


Polemic on sharia tourism between Muslim and Christian in Indonesia

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This article aimed to highlight how polemic between Muslims and Christians on halal tourism is discussed in Indonesia. The study concerned three research questions: How do Christians view halal tourism? Is the halal tourism a term that has the potential to build segregation according to the Christians' perspective? How do Muslims respond to Christians on halal tourism? By reviewing related literature and conducting interviews and analysis using reception theory, this study reached the following conclusions. Firstly, Christian religious figures view on halal tourism by varied characters: realistic, substantial and critical. Secondly, for those with oppositional views, they emphatically said that the term halal tourism had the potential to build segregation. Meanwhile, in a negotiation position, the main substantial one is still open minded for discussion if there is a concept that is formally more inclusive and from the material side representing the common will even though it was originally a will of a particular group. Thirdly, Muslims, as represented in the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), perceive that halal tourism does not interfere with other religious beliefs, but it has an economic value for the country.

Contribution: Practically, this article contributed to opening opportunities for halal tourism to be recognised by all elements in a multi-religious society. Differences in potential reception occur because the sender of the message and the recipient of the message have basic assumptions according to their respective contexts.

Keywords: polemic; Sharia tourism; Muslim-Christian relations; contestation; understanding.

Introduction

In 2014, the government of Indonesia promulgated Law number 33 of 2014 of Halal Product Assurance. This regulation provides an impetus and an atmosphere that supports halal tourism. In addition to the government, the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) provided further support through their fatwas. The National Sharia Council (DSN) of the MUI in 2016 propagated a fatwa on guidelines for the implementation of tourism pursuant to sharia principles (DSN MUI 2016).

The halal tourism cluster also became the master plan in Indonesian Sharia Economy 2019–2024 (Ministry of National Development Planning and/or National Development Planning Agency 2018). The provision to optimising halal tourism in Indonesia is indicated by two factors: internal and external. Muslims as the civil majority in Indonesia are internal support, in addition to geographical conditions that have potential appealing. In 2018, Indonesia was in second position as a Muslim-friendly tourist destination, and it increased the number of foreign tourist arrivals. A number of halal tourism industries in Indonesia received awards at the World Halal Tourism Awards 2016 (Halal Culinary, Halal Culture, Halal Hotels and so on). These three factors (being a Muslim-friendly destination, increased tourist arrivals and awards for the halal tourism industry) are external factors for the implementation of halal tourism in Indonesia. However, it is important to also consider the motivations of tourists visiting Indonesia, as they are primarily influenced by visa-free policies rather than religious similarities (Hartarto 2022).

Muslims in Indonesia are a marketing prospect. Halal Tourism Design enhanced responses to the enormous potential of consumers, as well as a magnet for the closest countries such as Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam. Based on data from the 'State Global Islamic Economy Report 2020–2021,' Indonesia became the fifth country in the world with the largest expenditure in 'Muslim-Friendly Travel' in 2019–2020. By earning 11.2 billion dollars, Indonesia is below Saudi Arabia (24.3 bn), the United Arab Emirates (17.2 bn), Qatar (14.2 bn) and Kuwait (13 bn) (Standard 2021).

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Alternately, Indonesia is a multi-religious country. There are tourist destinations where the inhabitants come from non-Muslim communities, such as the areas around Lake Toba (North Sumatra), Tana Toraja (South Sulawesi) and Bali. When the discourse on halal tourism emerged, the Christian community, especially those from the Lake Toba and Toraja regions, responded critically as explained in the following section. The polemic over the design of halal tourism shows that the need to become a market, requires acceptance from elements that are also interested in maintaining their identity. The urgency of managing diversity becomes important in such a situation.

