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Muslim-friendly tourism in non-Muslim majority destinations: A review of Bali Island

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Abstract

The global rise in Muslim tourists has prompted the international tourism industry to prioritise Muslim-friendly services and amenities. Bali, as a world-renowned tourist destination, faces a unique challenge in balancing its predominantly Hindu cultural identity with the growing expectations of Muslim travellers, particularly about religiously appropriate services. This study investigates the potential, challenges, and strategic approaches to implementing Muslim-friendly tourism in Bali. A narrative review methodology was employed, utilising secondary data from academic literature, industry reports, statistical sources, and documents highlighting current trends in Muslim-friendly tourism. The findings reveal that Bali offers supportive infrastructure, business interest, and several Muslim-friendly facilities, including prayer spaces, hotels, and halal food options. However, challenges persist, such as limited halal-certified establishments, local cultural resistance, and unclear regulatory frameworks. The study concludes that developing inclusive Muslim-friendly tourism in Bali requires a culturally adaptive approach, clear standards, and active stakeholder collaboration.

1. Introduction

The association of *Shari'ah* principles with tourism has given rise to several terminologies, including Islamic tourism, *Shari'ah* tourism, halal tourism, halal lifestyle, halal travel, Muslim-friendly tourism (MFT), halal tourist destinations, and religious tourism. These terms share a common foundation: the notion that Islamic teachings should guide tourism activities (Fitriani & Naamy, 2019). This tourism segment that caters to Muslim tourists has experienced rapid growth, prompting businesses such as hotels, restaurants, tour operators, and travel agencies to innovate and expand their presence (Aziz, 2018). In developing these destinations, it is necessary to consider all aspects holistically as an ecosystem (Sutono *et al.*, 2021). In addition, growing tourist awareness regarding health, safety, and security has become an important consideration for destination managers. In this context, efforts to promote this segment significantly encourage stakeholders to offer high-quality amenities, attractions, and accessible services that align with Islamic values (Abbas *et al.*, 2021; Ntounis *et al.*, 2022).

As reported by Prayer Times (2025), the global Muslim population is projected to reach approximately 2.04 billion, which is expected to lead to a proportional rise in demand for Islamic tourism. This segment has emerged as a fundamental part of the global tourism sector. The Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) 2024 reported a significant improvement in the accommodation of Muslim-friendly services, with the average destination score increasing by nearly 10%. This indicates that more destinations are actively striving to meet the needs of

Muslim travellers. Indonesia, in particular, demonstrated a strong performance, securing a top two ranking along with Malaysia in the GMTI 2024 (see Table 1). This achievement reflects Indonesia's robust tourism infrastructure and ongoing efforts to enhance tourism facilities, highlighting its growing potential and competitiveness in the global Muslim travel market.

Countries with significant Muslim populations, such as Malaysia and Indonesia, tend to be preferred by global Muslim travellers seeking a comprehensive experience aligned with their faith. This may be explained by the fact that Muslims can feel more comfortable in an environment that adheres to Islamic law in diet, attire, and other traditions (Mohsin *et al.*, 2016). Indonesia has outlined a clear vision and mission for this tourism sector in response to this demand. The country aspires to position itself as a premier destination for Muslim travellers while fostering diversity and promoting sustainable tourism practices. Its mission includes market-oriented promotional strategies, establishing a competitive environment for Muslim-oriented tourism, and enhancing Indonesia's global competitiveness (Sutono *et al.*, 2019).

Bali, Indonesia's most iconic and internationally recognised tourist destination, offers an intriguing context for this evolution. It is predominantly a Hindu culture, and a strong secular tourism identity raises important questions about how Muslim-friendly tourism can be implemented in a way that is both respectful and inclusive. As such, Bali is a compelling case for exploring how Muslim-friendly tourism principles can be integrated into non-Muslim-majority settings without

Table 1: GMTI 2024 rankings

GMTI Rank	Change VS 2023	Destination	GMTI Scores
1	0	Indonesia	76
1	0	Malaysia	76
3	0	Saudi Arabia	74
4	+1	Turkiye	73
5	-1	United Arab Emirates (UAE)	72
6	0	Qatar	71
7	0	Iran	67
7	0	Jordan	67
9	+6	Brunei	66
9	+4	Oman	66
9	+2	Singapore	66

Source: Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) (2024)

compromising cultural authenticity. While Bali is already showing signs of adapting to the needs of Muslim travellers, a critical gap remains in understanding how to develop its Muslim-friendly tourism capacity systematically. This study builds upon that gap by reviewing relevant literature and emerging trends in Muslim-friendly tourism, focusing on the opportunities and challenges that arise in non-Muslim-majority environments.

1.1 Definition of halal tourism vs Muslim-friendly tourism

Tourism has become a global focus due to increasing demand from Muslim travellers seeking tourism experiences that reflect Islamic values. Two key terms frequently appear in this context: halal and Muslim-friendly tourism (MFT). Although they are often used interchangeably in policy and academic discourse, academic literature has drawn distinctions between the two based on levels of compliance with *Shari'ah* principles (Table 2).

