
Exploring Halal Destination Loyalty Through Halal Destination Attributes, Halal Memorable Tourism Experiences, and Economic Impact in Muslim-Friendly Nature Tourism in West Java

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Abstract:

*This study investigates the role of Halal Destination Attributes (HDA) and Halal Memorable Tourism Experiences (HMTE) in influencing Halal Destination Loyalty (HDL) within Muslim-friendly nature-based tourism in West Java. The research focuses on exploring the interplay between these factors in shaping loyalty among visitors to the top three Muslim-friendly nature destinations in West Java: Kawah Putih in Bandung Regency, Pantai Balongan Indah in Indramayu Regency, and Sari Ater Hot Spring Resort in Subang Regency. The study employed a quantitative research design. Data were collected using a nonprobability purposive sampling method, targeting individuals who had visited one of the selected destinations at least twice, with their most recent visit occurring within the last 12 months. Using G*Power for sample size calculation, the survey garnered 143 valid responses from an initial target of 107 respondents. Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS software. The results demonstrate that both Halal Destination Attributes and Halal Memorable Tourism Experiences positively and significantly influence Halal Destination Loyalty. Additionally, Halal Destination Attributes are shown to have a significant positive effect on Halal Memorable Tourism Experiences. These findings underscore the importance of enhancing both destination attributes and memorable experiences to foster loyalty among Muslim-friendly nature-based tourism visitors.*

Keywords: *Halal Destination Attributes, Halal Memorable Tourism Experiences, Halal Destination Loyalty, Muslim-friendly tourism, Nature-based tourism.*

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1. Introduction

In 2023, the number of Muslim international visitors neared pre-pandemic levels, reaching approximately 145 million. By 2024, this market is expected to recover fully and grow by an additional 3% to 5%. Projections indicate continued growth, with Muslim international arrivals potentially reaching 230 million and spending estimated at USD 225 billion by 2028 (GMTI, 2024). The halal tourism industry generated \$247.58 billion in revenue in 2022 and is projected to grow to \$324.96 billion by 2030 (CredenceResearch, 2023), highlighting its rapid expansion (Ekka, 2024). This growth reflects increasing global awareness of halal tourism, which appeals to both Muslim (Rafiki et al., 2023) and non-Muslim (Iranmanesh et al., 2022) travelers due to its universal focus on health, hygiene, and halal-certified services (Ali et al., 2021;

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Hosseini et al., 2023; Putra & Hendayani, 2022; Tedjakusuma et al., 2023). Halal tourism is rooted in adherence to Islamic values and principles (Wahyudin et al., 2022), it caters to Muslim travelers through features such as Muslim-friendly accommodations, hygienic facilities, and activities consistent with Islamic teachings. This sector is recognized as a transformative approach within the broader tourism industry, addressing the needs of diverse global travelers (Abror et al., 2022; Polas et al., 2023; Wibawa et al., 2023).

Indonesia ranked as the world's top Global Muslim Travel Index 2024 with a score of 76, surpassing 144 other countries (GMTI, 2024), based on four key criteria: access, communication, environment, and services. These aspects reflect the destination's attributes that directly shape visitor experiences in the context of halal tourism. As the country with the second-largest Muslim population globally in 2024 (CNBCIndonesia, 2023), Indonesia is a prime destination for the global halal tourism market (Ruhaeni et al., 2024). West Java, which has the largest Muslim population in Indonesia, with 48.58 million residents (DataIndonesia, 2023; JabarBPS, 2024), presents substantial demand and growth opportunities for halal products and tourism (Shnyrkova & Predvoditeleva, 2022). However, despite its significant potential, West Java's performance remains underwhelming, consistently ranking sixth position (IMTI, 2023) in the Indonesian Muslim Travel Index (IMTI) from 2019 to 2023, indicating a need for strategic improvements to leverage its full potential.

Loyalty is a crucial aspect of tourism marketing (Shariffuddin et al., 2023) serving as a key goal in a competitive tourism environment (Kim et al., 2023) and an indicator of repeat visit behavior (Kim, 2014). Previous research highlights that practitioners widely agree on the role of memorable tourism experiences in fostering and maintaining visitor loyalty (Kim, 2014; Sthapit et al., 2024). Visitors tend to recall unique and impactful memories that influence their intention to revisit (Chen & Rahman, 2018). In halal tourism, memorable experiences are shaped by the visitors' interactions with elements aligned with Islamic principles (Han et al., 2019). These include dedicated prayer spaces with gender-separated areas, audible calls to prayer (Mursid & Wu, 2022), separate ablution facilities, availability of halal-certified food (F. Lestari et al., 2021), and activities that align with Islamic values (Bangsawan et al., 2019; Soonsan & Jumani, 2024). Such features fulfill the needs of Muslim travelers (Han et al., 2019), reflecting the characteristics of halal-friendly tourism destinations (Septiarini et al., 2023). The halal attributes offered by a destination play a significant role in shaping these memorable experiences, directly influencing visitor loyalty.

