



Analysis of the Influence of Muslim-Friendly Tourism Destinations on Inbound in Countries in the Asia Pacific Region

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ABSTRACT

Keywords:
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The Muslim population become an important consumer market worldwide and an increasingly competitive segment for the halal tourism business sector. Many Muslim-friendly tourist destinations in Asia-Pacific are currently being offered by OIC and non-OIC countries to make tourism a driving force for their economy. This study uses data sources released by the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) for the period 2015 to 2019. The population scope is the countries of the Asia-Pacific region, namely: China, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The results found that seven independent variables namely: visa, communication, outreach, safety, airport, restaurant, and hotel have a significant effect on inbound logs in countries in the Asia-Pacific region in 2015 to 2019. However, the results of the t test show that there are only three independent variables that have a significant effect on the arrival rate of foreign tourists, namely the Safety, Restaurant and Hotel variables. The results of this study contribute to enriching discourse for countries wishing to develop halal tourist destinations.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the world tourism industry has become an increasingly competitive market in understanding the needs, interests, demands, and behavior of international tourists to pursue the development of tourist destination countries (Han, Al-Ansi, Olya, et al., 2019). Glaesser et al., (2017) conclude from the International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics 2008 report that world trends in the tourism industry are expressed in terms of the number of foreign tourists visiting a destination (Oklevik, et, al. 2019; Kalvet, et, al. 2020; Orîndaru, et, al. 2021; Atsız, et, al. 2022). This global trend is evidenced from the World Tourism Organization (2020) which illustrates that there is an increase in the growth of international tourist arrivals.

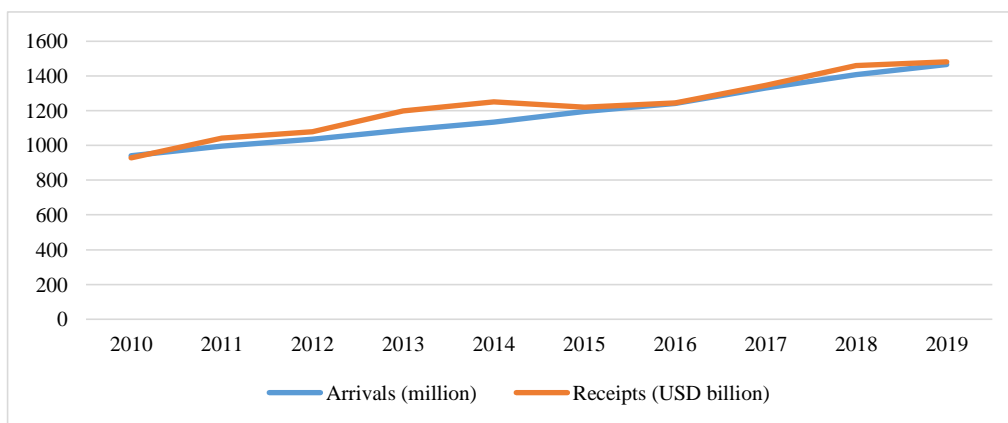


Figure 1. the Global Tourism Arrivals and Reception

The growth of international tourist arrivals and tourism receipts can drive the economy of a destination (Sarpong, et. al., 2020; Nathaniel, et, al. 2021). The rapid development of the market in the tourism sector has encouraged several countries in the world to make tourism as one of the engines that drive the economy by developing their own tourism destinations (Chisadza, et, al. 2022; Lee, 2021). In addition, the emergence of a new concept of Muslim-friendly or Muslim-friendly destinations in the global tourism industry creates attractive opportunities to achieve the desired economic growth (Azam et, al., 2019; Battour & Ismail, 2015). Another opportunity is also reflected in the Muslim population which has attracted international businesses to enter the global Muslim consumer market. Based on data in the State of the Global Islamic Economy Report (2020), Muslim spending on travel in 2019 increased by 2.7% from 189 billion dollars to 194 billion dollars. An effort to meet the fundamental aspects of the standard halal criteria for Muslim tourists is very important for the success of developing Muslim-friendly tourism destinations (Junaidi, 2020; Hanafiah, & Hamdan, 2021; Lestari, et, al. 2022).

