

ORIGINAL

Cultural Values as a Branding Logic: Structuring Halal Tourism Mechanism in West Sumatera

Valores culturales como lógica de marca: estructuración del mecanismo del turismo halal en Sumatra Occidental

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: this study investigates the role of Minangkabau Cultural Values (MCV) as a branding logic in the development of halal tourism in West Sumatra. It focuses on how these cultural values contribute to shaping destination image, tourism performance, and tourist loyalty.

Method: data were gathered from a survey of international Muslim tourists, and the relationships among cultural values, authenticity, experience, and loyalty were tested using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM).

Results: the findings indicate that MCV significantly enhance the perceived authenticity and people-centered experiences, which, in turn, have a substantial impact on both Halal Destination Image (HDI) and Halal-Friendly Destination Performance (HFDP). Tourist loyalty is primarily driven by HDI.

Conclusions: minangkabau cultural values serve as a strategic mechanism that strengthens the competitiveness of halal tourism by embedding authenticity and transformative experiences into destination branding.

Keywords: Halal Tourism; Minangkabau Cultural Values; Authenticity; Transformative Experience; Destination Image; Loyalty.

RESUMEN

Introducción: este estudio investiga el papel de los Valores Culturales Minangkabau (VCM) como una lógica de marca en el desarrollo del turismo halal en Sumatra Occidental. Se centra en cómo estos valores culturales contribuyen a conformar la imagen del destino, el rendimiento turístico y la lealtad de los turistas.

Método: los datos se recopilaron a partir de una encuesta aplicada a turistas musulmanes internacionales, y las relaciones entre los valores culturales, la autenticidad, la experiencia y la lealtad se analizaron mediante el modelo de ecuaciones estructurales de mínimos cuadrados parciales (PLS-SEM).

Resultados: los hallazgos indican que los VCM mejoran significativamente la autenticidad percibida y las experiencias centradas en las personas, las cuales, a su vez, tienen un impacto sustancial tanto en la Imagen del Destino Halal (IDH) como en el Desempeño del Destino Amigable con el Halal (DDAH). La lealtad de los turistas está impulsada principalmente por la IDH.

Conclusiones: los valores culturales minangkabau actúan como un mecanismo estratégico que fortalece la competitividad del turismo halal al incorporar autenticidad y experiencias transformadoras en la marca del destino.

Palabras clave: Turismo Halal; Valores Culturales Minangkabau; Autenticidad; Experiencia Transformadora;

INTRODUCTION

Halal tourism has moved from a niche to a mainstream development agenda, making the alignment of Islamic values, local culture, and tourism delivery central to destination competitiveness.^(1,2) In West Sumatra, this alignment is naturally framed by Minangkabau Cultural Values (MCV)—codified in the maxim *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah*—which function as a living code for hospitality, heritage, and everyday practice and can be mobilized as a distinctive “brandmark” for destination design.^(3,4) Policy reasoning in the thesis further argues that halal development should go beyond physical certification toward weaving Islam, Minangkabau custom, and social culture into the core visitor experience across districts.⁽⁵⁾

The theoretical pillars for embedding MCV into tourism are object-based authenticity (OBA) and transformative experience (TE). OBA concerns the perceived genuineness of materials, design, process, and place and is repeatedly linked to perceived value and meaningful evaluations of heritage settings.^(6,7) TE captures enduring changes in perspective that arise from reflective, value-laden encounters and learning, and in tourism these shifts support satisfaction and loyalty.^(8,9,10) Interpersonal and intrapersonal processes—social bonding, cultural contact, reflection, and identity work—operate as proximal channels that shape authenticity and meaning during visits.^(11,12,13) In halal-destination contexts, such experiential antecedents should strengthen halal destination image (HDI) and halal-friendly destination performance (HFDP), which theory associates with post-visit loyalty.^(14,15)