This study focuses on identifying the determinants of destination loyalty in nature-based tourism within West Java Province. While prior research extensively explores destination loyalty outside the context of halal tourism and incorporates memorable tourism experiences (MTE) (Azis et al., 2020; Kahraman & Cifci, 2023). There is a scarcity of studies examining the role of Memorable Tourism Experiences (MTEs) in halal tourism, particularly in relation to halal memorable food from the viewpoint of non-Muslim tourists (Sthapit, et al., 2024) as well as the effect of halal memorable tourism experiences on place attachment (Sthapit et al., 2022) These gaps present

opportunities for further investigation into halal memorable tourism experiences within the context of halal tourism. Similarly, halal destination attributes have been widely studied as predictors of revisit intention on halal tourism (Mursid, 2023; Mursid & Anoraga, 2022; Wardi et al., 2022) and visit intention on halal tourism (Lestari et al., 2023; Fenitra et al., 2024; Wijaya et al., 2024) but remain underexplored concerning their influence on destination loyalty, particularly in the halal tourism sector. This research aims to develop a destination loyalty model by integrating halal destination attributes and halal memorable tourism experiences in the context of West Java's nature-based attractions.

2. Theoretical Background

Halal Tourism: The term halal comes from Arabic which means everything that is permitted (Vargas-Sánchez & Moral-Moral, 2020), closely related to Muslims who are required to consume halal food and drinks (Juliana et al., 2022). The concept of halal tourism is categorized as Muslim friendly tourism (Almuhzzi, 2020), which is universal (Aji et al., 2021) which is starting to develop because it is becoming a new tourism segment that will bring economic benefits (Carboni & Janati, 2016), with the growing awareness of non-Muslims who are aware of health, safety, quality and hygiene (Ali et al., 2021). Halal tourism is a special tourist segment who is concerned with fulfilling the rules of Islamic law (Suban et al., 2023) which has been widely studied by many researchers and academics who are starting to talk a lot about halal tourism (Ratnasari et al., 2020). Halal tourism is a destination that is very attractive to visitors because of the confidence, security and comfort regarding the issue of fulfilling obligations and needs according to Islamic sharia which are guaranteed to be fulfilled (Mohammed et al., 2023) which has the impact of providing peace of mind that will recommend to other travelers (Preko et al., 2022).

Halal Destination Attributes: The characteristics of halal destinations are essential in shaping tourists' perceptions of a destination, which in turn affects their decision to visit (Gaffar et al., 2024). These attributes represent the commitment of tourism service providers to meeting visitors' needs by ensuring the availability of services that adhere to Islamic principles and standards (Han et al., 2019; Soonsan & Jumani, 2024). Key elements of halal destination attributes include certified halal food and beverages, prayer facilities, halal-compliant services and environments, and the ethical behavior of local residents and staff (Mursid, 2023; Lestari et al., 2023). These offerings aim to attract visitors and leave a lasting impression by providing exceptional halal services.

Halal Memorable Tourism Experiences: Previous studies have identified memorable tourism experiences (MTE) as a critical aspect of tourism, defined as subjective occurrences shaped by moments, events, and activities stored in long-term memory. MTEs are described as collections of positive memories that tourists recall and cherish after visiting a destination. This research applies the concept of Memorable Tourism Experiences (MTE) to Muslim-friendly nature tourism destinations in West Java. Further studies are encouraged to expand the understanding

of Memorable Halal Tourism Experiences (MHTE) (Sthapit et al., 2022). Investigating MHTEs is both theoretically important and practically valuable for the halal tourism sector, as MTEs are key to improving the competitiveness of destinations (Sthapit et al., 2023). Tourists who have positive MHTEs are more likely to revisit destinations (Leung et al., 2022), share favorable word-of-mouth (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021), form strong emotional connections with a place (Sthapit et al., 2022), and experience increased subjective well-being (Sie et al., 2021). These outcomes underscore the importance of designing MHTEs to foster loyalty and destination success

Halal Destination Loyalty: Loyalty in the tourism industry is a critical aspect that garners significant attention from both academics and practitioners, often shaped by memorable experiences (Tran et al., 2021). Loyalty in tourism extends beyond repeat visits, encompassing destination preference, positive word-of-mouth, and a commitment to long-term relationships with the local community (Khuan et al., 2024). Loyalty serves as a key factor for destinations aiming to retain tourists, especially when visitors face challenges in adapting to changes (Hu & Xu, 2021). Destination loyalty refers to tourists who have previously visited and are visit intention in the future (Han et al., 2019). It encompasses three dimensions: behavioral, attitudinal, and a combination of the two (Bhandari et al., 2024). Behavioral loyalty, in particular, reflects tourists' experiences at a destination, potentially fostering intentions to revisit or recommend halal destinations to others (Suhartanto et al., 2022).

