

Exploration of pilgrimage tourism in Indonesia

Pilgrimage
tourism in
Indonesia

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to extract information and analyze the antecedents of Muslims following pilgrimage tours. Data from the Central Bureau of Statistics Indonesia shows that 87.18 per cent of the total population of Indonesia are Muslims. In addition to running the ruling of Islam and the pillars of Faith, Muslims also maintain the religious tourism. The form of religious tourism which is widely followed by the Muslims of Indonesia is to follow a pilgrimage to the tomb of the *wali* (Guardian), both *wali limo* and *wali songo*.

Design/methodology/approach – This study used a qualitative approach. Data collection was done using in-depth interviews of Muslims in Indonesia who had already attended pilgrimages to *wali limo* and/or *wali songo*.

Findings – The tourists are satisfied and have an intention to revisit the destination, and the interest of the community to follow religious tours is very large, as well as the opportunities to do business in this sector are still wide open. Various motives and benefits of following religious tours, as well as suggestions for improvements for religious tourism destination managers, as well as advice for the government were uncovered. Thus, the results of this study are expected to provide a theoretical contribution related to marketing management in religious tourism and a practical contribution for the managers of religious tourism.

Research limitations/implications – Further research can be done with a quantitative approach, as well as comparative studies between pilgrimages in Indonesia (developing countries) and pilgrimages in other developing countries or in developed countries can also be conducted.

Practical implications – For marketing practitioners, the results of this study can be used as a consideration to continue to improve services in the field of religious tourism in the country, given the potential for development is very large.

Social implications – There is a contribution from this study to the development of marketing science, particularly related to marketing management on religious tourism services.

Originality/value – This study offers new insight regarding factors influencing Muslims pilgrimage tourism in Indonesia.

Keywords Satisfaction, Pilgrimage, In-depth interview, Religious tourism, Intention to revisit, *Wali limo*, *Wali songo*

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

The tourism sector plays an important role in bringing in government revenue, as well as revenue for tourism businesses. The Ministry of Tourism also sets targets on macro and micro levels. Macro targets of indicators include contributions to the national gross domestic product (GDP), foreign exchange and employment. It has been stated that the 2017 target of



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tourism could account for 13 per cent of the national GDP, up from only 11 per cent (Widiyanto, 2016).

Based on the destination, there are various types of tourism that can be enjoyed by tourists, including underwater nature tourism, beach tourism, nature tourism, religious tourism and culinary tourism. Religious tourism that is often followed by the Muslims of Indonesia is by pilgrimage to visit the tombs of Islamic religious leaders (*wali*), which are scattered in various regions around Indonesia.

In Indonesia, religious tourism to the tomb of the Guardians is known as the pilgrimage of *wali songo* and *wali limo*. In its history, these guardians spread the syariah of Islam in the fourteenth century, that started from the north coast of Java in locations such as Surabaya, Gresik, Lamongan, Tuban in East Java and Demak, Kudus in Central Java and also Cirebon in West Java. The pilgrimage of the *wali songo* is a religious tour to the nine destinations of the guardians' tombs, among others: Sunan Gresik (Maulana Malik Ibrahim) in East Java, Sunan Ampel (Raden Rahmat) in East Java, Sunan Bonang (Raden Maulana Malik Ibrahim) in East Java, Sunan Giri (Raden Paku) in East Java, Sunan Drajat (Raden Qadim) in East Java, Sunan Kalijaga (Raden Mas Syahid) in Central Java, Sunan Kudus (Jaffar Sidiq) in Central Java, Sunan Muria (Raden Umar Said) in Central Java and Sunan Gunung Jati (Syarif Hidayatullah) in West Java. Meanwhile, the pilgrimage of the *wali limo* is a form of religious tourism to the five destinations of the guardians' tombs; these are Sunan Gresik (Maulana Malik Ibrahim) in East Java, Sunan Ampel (Raden Rahmat) in East Java, Sunan Bonang (Raden Maulana Malik Ibrahim) in East Java, Sunan Giri (Raden Paku) in East Java and Sunan Drajat (Raden Qadim) in East Java.