Beyond generic experience constructs, MCV offer place-specific social and material cues—from Rumah Gadang aesthetics to *gotong royong*—that help visitors recognize integrity, participate in cultural practice, and interpret destination meanings; social identity research explains how such shared symbols and practices guide attitude formation and behavior in context.^(16,17,18) In a Muslim-friendly setting like West Sumatra, the interplay of Islamic attributes, cultural heritage, and lived communal norms is therefore a theoretically grounded route to stronger image, better perceived performance, and more favorable intentions.^(19,20)

This study develops and tests the Minangkabau Cultural Values Model (MCVM) linking MCV to OBA, TE, and interpersonal/intrapersonal experience factors, which in turn drive HDI and HFDP, culminating in loyalty among Muslim international tourists in West Sumatra; the model is estimated using variance-based SEM (PLS-SEM) to evaluate direct and mediated relationships.⁽²¹⁾ Conceptually, because authenticity and learning emerge from culturally coherent cues and practices, we expect OBA/TE and people-processes to elevate HDI and HFDP, and we further expect image and performance to transmit those experiential effects into loyalty.^(22,23)

Guided by authenticity and transformative-learning perspectives, together with destination-marketing and loyalty research, this study estimates a structural model organized in three blocks. First, object-based authenticity (OBA), transformative experience (TE), and interpersonal and intrapersonal processes are specified as antecedents of halal destination image (HDI) and halal-friendly destination performance (HFDP). Second, HDI and HFDP are modeled as proximal drivers of loyalty and as mediators linking the experiential antecedents to loyalty. Third, at the cultural layer, Minangkabau Cultural Values (MCV) are treated as upstream influences on OBA, TE, and the people-centered processes. This design maintains theoretical openness while allowing rigorous model-based evaluation of the relationships of interest.

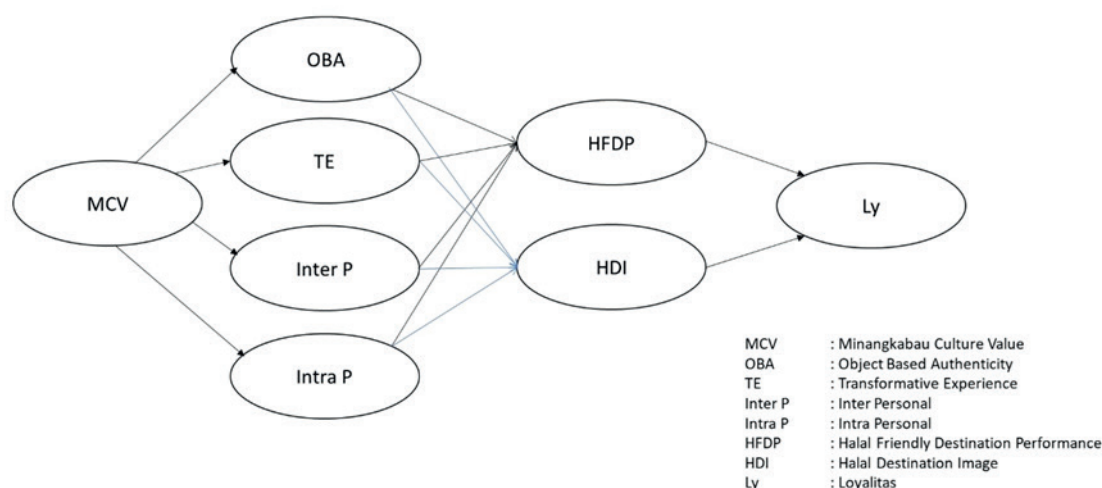


Figure 1. Research Model

METHOD

Type of study, period, and location

This study employed a field-based, quantitative survey with a confirmatory design to evaluate a theory-driven causal model. Data were collected during 2024 in West Sumatra, a mature halal-tourism setting embedded in Minangkabau culture.

Population, sample, and sampling

The target population comprised foreign Muslim tourists who were familiar with Minangkabau culture and had visited West Sumatra in 2024. A non-probability, accidental (intercept) sampling approach was used in situ, consistent with guidance for field intercepts in tourism contexts. Guided by model complexity considerations, the intended sample size was approximately 300 respondents. Inclusion criteria: (i) Muslim tourists holding non-Indonesian nationality; (ii) age ≥ 18 ; (iii) visited West Sumatra during the study period; (iv) self-reported understanding of Minangkabau culture. Exclusion criteria: (i) incomplete questionnaires; (ii) straight-lining or patterned responses detected at screening; (iii) refusals to consent. Exit criteria: respondents could discontinue the survey at any time without penalty; partial responses were discarded prior to analysis.