This study not only describes the arguments of the Muslim community as reflected in the views of the Christian group and the MUI's response to those views, but it also analyses them using a reception approach. This distinguishes it from similar studies conducted by Battour et al. (2018), Sthapit, Björk and Piramanayagam (2023) and Khan and Callanan (2017). In addition to the reception theory analysis, which sets it apart, this research also shows innovation reflected in the emergence of diverse perspectives from the Christian group, which explains their social position. In the study of the implementation of Islamic law, it is important to consider the response of non-Muslim groups as a sociological reality. Effective legal products must first be accepted by all elements of society. Therefore, this study will fill two spaces at once, the philosophy of Islamic law and the relations between religious communities.

Halal tourism, sharia tourism and Muslim-friendly tourism

Several terms are selected to describe the relationship between Islamic sharia and tourism. They are Islamic tourism, halal tourism, sharia tourism and Muslim-friendly tourism. In the literatures, Haddad et al. (2019) mentioned that the themes refer to three dimensions: Muslim tourists, tourism products such as halal services, halal food and beverage facilities and Islamic or non-Islamic tourist destinations (Haddad et al. 2019). Halal tourism, Islamic tourism or similar names are new terms in tourism that are not solely about worship trips such as *Hajj* and *Umrah*, but tourism in a broad sense, adapted to the values or principles in Islam.

Halal tourism, according to Battour and Ismail (2016), is an action or destination that is in accordance with the Islamic teachings implemented by Muslims in the tourism industry (any tourism object or action that is permissible according to Islamic teachings). That definition implies that the emergence of the term 'halal' has implications for tourism products, namely, food and beverages and accommodation facilities that must be in accordance with sharia principles (Vargas-Sanchez, Hariani & Wijayanti 2020).

Furthermore, the term used to describe this type of tourism is often either 'tourism' or 'halal tourism', with another

TABLE 1: Halal tourism regulations in provinces, regencies and cities in Indonesia.

No	Area	Types and numbers of regulations	Tourism
1	West Nusa Tenggara Province	Provincial Regulation Number 2 of 2016	Halal Tourism
2	Banda Aceh City, Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam Province (NAD)	Regent Regulation of Banda Aceh, Number 17 of 2016	The implementation of Halal Tourism
3	Siak Regency, Riau Province	Regional Regulation Number 2 of 2017	Halal Tourism
4	Aceh Jaya Regency, Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam Province (NAD)	<i>Qanun</i> Aceh Jaya Regency Number 10 of 2019	Halal Tourism
5	Muara Enim Regency, South Sumatra Province	Regional Regulation Number 15 of 2019	Halal Tourism
6	Riau Province	Governor Regulation Number 18 of 2019	Halal Tourism
7	Provinces of NAD	Letter from the Governor of Aceh Number 556/2266 dated 12 February 2019	Halal Tourism
8	West Sumatra Province	Regional Regulation Number 1 of 2020	Organising Halal Tourism
9	Bandung Regency, West Java Province	Regional Regulation Number 6 of 2020	Halal Tourism
10	Banjarmasin regency, South Kalimantan Province	Regional Regulation Number 2 of 2021	Halal Tourism

Source: The data was formulated from <https://jdih.ntbprov.go.id/>, <https://peraturan.bpk.go.id>, <https://jdih.riau.go.id>, <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-5779987/anjing-dilarang-di-pulau-banyak-aceh-sejak-2019-dasarnya-surat-gubernur>, and paralegal.id

commonly used term being Islamic tourism. One of the institutions that use this term is the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC). The OIC (2017) described that term, as a cultural concept, Islamic tourism:

... [I]ncludes visions and ideas that outline the inclusion of Islamic religious cultural sites in tourism programs with 'pedagogical' and self-confidence building elements. It tries to encourage a reorientation inside the tourist destinations towards less consumption and "western culture" loaded sites towards more Islamic historical, religious and cultural sites. (OIC 2017: 28)

This cultural concept overlooked interest or necessity of Muslim tourists to non-Islamic countries or regions that could become of interest. Moreover, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation has explicitly defined Islamic tourism as a religious conservative concept (Razak et al. 2019).