Halal Destination Attributes and Halal Memorable Tourism Experiences: Islamic attributes in tourism represent the integration of Islamic norms and practices into a destination's offerings, playing a pivotal role in attracting Muslim travelers (Battour et al., 2014). For these visitors, destinations that align with Islamic values—such as halal-certified services and facilities serve as primary attractions, enabling culturally resonant and permissible experiences (Han et al., 2019; Ratnasari et al., 2020). Memorable tourism experiences (MTEs) for Muslim travelers are significantly influenced by how effectively destinations address their specific needs. Features such as prayer facilities, halal food options, and clear signage play a critical role in creating positive impressions. Conversely, inadequate facilities or poor service can result in negative emotional evaluations and unfavorable memories. Therefore, a halal destination's ability to meet these needs profoundly shapes tourist satisfaction and enhances the overall travel experience (Melón et al., 2021; Tiwari et al., 2022). Previous studies highlight that high-quality halal food and clear halal information at destinations are essential attributes for both Muslim and non-Muslim tourists, contributing to a satisfying and inclusive experience (Aliffia & Komaladewi, 2021).

Halal Destination Attributes and Halal Destination Loyalty: Visitor satisfaction and loyalty (Al-Msallam, 2020) in halal tourism are largely shaped by how well destinations meet the specific needs of Muslim travelers, such as providing prayer facilities, clear signage to halal destinations, halal-certified food, and segregated areas for men and women. These attributes align with religious and cultural values, enhancing satisfaction, a key driver of loyalty. In tourism, satisfaction fosters

memorable experiences that encourage repeat visits and brand loyalty (Al-Msallam, 2020). For halal destinations, fulfilling these Islamic requirements consistently enhances emotional connections with travellers, fostering loyalty. On the other hand, failing to meet these expectations can lead to dissatisfaction, diminishing the likelihood of return visits and positive recommendations (Han et al., 2020; Sousa & Alves, 2019). Previous research emphasizes the important role of brand perception in shaping consumer behavior and loyalty (Susilawati et al., 2024). In halal tourism, visitors' actual experiences whether positive or negative significantly influence their perceptions, thereby affecting their loyalty to the destination. Prioritizing these Islamic-specific needs thus strengthens satisfaction and fosters long-term loyalty among Muslim travellers.

Halal Memorable Tourism Experiences and Halal Destination Loyalty:

Experiential marketing is widely used to attract, engage, and retain customers, leading many businesses to focus on creating distinct, positive, and memorable experiences for their clientele (Utarsih et al., 2023). Business success can be assessed by comparing strategies that influence market share and foster customer loyalty (Putra et al., 2023). Tourism is a competitive and ever-evolving industry that demands a comprehensive understanding of customer loyalty (Khuan et al., 2024). Building emotional connections based on visitors' perceptions and experiences is key to fostering (Desembrianita et al., 2024) destination loyalty among Muslim travellers in halal tourism. By offering halal-certified services, prayer facilities, and gender-sensitive spaces, destinations create positive experiences that encourage repeat visits and long-term loyalty. There is limited evidence connecting tourism experiences, overall satisfaction, and destination loyalty, especially in the context of halal tourism (Kahraman & Cifci, 2023), particularly in halal tourism. Positive memorable tourism experiences (MTEs) likely influence how travellers connect and identify with a destination (Sthapit et al., 2022). In the context of halal tourism, ensuring experiences align with Islamic values can strengthen emotional connections, ultimately fostering greater destination loyalty.