The development of Muslim-friendly tourism destinations as a potential alternative in the tourism sector in how destinations can increase their visitor ([Chianeh, et al., 2019](#); [Sun, et al., 2020](#); [Rahman, et al., 2021](#)). Asia Pacific noted to have a very large Muslim population, which is more than half of the world's Muslim population with a total of 1.8 billion ([Andrianto, 2019](#); [Lipka, 2017](#)). Muslim tourists in Asian countries are one of the targets for providing Muslim-friendly facilities that have been provided by the world's halal tourism industry players. Based on data from [the Pew Research Center \(2020\)](#) estimated that the Muslim population in the Asia Pacific region in 2050 will reach nearly 1.5 billion. This figure is much higher than the Muslim population in other parts of the world. This data describes that the Asia Pacific region will not only become the target of world halal tourism visitors in the future but also as tourist destinations in the future.

The strength of Asia is also reflected in the 2020 edition of [International Tourism Highlights \(UNWTO\)](#), which shows that in 2019 Asia Pacific contributed the second largest international tourist arrivals after Europe, even the growth rate of foreign exchange and inbound in the Asia Pacific region was the same as the growth rate of the European region, each reaching 7% compared to 2018.

Previous studies have been conducted related Halal tourism especially related to the dominant factors that encourage tourists to choose halal tourist destinations and the policy model for developing halal tourist destinations. [Glaesser et al., \(2017\)](#) found that the recovery in the tourism sector due to the SARS outbreak in 2003 and the economic recession in 2009 described a rapid process where growth stabilized again in the following years. [Chaturuka et al. \(2020\)](#) found that information about the safety, crime and general safety of a destination is very important for tourists in planning the destination tour to be visited. [Tresna, et al., \(2017\)](#), [Damayanti et al., \(2018\)](#) and [Hakim & Muslikhati \(2019\)](#) found that halal tourism destination have to fulfill four things, namely the availability of halal restaurants and/or hotels (accommodation), halal markets, halal travel agencies, as well as regulations related to security and comfort according to Islamic guidelines in a destination. [Glensor & Peak \(2004\)](#), [Njoloma & Kamanga \(2019\)](#), [Mataković & Cunjak \(2019\)](#) found that the impact of crime in a tourist destination gives a negative image to the destination and results in reduced tourist demand, while in the micro scope it can influence the decision to visit or revisit a destination where the crime occurred.

[Selamet et al., \(2022\)](#) found that halal tourism has been interpreted and understood in different ways, and this depends on the structural position of each group. While [Adiba & Nasrulloh \(2021\)](#) found that there were six factors that influence the intention of Muslim tourists to take sharia tourism trips on Madura Island, namely: private community perceptions, religious beliefs, infrastructure, halal marketing, halal awareness, and destination image.

Another study related to the attributes of halal tourism was conducted by [Serrin Razzaq et al., \(2016\)](#) found only three sites specifically mention halal and also identified a number of attributes that could deter more conservative halal travelers. These findings raise significant questions regarding the capacity of New Zealand's accommodation sector to convey appropriate accommodation information to the Islamic market and provide a satisfactory experience for those who stay. On the other hand, in terms of halal food production, [Kartal et al., \(2015\)](#) argue that halal food production is a comprehensive concept for all religious communities including all tourists in various countries and different backgrounds. While [Battour & Ismail \(2016\)](#) and [Khairawati \(2021\)](#) stated that halal food products and services are not only a regional implementation but have become a demand for Muslim and non-Muslim tourists globally. In line, [Stapit et al., \(2021\)](#) found that halal food can also be well received by non-Muslim tourists who consider it an unforgettable experience in eating these special foods. compared to the experience of eating a satisfying meal. While [Tamrin \(2020\)](#) found that Kalanganyar Village has diverse tourism potential, although there is still a lack of support from related agencies such as the existence of infrastructure and services as a tourist destination. On the other hand, [Rifa'i \(2021\)](#) found that halal tourism destinations in Malang include educational tours, lodging, culinary, thematic, religious, historical and cultural tourism.