The percentage of Indonesian people who are Muslim is far higher than the number of other religious followers. Data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) show that 87.18 per cent of Indonesian citizens or 240 million are Muslim (Detikfinance, 2014; Wilson *et al.*, 2013). This indicates that religious tourism in the form of pilgrimage has a great opportunity to continue to grow.

From the existing phenomenon in Indonesian society, it is seen that from year to year, the number of Muslims who follow the religious tour (*wali limo* and/or *wali songo*) continues to increase. The Ministry of Tourism projected tourist visits to the *wali songo* destination in 2019 as capable of reaching 18 million domestic tourists or about 15 per cent of the tourist target in the archipelago in 2019, with tourist expenditure per visit averaging Rp400,000 or Rp7.2tn in a year (Pangaribuan, 2015). The Tourism Minister also revealed that nowadays, more serious pilgrimage tourism development is needed, including destination management, tourism product packaging and promotion and marketing in the special interest tourism segment.

Meanwhile, studies on pilgrimage have been conducted abroad, such as studies conducted by Robledo (2015), Shafaei and Mohamed (2015), Melian *et al.* (2016) and Nassar *et al.* (2015). The studies conducted by the researchers are in the realm of religious tourism. Religious tourism is defined as a visit to religious places, with a view to meeting religious and recreational needs (Shinde, 2015). Therefore, a religious tourism destination that wishes to successfully target Muslim tourists should have Islamic attributes that meet the needs of the tourists (Nassar *et al.*, 2015).

The study of religious tourism for various religions in various pilgrimage objects in many countries with both quantitative and qualitative approaches has been carried out, such as Griffin and Raj (2017) conducted a study of the definitions and motives of the tourist in conducting pilgrimage for all religions. Štefko *et al.* (2015) conducted a study of marketing communication in Slovakia with a quantitative approach, whereas Singh (2006) and Shinde (2015) examined pilgrimage for Hindus in India. Smith (2017) conducted a study with a

quantitative approach to the tourist who conducted pilgrimage to France and Spain. Meanwhile, [Eid \(2013\)](#) examined pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia with a study focus on pilgrim satisfaction with a quantitative approach, as well as [Haq and Jackson \(2009\)](#) with a qualitative research approach examined the experience and expectations of Australian and Pakistani Muslims. [Shafaei and Mohamed \(2015\)](#) focus their studies on involvement and brand equity variables.

Religious tourism activities for Muslims in Indonesia are carried out domestically and internationally. Umrah is the most dominant type of pilgrimage abroad. However, the number of Muslims carrying out the pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina is still far below the number of those who carry out religious tourism domestically. Therefore, the opportunity to develop Muslim tourism in Indonesia is very large, considering the percentage of Muslims is the largest compared to the number of followers of other religions. Also, the public interest in following the pilgrimage continues to increase.

Spiritual tourism has recently been accepted as a growing segment of tourism in business and research circles ([Haq and Wong, 2010](#)). Meanwhile, the concept of marketing was seen as an appropriate tool to be applied to the management of objects of religious tourism, as revealed by [Eid \(2012\)](#), [Haq \(2014\)](#) and [Štefko et al. \(2015\)](#). In relation to the above explanation, it is necessary to conduct a thorough assessment of the antecedents of Muslims following religious tours (pilgrimage) with *wali songo* and/or *wali limo* as the destinations, as well as measuring the level of satisfaction of pilgrims for the places of pilgrimage they visit. The benefits of this study are expected to contribute theoretically to the development of marketing theory, especially concerning religious tourism, as well as provide useful information for religious tourism managers in Indonesia in targeting their target market and providing services to religious tourism visitors.