Halal tourism is defined as tourism that accommodates the needs of Muslim travellers in its products and services, including food, accommodation, financial services, and gender-specific facilities, consistent with Islamic principles. Halal tourism typically involves strict adherence to Islamic law across all aspects of the tourism experience. (Rahman *et al.*, 2020). Muslim-friendly tourism, by comparison, adopts a more inclusive and adaptable model that is especially relevant in non-Muslim-majority destinations where full *Shari'ah* implementation may not be feasible. It focuses on providing essential religious facilities and services, such as halal food and prayer areas, without requiring full *Shari'ah* compliance in all tourism aspects. This approach allows destinations to accommodate Muslim tourists' basic needs while preserving their cultural identity and welcoming travellers of all backgrounds (Muslim & Harun, 2022). Muslim-friendly tourism reflects the evolving nature of global Muslim travel by enabling broader application across diverse contexts, particularly in multicultural and secular environments. It promotes an inclusive, safe, and respectful tourism ecosystem of Islamic values, offering Muslim travellers a meaningful experience without excluding others (Nugroho *et al.*, 2019).

In the case of Indonesia, the country has officially adopted the term halal tourism in its regulatory and promotional frameworks. The Ministry of Tourism (2012) defines halal

tourism as tourism activities supported by facilities and services from the community, businesses, and government that align with Islamic values. According to Sugihartati *et al.* (2022), Indonesia's implementation of halal tourism follows two main approaches. The first is rooted in religious tourism, emphasising Indonesia's Islamic heritage, such as mosque visits, pilgrimages to religious leaders' graves, and halal culinary tours. The second approach is more pragmatic, treating halal tourism as an enhancement of general tourism by adding Muslim-specific services. This includes features such as prayer spaces, halal-certified food, and family-friendly amenities—elements that allow Muslim tourists to maintain their religious practices while engaging in various tourism types such as nature-based, cultural, and leisure.

While Indonesia continues to use the term halal tourism, this article adopts the term Muslim-Friendly Tourism (MFT) to better reflect the broader, more commonly accepted interpretation found in the literature and a more inclusive approach to serving Muslim travellers in non-Muslim-majority destinations, such as research by Rasyid *et al.* (2024), Suswanta *et al.* (2023), and Takhim *et al.* (2023). The MFT term is also aligned with the second approach in Indonesia's model, which emphasises practical religious accommodations within mainstream tourism infrastructure. It prioritises service provision over doctrinal enforcement and promotes inclusivity without requiring comprehensive *Shari'ah* compliance. Framing the Indonesian case within the MFT paradigm allows for more accurate comparative analysis. It situates Indonesia within a global trend toward flexible, culturally sensitive tourism that meets the diverse expectations of Muslim travellers.

1.2 Muslim friendly tourism in Indonesia

Indonesia has great potential for developing Muslim-friendly tourism at the global level, supported by its Muslim-majority population and the wealth of available natural resources. This tourism sector not only contributes to economic growth but also plays a role in creating various jobs. Nevertheless, strategic and operational challenges must be addressed to fully actualise this potential (Rahim *et al.*, 2024). Several key aspects should be considered to support the development of high-quality and competitive Muslim-friendly tourism. To achieve this, its tourism resources must be managed effectively and professionally. Additionally, community members and stakeholders should be supportive by fostering a positive

Table 2: The Differences between halal and Muslim-friendly

Aspects	Halal Tourism	Muslim-Friendly Tourism
Definition	Tourism that considers tourists' compliance with <i>Shari'ah</i> law involves strict halal nuances such as food and beverages, clothing, tourism activities, services, and others (Azam <i>et al.</i> , 2019; Jafari & Scott, 2014).	The term Muslim-friendly is lighter and narrower than halal. Muslim-friendly tourism caters to Muslim tourists' needs, is based on adherence to their religious beliefs, or implements the main elements of Islamic attributes in services and products (Ahmed & Akbaba, 2020; Battour <i>et al.</i> , 2014; CrescentRating, 2016; Junaidi, 2020).
Target Market	Primarily, Muslim-majority countries are the primary target audience seeking products and services that comply with <i>Shari'ah</i> law, which also creates many opportunities for both Muslim and non-Muslim countries (Boğan & Sarıışık, 2019a).	Muslim-friendly tourism, while targeting Muslim travellers, is commonly associated with destinations in non-Muslim-majority regions, such as Bali (Ahmed & Akbaba, 2020)
Services and Facilities	Includes prayer facilities, halal food and beverages, entertainment, gender-segregated facilities (pools, bathrooms), avoiding alcoholic beverages, halal finance, and pharmaceuticals (Jamal & El-Bassiouny, 2018).	It may include halal food options, prayer spaces, and some Muslim-friendly amenities, but it may also provide non-halal products and services or not strictly comply with <i>Shari'ah</i> (Ahmed & Akbaba, 2020).
Industry Application	A niche market, halal tourism includes halal hotels, halal transportation (halal airlines), food, entertainment, tour packages, and halal finance (Akyol & Kiline, 2014).	Tourism services are more accommodating of some Muslim-friendly options without full halal certification or integration of the basic needs of Muslim travellers (Ahmed & Akbaba, 2020).

attitude towards the growth of Muslim-friendly tourism (Nugroho *et al.*, 2021).

