

Managing The Uproar About Halal Tourism: Learning From Japan

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui persamaan dan perbedaan antara Tokyo Jepang dan Medan (Danau Toba) Indonesia dalam memperkenalkan Muslim Friendly ke dunia internasional, khususnya untuk wisata muslim melalui 5 aspek, yaitu Destinasi Wisata, Budaya, Makanan, Penginapan, dan Tempat Ibadah. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan ekonomi liberal dengan Muslim Friendly sebagai komoditas politik yang digunakan untuk menganalisis kebijakan antara Jepang dan Indonesia dalam mengimplementasikan Muslim Friendly. Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan menggunakan konsep studi komparatif Tokyo Jepang dan Medan (Danau Toba) Indonesia dalam mengimplementasikan muslim friendly, Jepang yang merupakan minoritas muslim sangat mendukung pariwisata ramah muslim, sedangkan Indonesia yang mayoritas muslim di beberapa daerah menolak untuk dijadikan wisata ramah muslim. Hasil penelitian menemukan bahwa Tokyo Jepang sebagai negara minoritas Muslim sangat mendukung untuk menjadi ramah Muslim karena kepentingan ekonomi, sedangkan Medan (Danau Toba) Indonesia menolak untuk menjadi ramah Muslim terkait unsur politik agama. Kebaruan/Originalitas dari penelitian ini: Dengan menggunakan content analysis, penelitian ini menemukan persamaan dan perbedaan antara kedua negara dan tingkat kepentingan yang menjadi prioritas dalam meningkatkan Muslim Friendly di masing-masing negara.

Kata Kunci : Tokyo Jepang & Medan (Danau Toba) Indonesia, Studi Perbandingan

ABSTRACT

This research aims to find out the similarities and differences between Tokyo, Japan, and Medan (Lake Toba), Indonesia, in introducing Muslim Friendly to the international world, especially for Muslim tourism through 5 aspects, namely Tourist Destinations, Culture, Food, Lodging, and Places of Worship. This research is qualitative research with a liberal economic approach, with Muslim-Friendly as a political commodity used to analyze policies between Japan and Indonesia in implementing Muslim-Friendly policies. This research was conducted using the concept of comparative study of Tokyo, Japan, and Medan (Lake Toba), Indonesia, in implementing Muslim Friendly, Japan which is a Muslim minority, strongly supports Muslim Friendly Tourism, while Indonesia, which is a Muslim majority in some areas, refuses to be a Muslim Friendly Tourism. The results found that Tokyo, Japan, as a Muslim minority country, is very supportive of becoming Muslim friendly due to economic interests, while Medan (Lake Toba), Indonesia, refuses to become Muslim friendly related to religious political elements. Novelty/Originality of this research: By using content analysis, this study found similarities and differences between the two countries and the level of importance that is prioritized in improving Muslim Friendly in each country.

Keywords : Tokyo Japan & Medan (Lake Toba) Indonesia, Comparative Study

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1. INTRODUCTION

Japan is a country of natural beauty and cultural uniqueness; technology is also a hallmark. The Japanese population adheres to the belief of ancestors called Shinto (Kitasawa, 2014). Foreign tourists, especially Muslim tourists, began to visit Japan after Japan opened up with a slogan entitled "Visit Japan", which started in 2003. The favourite destination for tourists in Tokyo (Uzama, 2012). In Tokyo, Muslim tourists can visit a very famous mosque, namely the Camii mosque (Yasuda, 2017); in addition to mosques, places such as Akihabara and Harajuku are also many favourite places to visit. According to the 2018 Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI), the most comprehensive index measuring the quality and quantity of halal tourism in various countries, Japan has ranked fourth as the most attractive tourist destination for Muslims worldwide. The increasing number of foreign tourists, especially Muslim tourists, requires Japan to complete facilities that support Muslim tourists, such as places of worship and halal food.

Therefore, Japan is trying to improve facilities and provide comfort for visiting Muslim tourists, especially in Tokyo. Japan has offered various Muslim Friendly facilities, among others, Halal food/restaurants, the latest place of worship is a mobile prayer room, Lodging with bidet toilet facilities, and Halal Catering Service (Wahidati & Sarinastiti, 2018); there is also a sophisticated application namely "Halal Gourmet Japan" to find halal restaurants, this application can also show halal food found in department stores. Unlike Japan, Indonesia is the largest Muslim-majority country in the world; when launching Muslim-friendly tourism, some places still cannot accept the idea. Medan (Lake Toba) is one area that rejects Muslim-friendly tourism. Lake Toba is an area that still upholds the value of its customs and traditions, with the Batak tribe being the majority. Its natural beauty makes Lake Toba an attractive tourist destination, especially since it has become part of UNESCO (CNN Indonesia, 2019).

