

## Conference Paper

# Debating Halal Tourism Between Values and Branding: A Case Study of Lombok, Indonesia

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## Abstract

This paper discusses the debate concerning the concept of “Halal” tourism by exploring the case of Lombok, Indonesia as a Halal tourist destination. Halal tourism has become a new trend in global tourism motivated by the growing number of Muslim travelers. This condition potentially brings substantial foreign earnings from tourism sector. Indonesia, as a country with the largest Muslim population in the world is also interested to follow the trend. In 2015, Lombok participated in the World Halal Tourism Summit held in Dubai and was awarded the “World Best Halal Tourist Destination” and the “World Best Halal Honeymoon Tourism.” This has motivated the local government to develop Halal tourism seriously. However, there is no concrete concept concerning the kind of Halal tourism to be developed. In the condition of “Halal tourism in the making” in Lombok, this research explores the available concept of Halal tourism in the literature, and tries to match the ideas with the practices of Halal tourism that is being developed in Lombok. This paper argues that Lombok tends to develop branding-based Halal tourism than value-based Halal tourism. Findings from the fieldwork research show that the success of Lombok to be acknowledged as Halal tourist destination is not yet followed by the development of tourism institutions and infrastructures, which are fully oriented toward Halal tourism according to Islamic values.

**Keywords:** Branding, Halal Tourism, Indonesia, Lombok, Values

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## 1. Introduction

Halal tourism has become a new trend in global tourism motivated by the growing number of Muslim travelers, which is continuously increasing yearly. Until 2014, the global Muslim population represents almost 23 % of total global population or worth USD  $1.8 \times 10^9$  consumers with a yearly average growth of 3 %. Of the total Muslim population, 62 % are spread in South Asia and Pacific, mostly Indonesia, Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh, the big four largest Muslim populated countries [1]. This situation potentially brings substantial foreign earnings from tourism sector. According to Dinar Standard [2], totally, Muslim travelers has dominated the total tourism expenditure amounted to USD  $126.1 \times 10^9$  surpassing countries of Germany, the United States, China, United Kingdom, and India. This number represents 12.3 % of global tourism expenditure with consistent average growth of 4.8 % per year. The increasing trend continues to USD  $137 \times 10^9$  in 2012 and USD  $140 \times 10^9$  in 2013, and is projected to reach USD  $181 \times 10^9$  in 2018 [3]. Seeing the potential earnings, a number of countries develop Halal tourism to reap the benefits from the global Muslim travelers, not only Islamic countries such as Turkey and United Arab Emirates, or Muslim populated countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia, but also non-Muslim countries such as the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand.

As the largest Muslim populated country in the world, Indonesia is also interested to follow the trend and takes part in the global Halal tourism market by introducing Halal ideas to some tourist destinations. Indonesia relies on tourism for foreign earnings by relying on its beautiful nature and its rich cultural heritage. There are many tourist destinations in the country, which has become favorite destination for global tourists such as Bali, Toraja, Yogyakarta, etc. However, with the growing competition in global tourism business, it is no longer sufficient to rely only on nature and culture as tourist attractions. It needs creative strategy more to attract global tourists, and Halal tourism offers opportunities for that purposes.

In 2015, Lombok—an island region among tourist destinations in Indonesia—participated in the World Halal Tourism Summit in Dubai and was awarded the “World Best Halal Tourist Destination” and the “World Best Halal Honeymoon Tourism.” Motivated by the awards, the local government—supported by the central government—embark upon developing Halal tourism to gain more benefits from the global tourism market. However, there is no concrete concept of Halal tourism yet to be developed in Lombok. This has raised question why the provincial government is determined

to develop Halal tourism in the absence of a clear concept. What kind of strategy developed by the government to achieve the target?

This research explores the concepts of Halal tourism available in the literature and tries to match them with the practices of Halal tourism being developed in Lombok. Within the condition of "Halal tourism in the making", a great debate in which path this unprecedented phenomenon should be programmed emerged. Two conceptual frameworks are available in the literature addressing the reason and strategy of states in developing Halal tourism identified as "values" and "branding." The value-based Halal tourism concerns with the development of Halal tourism institutions and infrastructure based on Islamic values. Meanwhile branding-based Halal tourism takes the idea of Halal as a kind of marketing strategy to attract tourists. The construction of Halal tourism in Lombok faces the choices between the two concepts.

