

Halal tourism in non-Muslim destinations: A systematic literature review of meaning contestation, misconceptions, and collaborative governance

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ABSTRACT

This study provides a systematic literature review of halal tourism in non-Muslim and multicultural destinations, focusing on rejection, misconceptions, and meaning contestation in Indonesia. Following an adapted SALSA framework and a PRISMA-informed screening process, relevant studies published between 2016 and 2025 were systematically identified from major international and Indonesian academic databases. After staged screening, 23 eligible publications were synthesised through a two-round thematic content analysis. Guided by symbolic threat theory, framing theory, and collaborative governance, the review identified four recurring themes: halal food and certification, destination branding and identity, regulation, and social rejection. The findings indicate that public resistance is primarily driven by misconceptions that equate halal tourism with Islamisation and perceive it as a threat to local cultural identity, rather than by opposition to Muslim-friendly services themselves. Comparative evidence from Japan, South Korea, Thailand, and Morocco further demonstrates that inclusive Muslim-friendly service approaches are more socially acceptable than normative halal destination branding. This review contributes an integrated explanatory framework that links policy framing, symbolic threat, misconceptions, and collaborative governance to explain resistance to halal tourism in multicultural destinations. The findings provide practical guidance for promoting inclusive Muslim-friendly services, strengthening evidence-based public communication, and developing collaborative governance strategies to enhance socially sustainable tourism development.

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INTRODUCTION

Halal tourism has emerged as a strategic segment in the global tourism industry, driven by increasing Muslim traveller mobility and the expansion of the halal industry. Data from the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) 2022 indicate that the global Muslim travel market was valued at approximately USD 188 billion, with projections to exceed USD 300 billion by 2026 (Crescentrating, 2023). This growth is underpinned by the expansion of the global Muslim population, projected to reach 2.2 billion by 2030 (Pew Research Center, 2017), positioning Muslim travellers as one of the most significant market forces in contemporary tourism. For Indonesia, home to the world's largest Muslim population, the development of Muslim-friendly destinations presents substantial economic opportunities while simultaneously creating challenges related to social resistance, the development of Muslim-friendly destinations presents substantial economic opportunities, yet simultaneously

confronts the paradox of social resistance, particularly in non-Muslim majority destinations such as Bali and Danau Toba (Jaelani, 2017; Scott & Jafari, 2010).

The controversies that have emerged are generally not centred on the availability of services (halal food, prayer facilities), but rather on the "halal tourism" label, which is perceived as an identity project or the Islamisation of public space. A number of studies highlight the terminological ambiguity among "halal tourism," "Islamic tourism," and "Muslim-friendly tourism," which generates interpretive variation at the levels of policy and practice (El-Gohary, 2016; Mohsin et al., 2016). Zamani-Farahani and Henderson (2010) demonstrate that even in Muslim-majority countries such as Iran and Saudi Arabia, tensions between religious regulation and global market demands frequently create gaps between formal policy and actual tourist experiences. Within the Indonesian context, these issues are rendered more complex by the intersection of tourism with local cultural identity, politics of representation, and power relations among actors (Makhasi & Rahimadhi, 2020).

From the perspective of symbolic threat theory (Bourdieu, 1991), when dominant actors attempt to alter the symbolic order of a space, including tourism spaces, groups that perceive their identities as threatened tend to respond with resistance. Rejection may therefore be understood not as a response to halal services per se, but as a response to symbolic threats against local identity. This condition indicates that the sustainability of halal tourism cannot be approached solely through market logic, but necessitates socio-cultural understanding and context-sensitive policy governance.

Existing scholarship has made important contributions by defining halal tourism, explaining the growth of the Muslim tourist market, and documenting destination-specific cases. However, these studies remain fragmented in three respects. First, prior reviews have largely emphasised market opportunities, service attributes, or certification standards, while paying less attention to how the label "halal tourism" becomes socially contested in non-Muslim or multicultural destinations. Second, studies on Indonesian resistance cases tend to be discussed as isolated political or communication problems rather than being synthesised as a recurring pattern of meaning contestation. Third, previous work has rarely linked policy framing, symbolic identity threat, and collaborative governance into one integrated explanatory model. This gap is important because public resistance is triggered not only by the availability of halal food or prayer facilities but also by the meanings attached to policy labels and the extent to which local communities are involved in defining destination identity.