LPPOM MUI (2023) has conducted several initiatives to develop Indonesia as a Muslim-friendly tourist destination. Table 3 summarises the establishment of institutions and the ratification of laws that form the foundation of the halal certification system in Indonesia. This robust and evolving halal certification framework is instrumental in enhancing Indonesia's credibility as a leading destination for Muslim-friendly tourism, assuring travellers of genuine adherence to Islamic principles.

Table 3: Historical Development of Halal Certification System

Year	Policy
1975	The Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) was formed.
1989	LPPOM MUI was formed, and halal certification was started.
2012	LPPOM MUI officially launched (Halal Assurance System 23000) and requires companies to implement it.
2014	Law No. 33 of 2014 concerning halal product assurance was passed.
2017	The Halal Product Assurance Agency (BPJPH) was formed.
2019	The obligation of halal certification by Law No. 33 of 2014 should have been implemented.

Currently, no law explicitly regulates halal or Muslim-friendly tourism in Indonesia. However, this segment in Indonesia is governed by various regulations and policies related to the tourism sector as a whole, as well as laws governing halal product guarantees. In addition, several regions in Indonesia have issued regional regulations (*peraturan daerah*, Perda) related to halal tourism. Moreover, to fulfil these necessities, although not as strong as a law, the National Sharia Council-Indonesian Ulema Council DSN-MUI (2016) issued a fatwa No.108/DSN-MUI/X2016, after considering that Indonesia needs guidelines for organising tourism based on *Shari'ah* principles. One of the provisions is as follows: "*Shari'ah Tourism Destinations are geographical areas located in one or more administrative areas in which there are tourist attractions, worship and public facilities, tourism facilities, accessibility, and communities that are interrelated and complement the realisation of tourism following shariah principles.*" The study by Saviera *et al.* (2024) showed that the following regions have halal tourism regulations: Regulation Number 51 of 2015, which is from the Governor of West Nusa Tenggara; Regulation Number 1 of 2020, which is from the Province of West Sumatra; Regulation Number 19 of 2022, which the Governor of North Sumatra Province issued; and Regulation Number 6 of 2020, which is from Bandung Regency. The Government of South Sumatra Province also issued Regulation Number 9 of 2019 regarding halal tourism.

1.3 Bali as a Muslim-friendly tourism destination

Bali has become a leading domestic and international tourist destination (Ramadhani *et al.*, 2023). As a tourist destination, Bali tourism has a strong branding that emphasises natural

beauty, cultural diversity, ethnic arts, traditional Balinese artistic performances, and religious ceremonies, all of which make Bali visually striking to tourists (Pageh *et al.*, 2022; Utama *et al.*, 2023). According to the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) by Yustiani (2024), Bali had significant fluctuations in local and international visitor arrivals from 2020 to 2023. It shows the influence of several global and regional occurrences, including the COVID-19 pandemic and its subsequent recovery, on the tourism industry. Figure 1 shows Bali's tourism recovery from 2020 to 2023. International tourist visits rebounded from a notable decline in 2021 to exceed 5.2 million in 2023, while domestic tourism reached its peak of 11.6 million. This indicates Bali's critical role in revitalising Indonesia's tourism sector.

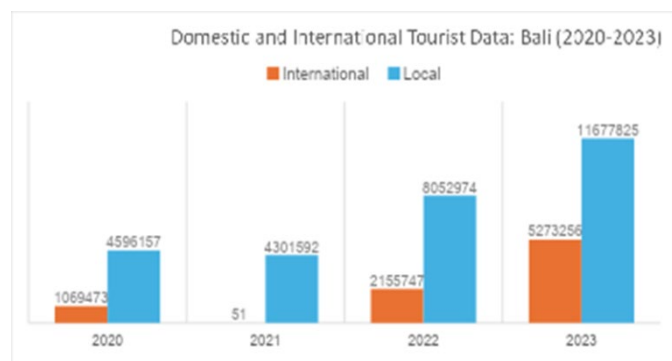


Figure 1: Domestic and international tourist data: Bali 2020-2023. Source : Yustiani (2024).

While Bali is predominantly Hindu and known for its unique cultural tourism identity, it increasingly attracts many Muslim tourists from domestic and international markets. Research indicates that Muslim-friendly services (MFT), such as halal dining options and prayer facilities, play a crucial role in enhancing the satisfaction and loyalty of Muslim travellers toward their destinations (Battour *et al.*, 2014). The study by Subagiyo and Syaichoni (2023) shows that the opportunities for halal culinary tourism in Bali are readily apparent; however, engaging with local producers and expanding the variety of halal menu offerings is essential. Despite Bali, Indonesia, being a major tourist destination that has gained increasing popularity among Muslim travellers, a comprehensive assessment of its halal facilities and food services is still necessary. This includes ensuring the availability of halal-certified food, providing facilities like prayer rooms and gender-separated restrooms, and serving meals prepared by halal principles (Setiawan & Pahlevi, 2023). Given the significant and expanding global Muslim travel market and Indonesia's top-tier ranking in the Global Muslim Travel Index, developing Muslim-friendly tourism (MFT) in Bali becomes a strategic imperative.