This research is conducted through fieldworks based on qualitative approach. The data collection is done through observations, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with stakeholders in tourism sector consist of officials at the provincial government, the business community, and educational institutions. The data collected are analyzed and interpreted to answer the research questions. To determine which strategy taken by the provincial government in developing Halal tourism, the research traces the construction of policies on Halal tourism developed by the government in chronological sequences. The data gathered from fieldworks, which reflects the practices of Halal tourism in Lombok are matched with the desk study on theoretical framework of value-based Halal tourism. The existing gap between value-based Halal tourism and the practices of Halal tourism implemented in Lombok points to the argument that Halal tourism being developed is still relatively limited to branding. To understand the development of Halal tourism institutions and infrastructures in Lombok, this research uses the following indicators: (i) organizational or management; (ii) the condition of human resources catering Halal tourism; (iii) standardization, certification and audit of Halal products and services; and (iv) the government regulations.

Exploring the case of Lombok through fieldworks, this research argues that Lombok tends to develop branding-based Halal tourism than value-based Halal tourism, due to pragmatic considerations for short-term economic gains. Findings from the research show that the acknowledgement of Lombok as the World Best Halal tourist destination is not yet followed by the development of institutions and infrastructures oriented toward Halal tourism according to Islamic values.

Eventually, this paper is organized in a simple structure. After this introduction, the second section will explore definitions of Halal tourism available in the literature and

look at the emergence of global trend in Halal tourism. The third section will explore the conceptual framework concerning the development of Halal tourism focusing on the debate between values and branding. The fourth section will trace the origin and development of Halal tourism in Lombok, Indonesia, that has taken out Lombok to accept international best Halal tourism awards. The last section will deal with the conclusion of this paper.

## 2. Halal Tourism: Definition and Global Trend

Halal is an Arabic term in Islamic religion, which means permissible according to the *shariah* (Islamic Law). Muslims are required to follow the *shariah* in practicing their religion as a way of life. *Shariah* covers all aspect of Muslims' life, from birth to death. Due to these principles, Muslims always make efforts to follow what have been designated in the *shariah*, including in the fields of travel and tourism. A number of Muslims, when traveling—both in Muslim and non-Muslim countries—prefer to utilize services, facilities and activities which comply with Islamic principles. Particularly related to food, there is a need for Muslim to consume Halal foods, which comply with *shariah*. This has motivated tourism industry to fulfill the needs of Muslim travelers by developing Halal tourism. Before looking at the definition of Halal tourism, let us look at the definition of tourism.

According to UNWTO, tourism is defined as the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes [4]. This definition refers to tourism in general. Combining the term "Halal" to form "Halal tourism," the definition of Halal tourism refers to "any tourism object or action which is permissible according to Islamic teachings to use or engage by Muslims in tourism industry" [5].

Theoretically, the literature on tourism barely subsumes religious attributes, especially when talking about the attributes of Islam [6]. Moreover, the complexity in understanding Halal tourism is also influenced by the emergence of wide-ranging terms in the subject, such as Islamic tourism, Islamic spiritual tourism, religious tourism, and Halal tourism, which are laying the variants within the framework of the understanding of religion-based tourism. Generally, Halal tourism and Islamic tourism are two mostly-used terms, which have been being discussed massively. This section will further clarify the definition and components of Halal tourism.

There are two approaches to understand the concept of religious tourism based on the perspective and goals in travelling [7]. First, the approach that defines Islamic

tourism which emphasize on the importance of 'spiritual motivation' when travelling. In a sense, Islamic tourism contains diversification motive where the attitude shown in this tourism is the intention to 'worship' and to ask the blessing of God and avoid disaster during the journey or trip [8]. Inclusively, Islamic tourism is widely understood as tourism activities carried out by Muslims and non-Muslims to learn about Islam [9]. On the other hand, it also relates to the consistency of faiths to continuously implementing the principles of Islam during the tour [10].

The important point of this approach is that all religion-based tourism activities based solely on spiritual motivation as the ultimate goal. Tourism activities based on the values of Sharia and Islamic religion is just standing on the consideration to acquire knowledge about the religion of Islam. Consequently, the selection of tourism locus could be limited because of the urgency to consider the social and cultural context in which knowledge about Islam is available. This then answers the question of why the Islamic concept of tourism is more widely used in the discussion of traditional religion-based tourism, such as the Hajj and Umrah, where the destination has been set rigidly [11].

The second approach specifically raises the definition of Halal tourism, which put the Islamic values as an important aspect contained in the material availability of travelling. The availability of Halal food, Halal entertainment, gender segregation public facilities, alcohol-free beverages, and the presence of Islamic financial institutions are some prerequisite materials that a tourism destination should provide [12]. Another important thing is the availability of facilities for worship, food with a Halal certificate, non-alcoholic consumption goods, and separated pool or spa for men and women [13]. In another context, Halal tourism is considered as a revolutionary form of tourism where the Muslim tourists began to realize the importance of religious needs when travelling, thus responded as an opportunity for tourism service providers [14]. Some businesses catch this opportunity to provide goods and tourism services to Muslim consumers, such as Halal hotels (the hotel adhered to Islamic principles), Halal resorts, Halal restaurants, and Halal travel packages [15].