The religious conservative concept of Islamic tourism is based on the conservative interpretation and understanding of Islam. Merging elements of the extremely conservative Islamic lifestyle with the modern tourism industry could indeed present new tourism options, spaces and spheres. For a growing conservative intra-Arab and intra-Muslim tourism market, the implementation of a religious conservative concept in tourism planning, as an extra option, could indeed have a positive economic and social effect (OIC 2017:28).

Another term is Muslim-friendly tourism (MFT). The Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC) uses the term '*Muslim friendly tourism*' with the same elements as the description of halal tourism or *Islamic tourism* (COMCEC 2016).

Çetin and Dinçer (2016) cited MFT as an extensive framework that encompasses Islamic tourism, in accordance with sharia

principles, and halal tourism, which provide a basis for discussing and implementing these concepts at a practical level. Meanwhile, there is something that makes this concept of Muslim friendly relative, namely a different interpretation of Islam (Cetin & Dincer 2016). However, there are common obligations that can be committed to the general standard of *Muslim friendly tourism*. Not having pork is a common obligation that Muslims must essentially abide by, but the dress code is relatively flexible depending on cultural context.

In its fatwa, MUI uses the term tourism based on sharia principles substantively referred to the Perda in West Nusa Tenggara (NTB), by naming Halal Tourism. There is no one term officially used, or defined. Thus, there is no obvious reference to what halal tourism or sharia tourism means. For technical purposes, this paper will use the term sharia tourism as the fatwa issued by the MUI and Halal Tourism as the nomenclature issued in regional regulations. Sharia tourism and halal tourism, in this paper, refer to the same purpose.

Research methods and literature review

This research used a qualitative method by reviewing literature from books, articles, documents and regulations to present sources. Moreover, related literature review and data collection are also carried out with in-depth interviews. Purposive sampling was used to classify the interviewees. The respondents here are religious leaders (read: priests or reverend) who are Christian religious figures (excluding Catholicism).

The selected respondents came from diverse backgrounds, including individuals from tourist destination and areas where Christian communities from the majority (such as Lake Toba and Tana Toraja), those from areas where Christian and Muslims are both minority groups (such as Bali), and persons from regions where Christians are a minority population (such as Aceh and West Nusa Tenggara). The selection of respondents aimed to provide a general context of Indonesia and bring different perspectives to advance the concept. However, the study conducted by Vergas-Sanchez et al. (2020) was limited to the population in Java due to the need for an extension of respondents to possibly account for variations in perception.

To differentiate from other studies, a review of previous studies has been carried out. Muthoifin (2020) asserted that the tourism sector basically has not shown enough enthusiasm in facing this *halal tourism*. Moreover, Vargas-Sanchez et al. (2020) surveyed perceptions of halal tourism by referring to mental and support levels. Mental levels referred to the collective beliefs and attitudes towards halal tourism, including perceived benefits, obstacles, religiosity, and attractiveness. Meanwhile, support level was identified by the level of awareness, benefits, attractions, and spiritual dimension of halal tourism. Abror et al. (2019) conducted a

study on the relationship between Halal tourism, religiosity, customer engagement and tourist's satisfaction.

There are essentially two studies on the MUI fatwa. The first study, conducted by Adinugraha et al. (2021), concluded that there is a necessity for a normative and positive regulation. The response of the MUI to the perception of Christian group will serve as a representation of both Muslims and religious institutions, providing a theological basis for the development of halal tourism in Indonesia. The MUI issued and enacted to fatwa Number: 108/DSN-MUI/IX/2016 concerning the Implementation of Tourism Based on Sharia Principles. At the regional governmental level, NTB Province promulgated regulation number 2 of 2016 concerning Halal Tourism. The NTB by law substantively refers to the DSN-MUI Fatwa. The only difference is in its diction. Regional regulation (Perda) selected the term 'halal tourism' while the MUI declared it as 'sharia tourism'.

The second study is the research conducted by Nurjaya & Paramarta et al (2021) that confirm with what Adinugraha & Nasution (2021) accomplished. This study also emphasised the importance of regulation. Nevertheless, Nurjaya & Paramarta et al, gave a proposal to profoundly reflect the aspects potentially hampering the development of halal tourism implementation; how to serve non-muslim tourists without clashing with Islamic sharia aspects. However, due to the fact that the study related to halal tourism is not enough, they proposed to determine the perceptions of non-Muslims.