Therefore, understanding why Bali should embrace this requires a comprehensive review of existing literature and data to identify the potential benefits, challenges, and implications of integrating MFT services into Bali's tourism sector. This review will explore whether and how Muslim-friendly tourism can complement Bali's established tourism brand, significantly enhance visitor satisfaction, and contribute to the island's economic growth by diversifying its appeal without compromising its cherished cultural authenticity.

Accordingly, this study aims to fill this knowledge gap by analysing the current state of Muslim-friendly tourism (MFT)

in Bali, while examining the potential, challenges, and strategies the growing Muslim community poses. The study will review current literature and data to discuss the potential of MFT initiatives to enhance Indonesia's economic development. This review aims to highlight the significance of strategic planning and stakeholder contribution to maximising the potential of Muslim-friendly tourism (MFT) in Bali by addressing the subsequent question: What are the potential challenges and appropriate strategies to support the development of Muslim-Friendly Tourism (MFT) in Bali?

2. Materials and methods

A narrative literature review approach provided background and context on developing Muslim-friendly tourism, particularly its potential in Bali. This method draws on secondary data from academic sources, industry reports, statistical data, and relevant documents that describe current trends in Muslim-friendly tourism (Halim & Aghwan, 2024). The literature was searched explicitly through academic databases including Scopus, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar, prioritising studies published between 2014 and 2025 to capture the most recent developments in the field.

Narrative reviews, commonly used across the social sciences and humanities, are especially suited for topics where reality is subjective and dynamic. This approach enables researchers to describe the current state of knowledge on a subject and offer a subjective examination and critical analysis of the existing literature. It allows exploring under-researched areas, offering new insights, or presenting alternative perspectives on even well-established fields (Rumrill & Fitzgerald, 2001; Sukhera, 2022). In this article, a narrative review helps to effectively contextualise Muslim-friendly tourism's development and discuss its potential in Bali from a specific perspective.

Unlike systematic reviews that follow a rigid and replicable search protocol, this narrative review synthesises insights from selectively chosen studies based on their relevance to core themes in Muslim-friendly tourism (Demiris *et al.*, 2019). These themes include governance, policymaking, marketing strategies, and levels of public awareness that influence the attractiveness of Muslim-friendly tourism destinations. The review also incorporates illustrative case examples from destinations recognised for successful Muslim-friendly tourism initiatives to highlight effective practices that may be applicable in Bali's context. Additionally, it explores challenges such as varying levels of halal awareness and understanding among the local population. It emphasises the importance of collaboration with local communities and businesses in building a sustainable model that benefits all stakeholders.

3. Results and discussion

The following section outlines the key findings derived from secondary data, integrating them with insights from relevant literature. Figure 2 graphically illustrates the identified potentials, challenges, and corresponding strategies crucial for advancing the Muslim-friendly tourism sector.

3.1 Muslim-friendly tourism potential in Bali

The Islamic economic perspective on Muslim-friendly tourism is rooted in the principles of Islamic economics, which emphasise values such as justice, sharing, ethics, and equality in distributing wealth and resources. The halal food industry is an essential component of Muslim-friendly tourism, as halal

food must adhere to Islamic law in its production and distribution. This creates substantial business opportunities for halal food producers and contributes to the local economy (Basyariah, 2021; Pranika *et al.*, 2023). Bali can become a halal tourism destination, provided the government takes the initiative. Improving services for the Muslim tourist segment should be a priority. One way to achieve this is by developing the concept of organising Muslim-friendly tourism. Governments of countries with non-Muslim majority populations, such as Japan, Taiwan, Singapore, and Thailand, are keenly aware of the economic potential presented by the

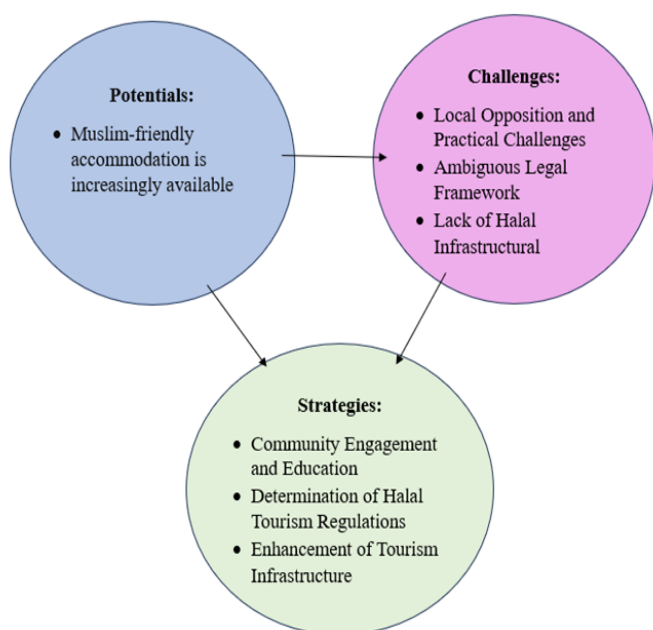


Figure 2: Muslim-friendly potentials, challenges, and strategies.

global movement of Muslim tourists, enabling them to develop Muslim-friendly tourism concepts (Napitupulu *et al.*, 2022). According to Sofyan (2021), chairman of the team for accelerated development of Halal tourism, several regions in Indonesia have already been planned and developed as Muslim-friendly tourism destinations. Figure 3 illustrates the top 10 destinations that are friendly to Muslims.