The hypothesis in this research is formulated using relevant theories from previous studies. The hypotheses are detailed as follows:

H1: Halal Destination Attributes has a significant positive influence on Halal Memorable Tourism Experiences

H2: Halal Memorable Tourism Experiences has a significant positive influence on Halal Destination Loyalty

H3: Halal Destination Attributes has a significant positive influence on Halal Destination Loyalty

3. Methodology

This study uses an online questionnaire to survey visitors of halal tourism nature destinations in West Java. Due to the unknown population size of halal tourism visitors in the region, a non-probability purposive sampling technique is employed. The population of this study comprises visitors who have traveled to one of the three

top-rated Muslim-friendly natural tourism destinations in West Java, as recognized by the IMJ-MFT (Smiling West Java Muslim-Friendly Tourism Award 2024). These destinations include Sari Ater Hot Springs in Subang Regency, Balongan Indah Beach in Indramayu Regency, and Wana Wisata Kawah Putih in Bandung Regency. The required sample size was calculated using GPower software, which determined a minimum of 107 respondents. Previous studies have validated GPower as an effective tool for sample size calculation, ensuring statistical power and representativeness (Gonçalves et al., 2024; Murshid et al., 2023; Ong et al., 2023), emphasizing its effectiveness in ensuring population representativeness with robust statistical power. It is widely used among researchers for accurate statistical power analysis to determine minimum sample size requirements (Hair et al., 2022). The selected sample will meet two criteria: (1) having visited a halal tourism destination in West Java at least twice (Oppermann, 2000), and (2) having made their most recent visit within the past 12 months (Jiang & Yan, 2022).

A purposive sampling method is used in this study to ensure that the respondents are relevant to examining the factors affecting destination loyalty in halal tourism. The research instrument, modified to suit the context of halal tourism in West Java, is adapted from existing literature. The halal destination variable is derived from studies by (Hasan, 2023; Lestari et al., 2023; Wibawa et al., 2023; Soonsan & Jumani, 2024), while the halal memorable tourism experience variable follows (Sthapit et al., 2022). The destination loyalty variable is based on research by (Almeida-Santana & Moreno-Gil, 2018; Stavrianea & Kamenidou, 2022). Data analysis is conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), chosen for its suitability in handling reflective, formative, or mixed constructs and its effectiveness in exploratory research aimed at theory development (Santosa, 2018). PLS-SEM is employed to assess the measurement model and test hypotheses through non-parametric bootstrapping. It excels in predicting causal relationships without strict distributional assumptions, making it ideal for complex models in non-normally distributed data (Hair et al., 2022). This approach aligns with the study's objective of investigating causal relationships within the halal tourism context, particularly in enhancing the destination loyalty model. This research used SmartPLS, a widely adopted method in tourism research due to its precision in identifying relationships within structural models (Hair et al., 2022). PLS-SEM's ability to handle small sample sizes and non-normal data (Hair et al., 2022), further validated its application. The bootstrap resampling method (5000 sub-samples) was utilized to test path significance, providing robust t-values (Wong-Ken, 2013). Additionally, descriptive statistics were calculated to summarize the sample characteristics comprehensively (Hair et al., 2012).

4. Empirical Findings/Result

Demographic characteristics of the sample

The demographic profile of the 143 respondents is summarized as follows: Most participants were female (62.2%), with males comprising 37.8%. A majority identified as Muslim (94.4%), followed by Protestant (3.5%), Catholic (1.4%), and

Hindu (0.7%). Regarding education, 41.3% held a bachelor's degree, followed by high school graduates (35.7%), master's degree holders (14%), and smaller proportions with doctoral (4.9%) or elementary education (0.7%). In terms of age, 68.5% were aged 18–25, while 13.3% were 26–35 years, and smaller groups fell within older age brackets. Most respondents resided in Java (81.8%), with others from Sumatra (12.6%), Bali/Nusa Tenggara (1.4%), Kalimantan (2.8%), and Sulawesi (0.7%). The majority were unmarried (72.7%), and income levels varied, with 65.8% earning below IDR 5 million monthly. Occupations ranged from students (43.4%) to private employees (26.7%) and entrepreneurs (9.8%). Travel patterns showed 75.5% visited destinations twice, mostly with family (65%) or friends (26.6%), for durations of one day (72%). Information about destinations was obtained from social media (50.3%) and personal networks (49.7%). This data highlights the socio-demographic diversity and travel preferences critical to analyzing factors influencing destination loyalty in halal tourism.

Measurement Model Assessment

To ensure its appropriateness for further structural analysis, the measurement model was evaluated for reliability and validity. This evaluation included assessing convergent validity and discriminant validity using factor loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE), in accordance with the guidelines of Hair et al., (2022) and Fornell & Larcker, (1981).