The Muslim Friendly discourse was then launched by the Governor of North Sumatra, Mr. Edy Rahmayadi, who stated that he would plan halal tourism in the area. The people in the Lake Toba area rejected the statement. The effort to declare Lake Toba as a halal tourist destination is considered to be able to disturb the traditions inherited from generation to generation (Tarigan & Basit, 2020), even though Indonesia is a Muslim-majority country. In 2019, based on GMTI (Global et al.), Indonesia ranked first as the most progressive country in developing Muslim Friendly (Mastercard & CrescentRating, 2019). The rejection of the Lake Toba community on the discourse of Muslim friendly is not in line with the wishes of the Indonesian government. Lake Toba is part of the UNESCO Global Park; of course, it is a pride for Indonesia as well as a performance to improve the quality of domestic tourism, especially halal tourism. However, the concept of halal tourism, which is considered religious tourism, has led to a firm rejection by the Lake Toba community of the plan to launch halal tourism (Tarigan & Basit, 2020).

The formulation of the problem to answer this research is "Why in Japan, where Muslims are only a minority, is the issue of Muslim Friendly supported and not controversial? Conversely, in Medan, North Sumatra, where Muslims are the majority, the issue of Muslim Friendly has become controversial, and there have been various rejections?"

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent years, the trend of Muslim-friendly hotels has been proliferating; to explore the vast potential of halal tourism, hoteliers in some countries have started several initiatives to attract travellers seeking halal services by offering unique opportunities tailored to Islamic beliefs. An article entitled *Halal Tourism: Developments, Opportunities, and Challenges*, written by Satriana and Faridah, explaining various factors, such as ease of travel and affordability, contribute to the increase in Muslim tourists, is very important. This provides a strong reason for the rise of halal tourism (Satriana & Faridah, 2018).

Furthermore, a journal article entitled *Polemics Over Halal Tourism Policies in Indonesia and its Review in Maqashid Sharia* by Surwandono et al. explains the changes in travelling, in the past, Muslim tourism was identical to tours to pilgrimage sites, is now dominated by various travel agencies specializing in pilgrimage tour packages to these religious centres (Surwandono et al., 2020). With the increasing trend of outbound vacations among Muslim tourists to explore the world, opportunities related to Muslim Friendly are wide open. Currently, halal tourism and hospitality services in airlines, hotels, and food services are rapidly growing new products related to the Muslim Friendly segment. Muslim-friendly tourism has a different structure from other forms of tourism because it is based explicitly on Islamic values (Surwandono et al., 2020). Muslim consumers are now one of the fastest-growing market segments. Market research conducted in early 2010 concluded that one crucial target group for global businesses and marketers is the Muslim Friendly segment, representing 42% of the Muslim population (Marlinda et al., 2021).

It is reported that countries in Asia with high Muslim populations enjoy greater preference as destinations chosen for Muslim Friendly by Muslims around the world. Such an insight is evident to Muslims, who would feel more comfortable in an environment that strictly follows Islamic laws regarding food, clothing, and other customs (Nuraini & Sucipto, 2021). While it may not be easy for Muslim minority countries to ensure compliance with regulations for Muslim guests, it can be achieved if regulations embrace tolerance of difference. Muslim minority countries such as Japan have also started efforts to attract Muslim tourists by organizing events such as the Halal Expo that promotes the existence of Islamic practices in their hotels and the provision of hospitality services for Muslim tourists. Various airlines and hotels are being improved (Surwandono et al., 2020).

The third article, entitled *Current Trends on Halal Tourism: Cases on Selected Asian Countries* by Samori et al., explains that a new phenomenon due to the emergence of the halal tourism industry, many Muslim or non-Muslim countries are ready to take advantage of market opportunities strengthened by the availability of halal products, and tourism infrastructure to meet the needs of Muslim tourists (Nuraini & Sucipto, 2021). In short, these countries want to capitalize on the growing Muslim tourism scene by attracting Muslim guests to their countries. The increase in Muslim travellers yearly is both an opportunity and a challenge for the tourism sector to develop halal tourism. Many countries (both Muslim-majority and non-Muslim) are trying to develop halal tourism (Samori et al., 2016).

3. Theoretical Framework

A. The Commodification of Religion

A theoretical framework is needed to conduct research using structured and clear theories, models and concepts. To better understand this paper, it is very important to know the commodification of religion as a theoretical framework in discussing the current Muslim Friendly tourism phenomenon. Zaenurrosyid and Ulfiana's writing (Zaenurrosyid & Ulfiana, 2019). Explaining that the

commodification of religion is declared as a modification of the essential value of religion, originally used as a guide to life and a source of normative values based on divine beliefs, transformed into exchange value, using various functions by adjusting human needs to religion. The commodification of religion is interpreted as a capitalist way to maintain the goal of accumulating capital or to realize value using commodification of use value and then becoming exchange value. Habernas' view of commodification is associated with transnational connections and diverse organizations and market networks seen as an increase in the commodification of life, including culture and religion, that can change humans from rational to irrational society (Mathisen, 2020).

