

Integrating Islamic Values and Place Identity to Enhance Halal Tourist Attractions among Tourists in Sumatra

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of Islamic values on domestic tourists' intention to visit Aceh, with place identity as a potential moderating variable. Aceh's strong Islamic character positions it as an attractive destination for Muslim tourists from Sumatra. Employing a quantitative approach, data were collected from 119 respondents via questionnaire and analyzed using simple linear regression and Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA). Findings reveal that Islamic values have a significant positive effect on visit intention. Place identity also positively influences visit intention, but does not moderate the relationship between Islamic values and visit intention. These results indicate that Islamic values serve as a primary motivator for domestic tourists, while place identity exerts an independent effect on visit intention.

Keywords: Islamic values, visiting interest, place identity, halal tourism, Aceh

INTRODUCTION

The global tourism sector is experiencing rapid growth (Khan, M.R., et al., 2021), and domestic tourism has also demonstrated significant recovery and expansion since the COVID-19 pandemic. The Central Statistics Agency (BPS, 2024) noted increased tourist mobility as an economic driver. More specifically, Aceh occupies a strategic position on the national tourism map, with a rising trend in visitation. The Aceh Central Statistics Agency (BPS, 2024) reported an increase in the number of domestic tourists, supported by data from the Aceh Culture and Tourism Office (Disbudpar Aceh, 2025), which indicated that 7.3 million tourist visits had been achieved by early 2025.

Aceh's appeal stems from its natural beauty and distinctive socio-religious context. As a region that implements Islamic norms and values, including the application of sharia law, Aceh presents a strong religious identity (Syahrizal, T.M. et al., 2025). This uniqueness raises important questions regarding the influence of Islamic values on tourists' perceptions and visitation intentions. According to Abdullah (2022), religious destinations often experience a dynamic tension between maintaining religious principles and accommodating the demands of the broader tourism market.

Studies have examined Islamic values and halal tourism as key determinants of tourist behavior. Factors such as halal facilities, access to places of worship, and adherence to Islamic law influence tourist satisfaction and repeat visitation (Mohamed, 2018; Rahman et al., 2020; Suhartanto et al., 2021; Rostiani et al., 2024). Recent bibliometric analyses confirm that while halal tourism is well-researched in Southeast Asia, there remains a need for further studies focusing on domestic destinations based on Islamic values (Sitepu et al., 2023; Chantarungsri, 2024). Recent bibliometric studies confirm that halal tourism is well-researched in Southeast Asia but highlight the need for more studies focused on domestic destinations, particularly those grounded in Islamic values (Sitepu, N.I., et al., 2023; Chantarungsri, 2024).

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Place identity refers to an individual's emotional and cognitive attachment to a destination, fostering a sense of belonging and loyalty (Dai et al., 2023; Qian & Li, 2024). Studies show it strengthens affective connections, enhances destination image and experience, and promotes sustainable tourist behavior through place attachment (Stylidis, 2020; Peng, 2020; Kyle & Jun, 2019).

Although the relationship between place identity and tourist behavior has been explored, a significant gap remains in understanding how Islamic values function as an antecedent influencing this relationship. Existing halal tourism research primarily focuses on halal facilities and experiences (Mohamed, 2018; Suhartanto et al., 2021; Rostiani et al., 2024), with limited attention to the interplay between religious values and place identity, particularly among domestic tourists. Additionally, empirical studies on domestic tourist behavior within Indonesia's inter-island context are scarce, despite Sumatra Island being a major source of visitors to Aceh (BPS, 2024). This study addresses these gaps by investigating the moderating role of place identity in the relationship between Islamic values and travel intention, contributing both theoretical insights and practical implications for halal tourism strategies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Interest in Visiting Aceh

Tourists' revisit intention refers to an individual's likelihood or willingness to return to a destination in the future (Qian & Li, 2024). Empirical research has demonstrated that perceived destination value, destination image, and tourists' emotional experiences are key determinants of both actual revisits and revisit intentions (Jebbouri, 2022). Within the context of Indonesian domestic tourism, findings suggest that factors such as visitor experience and destination image have a direct impact on revisit intentions; however, these relationships may be moderated by local contextual variations (Widiyasa, 2023).

Research examining visit intentions in Indonesian destinations (such as Lake Toba and the National Museum) found that satisfaction, destination image, and experiential value were important predictors of repeat visit intentions (Widiyasa, 2023). Therefore, understanding visit intentions to Aceh requires incorporating value constructs and tourist experiences relevant to the local context (Qian & Li, 2024).