Convergent Validity

As shown in Table 1, the factor loadings for most indicators exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2022), ensuring adequate representation of their respective constructs. Specifically:

1. Halal Destination Attributes (HDA): The initial model contained 28 indicators. However, 11 indicators were excluded (or removed) due to their outer loadings falling below 0.7, leaving 17 indicators that met the criteria for further analysis.
2. Halal Memorable Tourism Experiences (HMTE): All indicators had loadings between 0.712 and 0.835, surpassing the minimum threshold.
3. Halal Destination Loyalty (HDL): Similarly, all six indicators exhibited acceptable outer loading values ranging from 0.764 to 0.828.

All constructs showed composite reliability values above the recommended threshold of 0.7, demonstrating internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha values, which ranged from 0.889 (HMTE) to 0.956 (HDA), further confirmed the reliability of the constructs. Additionally, the AVE values for HDA (0.586), HMTE (0.624), and HDL (0.644) exceeded the minimum threshold of 0.5, signifying that the constructs explained over 50% of the variance in their respective indicators. In the HDA construct, indicators with low outer loading (<0.7) were excluded to enhance the model's overall validity and reliability. This adjustment aligns with the recommendation by Hair et al. (2017) that indicators failing to meet the minimum loading threshold should be omitted to refine the construct's measurement quality. Figure 2. illustrates the results of the PLS Algorithm analysis after the removal of 10 indicators from the Halal Destination Attributes (HDA) construct that did not meet the minimum threshold for outer loading values (<0.7)

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was assessed through the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio, which gauges the level of distinctiveness between constructs, as outlined by Henseler et al., (2015), HTMT values should be below 0.9 to establish discriminant validity. Table 1 indicates that all HTMT ratios for the constructs (HDA, HMTE, HDL) were below 0.9, satisfying this criterion. This result demonstrates the constructs' uniqueness and confirms that they are not overlapping conceptually.

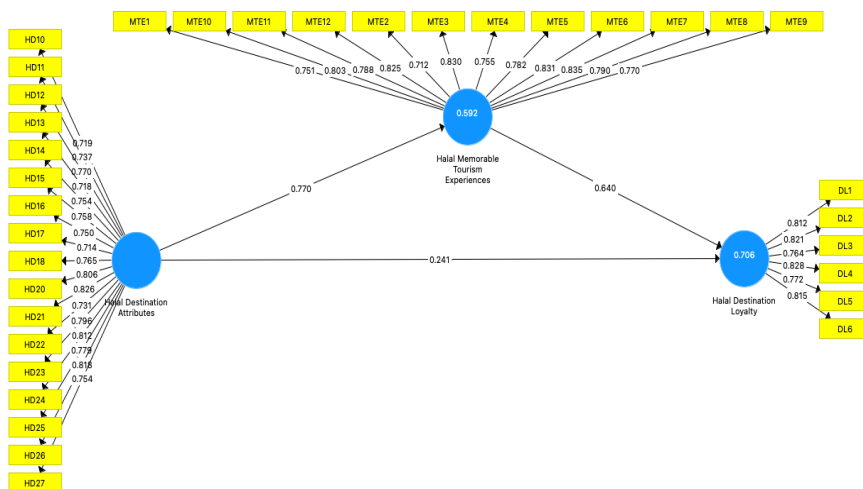


Figure 1. PLS Algorithm Output from SmartPLS

Source: Processed data by authors (2024)

Table1. Measurement Model and Discriminant Validity (Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio)

Variable	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE	HDA	HDL	HMTE
HDA	0.714 0.826	- 0.956	0.960	0.586			
HDL	0.764 0.828	- 0.945	0.916	0.644	0.793		
HMTE	0.712 0.835	- 0.889	0.952	0.624	0.806	0.898	

Source: Processed data by authors (2024)

Since each variable's Cronbach's Alpha coefficient esteem is higher than the study's pivotal esteem of 0.6, the unwavering quality calculations comes about illustrate the legitimacy of each variable utilized within the think about.

Structural Model Analysis

This study aims to explore how halal destination attributes and halal memorable tourism experiences influence loyalty to halal destinations in West Java's halal nature tourism. The model's predictive accuracy and relevance are assessed using R^2 and Q^2 , respectively. Hair et al. (2022) categorize R^2 values as weak (0.25), moderate (0.50),

or substantial (0.75), with higher values indicating stronger explanatory power. Similarly, Q^2 values are used to determine predictive relevance, where positive values confirm the model's capability to predict endogenous variables (Hair et al., 2022). Furthermore Cohen, (1988), thresholds for F^2 provide insights into the relative importance of individual predictors within the model, defining small (0.02), medium (0.15), and large (0.35) effects. These metrics collectively validate the robustness of the structural model.