Theoretically, the commodification of religion is defined as a market commodity to be exchanged, meaning modifying use value with growth value, and the development of religious commodification is part of the strategy by using religious symbols because religious issues become quite functional commodities when commoditized in the advertising space. The religious framework can form a camouflage and image when it becomes formalist-symbolic. The commodification of religion in the public sphere can reduce the essence of true religious values (Zaenurrosyid & Ulfiana, 2019). Boubekour views the commodification of religion as a way for entrepreneurs and their products to contribute to the formulation of Islamic ethics in the public sphere and simultaneously develop transnational Islamic business solidarity that connects Muslims across geographical, national and political boundaries, rebuilding a sense of dignity (Boubekour, 2016). However, such practices can be understood as alternatives less concerned with maintaining solidaristic bonds than turning Islamic artifacts into products for sale.

According to Ornella, quoted from Roose, the commodification of religion is defined more formally by Ornella as the process of recontextualizing religious symbols, language and ideas from their original religious context to media and consumer culture (Roose, 2020). In *Brand Islam*, one of the few works exploring the commodification of Islam, Faegheh Shirazi explores the marketing of products as halal or Islamic to Muslim consumers, noting that the production of such commodities is profit-driven and exploits the rise of the new Islamic economic paradigm and is not necessarily made to honour religious practices and sentiments (Shirazi et al., 2019), Shirazi concurs with Boubekour, that at least for some Muslims, consuming such goods increases their sense of connectedness to the Ummah (the global community of believers), though also reveals the commodification of important aspects of Islam into a profit-making endeavour (Roose, 2020).

As Shirazi says, at the theoretical and normative level, there are important fundamental differences between the foundations of Islamic ethics (and business ethics) and economic neoliberalism, making conciliation between ethics and practical imperatives difficult. Islamic principles are an ethos and a set of guiding rules based on Sharia. Sticking to the guidelines contained in the Quran and Sunnah (Saeed, 2006). While Islam and commerce have proven to be complementary and indeed beneficial to each other's development through adaptation to local cultures and customs, the neoliberal economic approach moves beyond the idea of mere economic exchange, focusing on maximizing efficiency and profit at any cost, this is certainly contrary to Islamic financial principles including the issue of Zakat (charitable tax) and the prohibition of *riba* (interest). As an economic approach, neoliberalism argues that social good will be maximized by maximizing the reach and frequency of market transactions and seeks to bring all human actions into the market domain.

B. Politicization of Religion

According to the Big Indonesian dictionary, politicization means making things (actions, ideas, and so on) political. From this understanding, it can be concluded that politicization is interpreted as an action in the form of ideas, ideas, and so on to be political. Then, when associated, with religion, the definition of politicization of religion is an act or in the form of ideas, ideas, and so on, if it is related to religion, becomes political (Sandyka Kurniawan, 2020). Several theoretical approaches to religious affairs have emerged to guide more specific aspects of religious work. For example, the theory of

religion as culture that emerged in the 1980s served as a justification to legitimize the CCP's claim to preserve traditional Chinese culture without appearing to endorse religion as a rival ideological system (Laliberte, 2015).

Meanwhile, in the context of Islam, the political dimension has also been inherent in Islam since the beginning of its development history; Islam calls politics with *siyasah*. According to Arkoun, as quoted by Fattah, it is interesting that the touch of politics in Islam can transform something profane into something sacred through a massive process (Fattah, 2008). Furthermore, Arkoun is quoted from Fattah as saying that political contestation often drags religion as legitimacy to realize the political interests of certain parties or groups. Although the Quran lives in a free dialectical space, by some Islamists, its meaning is often reduced and brought to support the agenda of establishing an Islamic Caliphate or Islamic state. Arkoun sees this idea as utopian (Fattah, 2008).

Although religion and politics are difficult to separate, Sandu Frunza warns of the dangers of religion when involved in politics and that religion as a private area must be separated from politics in the public sphere. Religious doctrine should not interfere with the public (state) constitution. Furthermore, Sandu Frunza argues that separating religion from politics can encourage ethical politics, where society and the state can more freely make common rules based on the nation's culture and ideology (Frunza, 2015). Instrumentalization of religion for certain political interests. The politicization of religion is also one of the important concepts in understanding Political Theology, such as Political Islam, which views religion as having strategic functional power over existing political realities. Building Muslim-friendly in terms of theory and facts on the ground.

4. Research Methodology

The study of this writing is carried out by observation, interviews, and tracing information sourced from print media, electronic media, tourism literature on the development of tourism in the world, and tourism in Islam. Moreover, an analysis will be conducted to describe and interpret the data. In particular, the study of Muslim-Friendly will be explained from the perspective of liberal economics and the politics of religion. This research aims to explain or compare Muslim Friendly in Tokyo, Japan and Medan (Lake Toba), Indonesia.