Table 1. Comparison of Previous Review-Oriented Studies and the Positioning of the Present Review

Previous review/article group	Main emphasis	Limitation addressed by the present review
Battour and Ismail (2016); Mohsin et al. (2016)	Concepts, practices, market potential, and Muslim tourist needs	Limited discussion of rejection, identity contestation, and non-Muslim destination governance
El-Gohary (2016); Samori et al. (2016)	Terminology, service standards, and emerging Asian halal tourism trends	Conceptual ambiguity is identified but not systematically linked to policy framing and social resistance
Henderson (2016); Jaelani (2017)	Certification, halal food, supply chains, and Indonesia's economic prospects	Certification and market logic receive more attention than local cultural anxiety and host-community legitimacy
Surwandono et al. (2020); Priyatmoko and Maulana (2022)	Regulatory polemics and misconceptions in Indonesia	Resistance cases are not fully synthesized with international Muslim-friendly service comparisons
Present review	Systematic synthesis of meaning contestation, misconceptions, and policy implications in non-Muslim/multicultural destinations	Integrates symbolic threat, framing, destination branding, and collaborative governance; offers a practical risk-strategy-indicator matrix

In response, this study pursues three objectives: (1) to map the characteristics of research pertaining to halal tourism and Muslim-friendly services in non-Muslim or multicultural destinations; (2) to identify dominant themes of rejection, misconception, and meaning contestation; and (3) to formulate evidence-based policy implications that can reduce social resistance while enhancing service inclusivity. The conceptual framework integrates destination branding, symbolic threat, policy communication framing, and collaborative governance perspectives to explain why service-oriented Muslim-friendly approaches are more adaptive than normative halal labelling in culturally plural destinations.

The novelty of this review is therefore not merely the aggregation of existing halal tourism studies, but the critical re-positioning of the debate. Compared with earlier reviews that focus on conceptual clarification, tourist needs, market opportunities, or certification standards, this review foregrounds the social and political dynamics of rejection in non-Muslim and multicultural destinations. It contributes by: (1) Integrating symbolic threat theory, framing theory, destination branding, and collaborative governance in one analytical synthesis; (2) Treating misconceptions as a mediating mechanism between policy framing and social resistance; (3) Comparing Indonesian cases with international Muslim-friendly service models; and (4) Translating the synthesis into a risk-strategy-indicator matrix for destination governance. Table 1 clarifies how this review differs from prior review-oriented studies.

METHOD

This study employed a systematic literature review using thematic content analysis. To enhance transparency and replicability, the review procedure was organised using the SALSA framework (Search, Appraisal, Synthesis, and Analysis), while the study selection process was reported following a PRISMA-informed flow. The search covered publications from 2016 to 2025 and was last updated on 31 December 2025. The unit of analysis comprised academic publications and policy documents discussing halal tourism or Muslim-friendly tourism in non-Muslim or culturally plural destinations, with particular attention to Indonesia. Data sources included indexed national and international journal articles, academic books, policy documents, and institutional reports related to halal tourism and sustainable tourism.

Literature searches were conducted using ScienceDirect, Scopus, Google Scholar, and Indonesian journal portals. The Boolean search strings combined conceptual, contextual, and resistance-related terms: (“halal tourism” OR “Muslim-friendly tourism” OR “Islamic tourism”) AND (“non-Muslim destination” OR “multicultural destination” OR Bali OR “Danau Toba” OR Lombok OR Japan OR “South Korea” OR Thailand OR Morocco) AND (rejection OR resistance OR misconception OR “destination branding” OR regulation OR governance). The search process was complemented by backward and forward reference checking of highly relevant articles.