The results of the analysis demonstrate substantial predictive accuracy, as indicated by the R^2 values of 0.706 for Halal Destination Loyalty and 0.592 for Halal Memorable Tourism Experiences. These findings suggest that the structural model accounts for 70.6% of the variance in Halal Destination Loyalty and 59.2% in Halal Memorable Tourism Experiences. The Q^2 values, which assess the predictive relevance of the model, are 0.443 for Halal Destination Loyalty and 0.358 for Halal Memorable Tourism Experiences. Both values exceed zero, confirming the model's strong predictive capability (Chin, 2010). The analysis of effect sizes (f^2) highlights the relative importance of the predictors. Halal Destination Attributes has a small effect (0.081) on Halal Memorable Tourism Experiences but exhibits a moderate effect (0.569) on Halal Destination Loyalty. In contrast, Halal Memorable Tourism Experiences has a large effect size (1.453) on Halal Destination Loyalty, emphasizing its critical role in fostering loyalty among travelers (Cohen, 1988).

These findings underscore the significant influence of Halal Memorable Tourism Experiences on Halal Destination Loyalty, while Halal Destination Attributes contributes meaningfully to both constructs, albeit to varying extents. These results validate the robustness of the structural model and provide valuable insights into halal tourism behavior. The strong explanatory power underscores the importance of enhancing destination attributes and creating memorable experiences to effectively build loyalty among halal tourists. Figure 3 illustrates the results of the bootstrapping analysis, showing the t-statistics for each relationship between the variables, as well as the t-statistics for each indicator.

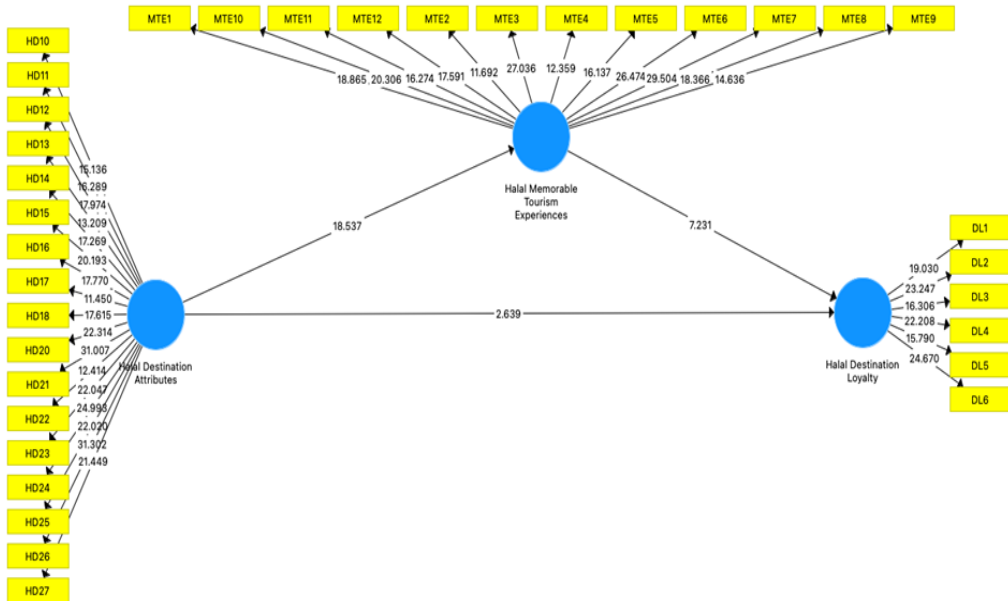


Figure 2. Bootstrapping Result Output from SmartPLS

Source: Processed data by authors (2024)

Hypotheses Testing

The structural model analysis highlights the relationships between the constructs in this study, confirming the statistical significance of all tested hypotheses. As shown in Figure 3, Halal Destination Attributes (HDA) have a strong positive effect on Halal Memorable Tourism Experiences (HMTE) ($\beta = 0.770$, $t = 18.537$), supporting H1. This indicates that well-developed destination attributes significantly enhance tourists' memorable experiences. In addition, HDA also has a positive impact on Halal Destination Loyalty (HDL) ($\beta = 0.241$, $t = 2.639$), confirming H2. This finding suggests that favorable destination attributes contribute, albeit to a lesser extent, to building loyalty among visitors. Furthermore, HMTE demonstrated a substantial positive effect on HDL ($\beta = 0.640$, $t = 7.231$), validating H3. This result underscores the critical role of memorable experiences in fostering visitor loyalty in halal tourism contexts. Table 2 summarizes the path coefficient values and t-values for each hypothesis tested in this study.