5. Result And Discussion

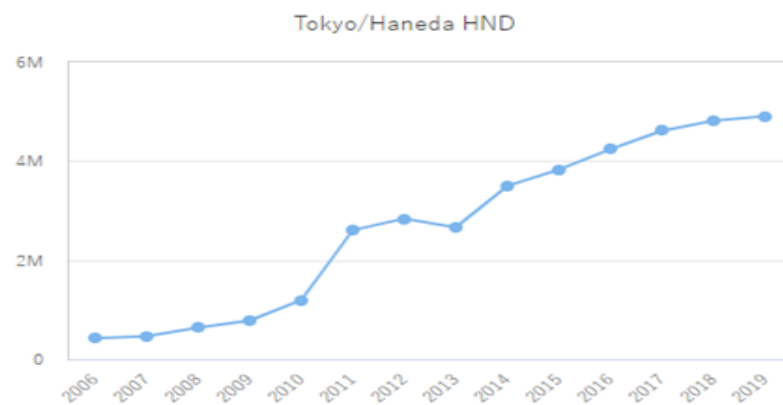
A. Halal Travel Needs in Tokyo Japan

Japan is a country with a Muslim minority. The entry of Muslims into Japan began during World War II and the oil shock around 1973. The existence of cooperation between Japan and Arabia for trade purposes indirectly led to the entry of Islamic influences, including the construction of mosques in Japan (Nuraini & Sucipto, 2021). The mosques that were built included the Kobe Mosque in 1935, and three years later, a mosque was built in Tokyo; although Japan has built a mosque, this does not mean Japan fully recognizes Islam. When viewed in terms of architecture, the mosque building in Japan does not reflect the culture and characteristics of the building in Japan, while the Imam in the mosque is also not a Japanese Muslim.

After the end of World War II and the Oil Shock, the image of Muslims in Japan began to disappear (Yusof & Shutto, 2014). Japan, as a country with high technological advances and beautiful cities, has become a destination for foreign students to study in Japan, besides Japan also provides scholarship quotas to foreign students every year, this has made Japan reopen to Muslims, one of the influences of Muslims in Japan is foreign students who are Muslim, because foreign students who study in the country, require halal food (Wahidati & Sarinastiti, 2018).

The need for halal food caused universities such as Tokyo to start providing halal food. Another influence that caused Muslims to grow was when Japan began to promote the slogan "Visit Japan." Japan is a country without specialized natural resources, and an emergency plan was needed to spread the country's participation in growing sectors such as education and tourism (Yusof & Shutto, 2014). Japan has promoted tourism because countries like Singapore have benefited from the tourism industry, especially Muslim tourists. Profits in the tourism industry are expected to be another source of income for Japan.

Economic factors are essential points that cannot be avoided or denied in the context of buying and selling activities, while in tourism, it is one of the forms of business that exists, which is supply and demand. In this case, the destination country is the host, while the tourists who come to that country are the guests. The host offers a deal with the guest's demand or needs (Thamrin & Virgianita, 2019). In practice, if this rule is fulfilled, the consequence will undoubtedly be many other guests interested in visiting, automatically boosting the country's economy. Products sold to tourists will be favored because of their halal value. So that business people can make various product innovations to increase economic income.



Source : Ministry of Justice "Statistics on Immigration Control

The benefits of Muslim travelers to increase Japan's revenue have made Japan open up tourism for Muslims. Japan has always been the destination of choice for global travelers due to its unique culture and stunning scenery.

B. Muslim traveler facilities in Tokyo, Japan

Japanese culture, with its uniqueness, is a characteristic that is not owned by other countries; Japan's open attitude to accepting Muslims as tourists by providing the best service makes Japan a Muslim Friendly Country (Uzama, 2012). Tokyo, Japan, is the most visited area by foreign tourists, especially Muslim tourists because there are mosques and other exciting places in Tokyo (Yusof & Shutto, 2014). Tokyo, Japan, has provided various Muslim facilities for the convenience of visiting Muslim tourists. Muslim-friendly facilities in Tokyo, Japan:

1. Halal food

Halal food is the most essential service Muslim travelers seek when visiting other countries. The level of acceptance of halal food assurance varies among Muslim travelers. Having food outlets with proper and easily identifiable halal assurance is a preferred option for Muslims and is critical to reducing skepticism (*Global Muslim Travel Index 2021*, 2021). The principle of halalness of food

and beverage products largely depends on the primary raw materials, auxiliary raw materials, and production process. (Halal is not only limited to the substance but also in the process of obtaining it). Big cities such as Tokyo are Japan's targets for opening halal food. Tokyo is the most prominent place in Japan for halal food production (Wahidati & Sarinastiti, 2018). In September 2017, the largest curry restaurant in Japan, Coco Ichibanya, also opened a halal-certified outlet in Akihabara, Tokyo.