Reading and considering non-Muslim views on halal tourism is one of the concerns to be addressed. The second study is the research conducted by Nurjaya & Paramarta et al (2021) that confirmed with what Adinugraha & Nasution et al (2021) accomplished. Therefore, this study aims to describe the perceptions of non-Muslims, especially Christians. The response of the MUI to the perception of Christian groups will serve as a representation of both Muslims and religious institutions, providing a theological basis for the development of halal tourism in Indonesia.

Results

Indonesian Ulema council fatwa and regulations on sharia tourism

Indonesian Ulema Council has an interest to ensure that the enactment of that regulation applied pursuant to sharia principles, including in the tourism aspects. In a fatwa promulgated in 2016, the DSN MUI provided guidance that the implementation of tourism must avoid 'idolatry, wickedness, destruction, *tabdzir/israf*, defection or apostasy; forming the benefit of expediency both materially and spiritually.' Hotels or home stays that comply with sharia principles must provide halal food and beverages certified by MUI. The employees are required to wear sharia-compliant attire and use sharia financial service, among other requirements (The Fifth Provision). Tourist destinations are required to avoid destruction and *khurafat*, wickedness,

adultery, pornography, liquor, drugs, gambling and art and cultural performances that are contrary to sharia principles (the Seventh Principle).

The fatwa of the DSN MUI formerly became a reference of consideration for provinces or regencies and cities promulgating regional regulations regarding halal tourism in Indonesia.

West Nusa Tenggara, the provincial level, is an area responding directly to this halal tourism concept through Regional Regulations. The emergence of the Halal Tourism Regulation is due in part to the natural resources that WEST NUSA TENGGARA possesses, which have the potential to attract foreign tourists from Asia and the Middle East, among other factors. (DSN MUI, 2016, Fatwa DSN)

In the body of the paragraph, the author eliminated the term of "Perda" as well-known by "Peraturan Daerah", as it refers to the regional regulation. The author amended a version of the sentence with some minor stylistic and formatting improvements. Another fact of halal tourism is the world's appreciation of Lombok Island, which received the *World's Best Halal Tourism Destination and the World's Best Halal Honeymoon Destination* from The World Halal Travel Summit/Exhibition 2015 (WHTS15).

Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam, Riau and West Sumatra are the three provinces that issued regulations regarding halal tourism in addition to NTB. Similar regulations are promulgated by the Regency and/or City government, including Siak Regency (Riau Province), Bandung Regency (West Java), Banjarmasin City (South Kalimantan), Banda Aceh City, Aceh Jaya Regency (NAD) and Muara Enim Regency (South Sumatra).

All local regulations issued by the Regent, Mayor or Governor in Indonesia, use the same nomenclature, namely halal tourism. The content of that regulation is generally the same as the nomenclature. The areas legalising halal tourism regulation are demographic areas with a Muslim majority population. These zones are characterised as Islamic territories based on socio-culture. The regulations existence regarding halal tourism becomes a juridical-structural space of what is sociologically the daily activities of the local community. All regulations of halal tourism refer to legal standing of DSN-MUI's parameter.

Christian perspective on halal tourism in Indonesia

Designing an area in Indonesia as halal tourism is the marketable destination; it clearly refers to the interests of financial accumulation as much as possible. On the other hand, socio-culturally, Indonesia is typically a complicated political identity country that still emerges in a public issue. This issue is important to look at; the acceptance (or rejection) of a group of regulations derived from the way of life of another group, including the design of halal tourism.