Table 2. Search Strategy and Screening Criteria

Stage	Operational decision
Search	ScienceDirect, Scopus, Google Scholar, and Indonesian journal portals; publication-year filter: 2016–2025; English- and Indonesian-language sources included
Identification terms	“halal tourism,” “Muslim-friendly tourism,” “Islamic tourism,” “rejection,” “misconceptions,” “destination branding,” “regulation,” “governance,” Bali, Danau Toba, Lombok
Appraisal	Title/abstract screening followed by full-text assessment using relevance, context, availability of methodological and findings information, and data-based argument criteria
Synthesis	Extraction of year, geographic context, research method, main findings, themes, and policy implications into a coding matrix
Analysis	Two-round coding: open coding for emergent categories and focused coding for consolidated themes and inter-theme relationships

The inclusion criteria were as follows: (1) publications released between 2016 and 2025; (2) studies addressing the concept, policy, implementation, or public reception of halal tourism or Muslim-friendly tourism in non-Muslim, Muslim-minority, or culturally plural destinations; (3) studies discussing rejection, misconceptions, branding, regulation, certification, or governance; and (4) documents containing the full text or sufficient methodological and findings information. The exclusion criteria were as follows: (1) publications outside the year range; (2) brief opinion pieces without methodological or evidence-based arguments; (3) documents unrelated to halal/Muslim-friendly tourism or not addressing the non-Muslim/multicultural destination context; and (4) duplicate records or repeated evidence from the same case without additional analytical contribution.

The screening process was documented in four stages. Database and portal searches identified 80 records, and seven additional records were located through backward and forward reference checking. After 19 duplicate records were removed, 68 records were screened by title and abstract. Thirty-five records were excluded because they were outside the scope of the review, did not address non-Muslim or multicultural destination contexts, or did not discuss rejection, misconception, branding, regulation, or governance issues. Thirty-three full texts were assessed for eligibility; ten were excluded because they were brief opinion pieces, had insufficient methodological or findings information, or duplicated evidence already represented in the corpus. The final corpus comprised 23 documents.

Table 3. PRISMA-Informed Screening Flow for Corpus Selection

Review Stage	Selection Details
Identification	Records from databases and portals (n=80) + backward/forward reference checking (n=7)
Duplicate removal	Duplicate records removed (n=19); records remaining for screening (n=68)
Title/abstract screening	Records excluded (n=35) for topic/context mismatch or absence of resistance/branding/governance focus
Full-text eligibility	Full texts assessed (n=33); full texts excluded (n=10) for opinion-only, insufficient data, or duplicated evidence
Included Corpus	Documents included in thematic synthesis (n=23)

Table 4. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Aspect	Inclusion	Exclusion
Year range	2016–2025	Before 2016 or outside the range
Document type	Journal/conference articles, relevant policy reports	Popular opinions without methodological basis
Topic focus	Halal/Muslim-friendly tourism in non-Muslim destinations; rejection/misconceptions; branding & regulation	Not relevant to halal/Muslim-friendly tourism or not addressing non-Muslim context/rejection
Information availability	Contains methods/findings or data-based arguments	Full text or adequate abstract not available

Data extraction included the author(s), publication year, geographic context, research method, object of analysis, key findings, evidence type, and policy implications. Thematic coding across studies was conducted to identify recurring patterns and inter-thematic relations. Coding was performed in two rounds: (1) open coding to identify all emerging themes and (2) focused coding to consolidate categories into dominant themes such as certification/halal food, branding/identity, regulation, social rejection, misconceptions, and collaborative governance. Aggregation was conducted through tabulation, descriptive statistics, and visual mapping. To reduce interpretive bias, each theme was retained only if it appeared in more than one source or if a single case provided strong contextual evidence directly relevant to the research objectives. The primary limitation of this method is the absence of formal interrater reliability testing; future studies should involve multiple coders and calculate reliability coefficients.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Analysis of the corpus (n = 23) indicates growing scholarly attention to this topic since 2016, with publication peaks in the 2016 and 2020-2022 periods. The early peak reflects a cluster of conceptual and market-oriented reviews, while the later peak coincides with intensified public debate about halal tourism in Indonesia following the COVID-19 pandemic. In terms of methodology, qualitative studies predominated, followed by review studies, secondary reviews, and quantitative and mixed-methods studies. The predominance of qualitative approaches reflects the central role of social issues, perceptions, meaning contestation, and resistance, which require in-depth exploration. A summary of study characteristics is presented in Table 5, while the publication trend is visualised in Figure 1.