Picture 1. Halal restaurant Tokyo Japan

The restaurants that provide the most halal food are Tokyo, which is around 46%, Osaka 6.6%, Hokkaido 5.7%, and Kyoto, 5%, and the remaining 15% is around 15% (Wahidati & Sarinastiti, 2018). In addition, the government also provides facilities in the form of a tourist guidebook published by the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) for Muslim tourists who want to find halal food; there is also a website, www.halalgourmet.jp which is a website to distinguish halal food and find halal restaurants.

2. Prayer place

Muslims' need for places of worship is critical because Muslims pray five times a day. Prayer is an obligatory act of worship for Muslims, so the need for places of worship is a significant concern for Muslim travelers (Mastercard & CrescentRating, 2019). Currently, there are around 241 prayer spaces spread across Japan. There are two types of places of worship, namely mosques and non-mosques (mushola). Tokyo has the most prayer spaces (20.7%), followed by Hokkaido (8.7%) and Osaka (6.6%).



Picture 2. Mosque on Wheels

The number of tourist attractions that provide prayer room facilities is good news for Muslim travelers, especially in strategic places such as Tokyo station. Japan has prepared a walking prayer room as a pickup truck that can be designed like a prayer room in general. This is due to the needs of Muslims regarding places of worship; this walking prayer room is Japan's latest breakthrough that is not yet owned by other countries; with the support of this mobile prayer room, it is hoped that Japan will be able to facilitate Muslim tourists effectively in terms of places of worship.

3. Restrooms with water/ bidet availability

For Muslims, water plays a vital role in purity and cleanliness, which are core aspects of the faith. This necessitates water use in toilets; Muslim travelers feel uncomfortable if arrangements for water use are unavailable. Physical hygiene is emphasized as water use in toilets becomes an absolute. For Muslim travelers, it is common for restrooms in Japan to use dry toilets, while Muslim travelers require toilets with water availability. However, toilets in Japan now provide bidets for Muslim travelers, making it easier for Muslim travelers to clean themselves (*Global Muslim Travel Index 2021*, 2021)



Picture 3 Restroom with bidet Availability

The unavailability of water in toilets is unpleasant for Muslims (Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC), 2016). This is because dry toilets are commonly used in Japan. However, bidet technology allows Muslims to clean themselves with water after using the toilet. So the need for toilets with water has been fulfilled.

4. Hotels

In addition to halal food facilities, Muslim travelers in Japan can now choose Muslim-friendly lodging. Hotels that provide halal-certified menus are starting to be provided, for example, Richmond Hotel (Osaka and Tokyo). In addition to hotels, there are also Den

hostels that also provide Muslim-friendly facilities. Hotels that provide a place to pray, complete with prayer equipment, such as prayer mats and the Al-Quran, are also increasing (Diversity, 2015).

ATAMI Sekaie in Atami City, Shizuoka Prefecture, located Southwest of Tokyo on the Izu peninsula, known for its onsen (hot springs) and beautiful panoramic view of the Pacific Ocean, is trying to attract Muslim tourists not only by providing halal-certified food but also by providing private Rotenburo, as the name implies Muslim tourists can enjoy onsen privately. This service can be obtained if Muslim tourists visit ATAMI Sekaie because this facility is beneficial for Muslim tourists. Usually, tourists only come to public baths, and it is difficult to get privacy in enjoying hot springs. This facility is expected to help the tourism industry in Japan proliferate, especially Muslim tourists.



Picture 4. Private Onsen

Some hotels, such as the Mapple Inn Makuhari hotel, also prepare special packages for Muslim travelers. The hotel offers futomaki sushi-making, soba noodles, and aizome (Japanese natural fabric dyeing technique) practice (Wada, 2017). These packages can be enjoyed in groups of at least five people.

C. Japanese Culture

Japan has a diverse culture and ancestral traditions. One of the most famous Japanese traditions is honoring guests. The tradition is known as the omotenashi concept, which was later applied to the service industry in Japan. The idea of omotenashi refers to receiving or providing hospitality and services to customers/guests and preparing the best service (Yamaguchi, 2017).

The omotenashi concept increases the quality of service to tourists from time to time, including services to Muslim tourists. Omotenashi is a service concept that prioritizes interaction with visitors who come. This concept is a typical Japanese service that provides the best and highest-quality service concept for visitors who come based on sincere service (Suseno et al., 2023). An original Japanese method of providing high-quality service from the heart based on communication between service providers and customers. The concept of omotenashi is currently recognized internationally as "a form of welcoming" rooted in Japanese tradition and culture (Janti, 2020). In its application, guest service with the omotenashi concept considers hotel staff and guests as equals, exceeding business-related services, can read guest needs right before the guest says it, and conduct detailed inspection and maintenance of installations.