Visitor socio-cultural dynamics (such as the congruence between cultural and religious values between tourists and destinations) are increasingly recognized as determinants of visit intention. Therefore, studies of visit intention to Aceh need to integrate religious and cultural variables into the model for a more comprehensive understanding of domestic tourists' visit intentions (Suhartanto et al., 2021).

Islamic Values on Tourist Visit Interest

Islamic values in the context of tourism encompass both normative and practical dimensions, including the availability of prayer facilities, guaranteed halal food, gender privacy, and socially appropriate behaviors aligned with Sharia law. Studies indicate that a comprehensive halal experience significantly influences Muslim tourists' satisfaction and revisit intentions; however, the relative impact of specific dimensions (halal services versus recreational activities) may differ depending on the destination context (Suhartanto et al., 2021).

Conceptual approaches to Islamic values in tourism emphasize two main aspects: (1) the instrumental aspect (the provision of services and facilities that meet sharia

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requirements), and (2) the identity aspect (the narrative and image of the destination that reflects Islamic values). Recent integrative studies highlight that effective halal tourism management must be aligned with sustainable development goals and local governance strategies to not only meet market demand but also maintain social and cultural sustainability (Khan, 2025).

In Indonesia, empirical evidence indicates that both religiosity and a sense of community play a significant role in fostering tourist loyalty at destinations associated with Islamic values. Consequently, measuring Islamic values should encompass not only individual religiosity but also supply-side elements, such as the availability of halal infrastructure (Suhartanto et al., 2021).

H1: Islamic values influence the interest of tourists from Sumatra to visit Aceh.

Place Identity in Moderating the Relationship between Islamic Values and Tourist Visit Interest

Place identity is defined as the cognitive-emotional aspect of an individual's attachment to a place. Place identity is a key construct in understanding how experiences, cultural values, and destination attributes shape tourist loyalty or behavioral intentions (Peng, 2020). Place identity is often positioned as a mediator or moderator in tourism behavior models linking perceived value to visit intention or loyalty (Dai et al., 2023).

Research shows that place identity can mediate the relationship between travel motivation and tourist loyalty; thus, strengthening place identity increases the likelihood of intention to pay more, return, or recommend a destination (Dai et al., 2023). Another study in the context of rural tourism found that place identity strengthens the effect of perceived value on behavioral intention, indicating the important role of place identity in converting perceived value into concrete actions (Qian & Li, 2024).

H2: Place identity moderates the relationship between Islamic values and the visit intention of tourists from Sumatra Island to Aceh.

The conceptual framework in this research is:

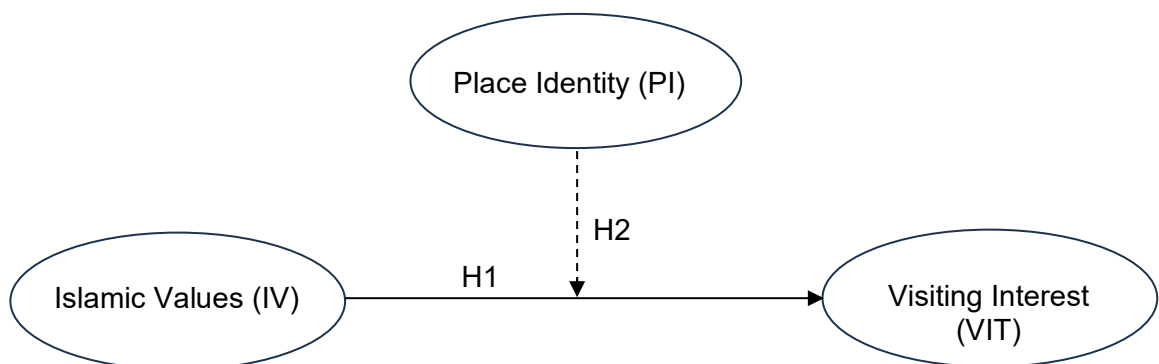


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

RESEARCH METHOD

This quantitative study examines the influence of the independent variable (Islamic values) on the dependent variable (tourist interest in visiting Aceh) and incorporates a moderating variable (place identity). The data collection technique in this study was carried out by distributing questionnaires to 119 respondents determined by the Hair

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formula and using a non-probability sampling technique, namely a sampling technique that does not provide equal opportunities or chances for each element or member of the population selected to be sampled (Hair, JF, et al., 2019).

Research data was obtained by distributing questionnaires to respondents who met the research criteria. The respondent criteria were:

1. Willing to be a respondent
2. Minimum age 20 years
3. Muslims and Non-Muslims
4. Domestic tourists from Sumatra Island (except Aceh)
5. Have you ever traveled to Aceh, or are you interested in doing so?