Lake Toba, one of the tourist destinations in North Sumatra, was selected by the Provincial Government and designed as a destination with the concept of halal tourism in 2019 (Sari 2019). The government planned to set up various facilities around Lake Toba that cater to Muslim tourists such as places of worship, halal food and drinks et cetera. The provision was intended to augment existing facilities. Related to the pros and cons, this concept does not necessarily lead to eliminating local traditions or foods commonly consumed by indigenous people. This discourse was expressed by the Deputy Governor of South Sulawesi, Andi Sudirman Sulaiman:

Although, Christians are the majority in the regencies of Toraja and North Toraja in south Sulawesi province, the proposal for halal tourism design has been rejected. According to Oktaviandi Rantelino, a lecturer at a state Christian Institute, there was a discourse on the implementation of halal tourism in these two districts in 2019. (Shofihara 2019)

According to Oktaviandi, the Deputy Governor's proclamation at that time was more of a political and economic issue, meant to politicise religion and take economic advantage of it through religious labels. This discourse has been objected to for at least two reasons. Firstly, the community considers that the concept, if enacted, is like underestimating the quality of tolerance for indigenous Toraja. Secondly, there is a trauma related to the 'Islamisation of Toraja,' as it can be a throwback to the Darul Islam event led by Abdul Kahar Muzakkar (1921–1965).

In Bali, halal tourism was promoted (Muhammad 2021), but faced subsequent objections from most Balinese people (Tabelak 2020), particularly Christians. There are two reasons why the people of Bali, especially Christians, object to halal tourism. Firstly, the livelihood of most people depends on tourism, that relies not only on natural attractions such as beaches, seas, mountains, forests, and rivers but also on Balinese culture, including traditional dances and rituals of Hindus, as well as traditional Balinese cuisine that is not considered halal in the sharia perspective. Secondly, Bali, also known as the 'Island of the Gods,' is home to various religions such as Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and Confucianism, with Hinduism being the predominant religion (Tabelak 2020).

As a Christian who assisted in Bali, Charles Manuputty said, when he heard the regulatory discourse on halal tourism announced by the government, it was spontaneously seen as a policy related to religion. The same perception was reiterated by Yvonne Makatita, a pastor who also served in Bali. She saw that the halal tourism regulation is about religion.

However, Charles, after further study, found that the development of halal tourism in Indonesia is also based on economic factors. The aim is to attract a large number of tourists from Arab countries to visit Indonesia. Arabians are targeted because they are the ones who have great finance

and wealth. Therefore, in order to attract tourists from Arab countries, which are predominantly Muslim, it is necessary to provide assurance that Indonesia is able to entertain the arrival of tourists from Arab countries by presenting everything halal.

As a Christian who understands the context of plurality in Indonesia, Charles said, it is really not a significant problem about the policy of 'Halal Tourism' as long as 'the spirit of halal' is intended, not breaking up the norms and values of togetherness as a plural nation and still respecting the others, so it is reasonable to implement it. The wish that is in other destinations of this country, where the majority is Muslim, the same facilities for tourists who are non-Muslims will also be prepared or accommodated. Thus, the concept of 'halal' not only belongs to one religion, but it justifies also the existence of other religions.

Christians in Aceh and NTB also enquire the regulation of halal tourism in their regions although for different reasons from areas where Christians are the majority. As the residents of NTB, Christians have certainly been already aware of the regulations regarding halal tourism. There are at least three reasons, from a Christian point of view, for looking at this regulation. Firstly, the economic side improves opportunities or stimulates middle eastern tourist arrival. Secondly, the regulation is considered to make tourism more orderly and provide a sense of security (no theft for tourists). Thirdly, this regulation is expected to keep the religious side in NTB and local culture preserved.

All informants realise that the policies of sharia tourism labels have the potential to produce segregation. All informants realise that policies by sharia tourism labels have the potential to produce segregation, leading to the polarisation of society based on a dichotomous religious identity. Additionally, the use of specific nomenclature by certain religious groups in promoting halal tourism without proper research exacerbates the issue and cause further problems, including the creation of confines and walls that reinforce the idea of halal tourism in a predominantly Christian society.