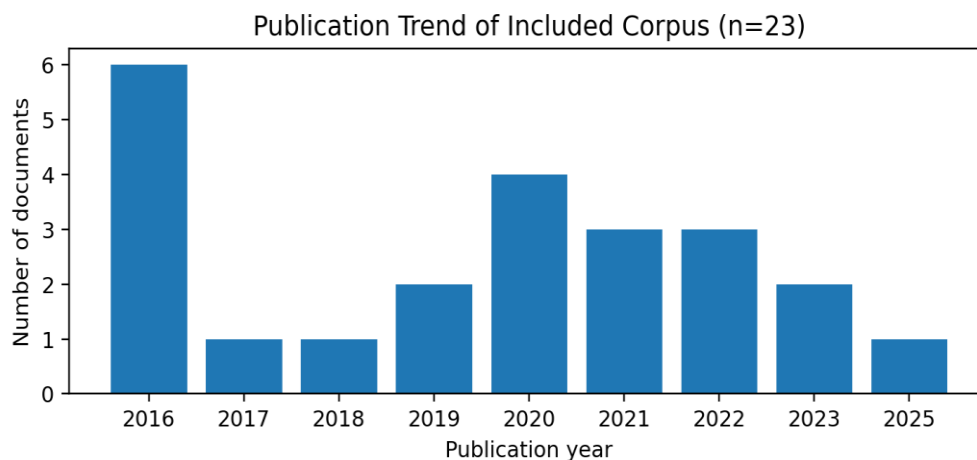
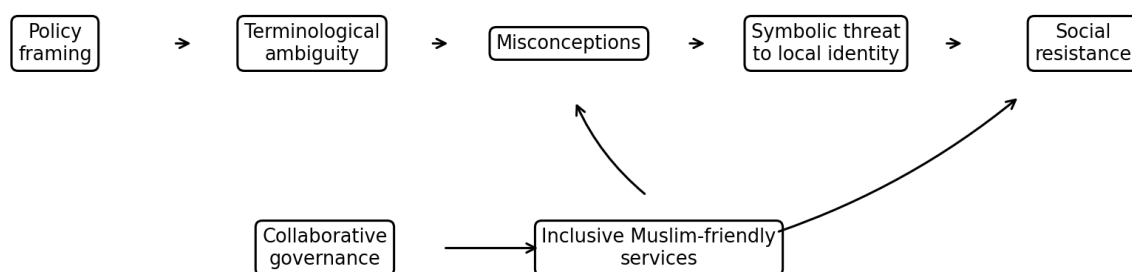


Figure 1. Publication Trend of Included Corpus by Year (n=23)

Thematically, the four most consistent issues are certification/halal food, branding/identity, regulation, and social rejection/conflict. Complete thematic frequencies are presented in Table 6. These findings suggest that the dynamics of halal tourism in non-Muslim destinations cannot be reduced merely to facility-related concerns, but intersect with identity politics, policy communication, and multi-actor governance (Almeira et al., 2023; Slamet et al., 2022). Figure 2 illustrates the conceptual relationships among policy framing, terminological ambiguity, misconceptions, symbolic threat, and social resistance, as well as the role of collaborative governance and Muslim-friendly services as mitigation pathways.



Conceptual relation among framing, misconception, identity threat, resistance, and governance response

Figure 2. Conceptual Map of Meaning Contestation and Governance Response

Table 5. Summary of the Study Characteristics of the Corpus (n = 23)