The collected data were analyzed using a series of classical assumption assessments, including validity and reliability evaluations to ensure the consistency of the measurement constructs, normality tests to examine data distribution, and diagnostics for multicollinearity and heteroscedasticity to confirm that no violations of regression assumptions would affect model estimation. All these procedures were performed in accordance with the statistical analysis guidelines recommended by Hair et al. (2019) and Ghozali (2021) before conducting the structural model analysis.

This study used simple linear regression and Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA), a method for evaluating the influence of independent variables on dependent variables by considering interactions with moderator variables. This study identified Place Identity as a moderating variable that can strengthen or weaken the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

The equation used:

$$VIT = \beta_1 IV + e \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

$$VIT = \beta_1 IV + \beta_2 IP + \beta_3 IV * PI + e \dots \dots \dots (2)$$

Information:

β = Coefficient Value; VIT = Visiting Interest; IV = Islamic Values; PI = Place Identity; and e = standard error

RESULTS

Respondent Characteristics

Based on the questionnaire that was distributed to 119 respondents, the following results were obtained:

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics (N = 119)

	Amount	Percentage
Gender		
Man	36	30.3
Woman	83	69.7
Religion		
Muslim	116	97.5
Non-Muslim	3	2.5
Age		
20-29	51	42.9
30-39	33	27.7
40-49	24	20.2
>50	11	9.2

	Amount	Percentage
Status		
Not married yet	59	49.6
Marry	55	46.2
Widower	5	4.2
Last Education		
High School/Equivalent	37	31.1
Diploma	4	3.4
Bachelor's Degree/Equivalent	55	46.2
Magister/Doctoral Degree	21	17.6
Work		
Student	35	29.4
Self-employed	10	8.4
Private sector employee	10	8.4
Government employee	26	21.8
Other	38	31.9
Income per Month		
<Rp2,000,000	33	27.7
Rp2,000,001 – Rp4,000,000	43	36.1
Rp4,000,001 – Rp6,000,000	16	13.4
Rp6,000,001 – Rp8,000,000	10	8.4
Rp8,000,001 – Rp10,000,000	8	6.7
>Rp10,000,001	9	7.6
Origin of Province in Sumatra		
Bangka Belitung	2	1.7
Bengkulu	11	9.2
Jambi	3	2.5
Riau islands	5	4.2
Lampung	2	1.7
Riau	5	4.2
West Sumatra	24	20.2
South Sumatra	10	8.4
North Sumatra	57	47.9
Visiting Aceh for Tourism		
Once	86	72.3
Never	33	27.7

Table 1 shows that the majority of respondents in this study were female, 83 (69.7%), while 36 (30.3%) were male. This proportion indicates that female participation in tourism activities in Aceh is relatively higher than male participation. Regarding religion, the majority of respondents were Muslim, 116 (97.5%), while 3 (2.5%) were non-Muslim.

Regarding respondents' age characteristics, the 20–29 age group was the largest, comprising 51 (42.9%), while those aged over 50 were the smallest group, with 11 (9.2%). This distribution indicates that young adults represent a key potential segment for Aceh tourism, aligning with national domestic tourism trends dominated by the productive age group (BPS, 2024). Additionally, most respondents were single (59 respondents, 49.6%), followed by married individuals (55 respondents, 46.2%), and widowed respondents (5 respondents, 4.2%). In terms of education, respondents holding a Bachelor's degree or equivalent were the majority (55 people, 46.2%), while those with a Diploma accounted for the smallest group (4 people, 3.4%).

Based on occupational category, other groups (including housewives, freelancers, and non-university students) dominated with 38 respondents (31.9%), and the fewest were private employees and self-employed individuals, each with 10 (8.4%). Economically, the majority had an income of Rp2,000,001 – Rp4,000,000 (43 respondents), and the least Rp4,000,001 – Rp6,000,000 (16 respondents, 13.4%).

Respondents came from various provinces on the island of Sumatra, with North Sumatra dominating with 57 respondents (47.9%), followed by West Sumatra with 24 respondents (20.2%), Bengkulu with 11 respondents (9.2%), and other provinces with smaller proportions, such as Riau, South Sumatra, and the Riau Islands. Eighty-six respondents (72.3%) stated they had visited Aceh, while 33 respondents (27.7%) had not.