Table 2. Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses	Structural Path	Path Coefficient	T-value (Bootstrapping)	Hypothesis Result
H1	Halal Destination Attributes -> Halal Memorable Tourism Experiences	0,770**	18,537	Supported

Hypotheses	Structural Path	Path Coefficient	T-value (Bootstrapping)	Hypothesis Result
H2	Halal Destination Attributes -> Halal Destination Loyalty	0,241**	2,639	Supported
H3	Halal Memorable Tourism Experiences -> Halal Destination Loyalty	0,640**	7,231	Supported

Notes: ** Significant at $p < 0.01$, * significant at $p < 0.05$ Source: *Processed data by authors (2024)*

5. Discussion

The findings of this study, demonstrating the positive and significant influence of Halal Destination Attributes (HDA) and Halal Memorable Tourism Experiences (HMTE) on Halal Destination Loyalty (HDL), align with prior research both within and outside the context of halal tourism but in linear variables.

Halal Destination Attributes on Halal Memorable Tourism Experiences

Destination attributes play a crucial role in shaping memorable tourism experiences (HMTE) by fostering emotional and sensory engagement through elements such as infrastructure, cultural authenticity, and service quality (Kim, 2014; Sthapit & Coudounaris, 2018). In halal tourism, features like halal-certified facilities, Muslim-friendly services, and cultural alignment significantly enhance tourists' experiences, creating lasting memories (Battour et al., 2018). This study confirms the vital influence of halal destination attributes (HDA) in crafting HMTE. Empirical studies reveal that social, environmental, and emotional factors contribute substantially to creating profound tourist memories and perceptions. The intricate relationship between destination characteristics such as local hospitality, infrastructure, attractions, and tourists' emotional engagement emerges as a critical determinant in shaping exceptional travel experiences.

In the context of halal nature tourism in West Java, these attributes gain further significance. The region's natural landscapes, including tea plantations and volcanic mountains, combined with halal services such as prayer facilities and halal dining, create a harmonious blend of cultural and spiritual fulfillment. Local traditions aligned with Islamic values enrich visitors' experiences, offering both cultural immersion and spiritual satisfaction. The alignment of halal destination attributes with travelers' expectations fosters a psychologically enriching environment and strengthens emotional connections (Rahman et al., 2020). For Muslim tourists, this alignment elevates satisfaction and memorability while promoting destination loyalty. West Java's unique natural and cultural assets, enhanced by halal-certified offerings, position it as a premier halal nature tourism destination, emphasizing the strategic importance of tailoring services to meet the needs of Muslim travelers.

Halal Destination Attributes on Halal Destination Loyalty

Destination attributes are crucial in influencing customer loyalty. Studies beyond halal tourism, such as Lee & Xue, (2020), highlight the significance of attributes like facility availability, cultural appeal, and environmental quality in fostering high-quality tourist experiences. Similarly, within halal tourism, studies by Battour & Ismail, (2016) highlight that halal-specific attributes, such as the availability of halal-certified food and prayer facilities, enhance Muslim tourists' satisfaction and loyalty. This supports the idea that fulfilling destination-specific needs leads to more positive experiences and ultimately builds stronger loyalty. The connection between destination attributes and loyalty is well-documented. Attributes such as local hospitality, well-maintained infrastructure, and service reliability have been found to positively impact tourist loyalty by fostering satisfaction and trust (Chen & Phou, 2013). In halal tourism, the provision of facilities that meet religious requirements strengthens trust and satisfaction, which translates into loyalty toward the destination (Zamani-Farahani & Musa, 2012). This aligns with the present study's finding of HDA has significant positive influence on HDL, emphasizing the importance of tailored attributes in promoting destination loyalty.

Destination attributes significantly shape memorable tourism experiences by leveraging elements such as cultural authenticity, sensory engagement, and service quality (Sthapit & Coudounaris, 2018). Empirical evidence highlights that factors like social interactions, environmental appeal, and emotional connections play pivotal roles in crafting profound tourist memories. These attributes interweave elements such as local hospitality, infrastructure, and attractions with tourists' emotional engagement, serving as key contributors to exceptional travel experiences. By functioning as psychological triggers, destination attributes elevate ordinary travel into extraordinary narratives, where each sensory and emotional interaction contributes to memory formation. Beyond visual or aesthetic appreciation, these features delve into deeper psychological realms, fostering personal meaning and cultural relevance. For destination managers, strategically curating these attributes can transform tourist interactions from mere transactions into impactful, emotionally resonant journeys that persist in memory long after the trip has concluded (Kim et al., 2012).

