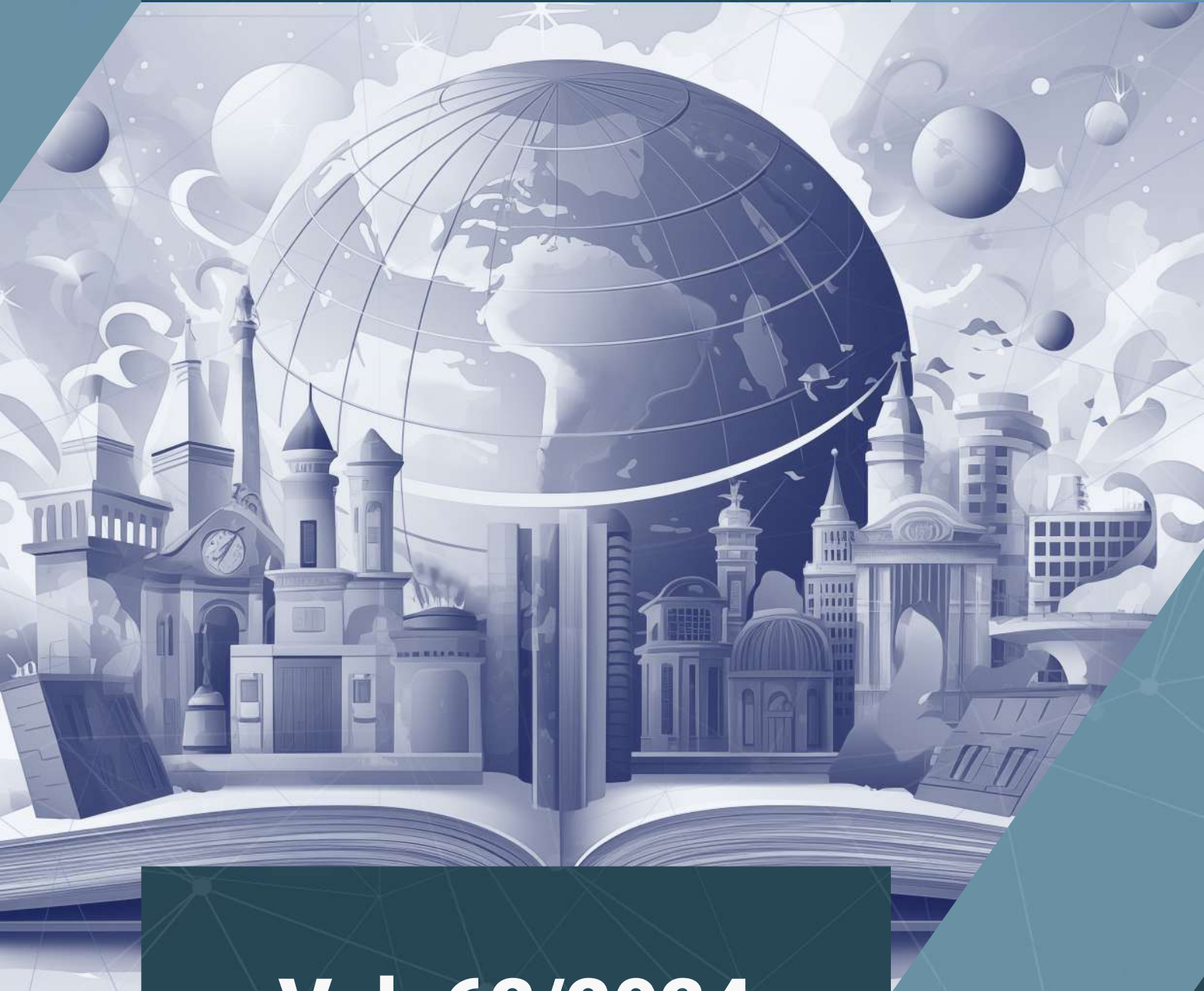




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Integrating Human Resource Development and Halal Tourism Strategies for Sustainable Development in Indonesia

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Abstract. This research aims to explore the integration of human resource development (HRD) into the growth of the halal tourism industry in Indonesia. Using a literature review method, the study examines strategies to enhance the sector's sustainable competitive advantage by focusing on HRD initiatives, including employee training, cultural competence, and service quality improvement in accordance with sharia principles. The findings indicate that while Indonesia has great potential in halal tourism, several barriers such as institutional readiness, inadequate infrastructure, and regulatory gaps hinder its full development. The study emphasizes the importance of continuous innovation, strategic marketing, and regulatory alignment to overcome these challenges. Recommendations include investing in human capital and fostering innovation to ensure Indonesia's positioning as a global leader in halal tourism.