Validity Test

The results of the validity test are:

Table 2. Validity Test

Variables	Item No.	$r_{\text{calculated}}$	r_{table}	Sig	Information
VIT	VIT1	0.898	0.179	0.000	Valid
	VIT2	0.938	0.179	0.000	Valid
	VIT3	0.955	0.179	0.000	Valid
	VIT4	0.950	0.179	0.000	Valid
IV	IV1	0.736	0.179	0.000	Valid
	IV2	0.838	0.179	0.000	Valid
	IV3	0.835	0.179	0.000	Valid
	IV4	0.831	0.179	0.000	Valid
	IV5	0.792	0.179	0.000	Valid
	IV6	0.771	0.179	0.000	Valid
	IV7	0.804	0.179	0.000	Valid
	IV8	0.818	0.179	0.000	Valid
PI	PI1	0.633	0.179	0.000	Valid
	PI2	0.716	0.179	0.000	Valid
	PI3	0.750	0.179	0.000	Valid
	PI4	0.696	0.179	0.000	Valid
	PI5	0.676	0.179	0.000	Valid

Source: SPSS data processing (2025)

From Table 2, it can be seen that all question items are said to be valid, because the calculated r value is $> r_{\text{table}}$.

Reliability Test

The results of the reliability test are:

Table 3. Reliability Test

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Information
VIT	0.951	Reliable
IV	0.920	Reliable
PI	0.913	Reliable

Source: SPSS data processing (2025)

From Table 3, it can be seen that all question items are said to be reliable, because the Cronbach Alpha values are > 0.600 .

Normality Test

The results of the normality test are:

Table 4. Reliability Test

Normality Test	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	Significance	Information
Kolmogorov-Smirnov	0.180	>0.05	Normal Data

Source: SPSS data processing (2025)

From Table 4, it can be seen that the data can be said to be normal, because the Asymp. Sig (2-tailed) values are > 0.05.

Multicollinearity Test

The results of the multicollinearity test are:

Table 5. Multicollinearity Test

Variables	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
IV	0.180	>0.05

Source: SPSS data processing (2025)

Table 5 shows that the VIF (variance inflation factor) value for each variable is less than 10, and the tolerance value is > 0.1. Therefore, it can be concluded that this study does not experience multicollinearity deviations.

Heteroscedasticity Test

The results of the heteroscedasticity test are:

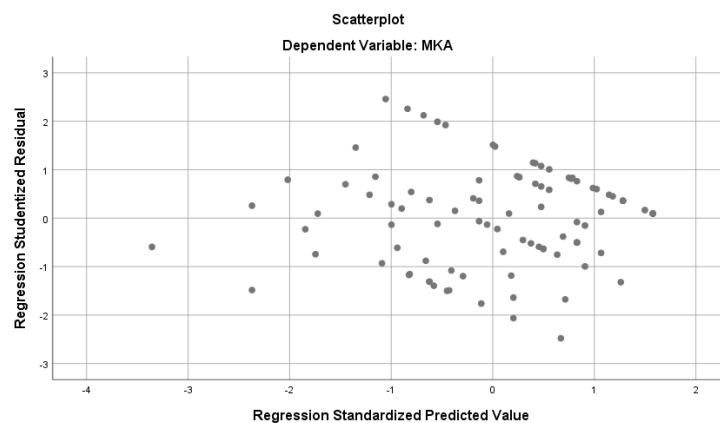


Figure 2. Heteroscedasticity Test

Source: SPSS data processing (2025)

From Figure 2, it can be seen that the points are spread in an unclear pattern above and below the number 0 on the Y axis, so it can be concluded that there is no heteroscedasticity problem in the regression model.

Simple Linear Regression

The results of simple linear regression are:

Table 6. Test Multicollinearity

Variables	Standardized Coefficients	t _{calculated}	Sig
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IV	0.719	11.197	0.000
Termination Test	R= 0.817 Adjusted R Square = 0.650 Std. Error of the Estimate = 2.26858		

Source: SPSS data processing (2025)

Table 6 shows that the Islamic Values (IV) variable has a positive and significant effect on tourists' interest in visiting Aceh. The coefficient value is 0.719 with a $t_{\text{calculated}}$ of 11.197 and a significance level of 0.000 (<0.05), indicating that the research hypothesis is accepted. This means that the higher tourists' perceptions of the application of Islamic values in Acehese tourist destinations, the greater the tendency to visit Aceh.

The correlation coefficient (R) of 0.817 indicates a very strong positive relationship between Islamic values and visiting intention. Additionally, the adjusted R-squared (R^2) value of 0.650 suggests that 65.0% of the variance in tourists' visiting intention is explained by Islamic values, while the remaining 35,0% can be attributed to other factors not included in the model, such as destination image, tourism promotion, travel experience, and socio-economic variables.