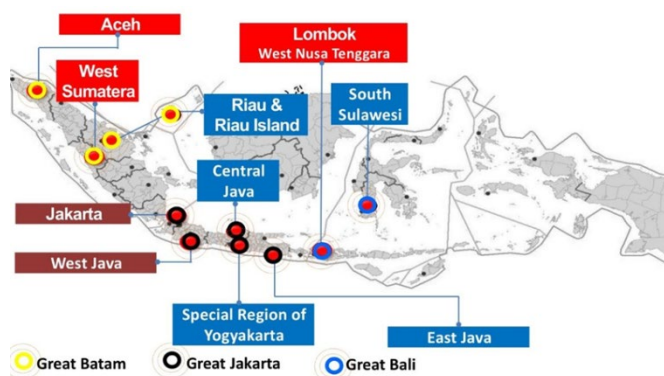


Figure 3: Top 10 Muslim-Friendly Destinations in Indonesia
Source: Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy of the Republic of Indonesia (2019).

"Great Bali" is identified as a strategic area with significant tourism potential, including for Muslim visitors. However, this does not imply Bali is currently a fully Muslim-friendly destination. Instead, it highlights future potential and governmental development efforts. The drive towards Muslim-friendly tourism aligns with Islamic values, supported by 765 Islamic worship facilities in Bali, comprising 515 prayer rooms and 250 mosques (Annur, 2022). Research by Zamany and Wiliasih (2023) further revealed that the availability of halal food and drinks, prayer facilities, and suitable accommodation significantly influenced tourists' perceptions of Bali as a Muslim-friendly destination. Furthermore, while five hotels in Bali have adopted a Muslim-friendly concept, only Bayt Kaboki and Princess Keisha hotels operate with management that closely aligns with such standards. The remaining three: Rhadana Hotel, Alam KulKul Boutique Resort, and Grand Santhi Hotel, currently offer only basic Muslim-friendly facilities, focusing on general hospitality, good service, and attention to halal aspects rather than full Sharia compliance (Halim & Baroroh, 2021).

3.2 Muslim-friendly tourism challenges in Bali

As society becomes more aware of implementing Islamic law in everyday life, Muslim-friendly tourism presents solutions for Muslim tourists and significant growth opportunities in the global tourism market. On the other hand, it also faces several challenges that could hinder its development. Vargas-Sánchez and Moral-Moral (2020) revealed that the main concerns in the halal sector include several important aspects that need to be addressed to develop this industry well:

- 1) Ignorance is a major obstacle, and a lack of information about this market, its characteristics, and its potential is another significant obstacle. Understanding and appreciating what is unknown is impossible.
- 2) The lack of adequate infrastructure to meet the needs of Muslim tourists is also a significant concern. This includes the availability of halal-certified food and proper prayer facilities, which are especially important for Muslim tourists.
- 3) There are difficulties in serving Muslim and non-Muslim customers simultaneously due to their cultural differences. This challenge includes how to make both markets compatible in the same space, taking into account factors such as Islamophobia, intolerance, and cultural misunderstanding.

The literature also identifies the diversity of interpretations of Muslim obligations worldwide as one of the problems in certifying halal products or services. Similarly, in this context, some key challenges associated with Muslim-friendly tourism are also identified. These include local opposition and practical challenges, ambiguous legal frameworks, and a lack of halal infrastructure and accessibility.

3.2.1 Local opposition and practical challenges

Although Indonesia is a Muslim-majority nation, several provinces most notably Bali are religiously and culturally distinct. Bali is a Hindu-majority region with a strong international tourism identity rooted in cultural heritage, art, and spiritual practices. This presents both a challenge and an opportunity when integrating Muslim-friendly services. In such areas, smaller Muslim populations may face challenges in accommodating the specific needs of Muslim travellers. The

behaviour of Muslim tourists is complex because they are guided by Islamic rules and values, which influence nearly every aspect of life, including travel. This creates uncertainty in how tourism services should be provided and can lead to unexpected consumer behaviours such as continuing to travel, compromising certain needs, or even cancelling trips altogether (Olya & Al-ansi, 2018).

Against this backdrop, the national emphasis on developing "halal tourism" has been perceived by some as a hegemonic move, prompting concerns about preserving the unique cultural and religious identities of minority regions particularly in Bali, where Hinduism predominates (Makhasi & Rahimmadhi, 2020). The continued promotion of halal tourism has also sparked the emergence of identity politics in regions with non-Muslim majorities, where communities resist or oppose the perceived dominance of halal tourism initiatives planned for their territories.

In 2019, Sandiaga Uno (former Indonesian Tourism and Creative Economy Minister 2020–2024) faced public resistance in Bali following his statement promoting halal tourism (Musthofa *et al.*, 2023). The Governor of Bali publicly criticised the proposal, emphasising that political interests should not be allowed to politicize matters of halal and haram. Similarly, the Head of the Bali Tourism Office expressed concern that the implementation of "halal tourism" could undermine Bali's original tourism identity, which has long been associated with its unique cultural attractions. The governor further suggested that halal tourism initiatives be directed toward other underdeveloped sectors, in order to preserve Bali's authenticity.