Literature review

Tourism industry in Indonesia

The Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 9 Year 2009 on Tourism explains the definitions of tourism, tourism and tourism as follows: tourism is a travel activity undertaken by a person or a group of persons by visiting a particular place for recreational purposes, personal development or studying the uniqueness of attractions visited during the interim period, while tourism is a wide range of tourism activities and is supported by various facilities and services provided by the community, businessmen, government and local government; also, tourism involves all activities related to tourism and is multidimensional and multidisciplinary that emerges as a manifestation of the needs of every person and country, as well as the interaction between tourists, government, local government and entrepreneurs. In almost all countries, the tourism industry is known to have significant importance at both domestic and international levels in terms of economic development ([Bajpai and Lee, 2015](#)).

Currently, Indonesia's tourism sector contributes approximately 4 per cent of the total economy. By 2019, the Government of Indonesia (GOI) wants to double this figure to 8 per cent of GDP, an ambitious (perhaps overly ambitious) target that implies that within the next four years, the number of visitors needs to be doubled to about 20 million. To achieve this target, the GOI will focus on improving Indonesia's infrastructure (including information and communication technology infrastructure), access, health and hygiene and also enhancing online promotional campaigns (overseas). The GOI also revised the free visa access policy in 2015 to attract more foreign tourists.

From [Figure 1](#), it appears that from year to year, the number of foreign tourist arrivals continues to increase. This is also the case with domestic tourist visits to the objects of

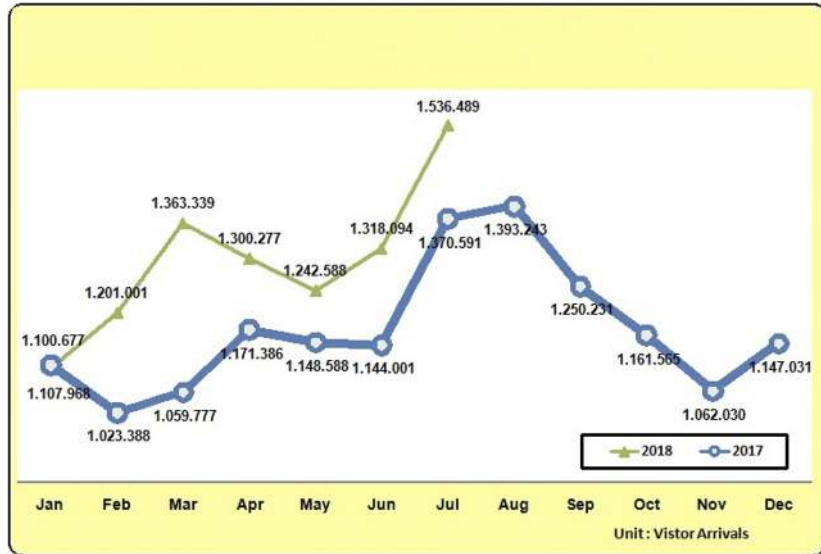


Figure 1.
International visitor
arrivals by month
(2017 versus 2018)

Source: Ministry of Tourism Republic of Indonesia (2018)

domestic tourism. The number of domestic tourists in 2019 is predicted to be as many as 275 million people. This indicates that the tourism sector has a great opportunity to continue to be developed in Indonesia in the present and future.

Religious tourism

In today's society, religious tourism or spiritual tourism is increasing in popularity. [Wilson \(2014\)](#), in grouping *halal* industries according to commodities and consumption, included spiritual tourism in the category of *halal* experience. [Shinde \(2015\)](#) defines religious tourism as a visit to religious places, with the aim of meeting religious and recreational needs. Meanwhile, [Haq and Jackson \(2009\)](#) define a religious tourist as someone who visits a particular place from the usual environment, with a view to fostering a level of spirituality. The purpose of pilgrimage is an exterior space that remains and transcends to jointly form a complex spiritual journey phenomenon ([Singh, 2006](#)). [Eid \(2013\)](#) defines Islamic tourism activities as activities, events or experiences conducted in a travel state in accordance with Islamic Shari'a, with one or all of the following: history, culture, art, inheritance, way of life, economy, health, education and other human interests. [Haq and Wong \(2010\)](#) defined spiritual tourists as special interest tourists undertaking travel to achieve specific objectives with specific needs. [Wilson et al. \(2013\)](#) define spiritual tourism as packages framed as holidays, which allow for worship and pilgrimage while enjoying recreational and social activities.