Based on some of the previous studies above, this study will reveal whether or not there is an influence of Muslim-friendly tourism destinations on inbound in countries in the Asia Pacific region. By knowing how a Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) score that has been achieved by a country with various criteria as a Muslim-friendly tourism destination can affect the number of inbound decisions made to a destination.

RESEARCH METHOD

The type of research used in this study is quantitative research, a research method based on the philosophy of positivism. The data used in this study is secondary data from 20 countries in the Asia-Pacific region from 2015 to 2019. The data was obtained from several sources, namely: (a) Inbound tourism data was obtained from Atlas Knoema data on the tourism sub-topic (<https://knoema.com/>). (b) Data for 7 sub-indicators of the Global Muslim Travel Index which include: Visa Requirements, Ease of Communication, Outreach, Safety, Airports, Restaurants and Hotels, obtained from the Global Muslim Travel Index released in 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 (<http://gmti.crescentrating.com/>).

This research chooses the object of research as the population are countries in the Asia-Pacific Region, that is, the region that includes East Asia, Southeast Asia and Australasia near the Pacific Ocean, plus countries in the Pacific Ocean (Oceania), totaling 35 countries. The main reason why this research was conducted in this area is because,

based on data released by [the Pew Research Center \(2022\)](#), this area is the area with the largest Muslim population in the world. In 2010 the Muslim population in this area was 1,005,507,000 people or around 62.1% of the total world Muslim population. Based on the same source, it is estimated that in 2030 it will reach 1,295,625,000 people.

While the samples from this study were 20 countries, namely: China, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. The main reason for determining this sample is the availability of data which is a variable in the research model released by [the Global Muslim Travel Index \(GMTI\)](#). From the GMTI report data that has been released, researchers use the periods of 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019. The 2020 report is not included because the inbound data for that year had not been released until the time this research was conducted.

To estimate the effect of the variable competitiveness of halal tourism destinations on the number of foreign tourist visits to the Asia-Pacific from 2015 to 2019, a panel data regression analysis model is used. In the process of power analysis using the help of STATA 16.0 software, this software is used to test each independent variable on the dependent variable either partially or simultaneously.

The interpretation of the panel data regression model has three kinds of models, namely using the PLS (Pooled Least Square), FEM (Fixed Effect Model), and REM (Random Effect Model) methods. By using this model, the interpretation of the best model for research is obtained. To determine the best model between PLS, Fixed Effect, and Random Effect, two model estimation techniques are used, namely the F test and the Hausman test.

The use of the Restricted F test in determining the most appropriate estimation method is seen from the lowest F probability value in the FEM output results. The F test is used in panel data regression to select the best estimation model between the PLS or FEM models. The Hausman test is used to choose between the Random Effect or Fixed Effect models.

While the Hausman Test is a follow-up test in choosing a panel data regression model. The Hausman test aims to determine which model is appropriate between FEM and REM, in the Hausman Test a Chi-square Probability value will be obtained that is smaller than alpha (α) ($0.0000 < 0.05$), meaning that FEM is better used when compared to REM, and vice versa if the value The Chi-square probability is greater than alpha (α) ($0.0000 > 0.05$), meaning that REM is better to use when compared to FEM.

After determining the best model, the next step is the Statistical Significance Test. Statistically, there are three tests, namely the t test (Individual Significance Test), F Test (Simultaneous Significance Test) and R² Test (coefficient of determination).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Panel data regression can be achieved if it meets the Classical Assumptions to find out whether there are regression deviations in the research data. Based on the multicollinearity test shown in Table 1 which shows that all variables have a Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) value of less than 10 and 1/VIF more than 0.1, it can be concluded that the regression model is independent of the possibility of multicollinearity.

Table 1. the Result of Multicollinearity Test

	VIF	1/VIF
Restaurant	4.867	.205
Hotel	3.382	.296
Airport	3.228	.31
Outreach	2.222	.45
Communication	1.957	.511
Visa	1.686	.593
Safety	1.48	.676
Mean VIF	2.689	.