Keywords. human resource development, halal tourism, sustainable, competitive advantage

Introduction

The tourism sector seeks to fulfil the physical, mental, and intellectual requirements of travellers through enjoyment and travel, simultaneously bolstering the local economy for the collective benefit. The Halal Tourism Marketing Strategy functions as an alternative within Indonesia's tourism sector, in accordance with the global trend of Halal Tourism as a component of the wider sharia-compliant economic industry (Ahmed & Akbaba, 2023). Halal tourism in Indonesia presents significant economic potential within the nation's broader tourism sector (Hariani & Hanafiah, 2024). The tourism sector aims to deliver both physical and psychological gratification to travelers while also enhancing national revenue (Koc & Ayyildiz, 2021).

Halal tourism is inclusive, appealing to both Muslim and non-Muslim travellers (Ekka, 2024). Halal tourism fundamentally focuses on sharia-compliant management concepts, coupled with courteous and friendly services for all travellers and their environments (Maskuroh, 2023). Reports indicate that the tourism sector, especially halal tourism, has garnered considerable global interest owing to its economic prospects (Nasution, 2021). In some areas, the tourism industry, encompassing halal tourism, has become as a significant source of foreign exchange revenue (Hakim, 2021). The increasing trend of halal tourism is not confined to Muslim travellers; it also encompasses all individuals seeking to engage with local culture

and knowledge, as emphasized by the World Tourism Organization (WTO) (Adinugraha et al., 2018). The extensive Muslim population worldwide and their significant expenditures in food, travel, and various sectors offer a considerable chance for the advancement of halal tourism (Irawan, 2019; Zaini, 2021). Notwithstanding Indonesia's designation as a halal tourist destination, obstacles persist in completely actualizing its potential.

The halal industry is presently among the most rapidly expanding sectors in the world economy, exhibiting an annual growth rate of 20%. In 2016, the worldwide halal market was valued at roughly USD 5.73 trillion and is anticipated to reach USD 6.53 trillion by 2024 (ReportBuyer). Halal tourism is a swiftly growing sector of this economy. In 2016, Muslim spending on halal travel amounted to USD 169 billion, with projections forecasting a rise to USD 283 billion by 2022 (Thomson Reuters & DinarStandard, 2017). The count of Muslim passengers was recorded at 131 million, representing 11% of global foreign visitors, and is projected to increase to 156 million by 2020 (Rama, 2017). The global Muslim population currently totals 2.18 billion, representing 28.26% of the overall population, and is expanding at an annual rate of 1.84% ("Muslim Population in the World," n.d.). Furthermore, the average per capita income in Muslim-majority nations has markedly risen from USD 1,763 in 1993 to USD 10,728 in 2015, while the aggregate GDP of the 57 Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) countries attained USD 27.9. These statistics underscore the significant potential for the halal tourism sector to engage with the global Muslim consumer market.

Nonetheless, the global halal business, encompassing halal tourism, has considerable obstacles in enhancing consumer knowledge, especially among non-Muslims, regarding the comprehensive implications of 'halal' beyond religious connotations. A significant number of non-Muslim consumers continue to view halal products as solely Islamic and intended only for Muslims (Haque et al., 2015). This fallacy poses a barrier for the sector in accessing the broader non-Muslim traveller demographic. In 2015, international travellers numbered 1.19 billion and are projected to surpass 1.8 billion by 2030, indicating substantial potential to attract non-Muslim consumers by elucidating the universal elements of halal tourism ("Global travel and tourism industry - Statistics & Facts," Statista, n.d.). Enhancing awareness among Muslim and non-Muslim travellers is essential for the growth of the halal tourism sector.