Religious tourism in Indonesia

Indonesia itself has a very complete characteristic as a pilgrimage destination of Islam, Catholicism, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism and even a variety of local beliefs that are estimated to amount to 245 beliefs ([Pangaribuan, 2015](#)). Some examples of

religious tourism in Indonesia include: Borobudur temple (Buddhist temple), Prambanan temple, visiting temples in Bali (Hindu religion) and *wali songo/wali limo* pilgrimage (Islamic religion); these all have great potential in the development of the religious tourism industry in Indonesia. Regarding special religious tours for Muslims, it appears that the target market available is large enough, so the potential to develop this type of tour has very great potential.

Services marketing

[Kotler and Keller \(2016\)](#) explain that service characteristics include those that are intangible, inseparable, variable and perishable. It is these characteristics that distinguish products in the form of goods and services. Managing the product in the form of services does not require 4P's (product, price, place and promotion), but it still takes 3P's (people, process and physical evidence) ([Kotler and Keller, 2016](#)). The traditional marketing mix applied to services is product elements, place and time, price and other user outlays, promotion and education, while the extended services marketing mix for managing the customer interface is process, physical environment and people ([Wirtz and Lovelock, 2016](#)). Based on the concept of service marketing, service providers are expected to be able to provide the best service quality for customers, so that it will lead to satisfaction and customer loyalty.

Religious tourism marketing

The terms religious tourism, spiritual tourism and pilgrimage are interpreted in an overlapping manner by researchers ([Haq, 2014](#); [Štefko et al., 2015](#)). In marketing management, religious tourism is a type of product in the service category. As it is a product in the form of services, service quality plays an important role. [Parasuraman et al. \(1988\)](#) describe the dimensions of service quality; these are intangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. [Akroush et al. \(2016\)](#) also emphasizes that service quality plays an important role in shaping tourist loyalty.

Religious tourism focuses on the visitation of religious sites or destinations, to consolidate a particular faith, and development of identity that refers to spiritual or religious enlightenment ([Štefko et al., 2015](#)). The relationship between tourism marketing and religion has become an interesting topic to study, as shown in the studies conducted by [Battour et al. \(2010\)](#), [Eid \(2012\)](#), [Haq \(2014\)](#) and [Štefko et al. \(2015\)](#).

Customer satisfaction

[Kotler and Keller \(2016\)](#) define satisfaction as a person's feelings of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing perceived products' performance (or outcome) in relation to his or her expectations. Meanwhile, satisfaction felt by consumers will cause them to develop loyalty for the brand/product ([Morgan and Hunt, 1994](#)). [Vinh and Long \(2013\)](#) state that research on the loyalty of tourists for tourist attractions has grown rapidly. From the meta-analysis conducted by [Oh and Kim \(2017\)](#), it was found that the concept of consumer satisfaction which was used in the research has both theoretical and practical implications. Satisfaction is measured by means of periodic surveys, customer loss rates, mystery shoppers and monitoring competitive performance ([Kotler and Keller, 2016](#)). Many studies show that satisfaction is a predictor of customer loyalty ([Chandrashekar et al., 2007](#); [Torres-Moraga et al., 2008](#); [Strenitzerová and Ganõa, 2018](#); [Meesala and Paul, 2018](#); [Abu-Alhaija et al., 2018](#)).

Research method

The sample unit in this study is in the form of individuals, that is, people in Indonesia who have followed the religious tours, namely, *wali limo* and/or *wali songo*. The sampling technique used is purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique, taking into account the selected population element based on the researcher's opinion that the sample is representative of an interesting population (Malhotra, 2010). In this research, data were collected by cross-sectional approach, that is, the data were only collected once for Muslims who have attended religious tourism at *wali limo* and/or *wali songo*. Data were collected by in-depth interviews.

This research was conducted by using a qualitative research approach, that is, by seeking information from the informants and by doing in-depth interviews on 15 people: some who often follow religious tours (11 people), managers of a religious tourism site (2 people) and marketing management experts (2 people). Interviews with tourist managers and marketing management experts were conducted to triangulate sources. Triangulation has also been viewed as a qualitative research strategy to test validity through the convergence of information from different sources (Patton, 1999; Carter *et al.*, 2014).