This backlash largely stems from the conceptual ambiguity surrounding "halal tourism," which is often perceived as a rigid or imposing framework. This perception persists despite the government's practical implementation, which often aligns with the more flexible and inclusive "Muslim-friendly tourism" (MFT) model, even while the broader "halal" term is used for national branding. The disconnect between terminology and practical scope can intensify resistance and misunderstanding, as communities react to the perceived implications of "halal" rather than the more adaptable reality. Conversely, the term MFT may offer a pragmatic and less intrusive approach, enabling destinations to cater to the essential needs of Muslim travellers without compromising their core cultural identity.

For example, the Bali Tourism Board (BTB) has explicitly rejected branding Bali as a "halal tourism" destination, asserting that such a move could dilute its cultural authenticity and spiritual heritage (Sanctuaries, 2025). The BTB leadership has affirmed Bali's commitment to preserving its cultural identity, local wisdom, traditions, and artistic heritage rather than adapting to comprehensive halal tourism standards. It has refused halal certification for traditional Balinese products and services that do not align with halal principles. Nevertheless, Bali remains committed to offering Muslim-friendly services, demonstrating respect for Muslim tourists' needs without altering its distinct cultural identity. This strategic approach prioritises cultural preservation while fostering sustainable and inclusive tourism. (Yaqub, 2025). A similar pattern of rejection due to a lack of proper socialisation and understanding of halal policies was observed in North Toraja (Putra *et al.*, 2021). Zuhdi *et al.* (2023) highlight that limited awareness and misconceptions about halal principles and certification remain significant barriers to the broader acceptance of halal tourism in diverse regions. They emphasise

the necessity of government initiatives to promote interfaith harmony actively.

Furthermore, varying levels of understanding about halal principles influence how Muslim consumers evaluate products and services. Those with limited awareness might view such offerings more positively without critical consideration. Conversely, individuals with a deeper understanding of halal requirements tend to assess these attributes more rigorously and may become sceptical, particularly if they doubt the service provider's intentions (Boğan & Sarıışık, 2019; Newman & Cain, 2014; Silver *et al.*, 2021).

Without proper understanding, heightened awareness can lead to resistance. Communities may perceive integrating Islamic values into public or commercial areas as culturally intrusive. These dynamics highlight the critical need for balanced community education to foster acceptance and understanding of Muslim-friendly tourism, mitigate potential social tensions, and prevent initiatives from being misunderstood or rejected by local communities.

3.2.2 Ambiguous legal framework

The regulatory framework for halal tourism in Indonesia remains underdeveloped and lacks comprehensive legal clarity (Effendi *et al.*, 2021). One of the most significant obstacles to the growth of halal tourism is the absence of a binding, unified legal structure that can serve as a definitive benchmark for business actors and tourists. In regions where Muslims are not the majority, such as Bali, this legal ambiguity leads to confusion among tourism entrepreneurs who are uncertain about how to implement halal tourism practices properly. The current situation reflects a broader issue: Indonesia still lacks a robust legal foundation capable of supporting the development of a halal tourism industry that provides both legal protection and assurance for Muslim travellers (Pastika & Khoirudin, 2025).

Indonesia lacks dedicated national laws or centralised government regulations addressing halal or Muslim-friendly tourism. Although Law Number 10 of 2009 on Tourism includes provisions that promote respect for religious norms, customs, and cultural values, particularly in Article 26, paragraph 1, these provisions are broad and do not provide actionable or technical guidance for implementing halal tourism standards. While religious norms are central to halal tourism practices, their legal interpretation within existing tourism legislation remains implicit rather than explicitly defined. Moreover, there is a lack of legal alignment with Law Number 33 of 2014 on Halal Product Assurance, which has the potential to serve as a complementary legal framework for supporting halal tourism initiatives (Susilawati, 2019).

The absence of precise regulatory enforcement mechanisms further undermines existing religious guidance. For instance, the fatwa issued by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), No. 108/DSN-MUI/X/2016, outlines key principles for sharia-compliant tourism. This fatwa provides comprehensive guidelines for sectors such as hotels, spas, travel agencies, and tour operations. Although rooted in Islamic principles, the fatwa promotes inclusivity by aiming to deliver quality service to all tourists—Muslim and non-Muslim alike, regardless of ethnicity or cultural background. However, unless this fatwa is codified into law or formalised through ministerial regulations by the Ministry of Tourism, it lacks legal authority and enforceability. As such, current laws and religious decrees

remain fragmented and ineffective in creating a cohesive regulatory environment for halal tourism. This legal vacuum hampers the development of a transparent and standardised halal tourism model across Indonesia. Without formal government endorsement and integration of religious guidelines into binding policy, efforts to promote halal tourism will continue to face inconsistency, business uncertainty, and limited consumer trust, particularly in regions with diverse cultural and religious dynamics.