The notion of halal corresponds with the tenets of sustainable development, a worldwide issue that includes economic, environmental, and social aspects. Tourism, a significant business in numerous economies, increasingly prioritizes sustainability. Halal tourism, commonly known as Islamic or Muslim-friendly tourism, is an emerging idea in the sector, with promising prospects for economic development. The halal industry also advances some of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and can significantly contribute to global sustainability. It is imperative to explicitly describe and convey the principles of halal and halal tourism, rectifying misconceptions among non-Muslim consumers and promoting a universally favorable attitude among all global consumers.

Human Resource Development encompasses various activities, including training, mentorship, succession planning, organizational development, management and performance enhancement, productivity improvement, and the provision of educational funding. This can be accomplished professionally or informally, both in-person and virtually. The government's policy has initiated a return to outdoor activities. The company favors a hybrid approach that integrates both online and offline components. This new habit of online activities is often utilized as a justification, as technology enhances the effectiveness and efficiency of certain tasks.

Human Resource Development (HRD) is essential in augmenting the competencies of

those employed in the rapidly expanding halal tourism business. HRD initiatives encompass various activities, including employee training, mentoring programs, succession planning, organizational development, and performance management. These initiatives seek to enhance efficiency while cultivating a proficient and versatile workforce equipped to address the specific requirements of halal tourism. In this context, the advancement of HR encompasses cultivating cultural competence, improving customer service abilities in alignment with sharia principles, and offering ongoing education to adapt to the evolving global tourism environment.

The HRD process may be formal or informal, utilizing both offline and online approaches. As digital tools proliferate, numerous organizations in the halal tourism sector have implemented hybrid systems that integrate in-person training with online platforms to enhance learning efficacy. This transition has been propelled by the augmented utilization of technology in training and development initiatives, allowing personnel to refine their skills in a more adaptable and accessible way. Moreover, HRD activities in halal tourism underscore the significance of hospitality, intercultural communication, and compliance with ethical standards that correspond with Islamic principles and general industry best practices. This research aims to address two main research questions: first, how human resource development can contribute to the sustainable competitive advantage of the halal tourism industry in Indonesia? and second, what are the key barriers and challenges in the development of halal tourism in Indonesia, and how innovative solutions can be implemented to overcome them?

Establishing a proficient and informed staff in halal tourism is crucial for satisfying the increasing demands of global tourists, both Muslim and non-Muslim, while upholding superior service quality and adherence to halal norms. With the expansion of halal tourism, the significance of Human Resource Development (HRD) escalates in promoting sustainable industry growth, ensuring that human capital is adequately prepared to support the industry's enduring success.

Methods

This study used the literature review to describe the development of the Halal Tourism Industry in Indonesia, and then conceptualized the strategies which may be used by the stakeholders to integrate human resource development with the growth of the Halal tourism industry. These strategies are expected to be adopted by the government and relevant stakeholders, ensuring that the Halal tourism industry in Indonesia achieves a sustainable competitive advantage. Furthermore, human resource development is emphasized as a pivotal component in building a skilled workforce capable of delivering high-quality services in alignment with halal principles. This study also adopted literary research for data collection techniques. By combining strategic human resource development with the expansion of halal tourism, the industry is positioned to contribute meaningfully to Indonesia's sustainable development.

Discussion

Sustainable Tourism and Human Capital in Halal Tourism

Tourism, as a service industry, heavily relies on human resources and has significant environmental, economic, and socio-cultural impacts, making sustainability a critical aspect of its long-term success. Sustainable tourism contributes to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by conserving tourist sites and natural habitats, with revenues from visitors supporting these efforts (World Tourism Organization). With 900 million global

visitors annually (ETE Ecological Tourism in Europe), sustainable tourism can raise awareness about environmental sustainability and biodiversity conservation among travelers worldwide.

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines sustainable tourism as a balance between meeting the needs of tourists, protecting host regions for future opportunities, and fulfilling economic, social, and aesthetic requirements using available resources. This includes sustaining biodiversity, preserving cultural integrity, and maintaining ecological processes. Sustainable tourism ensures the industry's economic and social benefits while minimizing its negative impacts on nature, history, culture, and the environment (ETE Ecological Tourism in Europe). Other organizations, like the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), emphasize that tourism activities must positively impact society, the environment, culture, and the economy in the long term.

