

Website Quality Analysis as an Interactive Marketing Communication on Indonesia Halal Tourism Destination

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze the effectiveness of Indonesia halal tourism website as an interactive marketing communication media employed by the government to attract abroad/international muslim tourists. Another purpose of this research is to investigate whether tourist website quality affects abroad/international muslims' intention to visit Indonesia. The research was conducted in qualitative approach of which data was gathered through *focus group discussion* (FGD) and online interview of 9 muslim informants. The assessment was based on literature research done by the researchers on 8 dimensions of halal tourism website. The result of this study revealed that Indonesia halal tourism website is perceived by the informants to still have many drawbacks and therefore can't be yet declared as an ideal halal website. The finding contributes recommendation of more effective marketing communication to enhance halal tourism website quality to be more competitive.

Keywords: Halal tourism, Halal tourism website, Indonesia, Visit intent

1. INTRODUCTION

Globally, halal tourism has grown into one of the fastest growing special-interest tourism. Halal tourism is not only targeted at muslim tourists but also non-muslim ones. Indonesia is a country with the largest muslim population in the world at 88.7 percent or about 209.2 million people and this is a comparative advantage for Indonesia to develop halal tourism for the international market [1]. Halal tourism becomes one of the tourism products which is seriously being developed by the government. Since 2018, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (Kemenparekraf) has stipulated 10 Nationally Prioritized Halal Destinations in which their development refer to the standard of Global Muslim Travel Indexes (GMTI). Those ten destinations are Aceh, Riau and Riau Islands, West Sumatera, DKI Jakarta, West Java, Central Java, Yogyakarta, East Java (particularly Malang Raya), South Sulawesi (particularly Makassar and its surrounding area), and Lombok [2].

Planning and Information Bureau of the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy noted that the growth of halal tourism in Indonesia in 2018 reached 18% out of the total number of international muslim tourists visiting the Indonesia prioritized halal tourism destinations at 2.8 million people with foreign exchange income more than 40 trillion rupiahs [3]. To promote Indonesia as halal

tourism destination, the government designs a website specifically used as an interactive marketing communication media. The website is believed to be one of the most powerful marketing media since it is the first information source tourists seek before travelling to a destination [4]. The quality of a website can be measured from four main dimensions namely *technical adequacy*, *website content quality*, *website specific content* and *website appearance* [5], [6].

Some countries whose major populations are non-muslims, such as Korea (*Korea Tourism Organization*), Japan (*Japan National Tourism Organization*), and Thailand (*Tourism Authority of Thailand*), also take the opportunity to develop halal tourism. These countries have even taken the quality of their halal tourism website more seriously. In connection with it, this research is going to compare the website quality of the government halal tourism between Indonesia and three other Asian countries (Malaysia, Thailand and Japan). Malaysia and Thailand are the two neighbouring countries which more or less have targeted similar international tourist markets to Indonesia. Meanwhile, Japan, a majorly non-muslim country, has paid more attention to its website quality and technical adequacy of its halal tourism for international muslim tourists.

Based on the phenomenon described above, the researchers are interested in analyzing the effectiveness of Indonesia halal tourism websites to attract foreign Muslim tourists to visit. Moreover, this study intends to investigate whether website quality of Indonesia halal tourism can influence international muslim tourists' intention to visit Indonesia. The results of the study are expected to provide recommendations to tourism players regarding marketing communication strategy to enhance halal tourism website quality of The Government of Indonesia.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 SOR (*Stimuli-Organism-Response*)

This research is to measure how aspects in a website included in website quality may affect how muslim tourists behave, especially to visit a country. Stimuli-organism-response theory initially was introduced by [7]. In this study, the stimuli used by the researchers are elements of website quality in a halal tourism website referring to the study conducted by Yousaf and Xiucheng in 2018. Organism is an emotional state and behaviour after stimuli. An organism, in this research, represents a consumer's state of mind after looking at website attributes which include pleasure, arousal and dominance as affective state [7]. In an organism, there are three aspects: pleasure, arousal and dominance. *Response* refers to behavioural reaction of customer shopping experience. Dimension of response that can be attained in this research is whether international tourists have the intention to visit Indonesia halal tourism destination after having two prior processes, that are *stimuli* and *organism*. The following is the ground *Stimuli-Organism-Response* theory which was developed by [7] and adopted by the researchers.