3.2.3 Lack of halal infrastructure and accessibility

The increasing prevalence of halal and Muslim-friendly tourism has led many tourist destinations to integrate halal food provisions to accommodate the demands of Muslim visitors (Perguna *et al.*, 2021). According to Suaidi *et al.* (2025), in the context of Bali, one of Indonesia's leading tourist destinations, fulfilling culinary needs by *Shari'ah* principles presents a strategic opportunity to attract more Muslim tourists, particularly from Southeast Asia and the Middle East. On the other hand, without adequate halal infrastructures, Bali risks losing this potential market segment. By strengthening the halal food infrastructure and ecosystem, it can expand its market reach and increase its competitiveness in the global tourism industry.

Bali, often known as the Island of a Thousand Temples, boasts an impressive 4,755 Hindu temples, and strong religious ceremonies heavily influence the lives of its people, contributing to the uniqueness of their culture (Annur, 2022). While this rich Hindu heritage is central to Bali's identity, it is also home to a Muslim population, with approximately 434,941 individuals identifying as Muslim, accounting for 9.63% of the total population, according to Darmawan (2023). The main issue encountered is the deficiency of halal infrastructure, characterised by the lack of halal auditors, insufficient raw material distribution facilities, and slow halal certification procedures. In this situation, halal auditors are crucial, as stated in Articles 39-45 of PP No. 39 of 2021, which stipulates that BPJPH and the Halal Inspection Agency must conduct the halal audit, verification, and certification processes. The limited number of halal auditors in Bali results in a delayed certification procedure, negatively impacting businesses seeking halal certification due to longer processing times and higher expenses (Suaidi *et al.*, 2025). Zuhdi *et al.* (2023) highlight the necessity of government initiatives to enhance Muslim-friendly infrastructure, including providing halal food, prayer spaces, appropriate ablution facilities, and actively promoting interfaith harmony.

3.3 Muslim-friendly tourism strategies in Bali

The Muslim-friendly tourism strategy is designed to meet the basic needs of Muslim tourists, particularly in religious aspects, without requiring full compliance with strict *Shari'ah* standards, as in the concept of halal tourism. Non-Muslim countries or destinations generally apply this strategy to attract global Muslim tourists. The main goal of this strategy is to provide comfort and a sense of security for Muslim tourists during their travels, although the services offered are still limited. This approach is flexible and more inclusive, allowing non-Muslim destinations to participate in the growing Muslim tourism market without having to build a complete *Shari'ah* infrastructure system. The following are some strategies related to Muslim-friendly tourism.

3.3.1 Community engagement and education

Education is needed to achieve public awareness about halal. Halal awareness is closely related to knowledge, understanding, and the level of religiosity of the community; thus, relevant parties require more intense socialisation to provide understanding and awareness of the halal lifestyle for the community, especially concerning the consumption of halal products. Similarly, socialisation efforts should target MSME entrepreneurs, particularly those involved in the halal industry, including goods and services (Fathoni & Syahputri, 2020).

The integration of community engagement in the development process is crucial. Involving the local community ensures the project's sustainability and brings rich and authentic local cultural elements to the tourist experience. By gaining support from the local community, Muslim-friendly tourism projects have a greater chance of enduring and thriving (Hidayatullah, 2023). Active participation by residents contributes to effective destination management and promotes cultural harmony, bridging the needs of tourists and the local community's values.

In Taiwan, halal institutions, the local Muslim community, and the Taiwanese government all greatly influence the growth of Muslim-friendly tourism. Through public diplomacy, the government utilises its soft power to promote Taiwan as a Muslim-friendly destination. Nonetheless, the local Muslim community actively supports Muslim-friendly tourism and businesses by organising educational seminars, introducing halal products during events, and disseminating information about Muslim-friendly tourism and industries through social media (Mahendra & Surwandono, 2021).

The development of the Muslim-friendly tourism industry must be carried out with a comprehensive approach. To encourage the tourism sector, the development of the creative economy must involve close collaboration between various stakeholders, including the government and regulators, workers, tourism business actors, local communities, religious figures, the private sector, educational institutions, academics, and Muslim media and influencers.

3.3.2 Development of halal tourism policies and regulations

More detailed regulations are needed to outline the fundamental aspects of Muslim-friendly tourism, including its definition, scope, and implementation. Regulations specifically regulating halal facilities and tourism services and guiding tourism business actors who want to implement *Shari'ah* principles are essential. According to Ramadhani (2021), the positive impacts of halal tourism have been widely felt in Indonesia, particularly in the economic and employment sectors. Regulations related to halal tourism can be established in the Governor's Regulation or Regional Regulation, such as the Regional Regulation of West Nusa Tenggara Province Number 2 of 2016 concerning Halal Tourism in Lombok, NTB; however, they cannot be applied comprehensively, as they solely pertain to Lombok, NTB. In this case, the Ministry of Tourism must act swiftly to establish such regulations, as any delay in their formulation could confuse stakeholders involved in halal tourism when conducting their business due to the lack of clear guidelines to follow (Rasyid, 2018).

In a previous study, Santoso *et al.* (2020) identified destination development policy as the primary key to halal tourism policy. Human resources for halal tourism management, grouped into

three categories, support these policies: 1) Human resources for making and implementing halal tourism policies; 2) Human resources for workers in the halal tourism sector; and 3) Human resources for driving the improvement of the quality of halal tourism nationally.