Source (Year)	Context	Method	Main Themes
Battour and Ismail (2016)	Global	Review	Definition/concept, Tourist needs, Marketing strategy
Mohsin et al. (2016)	Global	Review	Muslim tourist market, Tourist needs, Marketing
El-Gohary (2016)	Global	Review	Definition/concept, Terminological ambiguity, Service standards
Samori et al. (2016)	Asia	Review	Asian trends, Definitions, Research challenges
Henderson (2016)	Malaysia & Singapore	Review	Certification/halal food, Regulation, Supply chain
Carboni and Janati (2016)	Morocco (Fez)	Qualitative	Certification, Local culture, De facto halal
Jaelani (2017)	Indonesia	Review/ Secondary	Market/economics, Policy, Marketing strategy
Lombok (2018)	Indonesia (Lombok)	Qualitative	Branding/identity, Value contestation, Governance
Cheng et al. (2019)	South Korea	Mixed	Muslim-friendly services, Destination attributes, Visit intention
Al-Mansyur et al. (2019)	Indonesia (East Java)	Qualitative	Stakeholders, Branding/identity, Policy communication
Surwandono et al. (2020)	Indonesia	Review	Regulation, Sharia/maqashid, Policy distortion
Subarkah et al. (2020)	Indonesia	Qualitative	Branding/identity, Nation branding, Public diplomacy
Tarigan and Basit (2020)	Indonesia (Lake Toba)	Qualitative	Rejection/conflict, Misconceptions, Policy communication
Makhasi and Rahimmadhi (2020)	Indonesia	Qualitative	Rejection/conflict, Identity politics, Misconceptions
Juliansyah et al. (2021)	Indonesia (Bandung)	Quantitative	Destination attributes, Visit intention, Muslim tourist market
Suhartanto et al. (2021)	Indonesia	Quantitative	Tourist experience, Loyalty, Destination attributes
Saville and Mahbubi (2021)	Japan	Mixed	Certification/halal food, Tourist needs, Willingness-to-pay
Slamet et al. (2022)	Indonesia	Qualitative	Meaning contestation, Stakeholders, Rejection/conflict
Priyatmoko and Maulana (2022)	Indonesia	Review/Secondary	Misconceptions, Rejection, Policy communication
(Darmawan et al., 2023)	Indonesia (Bali)	Review/Secondary	Muslim-friendly services, Cultural anxiety, Regulation
Almeira et al. (2023)	Indonesia	Qualitative	Nation branding, Branding/identity, Governance
Tamara and Marlinda (2023)	South Korea	Qualitative	Certification/halal food, National strategy, Market
Suaidi et al. (2025)	Indonesia (Bali)	Qualitative	Certification/halal food, Regulation, Cultural anxiety

Table 6. Dominant Themes and Their Frequency

Theme	Frequency
Certification/halal food	5
Branding/identity	5
Social rejection/conflict	5
Regulation & policy	5
Muslim tourist needs	4
Muslim-friendly destination attributes	4
Misconceptions & framing	4
Policy communication	4
Muslim tourist market	3
Definition/concept	3
Marketing strategy	3
Cultural anxiety	3
Collaborative governance	2

Discussion

Global Halal Tourism Market Context and Its Relevance for Indonesia

The significant growth of the global Muslim tourism market places Indonesia in a strategically important yet challenge-ridden position. The GMTI 2022 ranks Indonesia as the world's top halal tourism destination alongside Malaysia, a position that reflects both considerable potential and political pressure to continue developing halal products (Crescentrating, 2023). However, as identified by Scott and Jafari (2010), tourism development in the Muslim world cannot be divorced from the context of internal diversity among Muslim-majority countries and the highly variable local dynamics therein. Indonesia, with its cultural and religious plurality, represents a unique case in which the national agenda for halal tourism development collides with heterogeneous local realities. The relevance of these findings for the national development agenda is considerable: a national branding-oriented halal tourism strategy that fails to account for local heterogeneity risks being counterproductive. Henderson (2010) demonstrates that even Sharia-compliant hotel models encounter compatibility challenges with global hospitality standards in various cultural contexts. This suggests that highly centralised and normative approaches to halal tourism development in Indonesia must be adapted to the realities of individual destinations.

Meaning Contestation and Symbolic Power in Destination Branding

Bourdieu's (1991) framework of symbolic power offers a productive analytical lens for understanding why resistance to halal tourism frequently extends well beyond the substance of the policy itself. In this view, the tourism field constitutes an arena of struggle in which various actors compete to define meaning and establish symbolic rules of engagement. When the label "halal tourism" is introduced as a destination identity rather than merely a description of services, it functions as a claim over symbolic space, which is subsequently contested by various interest groups (Makhasi & Rahimadhi, 2020).