Panel Data Regression Model Estimation

Panel data regression analysis was used to determine the effect of the competitiveness variable of Muslim-Friendly tourism destinations on inbound to Asia & the Pacific for the period 2015 to 2019. The interpretation of the panel data regression model has three types of models, namely using the PLS (Pooled Least Square), FEM (Fixed) method. Effect Model), and REM (Random Effect Model). The estimation of the regression equation in the research model is as follows.

$$Y_{it} = \alpha + \beta_1 X_{1it} + \beta_2 X_{2it} + \dots + \beta_n N_{nit} + e_{it} \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

Where:

- Y_{it} = dependent variable
- X_{it} = independent variable
- t = t period
- i = i entity
- a = constant
- e = variable outside the model

By using this model, the best interpretation of the model for research is obtained as shown in the table below.

Table 2. the Result of Model Estimation

Variables	(1) PLS	(2) FEM	(3) REM
Visa	-0.009* (0.005)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.000 (0.002)

Communication	0.009** (0.003)	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)
Outreach	0.024*** (0.004)	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.000 (0.001)
Safety	-0.003 (0.005)	0.003** (0.001)	0.003** (0.001)
Airport	-0.003 (0.004)	0.001 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)
Restaurant	-0.030*** (0.005)	0.005** (0.002)	0.003 (0.002)
Hotel	0.019** (0.008)	0.009*** (0.002)	0.009*** (0.002)
Constant	10.652*** (0.414)	9.002*** (0.197)	9.119*** (0.261)
Observations	80	80	80
R-squared	0.573	0.476	
Number of destinations		20	20

Source: Stata 16.0, data processed

Standard errors in parentheses: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The calculation results in Table 2 explain that the three models have different significant values. To produce the best model in the panel data regression calculation, the analysis of the F statistical test and the Hausman test will be continued (Hasanah & Ahmadi, 2017). The use of the Restricted F test in determining the estimation method is seen from the probability value of F in the FEM output results. Furthermore, from the test results, the best research model will be selected, first the F Restricted test to choose the PLS or FE model. While the Fixed Effect (FE) model was chosen as the best model, where there are only three independent variables that have a significant effect on loginbound, namely the Safety, Restaurant, and Hotel variables.

The F test taken from the FE output results shows that the prob > F value of 0.0005 is less than the significance level = 0.05, so the best temporary calculation model is the FE model. Followed by the Hausman test to determine the best calculation between the RE and FE models.

Table 3. the Result of F Statistics

Numb. of Observations	80
Prob > F	0,0000
Adj R-Square	0.5311

From the table 3 shows that all independent variables together have a significant effect on inbound logs in countries in the Asia-Pacific region from 2015 to 2019. The panel data regression estimation results obtained an F-statistical prob of 0.0000, which means that it is smaller than the significance level (0, 0000<0.05). Adj values are also found. The R-Square is 53.11% which explains the magnitude of the influence of all

independent variables on the dependent variable, while 46.89% is influenced by other factors outside the model. From the results of the t-test using the Fixed Effects (FE) model with Robust, it can be seen that several individual variables that do not have a significant influence leave the model, resulting in the following equation:

$$Y = 9.001735 + 0.0026852 * X_4 + 0.005403 * X_6 + 0.0093512 * X_7 + e$$

The results of the interpretation of the panel data regression equation above are as follows: *first*, the constant value has a significant positive effect on loginbound (Y) of 9.001735. The assumption is that if the Safety (X4), Restaurant (X6), and Hotel (X7) variables remain the same, the loginbound rate will be worth 9.001735 percent. This result is in line with the concept of a halal city, conveyed by [Tresna, et al., \(2017\)](#); [Hakim & Muslikhati \(2019\)](#), which must fulfill four things, namely the availability of halal restaurants and/or hotels (accommodation), halal markets, halal travel agencies and regulations. *Second*, safety variable (X4) have a positive coefficient value of 0.0026852 is obtained explaining that if each increase in Safety (X4) is 1 percent, there tends to be an increase in loginbound (Y) of 0.0026852 percent. This research is in line with research by [Chaturuka et al. \(2020\)](#) stated that information about the safety, crime and general safety of a destination is very important for tourists in planning the destination tour to be visited, by realizing and preparing safety information for a destination tour can reduce the fear of foreign tourists and minimize the risk of crime during the trip. In the macro scope, the impact of crime in a tourist destination gives a negative image to the destination and results in reduced tourist demand, while in the micro scope it can influence the decision to visit or revisit a destination where the crime occurred ([Mataković & Cunjak, 2019](#)). For this reason, creating a safe environment is a form of tourism competitiveness to be able to absorb a large number of tourist visits. Destinations must provide an environment that has appropriate safety measures in place ([Glensor & Peak, 2004](#); [Njoloma & Kamanga, 2019](#)).