3.3.3 Enhancement of tourism infrastructure

According to *Al-Muwafaqat fi Usul al-Ahkam*, the seminal work by Imam Asy-Syatibi, initially published in 1884 and later reprinted by *Dar al-Ma'rifah* in 1996, tourism can be viewed as an activity that is susceptible to misuse if not guided by proper ethical and legal frameworks. Table 4 illustrates the paradigm in tourism development based on *Maqasid Shari'ah*, which can be classified as one aspect of needs. The levels of *Maqasid Shari'ah* based on benefits are divided into three categories, namely *Daruriyyat* (necessity), *Hajiyyat* (complement), and *Tahsiniyyat* (embellishments).

By grounding MFT in this classification, tourism initiatives can be harmonised with Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and universal principles of well-being, contributing to a balanced and ethical tourism experience. MFT facilitates Muslim travellers in fulfilling religious obligations and reinforces principles of inclusivity, sustainability, and respect for cultural diversity. This makes MFT a strategic model for integrating tourism's religious, social, and environmental dimensions. To operationalise MFT in regions like Bali, where Muslims are a minority, there is an urgent need to enhance the capacity and competency of halal auditors through structured, accredited training programs led by both governmental and academic institutions. The availability of trained professionals is vital to accelerating halal certification processes, particularly for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) that often face bureaucratic and financial hurdles (Suhartini *et al.*, 2024).

Additionally, a study by Aliffia and Komaladewi (2021) revealed that the most significant attribute based on Muslim preferences for halal-friendly destinations in non-Muslim tourist destinations is the accessibility of information concerning halal options at the tourist area, along with the standard of halal food and beverages and access to prayer facilities. In this context, digital infrastructure is an important enabler that bridges the information gap and provides convenience for Muslim tourists in planning their trips. Digital platforms, also known as digital infrastructure innovation, play a significant role in MFT development. The development of mobile apps could enhance the quality and accessibility of services and information for Muslim travellers. The app contains information on halal restaurants, mosques, prayer timings, and other Muslim-friendly facilities and helps travellers navigate new destinations (Baran & Karaca, 2023). Travel agents and tourism marketers need to consider and improve the availability of information on halal tourism attributes to become Muslim-friendly destinations. Japan has started to develop halal food and places of worship in big cities and public places through the application "Halal Navi" (Aji *et al.*, 2020).

The study by Aliffia and Komaladewi (2021) showed Muslim travellers prioritise five indicators while visiting non-Muslim tourist destinations. These indicators include the following: halal food and beverages offered in tourist locations must be clean, safe, and hygienic; the availability of halal food options at attractions; halal food providers in tourist sites are accredited with halal certification; the clear display of halal certification logos by restaurants; and tourist information centres provide halal service information. These indicators are essential in building trust, enhancing the visitor experience, and promoting MFT as a viable and inclusive tourism model.

Table 4: Classification of *Maqasid Shari'ah* Objectives

1. Category	2. Definition by Syaharani and Fahmi (2024)	3. Example Objectives in Tourism
4. <i>Ad-Daruriyyat</i>	5. These fundamental needs are essential for preserving life, religion, and basic human well-being.	• Providing places of worship at tourist destinations; • Halal food and beverages; • Security; • Healthcare
6. <i>Al-Hajiyyat</i>	7. The needs that are not urgent promote comfort and convenience but may lead to difficulties without threatening basic life.	• Supporting services such as prayer time applications; • <i>Qibla</i> direction at the hotel; • Easy and safe transportation; • Provision of Islamic educational tour packages
8. <i>At-Tahsiniyyat</i>	9. The complementary needs that aim to beautify and perfect human life according to Islamic ethics.	• Hygiene • Cleanliness • Aesthetic appeal of the destination

4. Conclusion

This article reviews the potential for developing Muslim-friendly tourism (MFT) in Bali by examining the interplay between religious sensitivity, socio-cultural dynamics, and tourism governance. Bali offers an attractive environment with well-developed infrastructure and rich cultural experiences such as religious ceremonies, traditional dances, and intricate carvings. However, implementing MFT principles faces challenges from identity politics, religious diversity, and fragmented policies. This review contributes to the existing literature by arguing that religious tourism can be thoughtfully adapted to the context of a non-Muslim majority region while preserving local traditions and promoting social harmony.

The practical implications emphasise the need for focused public policies integrating inclusivity with cultural preservation, particularly through collaborative frameworks involving local stakeholders, Muslim communities, and regulatory authorities. For example, implementing halal certification programs, educational seminars, training hospitality professionals to provide welcoming service that accommodates dietary and religious needs, ensuring environments and facilities align with Islamic principles, and promoting interfaith tourism initiatives can increase acceptance while respecting Bali's distinct cultural identity.

Future studies should explore case studies related to implementing MFT in destinations with a non-Muslim majority population to evaluate their long-term socio-economic and cultural impacts. Comparative policy analysis between Indonesia and other multicultural tourism destinations, such as Thailand, Japan, and Singapore, may provide significant insights into appropriate and effective strategies for implementing MFT in these regions while maintaining cultural integrity.

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