An important point in this approach is the availability of goods and services that contain values of sharia as a supporting element in the tour for Muslim travelers. It implies that Halal tourism focused on the establishment of the production chain in which tourism can provide Sharia-compliant attributes to support tourism activities for Muslim travelers. When Halal tourism is regarded as an opportunity, then it works as a business opportunity that is prepared on the values of the Sharia and embraced by all actors in the tourism sector [16].

As a result, the concept of Halal tourism is close to the application of sharia values, which entered in a practical level to form a tourism environment, such as business ethics, consumer behavior, and personal action oriented to sharia values [12]. Departing from this context, the concept of Halal tourism has a constructive nature because it provides space for each tourism industry and its actors to adopt the values of Sharia in shaping the tourism environment.

Despite its novelty, some countries capture the concept of Halal tourism with a glance at the potential for a considerable profit. It is unique because non-Muslim countries, such as the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand also involve in capturing the opportunity besides Islamic countries (United Arab Emirates and Turkey) and Muslim-majority countries (Malaysia and Indonesia). The following part will elaborate the experience of countries in developing Halal tourism through the development of institutions and infrastructure, before explaining the position of Indonesia in the global Halal tourism.

## 2.1. Malaysia

The first country that is seriously implementing Halal tourism is Malaysia. Committed to establish itself as a center of Islamic civilization, the Malaysian government enacted the "Halal Master Plan" program. The program is organized into three phases, namely establishing Malaysia as a world center for Halal integrity and prepares for industrial development (2008–2010), establishing Malaysia as one of the favorite locations associated with Halal Business (2011–2015), and expanding the geographic footprint of Malaysia as the center of Halal Development Company (2016–2020) [17]. In 2008, the Islamic Tourism Centre of Malaysia conducted a campaign called "Malaysia My Second Home" attracting the Middle Eastern tourists. In this campaign, tourism operators and travel agents are involved in offering and promoting affordable health tourism [18].

In order to realize the grand design of "Halal Master Plan" the government established a set of rules to deny tourist behavior, which is incompatible with Islamic teachings, such as consuming alcohol, wearing exposing clothes, do sunbathing in the public area, and banning the provision of non-Halal food in tourist destinations [19]. To guarantee the implementation of the rules, a Halal food standardization policy was initiated by the Malaysian Department of Islamic Development (Jakim) under the supervision of both the Malaysian Department of Standards, and the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation. Cooperation among those institutions was organized to publish Certification Procedures Manual for the Certification of Halal products containing the

requirements of the application, inspection, supervision, and implementation as guidance for food producers [20]. This cooperation is an initiative that comes directly from the government.

Furthermore, there is also an instrument of standardization of services in Malaysia, the MS2610: 2015—Muslims Friendly Hospitality Services—Requirements. The regulation contains three important components related to the supply chain of Halal travel, namely the principle of providing accommodation, tour packages, and tour guides based on Islamic principles. In addition, the establishment of standardization rules did not only involve the Malaysian government, but also the voluntary actors within the tourism sector. Actors involved in the drafting process of standardization include Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC), Malaysian Association of Hotel Owners (MAHO), Malaysian Association of Hotels (MAH), Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents (MATTA), Bumiputera Travel and Tour Agents Association of Malaysia (Bumitra), and the Malaysian Tourist Guides Council (MTGC). With this achievement, it is undoubted that Malaysia stays at the highest rank in the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) (Table 1). However, several studies show that these programs are not linear with the satisfaction of the tourists from the Middle East, which considers the project of Halal tourism is still limited to the provision of Halal food and Halal hotel [20, 21].

## 2.2. Thailand

As a country with a major population of Buddhist, Thailand did not make much of a Halal industrial sector, not to particularly mention the Halal tourism sector. However, as the largest exporter of food products, the country has also moved to capture the opportunities of the growing Muslim consumer with high purchasing power. As such, developing Halal industry sectors sounds very promising economically, and the Thai government was determined to do so seriously. As a result, up to 2015 there are some 3600 companies in Thailand hold the overall Halal certification, which covers 120 000 kinds of products, with export volume increase of 10 % per year in order to maintain Thailand's position as world's fifth biggest exporter of Halal products [22].