Human Capital and Innovation in Halal Tourism

Human resources play a vital role in the success of any industry, including the Halal tourism sector (Peristiwo, 2020). The effectiveness of employees and their management directly influences the industry's ability to thrive. In Halal tourism, human capital is essential not only for establishing appropriate regulations but also for providing services that meet the needs of Muslim tourists, such as sharia-compliant accommodations and hospitality. The concept of "competing through people" highlights that organizational success increasingly depends on the management of talent and human capital (Goldin, 2024).

Human capital refers to the economic value of employees' knowledge, skills, and capabilities (Gerhart & Feng, 2021). In addition to effective human resource management, continuous innovation is crucial for maintaining competitiveness in the Halal tourism market. Innovation, whether in services, technology, or tourism packages, is key to satisfying Muslim tourists and enhancing their travel experience. For example, research by Battour & Ismail (2016) highlights the importance of innovations such as "Muslim-friendly airlines," with Indonesia's Garuda Indonesia leading by receiving the World's Best Airline for Halal Travelers award. Moreover, the introduction of mobile applications like HalalTrip and Muslim Pro helps Muslim travelers access Halal-friendly hospitality services, including hotels, travel packages, and restaurant guides (Vargas-Sanchez et al., 2020). Continuous innovation in the Halal tourism industry benefits individuals, communities, industries, and regions globally, enhancing the overall value and sustainability of the sector (Usman et al., 2024).

Rationale for Halal Tourism in Relation to Sustainable Development

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), instituted by the United Nations in 2015, comprise 17 global objectives and 169 targets designed to tackle diverse challenges to enhance global sustainability by 2030. The halal tourism sector, as an integral component of the larger halal ecosystem, significantly contributes to these Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Essential elements of this ecosystem encompass transportation infrastructure (airlines, cruise ships, buses, and trains), hospitality providers (Muslim-friendly hotels, resorts, homestays), food and beverage services, travel agencies, and healthcare and educational institutions (Hashmi & Ali, 2021).

Every component is interrelated and accountable for promoting sustainable development objectives within the tourism sector. Halal tourism fosters health and well-being, in accordance with the third Sustainable Development Goal (SDG). Corporate social responsibility (CSR) within the halal sector underscores economic, legal, ethical, and

philanthropic obligations. Islamic tenets promote charitable actions such as zakat and sadaqah, which facilitate equitable income distribution and enhance societal welfare (Khairunisa, 2021).

The halal tourism sector exemplifies these principles by guaranteeing the provision of nutritious halal food and beverages, alongside access to sophisticated healthcare services that conform to Islamic tenets, including medical tourism initiatives in Malaysia and Hajj safety protocols in Saudi Arabia (Sofyan et al., 2022). Halal tourism promotes gender equality, the fifth Sustainable Development Goal, by encouraging inclusive behaviours that empower women. Islamic doctrine underscores gender equality and the safeguarding of women's dignity. Halal travel firms have introduced efforts including female-only services in hotels, distinct swimming and exercise facilities, and hotels owned only by women (Jaelani, 2017). These initiatives demonstrate the industry's dedication to advancing equality and strengthening women within a sharia-compliant context.

Strategic Advancement of Halal Tourism

A systematic strategy is crucial for the halal tourism sector to secure a competitive edge and guarantee its sustainability. According to Hill and Jones (2008), a strategy is a collection of acts intended to surpass competition. In tourism, attaining a sustained competitive advantage necessitates comprehension of the business's service orientation and the distinctive attributes of the tourism sector (Evans, 2016). Indonesia has acknowledged the significance of halal tourism within its national development strategy, implementing Law No. 10 of 2009 to guarantee that tourism is developed systematically, sustainably, and responsibly, while honoring religious and cultural values, environmental sustainability, and national interests.