Lombok (2018), in their case study of Lombok, demonstrate how the contestation between Islamic values and Sasak cultural identity creates internal tensions that themselves become obstacles to halal tourism development. Analogous findings are documented by Slamet et al. (2022), who identify a battle over meaning among policymakers, tourism business actors, and local communities. From a destination branding perspective (Kavaratzis, 2005; Kotler & Gertner, 2002), this constitutes a problem of destination identity management: when an officially designated brand is inconsistent with the identity perceived by the host community, the outcome is brand dissonance that engenders resistance. Subarkah et al. (2020) argue that in the Indonesian context, an overly aggressive national halal branding strategy risks undermining the cultural identities of destinations that have hitherto constituted their primary attraction for international tourists.

Carboni and Janati (2016) offer a compelling comparative perspective from the case of Fez, Morocco. They find that halal tourism in Fez has in fact operated de facto without formal labelling accommodation, cuisine, and services that organically comply with halal standards are available without being packaged as "halal products." This finding challenges the assumption that formal labelling is an absolute prerequisite for Muslim-friendly tourism development, and reinforces the argument that organic, service-provision-based approaches are more adaptive in destinations possessing strong cultural identities.

Misconceptions as a Product of Policy Framing

Communication framing theory (Entman, 1993; Goffman, 1974) provides a sharp analytical framework for understanding the mechanisms through which public misconceptions about halal tourism are produced. Framing refers to the process of selecting certain aspects of perceived reality and rendering them more salient in communicative texts, in ways that promote particular problem definitions, causal interpretations, and moral evaluations (Entman, 1993). In the context of halal tourism policy in Indonesia, the choice of a "halal destination" frame that emphasises the religious identity dimension indirectly constructs halal tourism as a religious project rather than a consumer service project.

Priyatmoko and Maulana (2022) identify that public misconceptions about halal tourism in Indonesia are largely rooted in context-insensitive communication framing choices, wherein government officials and media frequently employ terminology that is ambiguous or carries connotations of religious exclusivity. Tarigan and Basit (2020), in their case study of Danau Toba, document how top-down government framing without meaningful engagement from the local Batak and Christian communities significantly exacerbated resistance, generating polarisation that extended far beyond the issue of tourism services. These findings are consistent with social exchange theory (Ap, 1992), which holds that host communities tend to support tourism development only when the perceived benefits are appraised as outweighing the social and identity costs borne.

Surwandono et al. (2020) add a regulatory perspective a regulatory dimension: the polemic surrounding halal tourism in Indonesia is largely a product of unclear legal foundations and inconsistent interpretations of maqashid al-sharia among policymakers. This ambiguity creates ample space for various actors to interpret and communicate halal tourism in accordance with their respective agendas, which in turn amplifies the potential for public misconceptions. The implication is that effective policy communication requires not only message clarity but also consistency across bureaucratic levels and communication channels.

Regulation and Collaborative Governance

Beaumont and Dredge (2010) identify three destination governance models relevant to this analysis: hierarchy-based governance (the state as dominant actor), market-based governance (the market as coordination mechanism), and network-based governance (multi-actor networks as the basis of coordination). Analysis of the corpus in this study suggests that failures in halal tourism implementation in several Indonesian destinations are largely attributable to the dominance of the hierarchy-based model, which often lacks meaningful consultation processes with local stakeholders.

Almeira et al. (2023) demonstrate that while collaboration among the government, Nahdlatul Ulama, and Muhammadiyah in developing a national halal tourism brand represents a step forward, it still excludes meaningful representation of non-Muslim communities who constitute an integral part of multicultural destinations. Slamet et al. (2022) complements these findings by documenting interest contestation among various policy stakeholders, wherein value consolidation and cross-actor participation emerge as prerequisites for policy legitimacy. Network-based governance, encompassing regional governments, tourism businesses, customary leaders, religious institutions, and communities, with clear mandates and structured conflict resolution mechanisms holds greater potential for building policy legitimacy and reducing social resistance.

Comparison with Malaysia, which employs a centralised JAKIM certification system with clear national standards (Henderson, 2016), suggests that Indonesia requires a more coherent regulatory framework. The regulatory fragmentation between national and regional levels as identified by Tarigan and Basit (2020) in the Danau Toba case creates uncertainty for business actors and provides space for inconsistent implementation. Nevertheless, regulatory centralisation must be balanced with local flexibility that permits adaptation to the cultural contexts of individual destinations.