The Halal industry in Thailand is predominantly controlled by the Central Islamic Committee of Thailand (CICOT), which is supported by several institutions, such as the Halal Science Center (HSC) Chulalongkorn University and the Institute of Food Research and Product Development (IFRPD) Kasersart University. Up to this time, CICOT has issued three regulations related to Halal products, namely National Halal Standard

THS 24000: 2552, Halal Products Standard Certification Process, and Regulation of the Central Islamic Committee of Thailand Regarding Halal Affair Operation of B.E. 2552.

The National Halal Standard is a general guideline that regulates important points regarding the implementation and management of Halal industry. This regulation aims to adjust national standards to international standards. The regulation, together with the Board of Halal Thai Promotion and Business Development serves as an effort to boost consumer confidence in the Muslim home and abroad as well as improving the Thai food products in the global market. The Halal Products Standard Certification Process is a regulation that contains procedures or stages in filing Halal certification by businesses. In the process, HSC Chulalongkorn University is involved as a unit that performs analysis and Halal Standard Institute of Thailand formed by CICOT perform as the developer unit for standardization of Halal products. The Regulation of the Central Islamic Committee of Thailand Regarding Halal Affair Operation of B.E. 2552 serves as an indicator for measuring and controlling the quality of Halal products. In a sense, Thailand has developed a number of institutions to support the development of Halal industry sectors although they were not always in line with the development of Halal tourism sector. The high volume of Thai exports is not comparable to the provision of Halal food for domestic consumption. According to the Director of the Royal Thai Travel and Trading Co. Ltd. Puwarest Ahmadthirakul, the limited supply of kosher or Halal food will have implications on the difficulties for tourists so that they can affect the development of Halal tourism sector (Bangkok Post, 2015). This indicates that when Halal principles are applied correctly and appropriately they can provide the benefit for the development of tourism sector in Thailand, in particular hospitality services, although Thailand is not a country with a majority Muslim population, such as Indonesia and Malaysia.

### 2.3. Philippines

The Philippines is also developing Halal tourism sector just recently. Two government institutions are initiating cooperation for Halal tourism project namely the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF) and the Department of Tourism (DOT) of the Philippines. The cooperation started with a number of meetings to facilitate debates on the implementation of Halal tourism as a form of cultural appreciation for the Muslim community in the Philippines. As a result, of the emphasis on cultural aspects, Halal tourism project does not run until the current DOT Secretary Ramon Jimenez Jr. suggested that the development of Halal industry and travel should take into account



economic considerations. The reason for it is to avoid difficulties to convince the parties concerned in the implementation of the project. Departing from these considerations, the DOT together with NCMF implement Halal tourism projects for 200 d and set a target that in the month of April 2016, the Halal certification has to be shared by hotels and restaurants in Manila, Makati, Davao, and Cebu.

After the implementation of Halal tourism project reached its 100th day, the Secretary of DOT observed the program and found that there are standardization obstacles that need to be improved. The standardization of Halal products in the Philippines is still governed by the national Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries, which leads to a gap with international standards. In addition, the agency only concerns with technical aspect, simply identifying the content of pork in food, while have not touched on the detection of blood and alcohol levels in certain product. As a solution, DOT and NCMF collaborate with Halal International Chamber of Commerce and Industries of the Philippines, Inc. (HICCIP) and Crescent Rating. The cooperation aims to ensure the standardization of Halal, which meets international standards of kitchen and facilities in 43 hotels, resorts, and restaurants, in Manila, Cebu, Boracay, Davao, Bohol, Zamboanga City, General Santos City, Koronadal, Cotabato City, Surigao City, and Siargao Island.

Until now, the Philippines government has no specific regulations governing the implementation of Halal tourism. However, the Philippines has committed to be involved in the development of the Halal industry, as stated in Republic Act No. 10817, instituting the Philippine Halal Export Development and Promotion Program. Overall, it establishes the creation of Philippine Halal Export Development and Promotion Program, which must refer to a set of goals, targets, strategies, and activities comprehensively for growth of the Halal industry in producing, supplying, and processing products, as well as increase export capacity of Halal products.

## 2.4. Singapore

In 2015, Singapore's tourism industry surprises the world by placing itself in the first rank in GMTI as Halal-friendly tourist destinations in non-Muslim countries. Based on the results of a survey of travelers from 100 countries, Singapore is widely known as the friendliest country for Muslim travelers, especially in the provision of Halal food and prayer facilities [23]. The achievements of Singapore cannot be separated from the role of Crescent Rating, a company that provides research, consulting, and training related to the rating of Halal, which also publishes a report on global industrial and

assessment systems tourist destinations seen from the weight of 'Halal friendliness' based on the availability of Halal food and a place of worship [24].