2.2 Halal Tourism

In Islam, there are terms of Halal and Haram. Halal literally means permissible, while haram is not permissible. The guidelines of halal and haram are very firmly held by muslim tourists while travelling to tourism destinations. Travelling also has encouraged Islam to fulfill other purposes, such as vacation, socialisation, welfare enhancement, knowledge search and learning, and appreciation the beauty of God's creations [8], [9]. Muslim tourism concept is the recent one, and has gathered its speed in a number of countries in Southeast Asia, for example in Malaysia and Singapore [10].

2.3 Quality of Halal Tourism Website

To prove the quality of a website, there are 4 eras or generations of website quality—WebQual 1.0, WebQual 2.0, WebQual 3.0, and WebQual 4.0 [11]. The ease of obtaining interesting information in the navigation of

tourism websites is one of the most important evaluative criteria, which affects visitors' perception [12]. Relating to this, there are eight halal dimensions in halal tourism marketing of a halal tourism website; they are halal search, halal assessment and certification, halal cuisine feature, recommended halal restaurants, halal tourism experiences, culinary diversity halal symbol, and halal airport. The halal facilities are useful to determine whether the eight dimensions affect muslim tourists and non-muslim to visit a desired halal destination.

2.4 Travel Intention

There are two-level factors which affect someone in the process of decision making to visit. The first level is psychological influence such as perception and learning. Then, the second level influence covers anything which has grown during the socialisation, including group reference and family influence [13]. The purpose image significantly affects the intention to visit a particular destination [14]. Meanwhile, the destination image relates directly to the travel intention [15].

3. METHOD

3.1 Types of Research

The type of research used by the researchers is qualitative. Qualitative research is one of research procedures which results in descriptive data in forms of remark or writing, and behaviour of the observed people [16]. Qualitative research method is the type of research which generates findings that can't be gained through statistical procedures or other ways of quantification or measurement.

3.2 Informant Selection

In this research, the researchers employ a *purposive sampling* method. Purposive sampling method is a sampling technique based on neither strata, random nor region, but on a particular purpose. The researchers select informants without age range, religion and gender. However, informants have to understand or to be up-to-date with technology, especially the internet.

3.3 Type and Source of Data

In terms of data source, the intended primary data are those collected from field surveys. There are two methods to collect data. The first method is to do a survey by distributing a *checklist* questionnaire containing questions relating to *website quality* indicators from some researchers which have been compiled to a set of complex questions. Next, the secondary data used by the researchers of this research are content analyses of halal tourism websites of the government of Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Japan. These data function as a

triangulation tool which will be used at the same time with primer data.

3.4 Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis technique of this research is content analysis. Content analysis is a research technique to draw conclusions which are possible to copy and valid from text (or from other meaningful things) to the users' context [17]. As a research technique, content analysis gives new insight, enhances researcher's understanding over a particularly new phenomenon, or informs practical action. Thematic analysis must be the ground method for qualitative analysis in that it provides core skills to make it possible to do other qualitative analyses [18].

3.5 Validity Data Test

The method applied by the researchers to test validity data of the research is triangulation method. The triangulation method is a technique to check the validity of data by making use of other data for croschecking or comparing data [19]. Observation is done by comparing four halal tourism websites of Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Japan which contain halal dimensions on a halal tourism website. The observation is to match the questionnaire results of the respondents. Subsequent to observation, interview will be administered by strictly referring to the interview guideline of which the further questions are in line with both the respondents' questionnaire result and the researchers' observation. This triangulation process is beneficial to uncover whether the data and the information gathered from the informants when being cross-checked with secondary data have influential results or not.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Informant Profiles

In this research, the selected informants by the researchers have no age limitation, religion, and gender. However, the informants must understand or be up-to-date with technology, especially the internet. Informants are determined by *purposive sampling*, that its determination is not based on strata, random or region but on particular purposes [20].

The informants in this research are moslem informants who comprises 7 male and 2 female informants. The age range of these 9 informants is from 19 to 63 years old. According to the interview with the informants, the researchers gain information concerning the perspective of each informant upon Halal dimensions which are required by the government ideal halal tourism website relating to Halal tourism website of the government of Indonesia. Furthermore, the informants also supply information in connection with quality of Halal tourism

website of the government of Indonesia compared to Halal tourism websites of the government of Malaysia, Thailand and Japan.