The Muslim-Friendly Approach: Lessons from International Contexts

International experience provides valuable reference points for how Muslim-friendly tourism can be developed without sacrificing a destination's cultural identity or marginalising non-Muslim tourists. Japan, as a non-Muslim country with a very small Muslim minority, has successfully increased Muslim tourist arrivals through a pragmatic approach: providing halal food information on digital platforms, prayer facilities at airports and shopping centres, and hospitality staff training programmes (Saville & Mahbubi, 2021). The key to Japan's success lies not in a national halal labelling system, but in the provision of accurate and accessible information that enables Muslim tourists to make decisions based on their own preferences.

South Korea has adopted a similar strategy: Cheng et al. (2019) identify that the destination attributes most decisive in shaping Muslim tourists' visit intentions are the availability of halal food information, ease of access to prayer facilities, and staff hospitality, rather than an overarching "halal destination" label. Tamara and Marlinda (2023) further note that South Korea's halal food gastro-

diplomacy strategy has successfully enhanced Muslim tourist satisfaction without altering the Korean pop culture or gastronomy that serve as its primary attractions.

Thailand, through its programme to enhance halal tourism potential in the Andaman Gulf, demonstrates how an inclusive service approach can improve Muslim tourist satisfaction while maintaining appeal for non-Muslim tourists (Surin et al., 2015). This consistent international pattern corroborates El-Gohary (2016) argument that destinations that focus on meeting Muslim tourists' needs without excluding other segments rather than constructing an exclusive destination identity, prove more successful in realising an inclusive tourism vision. Suhartanto et al. (2021) reinforce these findings by demonstrating that with empirical data from Indonesia: a holistic and high-quality tourist experience exerts a stronger influence on Muslim tourist loyalty than the halal label itself.

Table 7. Summary of Resistance Factors and Sustainability Implications

Resistance Factor	Form of Social Problem	Sustainability Implications
Conceptual misconceptions	Halal label perceived as Islamisation/exclusivity	Social rejection, programme delegitimisation
Cultural anxiety	Concerns about erosion of local customs/identity	Value conflict, community resistance
Weak regulation	No national standards; inconsistent implementation	Uncertainty, low accountability
Top-down policy framing	Lack of community participation in policy design	Minimal social policy legitimacy
Terminological ambiguity	Differing interpretations of halal tourism vs. Muslim-friendly	Public confusion & implementation incoherence

Evidence-Based Policy Implications

The literature synthesis and discussion above converge on five actionable policy implications for central and regional governments and destination managers. First, policy reframing: the terminology "inclusive Muslim-friendly services" is more appropriate for non-Muslim destinations, as it affirms that halal services constitute supplementary facilities rather than a transformation of local cultural identity. Second, the establishment of collaborative governance forums at the destination level involving regional governments, business actors, customary and religious leaders, communities, and tourism association as negotiation spaces for service standards, incentives, and complaint mechanisms (Beaumont & Dredge, 2010).

Third, evidence-based public communication: the development of communication packages (FAQs, infographics, case studies) that explicitly explain the distinction between halal tourism and Islamic tourism, with concrete examples of services that do not alter local culture and the economic benefits for small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Fourth, strengthening the halal supply chain through certification support for SMEs, hygiene and labelling training, and the provision of easily accessible halal information channels for tourists. Fifth, monitoring and evaluation systems with measurable performance indicators: availability of prayer facilities, number of certified businesses, tourist satisfaction, and community acceptance rates. The risk, strategy, and indicator matrix is presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Risk, Strategy, Indicator Matrix for Muslim-Friendly Service Development in Muslim-Minority Destinations