Furthermore, Singapore has also provided support features for Muslim travelers, such as web sites Halaltrip.com, a mobile-friendly application, and user's manual Halal tourism. The website offers a variety of features for Muslim travelers to book hotels, flights and package tours, and locates Halal restaurants and places of worship [25]. In addition, HalalTrip applications that can be downloaded into mobile phones is expected to facilitate Muslim travelers during the trip and sharing resources and providing advice and assessment of the list of restaurants that exist in certain destinations [26]. Initially, the Singapore domestic Halal tourism sector prepares to publish Halal travel guidance. The book published by the Singapore Tourism Board with the aim of ensuring the Muslim travelers from Indonesia to access the means of tourism, such as kosher or Halal food, accommodation embracing the principles of Halal and Islamic historical sites [27].

On the other hand, in order to improve and maintain the confidence of Muslim tourists, Singapore ensures all the needs of standardization and certification for the tourism industry under the authority of religious institution Majelis Islam Singapore (MUIS). This national certification agency has been established since 1978 as a legal entity of regulatory Administration of Muslim Law Act (Amla) and has as many as seven Halal certification scheme based on the (online) food supply chain. Overall, Singapore performs very well in developing Halal tourism among the Asian countries.

## 2.5. Indonesia's position in global Halal tourism

According to the report of the Global Muslim Travel Index 2015, there are several countries, which have met the category of Halal tourism destination criteria, one of which is Indonesia (see Table 1). Indonesia ranks the sixth in the index, lag behind its neighbor Malaysia, which ranks the first. The rank indicates that Indonesia still needs to improve its performance in the Halal tourism sector if it is determined to attract global Muslim travelers. The potentials of Indonesian tourism sector should be able to be developed more widely to cater Muslim tourists by providing services making enjoyable trip for Muslims. Stakeholders working within this unprecedented industry must address this issue properly.

The data shows that Indonesia is still at the second lowest level in terms of language proficiency along with Saudi Arabia in the acquisition value of 54.5. The low language proficiency is assumed to show two conditions, namely the low quality of human

resources (HR) in communicating with foreign tourists in a foreign language, and the inability in understanding the desire of foreign Muslim tourists in Indonesia. Of course, this index also shows that Indonesia has a good human resource capacity to sustain the development of Halal tourism. Then, the data also showed the small number of foreign Muslim tourists visiting Indonesia with the acquisition of the second-lowest score of 13.1. This figure shows that Indonesia laid down as the last second preference by Muslim foreign tourists for sightseeing. It informed that there is a labor shortage in the scheme of Halal tourism so it is not able to provide optimal service to foreign Muslim travelers.

### 3. Branding-based vs. Value-based Halal Tourism

Following the definitions concerning Halal tourism as explained above, this section would look further at the strategy of states in developing Halal tourism. Two concepts will be particularly discussed, which are Halal tourism as a value (value-based Halal tourism) and Halal tourism as a brand-image (branding-based Halal tourism). There are differences in the origin and ideas between the two concepts that will bring different implications on the strategy and implementations of the concept in the real world.

#### 3.1. Value-based Halal tourism

Halal tourism as a value refers to the practice of travelling according to sharia principles. Muslims, when traveling, should not leaving the sharia principles, such as *salaat* (praying), not consuming pork and drinking alcohol, not enjoying night entertainment in the pub, etc. The implementation of this shariah principle would bring implications to fulfil Muslim's need when traveling. There are five basic pillars in Islam, which have consequences in travel and tourism as shown in the following table (Table 2).

As shown in the table, from the five pillars of Islam, four of them have direct implications on travel and tourism, which generate the needs of Muslims while travelling characterized as faith-based needs [29]. Thus, the needs are related to the faith of the Muslims according to the Sharia. Three components that should be addressed related to Sharia principles, which are: (i) key faith-based needs; (ii) demand-side key themes and; (iii) supply-side key themes. The following table shows the detail of the components.

For Muslim countries—mainly Middle East and North Africa—or countries with majority Muslim population such as Indonesia and Malaysia, developing Halal tourism

TABLE 1: Global muslim travel index 2015.