The concept of *omotenashi* is like the spirit of the service industry that places the customer as an essential point. In the concept of *omotenashi*, the relationship between *motenasu gawa* (host) and *motenasareru gawa* (guest) is more than just a relationship between host and guest (Amalia & Gunawan, 2022). The host treats a guest as a human being and wants both host and guest to be happy by sharing hospitality, joy, fun, and sometimes even sadness.

D. The Muslim-Friendly Phenomenon in Indonesia

Indonesia has the world's largest Muslim population, and it has also become the most popular halal tourism destination, according to Mastercard, in 2019. In Indonesia itself, halal tourism has good economic prospects as an effort to develop the national tourism industry (GMTI, 2023). Halal tourism has characterized Indonesia in recent years. Some groups consider the concept of halal tourism as a representation of Islamic tourism ambiguous. Halal tourism is often known as Muslim Friendly tourism; the concept of halal tourism is often debated, namely whether the concept of halal tourism has a solid ontological basis in Islam. Otherwise, it is only a form of economic strategy to build competitive tourism and increase acceptance from the foreign Muslim segment (Surwandono et al., 2020).

Halal tourism was rejected in Bali, Lake Toba, a destination in North Sumatra, Tanah Toraja in South Sulawesi, and Labuhan Bajo, a destination in West Nusa Tenggara. The peak of rejection in each place occurred in different months and appeared alternately (Makhasi & Rahimadhi, 2020). The rejection of halal tourism was carried out around the campaign period, the determination of the results, and the dispute over the results until the inauguration of the President and Vice President of the general election results. The location of the rejection of halal tourism is in areas with Muslim minorities (Sodawan & Hsu, 2022). This is a symptom that raises disputes between political identities with the rejection of halal tourism. The emergence of halal tourism at the beginning of 2010 caused various reactions from the community and academics; some people look apathetic and consider that halal tourism is a commodification of religion and tends to be exclusivist, so most Muslim minorities reject the proposal of halal tourism. The promising potential of halal tourism, the assumption arises that halal tourism that develops in Muslim-majority countries such as Indonesia is hegemony so that it threatens the existence of people of other religions. The momentum of this rejection comes in a series of 2019 Presidential and Vice Presidential Elections that raise the tension of national and identity politics in each region.

E. Muslim-Friendly Rejection in Medan (Lake Toba), Indonesia

Although Indonesia has become a country with the largest Muslim community in the world and a country with good halal tourism, there are still areas that experience obstacles when wanting to develop the potential of halal tourism. One of them is the Medan area, namely Lake Toba; this began when North Sumatra Governor Edy Rahmayadi began to launch halal tourism for Lake Toba, and there was rejection from the surrounding community, causing a sharp polemic (Warsito, 2019). For the people in the Lake Toba region, the plan to implement Lake Toba as a halal tourist destination is thought to disturb the customs and traditions that have existed for a long time. The tradition in question is related to consuming pork, commonly done in every traditional ceremony or wedding party when mourning and giving a stick (member *sukkot*) to an elderly person.

For some of the Batak tribe, serving pork with various preparations is part of the local wisdom in the region. Hence, keeping pigs around the house yard is a common sight, and the pigs are even allowed to roam around the village area.



Picture 5 Reject Lake Toba Halal Tourism

North Sumatra Governor Edy Rahmayadi has clarified that there is no intention to eliminate culture or downplay certain religions (Tarigan & Basit, 2020). According to him, the polemic occurred more due to a misinterpretation of the intention of declaring halal tourism for the Lake Toba tourist area. However, this problem is also inseparable from the problem of multiculturalism, which is very closely attached to the Indonesian nation. Moreover, in North Sumatra, several ethnicities and races exist, such as Batak, Malay, Nias, Chinese, Indian, and other ethnicities.

F. Medan Community Culture, Lake Toba Indonesia

Lake Toba is famous for its uniqueness and cultural characteristics, and the life of the local people there is strongly influenced by culture. *Regarding cultural values and customs, Toba Batak culture* is an idea passed down from generation to generation. The lives of people in Lake Toba are always related and governed by customary values. Customs are part of the obligations that must be obeyed and carried out (Lubis & Zulian, 2021). In implementing Toba Batak customs, the Lake Toba community considers customs that are believed to be norms governing the relationship between Toba Batak people, influenced by the rules and norms that already apply in their society. Legislation and religious law, which regulate the normative life of society in detail, minimize the role of adat in regulating matters relating to social norms in community life (Siregar et al., 2018). Inherent customs are often viewed and interpreted as part of the customs of the Toba Batak community.

In terms of customary concepts, the people of Lake Toba already have local wisdom values in the form of traditional advice, which the Batak indigenous people are obliged to obey. This has become a norm for indigenous peoples and must be obeyed and implemented. In addition, the order of social values of the Batak customary law community also regulates the existence of forest areas located around the Lake Toba area, which is a place to find life for the Batak people. Land for the Batak community is a place that must be protected and preserved for future survival.