Halal Memorable Tourism Experiences on Halal Destination Loyalty

The relationship between Memorable Tourism Experiences (MTE) and loyalty between has been extensively investigated in the literature. (Bhandari et al., 2024; Stavrianea & Kamenidou, 2022; Zhou et al., 2023) outside of halal tourism context. For example, Kim et al. (2012) suggest that unique and memorable experiences create emotional connections with a destination, fostering repeat visits and positive word-of-mouth. Within halal tourism, Rahman et al. (2020) expand on this, stating that memorable experiences tailored to religious and cultural expectations significantly enhance destination loyalty among Muslim travelers. These findings parallel the results of this study, where HMTE exhibits a large effect size in influencing HDL. The findings regarding quality experiences resonate with studies on service quality and customer satisfaction. Hemsley-Brown and Alnawas (2016) assert that service

quality mediates the relationship between customer experiences and loyalty, as seen in the tourism industry where responsiveness and reliability of services contribute to repeat visits. This connection is also observed in halal tourism, where destinations that effectively meet the specific needs of Muslim travelers foster both satisfaction and loyalty (Battour & Ismail, 2016). Memorable tourism experiences serve as a powerful predictor of destination loyalty. Studies show that positive, emotionally impactful experiences not only increase tourists' satisfaction but also boost their intention to revisit and recommend destinations (Tsai, 2016). In the halal tourism domain, memorable experiences linked to culturally immersive activities and religiously compliant services amplify tourists' emotional connections, reinforcing loyalty to the destination (Rahman et al., 2020). The significant relationship between HMTE and HDL observed in this study reinforces these findings, highlighting the role of experiential quality in fostering destination loyalty.

Memorable tourism experiences emerge as a critical determinant of tourist loyalty, demonstrating significant positive influences through complex emotional and cognitive mechanisms. Previous research by Guleria et al., (2024) highlights that positive memorable tourism experiences (MTE) significantly influence storytelling intentions, a key component of word-of-mouth communication. Storytelling, in this context, acts as a precursor to destination loyalty, as satisfied tourists are more likely to share their experiences and recommend the destination to others. Contemporary research underscores the transformative potential of memorable experiences in cultivating sustained destination loyalty by engaging multidimensional psychological and emotional processes. This study's results align with Anwar & Ozuem, (2022), who discuss the mediating role of service quality between experiences and loyalty. In the context of halal tourism, fulfilling expectations through robust destination attributes and effective service quality creates memorable experiences that act as a pathway to loyalty. The findings also mirror Rahman et al. (2022), who emphasize that tailored experiences for Muslim tourists, coupled with destination facilities and services, enhance destination attractiveness and revisit intentions. In conclusion, this study enhances the understanding of destination loyalty by providing empirical evidence that supports previous research on the roles of destination attributes, memorable tourism experiences, and service quality. These findings highlight the need for destination strategies that meet tourists' expectations, especially in niche markets like halal tourism.

6. Conclusions

This study reveals that halal destination attributes (HDA) play a pivotal role in influencing both memorable tourism experiences (HMTE) and halal destination loyalty (HDL), particularly in the context of Muslim-friendly nature tourism in West Java. HDAs, including halal-certified facilities, Muslim-friendly services, and culturally integrated attractions, provide a foundation for satisfying the needs and expectations of Muslim tourists. These attributes not only enhance the overall experience but also contribute significantly to creating profound and memorable encounters. The positive relationship between HDA and HMTE underscores the

importance of integrating Islamic values and principles into service delivery and destination design. For example, the availability of prayer facilities, halal dining options, and culturally sensitive recreational activities at destinations like Sari Ater Hot Springs, Kawah Putih, and Pantai Balongan Indah exemplifies how tailored HDA can amplify tourist satisfaction and emotional engagement. These elements not only leave a lasting impression but also establish a strong psychological connection to the destination.

Furthermore, HMTE is shown to significantly influence HDL, aligning with the notion that memorable experiences foster emotional bonds, which translate into loyalty behaviors. This includes revisiting the destination and recommending it to others through positive word-of-mouth and storytelling, as supported by (Guleria et al., 2023). In the context of West Java's halal tourism, tourists' positive memories of the region's unique attractions and services enhance their willingness to promote these destinations to their peers, ultimately bolstering destination loyalty. The findings also highlight the intertwined effects of HDA, HMTE, and HDL, emphasizing the strategic need for destination managers to focus on providing exceptional, culturally aligned experiences. By doing so, Muslim-friendly destinations in West Java can strengthen their competitive position in the global halal tourism market while fostering long-term loyalty among visitors.

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