Thus, the equation can be written:

$$VIT = 0.719IV + e$$

Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA) Test

The results of the Moderated Regression Analysis Test are:

Table 7. Test MRA

Variables	Standardized Coefficients	$t_{\text{calculated}}$	Sig
IV	0.503	3.958	0.000
PI	0.702	2.684	0.008
IV*PI	-0.279	-0.835	0.405

Source: SPSS data processing (2025)

Table 7 shows that Islamic Values (IV) have a positive and significant influence on Tourists' Interest in Visiting Aceh, with a coefficient value of $\beta = 0.503$, $t_{\text{calculated}} = 3.958$, and Sig = 0.000. This means that increasing perceptions of the implementation of Islamic values in Aceh significantly increases the interest of domestic tourists to visit.

Place Identity (PI) has a positive and significant effect on Visit Intention, with a coefficient value of $\beta = 0.702$, $t_{\text{calculated}} = 2.684$, and Sig = 0.008. These results indicate that the higher the level of tourist identification with Aceh as a destination that has emotional and cultural meaning, the stronger their intention to visit. However, the interaction between Islamic Values and Place Identity (IV*PI) shows a coefficient value of $\beta = -0.279$, $t_{\text{calculated}} = -0.835$, and Sig = 0.405, which means it is not significant ($> 0,05$). This means that Place Identity does not moderate the influence of Islamic Values on Visit Intention.

Thus, the equation can be written:

$$VIT = 0.503IV + 0.702IP - 0.279IV * PI + e$$

DISCUSSION

The research results show that Islamic values have a positive and significant influence on domestic tourists' intention to visit Aceh. The stronger tourists' perceptions of the implementation of Islamic values in Aceh, the greater their likelihood of visiting. This finding supports the concept that the Islamic dimensions of a destination, such as the provision of halal facilities, a religious atmosphere, and Sharia compliance, are key drivers of Muslim tourist behavior (Suhartanto et al., 2021).

These findings align with Abdullah (2022), who emphasized that the application of Islamic values in tourism is not merely normative but also serves as a symbol of the destination's cultural and spiritual identity. Chantarungsri (2024) added that halal tourism thrives when Islamic values are authentically integrated into the tourism experience. In the Aceh context, the application of Islamic values increases a sense of security and comfort, and strengthens the region's image as a religious and cultural destination, aligning with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), which emphasizes the role of values and beliefs in shaping behavioral intentions.

Furthermore, the results of the moderation test showed that tourists' emotional attachment to Aceh directly strengthened their intention to visit, but did not strengthen the effect of Islamic values on that intention. This finding differs from Qian and Li's (2024) finding that place identity can strengthen the relationship between perceived value and behavioral intention in the context of rural tourism in China.

For most domestic tourists, especially those from Sumatra and Muslim communities, Islamic values in Aceh are considered inherent attributes that no longer depend on emotional attachment to a place. Thus, place identity plays an independent role in building loyalty, rather than acting as a moderator. This finding is consistent with those of Dai et al. (2023), who stated that the role of place identity can vary depending on the level of cultural value homogeneity between tourists and the destination. Research by Styliadis (2020) explains that tourists' emotional attachment tends to form directly without the need for additional value interactions.

From a practical perspective, these results underscore the importance of maintaining a balance between strengthening Islamic values and developing a destination identity. Acehese tourism managers need to preserve the religious aspect as a core value that distinguishes Aceh from other destinations in Indonesia, while simultaneously crafting a more emotional and inclusive representation of place identity. This approach can enhance Aceh's appeal as a halal destination that is not only religious but also warm, cultural, and open (Khan, 2025).

CONCLUSION

This research shows that Islamic values play a significant role in shaping domestic tourists' interest in visiting Aceh. The application of Islamic principles, reflected in halal-certified facilities, a religious atmosphere, and orderly social norms, creates a sense of security and comfort for tourists. This makes Aceh known not only as a cultural and nature-based tourist destination but also as a destination offering spiritual experiences aligned with the religious values of its people.

Furthermore, research findings show that place identity also influences visitation intentions, although it does not significantly strengthen the relationship between Islamic values and tourist interest. This suggests that tourists' emotional attachment to Aceh is directly shaped by personal experiences and perceptions of the region's character. Therefore, Aceh tourism development needs to be directed at maintaining a balance

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between religious identity and a destination image that is friendly, modern, and open to all tourists.

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