Destination	2015 Rank	2015 GMTI Score	Family friendly holiday and safe travel destination			Muslim friendly services and facilities available at the destination				Halal awareness and destination marketing	
			Family friendly holiday destination	Safe travel environment	Muslim visitor arrivals	Dining options and assurance	Ease of access to prayer spaces	Airport services and facilities	Accommodation options	Ease of communication/language proficiency	Muslim travel needs awareness and reach out
Malaysia	1	83.8	64.3	100	58.5	90	100	100	60	71.8	88
Turkey	2	73.8	62.2	82.5	78	75.5	100	86.7	48.3	33.5	68
United Arab Emirates	3	72.1	51.3	100	33.4	80	100	86.7	60.5	73	58
Saudi Arabia	4	71.3	40.3	86	48.7	95	100	100	60.5	54.5	50
Qatar	5	68.2	44.3	100	10	90	100	100	54.3	73	38
Indonesia	6	67.5	51.9	89.5	13.1	83	100	82.2	48.6	54.5	61
Oman	7	66.7	43.5	100	13.7	80	100	100	51.7	65	40
Jordan	8	66.4	41.8	89.5	30.9	80	100	80.8	40.1	77	51
Singapore	9	65.2	52.8	100	32.9	80	70	66.7	44.4	78.2	48
Morocco	10	64.4	51.1	89.5	34.2	75	100	63.3	42.2	65	46

Source: Global muslim travel index report 2015 [28]

according to sharia principles should not be that difficult. This is due to the existence of Islamic values, which have become part of people’s daily life. Instead of that, there are sufficient infrastructures for performing Islamic principles as mosques for *salaat* (praying). As stated in a report commenting Indonesia, Muslim friendly tourist destinations are a place with many mosques, and Indonesia has 600 mosques [29]. Therefore, these countries are able to develop Halal tourism based on values. The government needs only to set up policy to develop and support value-based Halal

TABLE 2: Islamic pillars and their impact on travel and tourism.

Islam Pillars	Impact on Travel and Tourism
Pillar 1: Declaration of faith in God (Allah) and the Prophet Muhammad	Travel should not be oriented to visit places, which will lead to denying the existence of God and the Prophet Muhammad ( <i>mushrik</i> ).
Pillar 2: Performing <i>Salaat</i> (five times daily prayer)	The needs for prayer directions (qiblah); information on prayer timing; washroom with foot wash facilities; prayer's mats; prayer's rooms; mosques in the destinations.
Pillar 3: Fasting during the daytime in the month of Ramadhan	The need for Halal foods, early breakfast (meals before fasting) and iftar.
Pillar 4: Observing zakat (charitable giving)	No specific impact
Pillar 5: Pilgrimage to Mecca (hajj)	Religious travel (hajj and umra) to Makkah (Saudi Arabia)

TABLE 3: Concept of halal / muslim friendly tourism.

Faith-based Needs	Demand-side Key Themes	Supply-side Key Themes
Halal food	Religious and heritage travel	Destinations: Transport terminals Hotels, villas, resorts, etc. Religious and heritage sites; attractions; shopping; beaches; nature; adventure; life events. MICE, Venues. Healthcare services, Hospitals
<i>Salaat</i> (Praying)	Leisure travel	
Water usage friendly washroom	Business travel	
Ramadhan services and facilities	Healthcare travel	
No non-Halal activities		Travel agents / Tour operators
Recreational facilities with privacy		Human capital

tourism. Moreover, value-based Halal tourism should be supported with comprehensive and consistent policies. If this could be done, the development of value-based Halal tourism would gain support from the society, and could enhance social cohesion. Society as a whole would feel as a part of the tourism sector, which is being developed by the government.

Meanwhile, for non-Muslim countries it is relatively difficult to develop Halal tourism based on values, since they do not practice Islamic values in their society. However, due to the interest to gain benefits from the significantly growing number of Muslim

travelers, they tend to adopt Muslim-friendly tourism or Halal-friendly tourism instead. In a sense, Halal is employed as supporting facilities to attract Muslim travelers, by providing minimal facilities for Muslim travelers, such as Halal food and Kiblah direction in hotel rooms. By so doing, non-Muslim countries could give services to make Muslim travelers feel comfortable while traveling, although the people in the countries do not implement or practicing Islamic values in their daily life.

### 3.2. Branding-based Halal tourism

In the era of economic globalization, states compete with other states in order to gain benefits from the liberalization of economic activities. The opening up of market in many countries has given opportunities for states to develop products and services to cater global consumers. In order to win the competition a number of strategies employed by the states, among others is through “nation branding”. Nation branding is defined as a government-based coordinating strategy to manage national image and to improve tourism, investment, and foreign relations [30]. Branding for developing state image has been recognized long as part of the efforts to practice public diplomacy. As mentioned by Volcic, the nation-branding trend makes the connection between nationalism and marketing explicit and concrete. Insofar as it is characterized by unprecedented levels of state expenditure on branding consultants, the mobilization of private/public partnerships for promoting national identity, and the convergence of the state’s use of commercial strategies for public and international relations with the private sector’s use of nationalism to sell products [31].