G. Lake Toba Non-Muslims' Perception of Muslim Friendly

I have conducted interviews with several sources from the area around Lake Toba and visitors to Lake Toba tourism. With the first statement, "How is the response to halal tourism on Lake Toba?" get the following response:

The launching of halal tourism in Lake Toba was responded negatively by the community" [...]. (No. 1. Jesica, female, Christian, resident of Lake Toba). The response to halal tourism for the majority of the community does cause intrigue, mainly because halal tourism, the majority of local people are Christians. They feel that the proposed halal tourism concept will eliminate the characteristics of the Lake Toba area itself because there is a mainstay menu at Lake Toba, namely pork culinary [...] (No. 2. Cynthia, female, Muslim, visitor).

Halal tourism is considered to change the stigma of the community who think that the characteristics of halal tourism will eliminate the image of tourism for the general public; another impact could be to reduce the profit of culinary that has long served general culinary, without the words halal tourism [...] (No. 3. Tami, woman, Islam, visitor). It is good to be implemented, but considering that not all residents of the Lake Toba area are Muslim, it must be able to adjust local customs and culture, such as local wisdom not to be disturbed; it is necessary to increase the approach to the community for understanding in diversity, to avoid conflict [...] (No. 4. Nurul, woman, Islam, resident of Lake Toba).

The second question was, "What is the view of halal tourism on Lake Toba?" The responses were as follows:

Halal tourism in Lake Toba seems to limit the development of the culture of the Lake Toba region (No. 5. Dayana, female, Christian, resident of Lake Toba). Halal tourism raises pros and cons; there must be a review of policies related to changes in tourism structures without having to eliminate the identity of the area (No. 2. Cynthia, female, Islam, visitor). It needs to be adjusted so local wisdom is not disturbed (No. 6. Yoga, Male, Islam, visitor).

The third question, "Why is there a rejection of halal tourism in Lake Toba?" with the following responses:

Because the majority of people around Lake Toba are Protestant Christian, when halal tourism is launched, people around Lake Toba feel that new regulations from the government limit their freedom of religion, culture, and activities [...] (No. 5. Dayana, female, Christian, resident of Lake Toba). The community rejects the existence of halal tourism because it allows cultural elimination, which is considered to reduce tourism interest and creates the idea that Lake Toba is only for Muslims [...] (No. 2. Cynthia, female, Islam, visitor). There needs to be good communication and in-depth understanding to establish halal tourism [...] (No. 4. Nurul, female, Islam, a resident of Lake Toba).

The fourth question, "Are there worship facilities and halal food in Lake Toba?" with the following responses:

Worship facilities and halal food are already available because some people who live in the Lake Toba area are Muslim [...] (No. 5. Dayana, female, Christian, resident of Lake Toba). Several worship facilities and halal food are available at Lake Toba in the form of small prayer rooms provided at each culinary place [...] (No. 2. Cynthia, female, Islam, visitor). In some places, there are already worship facilities such as prayer rooms and mosques, and in some hotels, there are also Qibla directions; although there is halal food, visitors must be careful in choosing food or choosing a restaurant with a halal logo and asking the seller [...] (No. 6. Yoga, Male, Islam, visitor).

The fifth question "Is halal tourism in Lake Toba related to the political issues of North Sumatra? With the following responses:

Yes, in the North Sumatra region, halal tourism is only associated with political issues [...] (No. 1. Jesica, female, Christian, resident of Lake Toba). Halal tourism could be part of a series of plans to raise the prestige of political elites who are trying to convince the public that they can provide an innovation that will be useful for the community to get votes and maintain their existence in the political field [...] (No. 2. Cynthia, female, Muslim, visitor).

H. Tantangan Muslim Friendly di Medan, Indonesia

Indonesia has a variety of cultures, customs, and religions. The existence of this diversity raises various pros and cons of every policy taken by the government. Lake Toba itself is a society familiar with customs and traditions, and it is undeniable that the halal tourism of Lake Toba is associated with

religious politics. In Indonesia, religious politics is instrumental in instrumentalizing religion for particular political interests. The politicization of religion is also one of the essential concepts in understanding Political Theology, such as Political Islam, which views religion as having strategic functional power over existing political realities. Various parties predicted and cautioned the Indonesian political year that occurred in 2018-2019 regarding the use of ethnicity and religious sentiments in political competition (Kurniawan, 2019).

In political situations, religious activities with political nuances, such as joint dhikr, grand recitation, and others, are held only to gain the sympathy and votes of the people. They realize that religious attributes can increase popularity by touching the emotional side of the people. It is not denied that this can happen to other religions in the form of the use of religious symbols by political elites. The voting public, especially in Indonesia, has a high religious sensitivity, so it is easily influenced if religious issues are used.