The process of in-depth interviews was conducted in participants' homes, at the workplace and in places of religious tourism. The data search process is stopped when "saturation" data has been obtained. Saunders *et al.* (2018) described that saturation should be operationalized in a way that is consistent with the research question(s) and the theoretical position and analytic framework adopted. After the interview data were collected, there was further analysis of the data.

Result and discussion

Researchers conducted in-depth interviews with 11 informants: respondents were aged between 22 and 65 years, with a majority of the respondents aged between 40 and 50 years. Regarding the gender of participants, there were five male participants and six female participants. Regarding the types of professions of participants, they included undergraduate students, housewives, private employees, government employees and businessmen. In this study, there were also two religious tourist place managers involved and two experts on marketing management.

The results of the in-depth interviews with the informants in general cover the following aspects:

- the motive to follow religious tourism;
- the benefits of following the pilgrimage tour;
- response to the availability of religious facilities and infrastructure in religious tourism destinations;
- responses to the availability of *halal* food vendors and souvenirs;
- intention to revisit religious tourism destinations in the future;
- the level of satisfaction of religious tourism destinations, as well as the factors that cause satisfaction or dissatisfaction in religious tourism destinations;
- advice of managers for the improvement of pilgrimage services;
- suggestions for the organizers of pilgrimages of *wali songo/wali limo*;
- suggestions for the government in relation to the religious tourism place; and
- study findings based on age and gender of participants.

These aspects will be discussed one by one below.

Motives to follow religious tourism

Some informants revealed that the reason they followed the pilgrimage tour was:

- to increase their level of faith;
- to remind themselves that death is certain to come;
- to remember and honor the struggle of the saints in the struggle for Islam;
- to bring their children with the hope that their children also increase their level of faith;
- to obtain peace of mind;
- to know the history of the *wali*'s struggle in real terms by coming to his grave;
- to get closer to God;
- to be able to imitate the spirit of the guardians in establishing the religion of Islam;
- to obtain God's blessings; and
- to execute the command of the Prophet.

This finding is in line with that of [Vukonić \(1996\)](#), that the pilgrimage is motivated by religion, and that of [Štefko et al. \(2013\)](#), that tourism motivated by religious or spiritual reasons or associated with religious, cultural heritage and pilgrimage destinations and sites was previously a largely domestic phenomenon.

The benefits of following the pilgrimage tour

According to the informants, the benefits of following the pilgrimage tour are feeling happy; will imitate the struggle of the *wali*; feel more aware of death; will continue the struggle of the *wali*; gratitude to the trustees for their struggle; create a sense of peace of mind; become more devoted; to be more confident about the truth of Islam; and were amazed by the guardians who had strived to uphold the religion of Islam, causing a desire to increase the informant's worship. One of the informants suggested that the destination also provides lodging, so that tourists can worship longer by staying there, and therefore, they are not in a hurry to go home. This finding supports the results of a study conducted by [Štefko et al. \(2015\)](#) that spiritual tourism aims to explore the elements of life that are beyond one's perception and help to balance the body, mind and spirit.

Response to the availability of religious facilities and infrastructure in religious tourism destinations

Generally informants explained that the facilities and infrastructure of worship places (mosque, toilet room, ablution place and Muslim women's prayer dresses) are provided in religious tourism destinations. However, some informants revealed that the cleanliness of the bathrooms and ablution places still needs to improve. Similarly, Muslim women's prayer dresses that are provided for Muslim women should also be kept clean. Several informants also advised the tourists to keep the environment clean, including when they worship in the mosque. Awareness of personal hygiene and the environment in people in developing countries is generally still low when compared with people in developed countries. As revealed by [Huttmánová and Synčáková \(2009\)](#), the lack of infrastructure and supplementary services are other reasons for low visitor numbers, according to research conducted in Slovakia.

