at the time of prayer (to perform congregational prayers), respondents also disapproved of the reception service that stops at prayer time as imposed by some non-star Islamic hotels. For the respondents, this has nothing to do with Sharia. Some respondents gave reasons such as; the hotel must serve its guests as well as quickly as possible. Hotel staff must be *on standby 24 hours; what if guests are in an emergency, in a hurry, etc. Praying in congregation is sunnah, but serving guests is an obligation*."

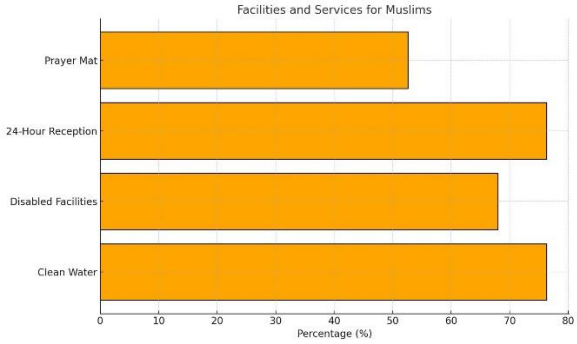
Regarding Islamic accessories that decorate hotel interiors, although not included in the MUI fatwa on Sharia tourism principles, there is a growing opinion in Islamic society about the "makruh or haram" of decorating statues, or images of living things such as photos, pictures of people or animals. Some Sharia hotel managers replace photos of animate beings with images of the Al-haram mosque (Mecca), An-nabawi (Medina), Kaaba, or calligraphy. Against this opinion, respondents stated that photos or images of humans, as long as they do not show nudity, are no problem; also, they prefer images of traditional art nuances of the archipelago rather than Arabic calligraphy. In line with these findings, respondents prefer to hear instrumental music rather than the sound of the *murattal* Quran (recorded recitation) in the hotel. The respondents also believe the quality of the hotel was attested by the Tripadvisor certificate/review rather than by the MUI halal certificate.

"Whether hotels should provide prayer rooms": Generally, hotels provide prayer rooms to facilitate the needs of Muslim guests who have activities in the hotel (non-residents), for

example, for MICE events. Interestingly, most respondents agreed that a prayer room should be inside the hotel building. However, an equal number of them considered parks and green areas (RTH) more important than a prayer room/mosque in the hotel. The purpose of staying overnight is to get an excellent place to rest. Usually, travellers stay in hotels to get a more private place to rest, including good sleep. Regarding the function of the Musholla to facilitate congregational prayers for residents and workers at the hotel, most answered in the room or the mashallah when asked whether they preferred praying in the room. Some respondents explained, "*Frankly, the purpose of staying overnight is to have good rest, privacy, and sleep well, not praying in congregation in the hotel mosque or mushalla*."

Hotel Facilities, Swimming Pool, and Gym

The swimming pool is one of the hotel/lodging facilities that determine the grade of a hotel (Hariani et al., 2017). The area and facilities of the hotel's swimming pool determine the hotel's star status. MUI's provision of a separate swimming pool for Sharia hotels is troublesome for hotel managers or inclusivism rules on global business standards. This fact is also reflected in travelers' opinions about hotel swimming pools. Most respondents had no problem with swimming pools mixed with men and women. When compared to the priority level between gender separation or water purity/cleanliness, all respondents agreed with the second priority: the necessity of cleaning and maintaining pool water purity quality (see graph 5).



Graph 5. Amenities

A Sharia hotel service practice in a city explains that all hotel servants, including check-in staff, kitchen staff, etc., stop at noon prayer time (dzuhur) because all staff perform congregational prayers. We also asked respondents if this was the ideal practice for Sharia Hotel Services. The majority agreed to disagree. Congregational prayer is good. However, the staff should not all leave the job of serving guests. The respondents prefer a 24-hour reception service facility rather than a receptionist who closes to serve at the beginning of the prayer time.

The inclusiveness of respondents is also shown in the choice of answers to questions related to interior accessories in hotel buildings and musical accompaniment in the lobby, if any. Most respondents in Jabodetabek chose the answer of Nusantara art decoration, installation art, or pictures of local scenery rather than pictures of the Ka'ba, Masjidil Haram, or Kiswah cloth in hotels. The majority of respondents prefer instrumental music or local music as accompaniment. Regarding accommodation sources of reference, respondents prefer 5-star reviews or an Excellent achievement certificate from Tripadvisor rather than a

sharia hotel certificate from MUI.