With the same religious colors, the voter mobilization approach is expected to be used efficiently. Primordial sentiments can be used as an effective campaign method to garner votes. So, it is not surprising that candidates are more likely to focus on mobilizing potential voters who adhere to the same religion as themselves. This phenomenon further confirms that religion is still an exciting thing to be used as "political merchandise" or at least can be used as one of the appropriate strategies to gain public sympathy so that it can win their votes. This phenomenon has plagued every time before the euphoria of politics and has become commonplace. This proves the strategy is adequate, so the same method is used in the next period (Ruslan, 2014)

The rejection of halal tourism occurred after the ascension of Mr. Edy Rahmayadi as governor in Medan after winning the gubernatorial election with his competitor, Mr. Jarot. Judging from the results of the votes and supporters, the Lake Toba community itself supported Jarot, while Edy Rahmayadi won in other areas. Halal tourism, launched by Mr. Edy Rahmayadi, was declared to eliminate the existence of customs and characteristics of Lake Toba because the people around Lake Toba are Protestant Christians. When halal tourism is launched, the people around Lake Toba feel that their freedom of religion, culture, and activities is limited by the rules of halal tourism by the government. This explains that religion is a susceptible issue for the people of Indonesia, and it is a challenge for Indonesia.

I. Indonesia and Japan Muslim Travel Index

The fifth edition of the annual Mastercard-CrescentRating GMTI 2019 report continues to track the overall growth of the Muslim travel market. In 2018, there were an estimated 140 million international Muslim visitors. It is projected to reach 230 million by 2026. Mastercard-CrescentRating Digital Muslim Travel Report 2018 estimates that Muslim Travelers will spend USD 180 billion by 2026 on online travel purchases.

GMTI 2023 ranking of top Muslim traveler destinations

Muslim Women Friendly Destinations - Top 10 OIC Destination

Rank	Destination	Score
1	Malaysia	87
2	Indonesia	86
2	Qatar	86
4	Saudi Arabia	85
5	Brunei	84
5	Kuwait	84
5	UAE	84
8	Bahrain	82
8	Oman	82
10	Jordan	81

Muslim Women Friendly Destinations - Top 10 non-OIC Destination

Rank	Destination	Score
1	Singapore	84
2	Taiwan	82
3	Japan	81
4	South Korea	79
5	Hong Kong	76
5	Mauritius	76
5	Portugal	76
8	Vietnam	75
8	Andorra	75
10	UK	74

Picture 6. Halal tourism destination ranking based on GMTI 2023

Indonesia and Japan are attractive to Muslim tourists. Both countries have an advantage in starting to build the potential of halal tourism to continue to grow.

J. Field Findings

This paper found that the issue of Muslim Friendly in Tokyo, Japan, and Medan Indonesia has differences in the application of Muslim Friendly. Japan itself has tried to maximize facilities for the arrival of Muslim tourists with halal restaurants, hotels, toilets with bidet technology, and independent onsen for Muslim tourists, while in Medan, Lake Toba, the discourse of halal tourism cannot be fully realized due to public rejection of the concept of Muslim Friendly from the results of interviews from sources found the conclusion that the existence of Muslim Friendly will damage the existence of customs in the region and the intense politicization of religion that makes people unable to open themselves to Muslim friendly.

From the argument of the article entitled "Organizing the Uproar about Halal Tourism: Learning from Japan," it is found that Muslim Friendly is a result of the commodification of religion, which is used as an attraction for Muslim tourists, the commodification of religion is defined as marketing halal or Islamic products to Muslim consumers, noting that the production of these commodities is driven by profit. Japan utilizes the word Muslim Friendly to attract Muslim tourists and promote Japanese tourism while providing foreign exchange as an economic interest.

In Lake Toba Medan North Sumatra, the commodification of religion plays a vital role in realizing the attraction of Muslim tourists in the region. However, the politicization of religion is also inherent in the promotion of halal tourism in Lake Toba due to political elites who want to use it to attract Muslim communities. Using halal or Muslim-friendly tourism can attract Muslim tourists from various countries.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Muslim Friendly is currently a destination for both Muslim majority and minority countries; economic factors make Muslim Friendly a new trend in the world of tourism. Indonesia, as a Muslim majority country, has problems with efforts to implement Muslim Friendly while Japan, as a minority country, continues to try to optimize Muslim Friendly facilities.

Medan, Lake Toba, Indonesia, is an area with the most customs and adherents of Christianity. The politicization of religion that occurred before and after the election became a problem for the development of Muslim-friendly Medan in Lake Toba, Indonesia. Meanwhile, Tokyo, Japan, has received great support in the development of Muslim-friendly because of the economic sector. Japan's openness to Muslim Tourism should be used as a lesson for the Lake Toba region of North Sumatra because Japan, as a Muslim minority country, can support the development of halal tourism in the country. The Lake Toba region can learn from Japan in the application of halal tourism by supporting and accepting the presence of halal tourism for Muslim tourists visiting Lake Toba.

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