The Indonesian Ministry of Tourism has formulated various methods to advance halal tourism, concentrating on four primary business sectors: hotels, dining establishments, travel services, and wellness centers. Thirteen provinces, including Jakarta, West Java, and East Java, have been designated as halal tourism destinations, with primary entry points such as Jakarta, Bali, and Batam facilitating access for tourists to adjacent regions. These efforts seek to position Indonesia as a significant participant in the global halal tourism sector, evidenced by its achievements in securing many accolades at the 2016 World Halal Tourism Awards (Jaelani, 2017).

A strategic policy alignment between central and provincial governments is essential, in conjunction with the government's efforts, to boost halal tourism. This entails the establishment of uniform regulations across several governmental tiers, underpinned by certifications like halal certifications granted by the Indonesian Ulema Council (IUC). This alignment guarantees the uniform and effective implementation of the halal tourism program nationwide.

Investment in Human Resources and Innovation

Investing in human capital is essential for the advancement and competitiveness of the halal tourist sector. Human resources are seen as a strategic asset, and firms should perceive personnel as assets that augment the industry's value over time (Mello et al., 2019). Although the expenses associated with investing in human resources may be substantial, such investments produce a sustained competitive advantage that is challenging for competitors to imitate.

Training and development initiatives specifically designed for halal tourism are crucial for sustaining a proficient staff. The Indonesian Ministry of tourist has acknowledged the necessity of enhancing human resources in the halal tourist sector through the implementation of certification programs and training at prominent locations such as Jakarta, Bali, and Lombok. These programs seek to improve the quality and quantity of tourism experts, ensuring Indonesia

is adequately equipped to satisfy the increasing demand for halal tourism services. Through investment in human resources, Indonesia can position itself as a premier worldwide destination for halal tourism.

Moreover, ongoing innovation is essential for the sustainability of halal tourism. Advancements in services, technology, and tourism offerings are essential for maintaining industry competitiveness and addressing the changing requirements of Muslim travelers. Examples encompass the establishment of Muslim-friendly airlines, mobile applications such as HalalTrip, and sharia-compliant services (Battour & Ismail, 2016). Indonesia's achievement in these domains, shown by Garuda Indonesia's designation as the World's Best Airline for Halal Travelers, underscores the significance of innovation in sustaining a preeminent status in the halal tourism sector.

National Branding and Halal Tourism

Indonesia has achieved notable progress in promoting its tourism sector with the "Wonderful Indonesia" campaign. Nonetheless, the integration of halal tourism into this branding approach is still inadequately developed. Prioritizing the establishment of Indonesia as a "Muslim-friendly destination" is essential, as seen by the success of areas such as Lombok, which has been acknowledged as the World's Best Halal Tourism Destination (Paramarta et al., 2021). The visit of Saudi King Salman in Bali, accompanied by his extensive entourage, underscores the potential for Bali to enhance its halal tourism initiatives, bolstered by the support of local and central government efforts.

Nation branding serves as a strategic asset for Indonesia's tourist sector; by integrating halal tourism into its overarching branding initiatives, the nation may draw a greater number of Muslim travellers and bolster its standing in the global tourism market (Temporal, 2011). Halal tourism initiatives should be incorporated into the "Wonderful Indonesia" brand, establishing Indonesia as a prominent halal-friendly destination in addition to its natural beauty.

Barriers, Challenges, and Opportunities in the Development of Halal Tourism

Halal tourism, a rapidly growing sector, is seen as an opportunity to cater to the increasing number of Muslim tourists worldwide. With Muslims constituting about 30% of the global population and projected to rise by 70% between 2015 and 2060, the potential for halal tourism is significant (Seongseop Kim et al., 2015; Keeter et al., 2017). By 2020, Muslim tourists were expected to increase by 30%, contributing up to USD 200 billion in spending (MasterCard-CrescentRating, 2016). As a result, both Muslim-majority and non-Muslim-majority countries are capitalizing on this trend by developing halal tourism infrastructure. However, despite the growth potential, various barriers and challenges hinder the effective development of halal tourism.