The Christian perception of the regulation phenomenon or halal tourism regulation, as reflected in what was conveyed by several respondents above, illustrates several phenomena. Firstly, halal tourism is a concept emphasising economic concepts that are legitimised by Islamic norms. Secondly, halal tourism has the potential to strengthen dominance, so that there is a potential for privileges towards a particular group over another. Thirdly, the emergence of halal tourism discourse, triggering spontaneous and reactionary responses to figure out counter-narratives, in turn, creates narrative feuds and identity rivalry. Fourthly, the formulating of a 'halal' nomenclature parting to a particular group is considered a way to establish boundaries and to assert group identity.

The Christian perspective presented above illustrates that, regardless of any attempts to re brand it as "Halal Tourism," they still view it as operating within a framework based on Islamic teachings. While some have suggested using term "halal" over "sharia" (Usman, Sobari & Sari, 2019) or "Islamic tourism" (Boğan & Sarıuşık, 2019), these distinctions do not have a significant impact on Christians, as they perceive these terms to have the same meaning.

Polemics over halal tourism: Views of Muslims

The views of Muslims depicted in this study come from those who have a structural position in the MUI. As the institution of Islamic justification, MUI went through a process of study based on both a social point of view and the religious texts itself before providing guidelines for the sharia-based tourism implementation. Indonesian Ulema Council is mindful of its role as a representative of Islam in Indonesia, a country that is home to many different religions. This diversity gives the potential to rise different perspectives in regulations that are close to certain religious groups.

The Christian view, with varied arguments, clearly illustrates this objection regarding sharia tourism or halal tourism. Cholil Nafis, Chairman of the MUI in 2021–2025, perceived that the Christian view of the sharia-based tourism or halal tourism can be understood in three ways. Firstly, the perception of those who refuse because of ignorance or a lack of socialisation, so they assumed that sharia is exclusive regulation. Secondly, an offensive view occurs because sharia tourism has the potential to change something that is already established. This is with regard to entrenched traditions and will have the potential to change because of new rules. On its advance, the transformation of established habits is entwined with economic interests. Thirdly, the perception arises to portray the importance of religious influence in an area, and thus, it experiences resistance.

The MUI's first response to the Christian view was about sharia being assumed to be exclusive and rigid. Cholil Nafis said that sharia is not exclusive, but quite the opposite, that is inclusive. If sharia tourism or halal tourism is applied, then there is no question of faith there, but its ethics. Because in the principle of transactional relationships [*muamalat*], everything can be a relationship (business), even related to those who are not religious or have faith.

TABLE 2: The Christians' view of characteristic on halal tourism.

Christian groups categories	View of the characteristic on halal tourism
Christianity as the minority	Realistic. Economically, it opens up opportunities. Socially, it makes tourism more disciplined or orderly. Culturally, the local government strives to preserve its cultural roots.
Christianity and Islam as the minority	Substantively. Living as a minority, it is important to ensure that the 'halal tourism' is not a problem if it does not damage the norms and values of togetherness as the diverse nation.
Christianity as the majority	Critical. The implementation of halal tourism is able to be seen as a manifestation of (1) the politicisation of religion for economic gain, and (2) a potential disregard for the value of tolerance that has long been promoted.

Source: Data was compiled by the interview of selected respondents

The idea of halal or sharia-based tourism in Indonesia cannot be separated from two interests: economics and theology. The economic aspect of halal tourism is linked to relatively low number of tourist arrivals from Middle Eastern countries. For instance, in 2017, Thailand recorded 600 000 tourists from the middle east (Admin 2022a), whereas Indonesia only received 264 369 visitors from the same region during the same year, according to data from the Central Statistics Agency of Indonesia (Admin 2022b).

The MUI has a principle for *himayatul ummah* or preserving the devotees of 'an al-ma'k uulat al muharromaat [forbidden food]. This principle is applied to halal food, *riba* [usury], sharia finance, and other aspects of daily life. When the MUI confers about alternative sharia-based financial systems, there needs a space for the real sector. Halal or sharia-based tourism, which theological justification was authorised by the MUI, is one of the responses to the public's interest for comfortable tourism in increasing spiritual values.