Response to the availability of halal food vendors, as well as souvenirs

All informants said that the need to eat and drink while at the tourist destinations is well-provided for, because there are so many food and beverage sellers in all religious tourism destinations. They serve the typical food menu in each destination visited by the tourists offered at an affordable price. Similarly, the souvenirs at religious tourism destinations are also available in many varieties and variations and also offered at an affordable price. Some informants argue that this is a blessing felt by the local people (food, beverage and souvenir sellers), with the existence of the graves of *wali* in the area. Štefko *et al.* (2015) revealed that the secular aspects of pilgrimage (finding accommodation, organizing the trip, food, eating and health care) are the same as for modern tourism. This is in line with Wilson and Liu's (2011) statement that Muslim consumer behavior and corporate practices point toward perspectives which reframe the *halal*.

Intention to revisit religious tourism destinations in the future

All the informants revealed that they will follow the pilgrimage of the *wali limo/wali songo* in the future, if they have the opportunity and have sustenance. Most of the informants have followed the religious tour more than three times; there are even informants who have followed the religious tours 30 times. This could be a signal that in the future, religious tourism will continue to grow, considering the number of Muslims in Indonesia is higher when compared with the number of adherents of religions other than Islam. Thus, from the aspect of marketing, this will be a great opportunity to increase business in this sector. This can be achieved by continuing to understand the needs and desires of the tourists who are carrying out religious tourism. In this case, aspects of service marketing need to be considered; these are, among others, quality of service, price, place of destination, promotion, personal, service process and physical evidence (Kotler and Keller, 2016). Oppermann (2000) underlines that past experience has an influence on future behavior in a tourism destination choice context.

The level of satisfaction of religious tourism destinations and the factors that cause satisfaction or dissatisfaction in religious tourism destinations

Most informants answered that they were satisfied with the destination they visited; only a few informants said they were very satisfied. Generally those who feel satisfied because they feel happy to be together with their family and friends do religious tours; they are also satisfied with the staff in a welcoming location and satisfied with a comfortable and safe place. Therefore, they hope that in the future, they can come back to the destination. One informant said that he was less satisfied with religious tours that he attended, because the time to visit and worship in the place is shorter, so it is less relaxed. Maintaining and improving customer satisfaction is the main aspect that needs to continue, at least by religious tour managers and other parties associated with the implementation of religious tourism. With the creation of customer satisfaction, it is expected that loyalty will follow (Solomon, 2013). As expressed by Eid (2012) and Triantafyllidou *et al.* (2010), as travel for religious purposes increases, the design of an effective marketing plan may help develop the market for pilgrimages.

Suggestions for managers to improve pilgrimage services

The informants suggested the following ideas for managers of pilgrimage tourism destinations:

- the level of security needs to be improved, because the locations are so crowded that they are prone to crime, such as pick-pocketing;
- the level of hygiene needs to be improved, as well as the participation of tourists to maintain personal hygiene and the environment needs to increase;
- suggestions for separate places for female tourists and male tourists at tourist sites;
- the emphasis by the committee/manager that the purpose of the pilgrimage is to obtain the guidance of God, not to get the guidance of the saints who have died; and
- in some religious tourism destinations, there are many beggars, and the manager is expected to reduce the number of the beggars.

The existence of beggars in tourist spots is also almost the same as that which occurs in developed countries, such as in Belgium and France. Thus, it may be necessary for the role of government (social service) to increase and improve. [Štefko et al. \(2015\)](#) explained that the success of the destination lies in its ability to listen to visitors, finding their motives for a visit.

Suggestion for organizers of pilgrimage of wali songo/wali limo

Suggestions delivered by the tourists for pilgrimage tour organizers are to provide convenient and safe transportation, such as an air-conditioned bus with WiFi. It is also recommended that the organizers work more systematically and structurally, so that the activity runs well and smoothly, that there is no miscommunication, no tourists are scattered and the tour is on time. In general, participants are willing to pay a higher price in the hope that they can be more comfortable. This is in line with the findings of a study conducted by [Wright \(2008\)](#), that many tourist companies consider traditional pilgrims a low-profit industry, while they ignore the fact that even traditional pilgrims have changed their purchasing and spending habits. In addition, maintaining good relations with tourists through optimizing the marketing communication mix is also suggested by [Štefko et al. \(2015\)](#).