Tourism itself is one of the components of nation branding. Branding in tourism, which is widely known is destination branding. When the idea of Halal tourism was formulated as a “niche” tourism, there is a need to introduce the idea to the global market. Halal tourism, as a branding, is primarily conceptualized from demand-side perspective, adopting a consumer-perceived-image approach. However, branding needs a lot of budget for hiring consultants and promoting brands through varieties of media. Nevertheless, once it is accepted by the public, it promises substantial economic benefits for the selling products or services.

## 4. Lombok: Halal Tourism in the Making

The construction of Halal tourism in Lombok develops through three major phases, namely: (i) the initial phase (1982–2007); (ii) the exploration phase (2008–2015); and

(iii) the growth phase (2015–present). The following part will elaborate in detail the three phases of Halal tourism development in Lombok to answer the research questions. Using the theoretical frameworks explained above, the analysis would be guided by four indicators to understand the government's policy in developing Halal tourism in Lombok, including: organizational or management; the condition of human resources for Halal-based tourism; standardization, certification and audit of Halal products and services; and the government regulations.

#### 4.1. The initial phase (1982–2007)

The development of Halal tourism in the initial phase was started in 1982, when the government tried to look at tourism sector as a way out to alleviate poverty in the rural areas. The province of West Nusa Tenggara (where Lombok is located) was well known for its lack of resources to boost local economy to generate welfare for the people. The initial phase began when the attention towards tourism sector started to develop in Lombok, despite the refusal from some government officials and part of the society to develop tourism sector [32]. The reason for the refusal was due to the objections from the Muslim society who perceived tourism as closes to immoral behavior (*maksiat*) such as drinking alcohol and enjoying night entertainment, so that it should not be developed. Consequently, the government missed the opportunity to gain economic benefits from the tourism sector.

Meanwhile, there were growing interests of tourists coming to Lombok to enjoy its beautiful nature of beaches and mountains. Development of tourism and the high interest of tourists coming to Lombok began to lure the attention of both governments and communities about the importance of tourism. The distinctive cultural condition between Lombok and Bali was look upon as a potentiality, where Lombok holds its Islamic value and Bali with its Hinduism value.

In 1987, it was agreed that Lombok should bear an iconic identity called "The Island of Thousand Mosques" to describe its cultural uniqueness. In 1987, the government of West Nusa Tenggara did collaboration with United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to start planning the process that should consider social and cultural condition. Consequently, the development of tourism established in particular context of Muslim-majority societies.

Mahdi as Council Secretary of West Nusa Tenggara Province Lombok also stated that entering the 1990s, a number of investors from the Middle Eastern countries were interested to build tourism facilities in Lombok to cater Muslim tourists. They saw the

wonderful nature and hilly contour of Lombok held the potentials to be developed as tourist destinations. There was an idea to build a hotel in accordance with Islamic values, such as separation between male and female in public area, prayer facilities, and Halal food. The idea was realized some years later when Svarga Resort in Senggigi was completely built with its Muslim-friendly facilities. As a result, in 2003 tourism activities gained positive support from religious leaders in Lombok known as *tuan guru*. This was also due to the initiative of the government who had invited them to travel to Singapore, Mecca, Dubai, and Jeddah in order to experience how tourism develops in the Muslim countries. The aim was to change the perception of *tuan guru* concerning tourism that it does not always involved immoral and negative practices, as assumed by most of Lombok's society. Through these activities, *tuan guru* finally agreed to develop tourism according to Islamic principles.

#### 4.2. The exploration phase (2008–2015)

The second phase, the exploration phase was started from 2008 to 2015. Departed from the successful attempt to gain support from *tuan guru* during the initial phase, the government continued its efforts to develop tourism more seriously. In 2010, Lombok managed to organize Musabaqah Islamic Art, an exhibition to show the rich cultural heritage of Islamic art. This activity constitutes the recognition and development of the attractive Islamic tourism destination. Agus as Representative of International Tourism Development Center West Nusa Tenggara Province Lombok also stated that in 2011, Emmar Properties had been planning an investment to develop Halal tourist destination in Lombok. They targeted the Special Economic Zones (SEZ) of Mandalika, a site that has been designated as tourist destination area in central Lombok. However, the investment was halted due to land acquisition conflicts in the targeted wide-ranging area.