Key Theme	Policy Risk	Mitigation Strategy	Monitoring Indicator
Misconceptions	"Halal tourism" label perceived as Islamisation	Muslim-friendly framing; explain services as supplementary facilities	Public perception surveys; media sentiment; community acceptance rates
Branding/identity	Destination brand perceived as exclusive	Co-branding: local cultural narrative + Muslim-friendly services	Brand recall; brand attitude; stakeholder acceptance index
Regulation	Top-down rules provoke resistance; non-operational standards	Operational guidelines based on service needs; collaborative forum	SOP compliance; number of forums; business actor satisfaction
Certification/halal food	Certification costs/complexity for SMEs	Certification incentives, mentoring, information digitalisation	Number of certified SMEs; halal menu availability; hygiene audit
Muslim-friendly services	Inadequate prayer facilities/information	Minimum service bundle standardisation (prayer space, halal info)	Tourist satisfaction index; repeat visit intention
Governance	Weak cross-sectoral coordination; conflicting interests	Collaborative governance with clear mandate and conflict resolution	Coordination performance; complaint resolution; inclusive economic outcomes

Research Limitations and Future Research Agenda

This study has several limitations that warrant explicit acknowledgement. First, the corpus was constructed from documents accessible online and containing adequate methodological/findings information, meaning that access bias towards paid or non-digitised publications may exist. Second, given the heterogeneity of study designs (qualitative, quantitative, and policy reviews), this study did not conduct statistical meta-analysis; the synthesis is thematic and descriptive in nature. Third, although the coding procedure followed systematic steps, interrater reliability has not been formally tested. Fourth, the English-language bias in international databases likely limits the representativeness of local Indonesian-language perspectives published in non-internationally indexed journals.

As a future research agenda, comparative field studies across several non-Muslim majority destinations (Bali, Danau Toba, Labuan Bajo, and Tana Toraja) are important for empirically testing the relationships between policy framing, levels of public misconception, and community receptivity. Policy evaluation based on indicators (acceptability–feasibility–equity) is also needed to ensure that the Muslim-friendly approach is genuinely inclusive for all tourists. Future research is also recommended to involve more than one coder and calculate formal reliability coefficients, as well as to expand the corpus through Scopus and Web of Science databases with updated year filters.

CONCLUSION

Halal tourism represents a significant market opportunity, yet its sustainability in Indonesia is critically determined by social legitimacy in multicultural destinations. This systematic literature review (n=23; 2016-2025) identifies four dominant themes—certification/halal food, branding/identity, regulation, and social rejection/conflict—that interact with and reinforce one another in shaping the dynamics of acceptance and rejection of halal tourism. Theoretically, the review contributes by integrating symbolic threat theory (Bourdieu, 1991), framing theory (Entman, 1993), destination branding, and collaborative governance perspectives. The synthesis shows that social resistance to halal tourism is primarily a response to perceived symbolic threats against local identity, rather than to halal services per se. Misconceptions function as a mediating mechanism between policy framing choices and the intensity of public rejection. International comparisons with

Japan, South Korea, Thailand, and Morocco confirm that a service-based Muslim-friendly approach is more effective and socially sustainable than normative halal labelling.

Practically, the findings imply four priorities: (1) reorienting policy language from normative halal labelling to inclusive Muslim-friendly services; (2) constructing multi-actor collaborative governance structures that provide meaningful participatory space for local communities; (3) developing evidence-based public communication that explicitly distinguishes halal tourism from religious identity projects; and (4) strengthening SME capacity through certification support, hygiene training, and digitalisation of halal information. These implications can help destination managers provide Muslim-friendly services without weakening local cultural identity or excluding non-Muslim tourists. The study remains limited by the use of an accessible online corpus, the heterogeneity of included study designs, and the absence of formal interrater reliability testing. Future research should combine systematic review with field-based mixed methods, including community perception surveys, stakeholder interviews, media sentiment analysis, and tourist experience data across Bali, Danau Toba, Labuan Bajo, Tana Toraja, and other culturally plural destinations. Such work would provide a stronger empirical basis for policy designs that are not only economically viable, but also socially legitimate, culturally sensitive, and inclusive for all tourists.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

This journal uses the Contributor Roles Taxonomy (CRediT) to recognize individual author contributions, reduce authorship disputes, and facilitate collaboration.

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R : Resources

D : Data Curation

O : Writing - Original Draft

E : Writing - Review & Editing

Vi : Visualization

Su : Supervision

P : Project administration

Fu : Funding acquisition

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial or non-financial interests that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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