Suggestions for the government related to religious tourism sites

Local governments (provinces, districts and cities) are expected by informants to be actively involved in facilitating and maintaining the existence of religious tourism destinations, as these places are generally a part of heritage tourism. This is certainly in line with the government's desire to make tourism a source of revenue for local government. The expectations of the participants of this study were to rid religious sites of the many child beggars, the maintenance of the less-than-perfect tombs and the comfort and security of parking vehicles at tourist sites. Participants of this research also proposed the holding of insurance for tourists who follow these pilgrimage tours for security and comfort during the tour.

Study findings based on age and gender of participants

Pilgrims who take part in the *wali limo/wali songo* religious tours are generally people aged 30 years and above. To increase the number of visitors in religious tourism, it is recommended that religious tourism managers also target the younger generation, for example, by promoting cooperation with schools (elementary, junior high and high schools) and universities, so that the students can be directed to visit religious tourism sites.

Information obtained from religious tourism managers is that the comparison between male and female visitors is commensurate, because in general they are married couples who

take part in the pilgrimage in a pilgrimage group. From the results of the interviews with male informants, in general, they argued that the facilities provided at religious tourism sites had fulfilled their expectations; however, some male informants suggested that the pilgrims' comfort could increase even further, and their hopes for religious tourism managers would be that they provide a spacious and clean hall, so that they can unwind easily after they make a pilgrimage at the site, before they continue the journey to other religious attractions. The results of the interviews with female informants suggested that the places of worship and worship equipment in religious tourism places should be kept clean. Likewise, they believed that the souvenirs sold in religious tourism places should be more varied.

Conclusion

From the analysis of the results, it can be concluded that the interest of Muslims in Indonesia to follow the pilgrimage tour (*wali songo/wali limo*) is very high and will continue to increase in the future. Given that some participants reported that they were satisfied with religious tourism destinations and intended to continue to follow the religious tours, there is a great opportunity for religious tourism businesses to reach more markets.

There are various motives behind why the tourists follow religious tours, ranging from wanting to improve their level of faith and devotion, to achieve serenity of heart, to get guidance from God and to Prophet's *sunmah*. Likewise, the benefits they obtain after they follow pilgrimage tours are also various: it can create a sense of peace of mind; people can feel more aware of death and the desire to continue the struggle of the guardians; and they can become more devoted to God.

Facilities and infrastructure in religious tourism destinations have also improved considerably when compared to facilities and infrastructure that existed five years ago. Likewise, the availability of food vendors, drinks and souvenirs has very much improved and vendors now offer their products at affordable prices. However, some facilities need to be improved, including the cleanliness of the bathrooms and ablution places. In this case, an awareness of the tourists to maintain personal hygiene and the environment is required.

Lately, pilgrims from the *wali limo/wali songo* have not only come from within the country, but also from countries in Asia, even Europe. Therefore, tourist attractions need to provide guides who are proficient in foreign languages, such as Chinese and English. In addition, sign boards that can help pilgrims should be translated into English and Chinese.

Finally, suggestions were given to various parties related to the existence of religious tourism destinations, including advice to the managers of religious tourism destinations and local governments, as well as to pilgrimage committees. All suggestions are aimed at the convenience and security of the tourists. Thus, for marketing practitioners, the results of this study can be used as a consideration to continue to improve services in the field of religious tourism in the country, given the potential for development is very large. Similarly, there is a contribution from this study to the development of marketing science, particularly related to marketing management on religious tourism services. Further research can be done with a quantitative approach, as well as comparative studies between pilgrimages in Indonesia (developing countries) and pilgrimages in other developing countries or in developed countries can be conducted. The results of this study are expected to contribute to the development of Islamic marketing concept, as stated by [Wilson and Grant \(2013\)](#) that Islamic marketing is filtered through more worldly actors and activities by Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

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