In order to explore the suitable design of Halal tourism development, the West Nusa Tenggara provincial government prepared various regulations concerning tourism. Started with the issuance of provincial government, the Local Regulation No.7/2013 on West Nusa Tenggara Tourism Development Master Plan (RIPPDA NTB), the government inserted tourism as one of priority sectors for local economic development. The regulation mentioned specifically that religious tourism is one of the tourism activities to be developed in Lombok. The regulation defines religious tourism as tourism activity related to religion, which would be developed in the areas of Mataram, West Lombok, and Central Lombok. The most important progress in the development of Halal tourism



was when Lombok participated in the World Travel Summit in Dubai in 2015 and won awards as the World's Best Halal Destination and World's Best Halal Honeymoon. The momentum boosted the spirit of the government officials and the business community in the tourism sectors to develop Halal tourism in a more concrete programs and activities.

### 4.3. The growth phase (2015–present)

The third phase was started right after the acceptance of awards from the World Travel Summit in 2015, by the issuance of Governor's Regulation on Halal tourism. The Governor of West Nusa Tenggara Muhammad Zainul Majdi responded the awards positively, by issuing a Governor Regulation No. 51/2015 on Halal Tourism. In 2016, the regulation was developed into a more specific regulation, which is the Local Government Regulation No. 2/2016 on Halal Tourism. This signifies that Halal tourism has been legally and institutionally prepared. After the issuance of this specific regulation in June 2016, the Association of Corporate Travel (ASITA) launched a Halal tourism package. The accomplishment of National MTQ (Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an) and World Ulama Conference follow subsequently. Those events improve the element of branding and identity of Lombok as Halal tourism destination.

Through the three phases, some practitioners explained that until today, Lombok is still developing the concept of Halal tourism, which is oriented to capture economic gains from global tourism. The Secretary of the Association of Corporate Travel Jasnawadi Wirajagat, mentioned that the main strategy to develop Halal tourism in Lombok is organized under the slogan of 'starting from the end'. He illustrates the fact that Lombok has just won the international award, which has prominent role to attract the attention of wide-ranging stakeholders, particularly investors and tourists, into a single platform. Working conversely against the logic of 'starting from the beginning', he seemed very optimistic on the current development of Halal tourism in Lombok.

A government official—Functional Head at the Department of Culture and Tourism of West Nusa Tenggara Province—Gusia also mentioned that the designation of Lombok as Halal tourist destination was aimed at increasing the selling value of the tourism sector. However, it is underpinning the risk of developing Halal tourism, which falls into dichotomy between economic rationality and Islamic value. Despite its local potential resources to catch opportunity from Halal global market, Gusia doubts that subsuming Islamic value within the perception of the economic pursuit of profit will only engender socio-economic crackdown at the level of society. It implies that the economic

rationality alongside modernity will erode Islamic local wisdom. Yet he underlined that the government should anticipate this impending challenge in order to develop more sustainable Halal tourism.

## 5. Conclusion

The development of Halal tourism in Indonesia is a rather new phenomenon although Indonesia is known as a country with the largest Muslim population in the world. Halal tourism has become a trend in global tourism, which promises to give economic benefits from the growing number of Muslim travelers worldwide. Many countries are developing this particular segment of tourism, which focuses on providing services for Muslim to perform their Islamic belief when travelling. This has given birth to the term of Halal tourism as tourism or travel according to Islamic values (Sharia). There are two concepts of Halal tourism that the government should address, namely the value-based Halal tourism and the branding based Halal tourism. The value-based Halal tourism focuses on the implementation of Islamic values or Sharia in the tourism activities and industry. Meanwhile, the branding-based Halal tourism uses the term as branding to attract Muslim travelers, which are growing in numbers.

Indonesia is also interested to develop Halal tourism by relying on its beautiful nature and rich cultural heritages. The election of Lombok as the World's Best Halal Tourism Destination and World's Best Halal Honeymoon Destination in the World Halal Travel Summit in Dubai in 2015 has motivated the provincial government to develop the tourism sector seriously focusing on Halal tourism as a mean to boost local economy.

A number of regulations have been prepared to support the materialization of the idea along with the development of institutions and infrastructure. However, there was a gap between the ideas of Halal tourism to be developed which is supposed to be based on Islamic values with the practices in Lombok. Findings from the research have highlighted the gap between value-based Halal tourism and branding-based Halal tourism. The development of Halal tourism in Lombok is still facing many problems in terms of institutions building, such as poor management of organizations, the lack of human resources in Halal-related tourism, and inefficient mechanism of Halal standardization and certification. Therefore, the practices of Halal tourism being implemented in Lombok, is more oriented toward branding for the purposes of enlarging the tourism market. Meanwhile, the idea to develop value-based Halal tourism is still far from materialized.

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