Based on the results of this research, the development of halal tourism in Indonesia in the future is an effort that requires a more inclusive approach to the diversity of local Islamic cultures and traditions. Although the concept of halal tourism is often based on strict global standards, this research shows that Indonesian Muslims can adapt to tourism cultural practices that are considered contrary to the values of global halal ideology. This flexibility is supported by the Indonesian Islamic tradition that respects tolerance and diversity of sects and contextual interpretations of Islamic law. Going forward, the development of halal tourism in Indonesia must consider unique aspects of local culture as part of a strategy to increase the attractiveness and relevance of this industry. This approach can not only strengthen the competitiveness of Indonesia's halal tourism in the global market but also ensure that the Muslim community in the country can widely accept the industry. In addition, the development of halal tourism in Indonesia can be directed to providing space for local cultural adaptation without ignoring the basic principles of sharia, thereby creating harmony between local traditions and global standards. Reflection on the results of this research shows that halal tourism in Indonesia has unique characteristics that distinguish it from the halal tourism approach in other countries. Findings on the flexibility of Indonesian Muslims in navigating the differences between global tourism culture and local Sharia values reflect the characteristics of tolerant and adaptive Islam in the archipelago. This contrasts previous research results, such as El-Gohary (2016), which emphasized the strict implementation of global halal standards, including the prohibition of gender mixing and the need to provide Muslim-friendly facilities without considering the local cultural context.

On the other hand, Hasyim's research (2022) also supports this finding by showing that halal tourism practices in Indonesia are only partially subject to global halal ideological standards. Instead, Indonesian Muslims tend to integrate Islamic values with local cultural practices. This is in contrast to the case in countries such as Malaysia and Saudi Arabia, which have consistently adopted global halal standards with little adaptation to local traditions. Furthermore, this reflection also strengthens Swidler's (1986) concept of "Culture in Action". This study proves that Indonesian Muslims use "cultural tools" that allow them to continue practicing their faith in the context of tourism, which is not always in line with formal sharia values. However, this study is also different from previous studies, such as Kanter (1972), which underlines that ideology tends to create uniformity in community practice. In Indonesia, this uniformity does not occur because of tolerance for the diversity of Islamic interpretations and traditions.

Thus, compared to previous research, this research confirms that a halal tourism approach that is too ideological or uniform may not be entirely relevant to be applied in Indonesia. In the future, the development of halal tourism in Indonesia needs to consider the dynamics of local traditions and culture that are flexible in order to provide an inclusive and sustainable experience.

4. Conclusion

This research conducted in Santri community groups shows that Indonesian Muslims have a unique cultural repertoire that adapts to the tourism culture, which has become an inherent part of their lives. Some conventional tourism practices are considered to violate the concept of *aurat*, *shirk*, and *syubhat* food, which is doubtful according to global halal ideology. However, the inherent Islamic cultural tools that allow tolerance and co-exist with

differences in *mazhab*/ theology in Islamic laws (including matters of custom) allow Muslims in Indonesia to have flexibility towards the rules of Islamic law, including halal ideology. Muslim travellers can strategize with Islamic traditions that are relevant to local culture.

Moreover, this study reflects that the criteria for Sharia hotels set by religious authorities are not easily practiced due to differences in cultural repertoire in society and the tourism business culture. Some halal tourism practices, which include an obligation for female employees of Islamic hotels to wear headscarves and to separate swimming pools for men and women, for instance, do not seem "familiar" to travellers. Inclusive global business ethics are difficult to reconcile with the concept of Islamic hotels defined in the global halal ideology. Alternative and more contextual conceptions of syariah or halal tourism are needed to reconcile the principles of Syariah and tourism culture. Future studies, however, are needed to complement this study, which includes diversity in Muslim textual traditions of tourism and broader participants and cultural backgrounds. For example, a similar survey could be conducted among Muslims with different social and cultural backgrounds to control this research.

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