4.2 Interview Result

The interview was done in two ways, Focus Group Discussion and online interview. The results of the interview were processed to attain information on whether Indonesia Halal tourism website can be said to be ideal in accordance with Halal dimensions by [21]. The interview results were processed using qualitative data analysis which was initiated by transcription, recapitulation transcript, and then reduction data: coding, coding combining, determining category and theme. Of the qualitative data analysis, the researchers collect 146 codings, 30 categories and 9 major themes.

4.2.1 Theme 1: Halal Accommodation Facility

In the first major theme, there is one category with 6 codings. This theme explains the informants' perceptions related to hotel accommodation, halal facility at hotel, hotel room information, qibla direction, moslem hotel information, and hotel link. Referring to the interview results, several informants stated that it is necessary to have the detailed information in terms of accommodation facility theme, yet some others say not too important.

"Let's say there's a hotel that provides such description, and another hotel doesn't, but with similar facilities and similar rate, I am likely to choose the one with description." (12)

"I personally think it's important as, for example we go to a hotel then the room we have ordered has no qibla direction. We definitely will be confused." (14)

"Generally, on non-Halal website, the facility is like fitness centre. So, here, the facility should be made with for example praying room icon with a hotel link inserted. When people get interested, they may simply click the link." (18)

4.2.2 Theme 2: Place of Worship Facility

This major theme has 2 categories with 4 and 5 codings each. This theme clarifies the informants' perspectives over the place of worship facility on tourism websites. According to the interview result, the informants explain some important points which need to get more attention in line with place of worship information (category 1) and the adequacy of place of worship facility (category 2). Some of those points are location of praying or mosque, restroom and wudhu in the mosque facilities, image of praying room or mosque, and link or address of worship place. The interview result then confirmed that the informants feel that it is advisable to have information about the place of worship, but the information of it is not separated. Such information

should have been in the information relating to the praying room or mosque.

“Mosque is a really necessary, especially the one close to the tourist attraction.” (12)

“Actually, that is not really matter. When we are the mosque, we can wudhu and do little clean up, pee and even poo at the same time as they are located in the mosque.” (13)

4.3.3 Theme 3: Halal Food Facility

The theme is the one with the biggest numbers of categories and codings among other themes. It has 8 categories and 45 codings. The eight categories are several essential points which concern the informants in terms of Halal food facility. It starts from Halal food categories, Halal food information, Halal food cooking process, Halal food menu information, Halal restaurant recommendation, chef of Halal food information, Halal restaurant location information, and Halal guidebook information. This theme is the core theme since moslem tourists definitely require the latest information related to Halal food.

“If it comes to such details, I don’t think it is necessary. As long as we know that the restaurant is ‘No Pork’, ‘No alcohol’, that’s enough for me.” (12)

“That’s necessary I guess because we also have to see the ingredients; it is made of what kind of meat, cow or pork.” (14)

“So, all the information we need is very important as either local or international tourists. For example, I am from Surabaya to Jakarta and I don’t know much. Therefore, if the website provides the information, it will help us a lot do all activities there.” (15)

4.3.4 Theme 4: Halal Certification

The fourth theme is about Halal certification. In this section, the informants responded how important Halal certification labeled at Halal food and at Halal restaurant is. Through interviews conducted by the researchers themselves, it was revealed 3 categories in this theme with 14 codings. Those categories are Halal certification guarantee, Halal certification information and Halal information. However, there are some different views among the informants in terms of Halal certification guarantee. Some believe that Halal certification guarantee is required whereas some others don’t.

“It is even credible when Halal certification is added. It is strengthen by the authority of the country, isn’t it?” (17)

“It is necessary to have such certification or legality. The process may be Halal and the food is Halal, but it still needs legality or approval as well.” (16)

“I am not kind of tight and strict. Once the food is stated Halal, then it is Halal.” (12)

After all, the majority of the informants asserted that information of Halal certification matters. It is strongly advisable to attach it on Halal tourism website.

4.3.5 Theme 5: Halal Tourism Website

The topic discussed under this theme is Halal tourism website. There are 5 categories and 34 codings which describe some aspects in line with Halal tourism website, which begins with website appearance, information of Halal tourism website, media supporting website, website content of Halal tourism, and map information in the website. Upon this theme, it is obvious how the informants tremendously need not only complete but also attractive information relating to appearance, contents, and details in a Halal tourism website particularly Indonesia.