The ideological or theological interest of MUI is how to encourage the Islamic way of life. Meanwhile, the markets supposed that there are advantages of business or economic side. The relationship between these two things is the main characteristic of the sharia economics; relying on the real sector and belonging to a sharia foundation, not just profit oriented. According to Nafis, in *muamalat*, religion cannot run if it is not supported by economic aspects. If an economic practice runs in accordance with sharia principles, but no profit is obtained, then this activity will be difficult to develop. Vice versa, if only the economic side is working, but it is not pursuant to sharia principles, so then there is a problem there. Theological and economic aspects are

intertwined when it comes to halal tourism. While the MUI primarily focuses on the theological aspect, it also seeks to enhance the economic well-being of the country. In other words, the institution strives to strike a balance between the two aspects.

The term Shari'a Tourism or Halal Tourism is still proposed, as it is related to branding and labels. The important thing that the producers should do is to provide differentiation in the market context. If there are no distinguishing factors, then a product will be unfamiliar. The label distinction is theologically formed because the MUI is a religious institution. The term sharia-based tourism or halal tourism is significant because of the association with sharia principles. The MUI has the opportunity to clarify the meaning of sharia and alleviate concerns among those who do not understand it. If left unexplained, the fear or phobia associated with the term may persist.

Discussion

The reception of views on halal tourism can be delivered to, at least, three reception positions as introduced by Hall (2005). Firstly, the dominant-hegemonic position presupposes an extensive reception of the audience through the text. The message was conveyed clearly and was well received by certain Christian figures residing in areas where they are in the minority. Halal tourism is realistically accepted because the economic aspect becomes the postulate as in the beginning of its discourse (Hall 2005).

Secondly, the negotiation position refers to the position where the audience accepting the submitted code but wishes to negotiate it. The majority of them comprehensively understands the definition; nonetheless, because the message is conveyed in the context of a society that has a more complex diversity level, the message's content seeks to be negotiated. Christians in Bali, where they are a minority who are likewise in the same position as Islam (as a minority group), exist in this situation. They encouraged an intensive reading of the so-called 'halal tourism'.

Thirdly, the opposition model occurs when the audience objects or takes a stand of opposition to a text throughout inferring an autonomous meaning. Moreover, this position is undertaken by the context of Christianity as the majority or dominance. The choice to build a counter-narrative or, even reject the discourse of implementing halal tourism, is a powerful choice, because this group has authority both socially and politically. The substance of objection is dominated by cultural factors as well as beliefs, history and experience of being alive.

This study described various perceptions of an individual or a group of community that are closely related to their social position. Their position, as a number of social groups, clearly shows how the opposition is undertaken. Meanwhile, if this position could not be, they would stand for a dominant or hegemonic position. The reception, which encompasses

TABLE 3: The Christians and Muslims view on halal tourism.

The discourse	Views of Christianity	Views of Muslims
Sharia tourism or halal tourism in Indonesia	Halal tourism is a concept that concerns economic concepts legitimised by Islamic norms	Both of them are variables correlating at the right time. For Muslims, it is important to protect against something (food, facilities and others) that is forbidden (religious aspects). On the other hand, the concept has the opportunity to gain tourist arrivals (economy).
	Halal tourism has the potential to strengthen dominance so that there is a potential for privileges to one group over another.	Regulations on halal tourism have the potential to cause changes both culturally and economically. But change itself is a necessity, because there is a huge market that is to be expected as an object.
	Halal tourism regulation discourses trigger spontaneous and reactionary responses to shape counter-narratives in non-Islamic majority areas.	The emergence of sharia-based tourism or halal tourism does not intend to restrict other religions or cultures. Each of them carries out activities pursuant to the principles they believe in.
	The emergence of a 'halal' nomenclature closes to a particular group, which is assumed as a way to establish restrictions and assert-group identity.	There is inadequate information conveyed and received by others (non-Muslims) about the nomenclature of Islam perceiving (for example) sharia as an exclusive one. In another side, the label of halal tourism remains vital as a differentiation factor.