Barriers to Halal Tourism Development

Institutional Challenges and Human Resources

One of the primary barriers is the lack of readiness in institutional aspects, particularly the inadequate provision of trained human resources who understand the concept of halal tourism. Research shows that provinces like West Nusa Tenggara, North Sumatra, and West Java have struggled with this issue, where the insufficient institutional framework hinders tourism development (Santoso & Argubi, 2018; Suparmin & Yusrizal, 2018). Moreover, low community participation, especially among youth, further exacerbates the problem, as seen in

areas like Setanggor Village, where engagement in tourism planning and decision-making remains limited (Feriadin et al., 2021).

Lack of Innovation in Promotion and Marketing

Halal tourism development also suffers from a lack of innovation in promotional programs and digital marketing strategies. This is evident in Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, where inadequate information about halal tourist sites leads to a weak digital presence (Haryanegara et al., 2021). Additionally, geographical and cultural factors, such as the strict application of Islamic law in certain regions like Aceh, also contribute to the challenges in attracting a broader range of tourists.

Inadequate Infrastructure

The development of halal tourism is further impeded by the lack of appropriate infrastructure, such as insufficient worship facilities, limited ablution spaces, and inadequate cleanliness in prayer rooms. This issue has been highlighted in various regions like Pulerasi Tourism Village (Yanma & Zaenuri, 2021). Moreover, the overall service quality in some provinces, including West Nusa Tenggara, remains suboptimal (Fahham, 2017).

Absence of Comprehensive Regulations

Another major obstacle is the absence of clear and comprehensive regulations regarding the development of halal tourism in Indonesia. Several studies have pointed out that provinces such as West Nusa Tenggara, Bandung, and Bangkalan lack the necessary legal framework to regulate halal tourism effectively (Minardi et al., 2021; Suryana & Utomo, 2020; Santoso & Argubi, 2018). The lack of halal certification for food, beverages, hotels, and restaurants further complicates the development process, as many tourism businesses still do not meet the required standards set by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) (Afrilian & Hanum, 2020).

Challenges & Opportunities for Halal Tourism Development

One of the more complex challenges in the development of halal tourism lies in catering to both Muslim and non-Muslim tourists. Non-Muslim tourists may be reluctant to visit destinations without certain non-halal attributes, making it difficult to balance the needs of diverse tourist groups without compromising the halal principles (Battour et al., 2011; Battour & Ismail, 2016). This challenge presents an opportunity for businesses to apply creativity and flexibility in offering services that accommodate both Muslim and non-Muslim travelers, which could further enhance the attractiveness of halal tourism destinations.

Despite the challenges, there are significant opportunities for the development of halal tourism. The growing number of Muslim tourists represents a vast market that countries can tap into by developing halal-compliant infrastructure (Mohsin et al., 2016). This includes building more halal-certified restaurants and sharia-compliant hotels, sectors that are currently underdeveloped in both Muslim and non-Muslim-majority countries (El-Gohary, 2016). Furthermore, education and training programs focused on halal practices can help bridge the gap in understanding and implementation, allowing universities and research centers to offer specialized training for stakeholders in the tourism industry.

Additionally, the increasing demand for halal tourism offers a promising business opportunity for travel agents and tourism service providers to expand their offerings. By leveraging digital platforms, such as HalalTrip and Muslim Pro, tourism businesses can better promote halal destinations and services. Moreover, initiatives like halal-certified airlines, which cater specifically to the needs of Muslim travelers, present an innovative approach to expanding the halal tourism market (Battour & Ismail, 2016).

Conclusion

The development of sustainable halal tourism presents both significant opportunities and challenges for the global tourism industry, particularly in Muslim-majority countries like Indonesia. Human capital plays a crucial role in supporting this sector, where continuous innovation and strategic human resource development are necessary to maintain a competitive edge. Halal tourism aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), contributing to economic growth, environmental sustainability, and social well-being, including gender equality. However, the success of halal tourism is hindered by several barriers, such as inadequate infrastructure, insufficient regulatory frameworks, and a lack of trained human resources. Moreover, balancing the needs of Muslim and non-Muslim tourists presents an ongoing challenge that requires creativity and flexibility. Despite these obstacles, the expanding Muslim population and the increasing demand for halal tourism offer promising prospects for growth. To capitalize on these opportunities, it is imperative to invest in human capital, innovation, and policy alignment to ensure Indonesia's global competitiveness in the halal tourism industry.

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