“What matters most is improve its contents. That website with such information, I as a tourist, for instance, will get small advantage from the website. Meanwhile, from Japan website, the benefit I gain is way much “ (18)

“It is really shown all islam industries, places where Moslem tourists can go, and foods. It is even clearer with its description and its maps for mosque and restaurant. It surely will be helpful (looking at Malaysia website). I prefer the exploration of Malaysia and Thailand. The Indonesia website is just a single page. I don’t like that.” (12)

“Yes, from the testimony given by people who have travelled, we can see. When the information provided for the tourist is minimum, the testimony will not be good.” (15)

4.3.6 Theme 6: Moslem Friendly Application

The theme specifically discusses moslem friendly application. The informants’ views on how moslem friendly application supports Halal tourism website were gathered and processed. It is then formed 1 category with 5 supporting codings. Majority of the informants said that moslem friendly application is an advantage because it will help users to search information relating to Halal tourism. The different opinion among the informants is only the reason they give to explain why moslem friendly application is necessary.

“In my opinion, that kind of application is important so that it will be easier for us to seek information in terms of culinary, and tourism. So, it is necessary.” (14)

“Necessary, bro!. That application is really beneficial since an application is usually simpler than a website, isn’t it? It is more compact and more

easily to operate than a website. So, I think it is necessary.” (12)

4.3.7 Theme 7: Moslem Tourist Perspectives

In the seventh theme, there are 3 categories and 15 codings which explain Moslem tourist perspectives over Moslem tourist needs, travel experiences, and definition of Halal tourism. Through interviews conducted by the researchers, the researchers discover that the informants' experiences affect their perspective towards Halal tourism, especially regarding Halal tourism websites.

“Very important, bro/sis as in Indonesia the majority is moslem. Therefore, a sub-category of Halal foods is very important.” (14)

“The general information which has accommodated all tourists' needs is what needs to be shown in the website.”(18)

“That's not really matter (Halal facility information in hotel) since everywhere I go, for example out of the town for some time, I always bring it myself and qibla can be located using compass. Yet, if hotel provides such facility, that would be great.” (12)

4.3.8 Theme 8: Halal Tourist Attractions

The eighth theme discusses halal tourist attractions. In this theme, there are 4 categories and 9 kodings. The discussion within this theme begins from the tourist destinations to tourist attraction sites, then link or address of souvenir shops and closed with islamic festivals discussion.

“I think it is very important remembering that in Indonesia we have Sunan tourist attraction. So, we need to show it too that in Indonesia there is religious tourist attraction.” (14)

“Important, but to me, souvenir is not a must; having food is enough.”(13)

“The information of halal shop is also necessary, for example we need to buy 'mukena' (a Moslem woman pray equipment), we may get confused where to buy it. So, it is advisable to have note and map as well to avoid confusion locating it.” (14)

4.3.9 Theme 9: Halal Facilities at Airport

Halal facilities are applied not only in tourist attractions, hotels, or restaurants, but also in airports. In this theme, the researchers need to discover what perception of or how the informants respond over the implementation of halal facilities in airports.

There are 2 categories and 5 codings which explain the informants' perception over halal facilities in airport, starting from halal information in airport and halal information in airline. What is interesting from the

interview findings conducted by the researchers relating to the implementation of halal facilities in airports is that there is a different perception on whether important or not halal facilities are implemented in the airport.

“That's also important actually. If there is a facility supporting halal, we will be more informed that there is a place to support the halal travelling mentioned before.” (11)

“It is not necessary to be given such kind. It's better we are given information about the available food outside the airport. In the airport, we usually buy some bread or hamburger around in a matter of urgency. For heavy meal such as local food, I don't think it is necessary.”(12)

“But, in the airport, sometimes it is necessary for example during the transit we need to eat. So, it is necessary.” (13)

“... in term of being needed or not, I think it is not that urgent. It's probably because airport has its own communication media. Maybe just give the link.” (18)

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the results attained by the researchers subsequent to the process of gathering and analysing data, the halal tourism website of The Government of Indonesia is still perceived to have some drawbacks and therefore cannot be declared as an ideal halal tourism website when referring to 9 big themes. Indonesia Halal tourism website must be developed in terms of appearance, user-interface website, and also detail completeness of both the content and the information which up to the present time are less compared to those of Halal tourism websites of Malaysia, Thailand, and Japan. The findings of this research are highly expected to be made used by The Government of Indonesia to develop the quality of its Halal tourism website.

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