Third, In the Restaurant variable (X6), a positive coefficient value of 0.005403 is obtained, explaining that if each increase in Restaurant (X6) is 1 percent, there tends to be an increase in loginbound (Y) of 0.005403 percent. This variable shows that restaurant has a significantly positive effect on the number of loginbound. For tourists, food becomes a primary need when they travel. The result is in line with [Damayanti et al., \(2018\)](#) that found there is a relationship between restaurant attributes and tourists, meaning that the higher the restaurant attributes, the more tourists visit. Based on data by Global Islamic Report which estimates that Global Muslim spending on food and beverages was US\$ 1.37 billion in 2018 and will increase by US\$ 2 trillion by 2024. This indicates an increase in Global Muslim demand for food and beverages. Halal drinks will encourage a destination to produce halal food so that it can increase the number of foreign tourists in a destination. According to [Kartal et al., \(2015\)](#) who argue that halal food production

is a comprehensive concept for all religious communities including all tourists in various countries and different backgrounds. According to [Battour & Ismail \(2016\)](#), halal food products and services are not only a regional implementation but have become a demand for Muslim and non-Muslim tourists globally ([Khairawati, 2021](#)). This is supported by research by [Stapit et al., \(2021\)](#) who conducted a study in observing halal food for non-Muslim foreign tourists showing that halal food can also be well received by non-Muslim tourists who consider it an unforgettable experience in eating these special foods. compared to the experience of eating a satisfying meal.

On the other hand, the Hotel variable (X7) have a positive coefficient value of 0.0093512, explaining that if each increase in Hotel (X7) is 1 percent, there tends to be an increase in loginbound (Y) of 0.0093512 percent. This variable has a significant positive effect on the number of log inbound. Halal hotels provide halal services to Muslim tourists, including operational services and hotel management that are managed with sharia principles. The majority of Muslim tourists use hotel accommodation, or homestays when making tourist visits ([Sthapit et al., 2021](#)). According to data related to tourism in the Asia Pacific region shows that the amount of inbound is proportional to the foreign exchange generated from the expenditure of foreign tourists to the Asia Pacific region for a period of 5 years (2015-2019). This study shows that foreign exchange for foreign tourists visiting the research object countries in the Asia Pacific region shows a positive trend proportional to the expenditure of foreign tourists in these destinations. In this case although historically, Europe has managed to maintain being the most visited region by world tourists in recent decades, the data shows that the fastest growth will be concentrated in the Asia and Pacific region for the foreseeable future ([Glaesser et al., 2017](#)).

CONCLUSION

The primary results of this study demonstrate that the following indicator of the competitiveness of Muslim-friendly destinations such as destination security guarantees (safety), availability of places to eat that meet halal certification or labels (restaurant) and, residential areas (hotels) or accommodation has an effect on the number of foreign tourist visits to the Asia-Pacific region. These findings prove that there is an influence from the hypothesis that has been observed to be true, the higher the ranking on the GMTI sub-indicator can increase the number of inbound to destinations. The results will give a practical contribution in measuring the competitiveness of Muslim-friendly tourism destinations to increase inbound tourist arrivals.

Despite of the compelling results, this study acknowledges a research limitation. Due to the limitation, the authors suggest future research to add more diverse indicators of competitiveness such as destination facilities, the environment offered, and the

attractiveness of a destination and a wider range of objects to provide more relevant information to increase tourist attractions.

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