Source: Data was compiled by the interview of selected respondents

a negotiating attitude, is chosen by a group that has power to balance with the *encoder*.

The map of Christian groups' views on halal tourism discourse is a new study that has yet to never be conducted by previous researchers, which has been discussed in the literature review. The MUI's feedback to the Christians' view is also a novelty. As discussed earlier, MUI still perceives optimism when the halal tourism can be accepted by all of society, including non-Muslims, only if the medium or instrument in conveying its message can also be well understood by the public. The resistance that arose is mostly caused by inadequate information.

This polemic between Muslims and Christians on the issue of halal tourism reflects a fascinating conclusion. As an identity, labelling of halal tourism remains an important thing because of peculiarity or differentiation. Economically, halal tourism helps the country bring in tourists. In the social field, this concept still preserves the integrity of plural society, even though there are changes that occur as a result of the implementation of the halal tourism. Theologically, halal tourism ensures that Muslim tourists enjoy facilities pursuant to Islamic law.

The Christians' and Muslims' views describe the religious identity contestation arising from the divergent views on 'halal tourism.' If the Christians (whether they are the dominant audience, or opposition and negotiators) observed that economic and/or political issues that had to be separated from religious aspects, then it was not alike the Muslims view that religion and economics can support each other. The economy and religious principles are interconnected, as economic activities cannot thrive without adhering to religious values.

This study also portrayed religious sights on the relationship between religion and economics that shows varied characteristics. This various perspectives have implications on free public sphere highlighted by contestation. The holistic resource belonging to the community will significantly affect onto the outcome of the contestation. Those who have a network connected to political power will easily enact and accommodate the idea of halal tourism as a regulation similar to 10 districts, cities and provinces.

The difference of receptions from Christians obviously confirmed their social position. The stronger the position, the more they get space to take an opposition stance. Meanwhile, the responses and perceptions shown by Muslims express noticeably how this institution wants to take on the role, not only in the religious aspect but also the tourism sector (read: economy).

Halal tourism can be recognised in the level of practice by all elements in a multi-religious society, socialisation by religious institutions, civil society, economic factors, and the government, only if it is persistently carried out to explain

the intention and substance of applied policies. Attributes that are acceptable in Muslim areas, for example, may not necessarily be able to be implemented in non-Muslim countries (Jia & Chaozhi 2020). The different reception occurs because the messenger and receiver have their own elementary perception based on each context.

The research conducted by Purwandani and Yusuf (2021) actually recommended what is also a philosophical purpose of this research, which is the need for a different approach to accommodate diverse communities with different norms and habits. However, the communities in question do not include groups with different beliefs, so the problematic aspects are not adequately depicted.

Conclusion

Firstly, the Christian perspective on halal tourism can be categorised as realistic, substantial and critical. Realistic plays more of a role as the dominant audience, while substantive seeks to negotiate and critical stands to engage in opposition. Secondly, the opposition, powerfully said that the term halal tourism had the potential to build segregation. While in a negotiation context, the substantive perspective allows for a discussion of more inclusive concepts that reflect the common will, even if the original proposal comes from a particular group. Thirdly, the MUI, as a religious institution, maintains that halal tourism does not contradict other religious beliefs and emphasizes its positive economic impact on the country.

This research presented a novelty of religious perception study, implementation of sharia principle and interfaith relations; there is no single perception of an object from a religious group, and several groups that have space to transform religious beliefs into legislation (local regulations) are those who have appropriate resources (social and political) to reach out to the state. A perception has a correlation with social as well as cultural situations in which the group or individual still runs on. Because the limitation of this research, the Christian view of halal tourism and how the MUI responds to it, the economic indicators, as the main variables of this idea, have yet to be presented more. This theme can be studied through subsequent research so that it can enrich the next academic discourses.

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Author's contributions

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Ethical consideration

This article followed all ethical standards for carrying out a research without direct contact with human or animal subjects.

Data availability

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

Disclaimer

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