Variables

Latent constructs followed the study framework: Minangkabau Cultural Values (MCV), object-based authenticity (OBA), transformative experience (TE), intrapersonal and interpersonal processes, Halal Destination Image (HDI), Halal-Friendly Destination Performance (HFDP), and tourist loyalty—each aligned to prior definitions in the literature. For clarity, constructs less familiar in destination studies (e.g., OBA and TE) were specified following their original theoretical sources before adaptation to the halal-tourism context.⁽²⁴⁾

Instruments, techniques, and procedures

Primary data were gathered using a structured, closed-ended questionnaire administered as a self-report instrument, appropriate for capturing latent evaluations of destinations.⁽²⁵⁾ Scale items were adapted and, where needed, collated from prior research to ensure content coverage and conceptual equivalence with the study's theoretical definitions.⁽²⁶⁾ Content adequacy and clarity were checked through iterative pretesting to confirm wording and response-format consistency with the constructs' operationalization.^(24,26)

Data collection process

Trained enumerators conducted on-site intercepts at high-traffic tourism nodes (e.g., attractions, transport hubs, and hospitality venues) across West Sumatra during the data-collection window. After screening for eligibility, respondents received study information and provided consent before completing the questionnaire individually. Procedures minimized interviewer influence and preserved respondent privacy.⁽²⁷⁾

Data analysis process

Given the study's theory-extending and prediction-oriented objectives, and the presence of multiple latent variables with potential non-normality, variant-based structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed.^(28,29) Analyses were conducted in SmartPLS. Model evaluation followed the two-stage sequence: (i) assessment of the measurement (outer) model and (ii) assessment of the structural (inner) model, in line with current PLS-SEM guidelines. The significance of direct and indirect (mediated) relations was estimated via nonparametric bootstrapping, which is standard practice for PLS-SEM mediation and effect-size inference. Where theoretically specified, moderation was examined within the PLS-SEM framework following accepted behavioral-research procedures.^(30,31,32)

Ethical aspects

Participation was voluntary with informed consent obtained prior to data collection. No personally identifying information was stored with responses, and anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout. Procedures adhered to commonly accepted ethical principles for human-subjects survey research in tourism and consumer studies.

RESULTS

The model shows acceptable global fit ($SRMR < 0,08$; NFI near 0,90), supporting further evaluation of the measurement and structural models.

Measurement model

Convergent validity is supported: most standardized loadings exceed 0,70 and each construct's $AVE \geq 0,50$; internal consistency is adequate with Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability $\geq 0,70$. Representative item

loadings are shown below (tables 1;2 and 3).

Table 1. Outer loadings		
Construct	Items	Loading
HDI	HDI1	0,833
	HDI2	0,849
	HDI3	0,796
	HDI5	0,835
	Ly1	0,764
Loyalty	Ly2	0,691
	Ly3	0,680
	Ly4	0,770
	Ly5	0,671
	MCV1	0,790
MCV	MCV2	0,804
	MCV3	0,818
	MCV4	0,833
	MCV5	0,842
	OBA1	0,785
OBA	OBA2	0,829
	OBA3	0,802
	OBA5	0,817
	TE1	0,851
	TE2	0,778
TE	TE3	0,783
	TE4	0,823
	TE5	0,828
Intra P	IntraP4	0,806
	IntraP5	0,793

Table 2. Construct reliability and convergent validity				
Construct	Cronbach's α	rho_A	Composite Reliability	AVE
HDI	0,848	0,854	0,898	0,687
HFDP_	0,827	0,834	0,878	0,591
Inter P	0,904	0,913	0,929	0,722
Intra P	0,804	0,823	0,870	0,626
Loyalty	0,762	0,768	0,840	0,514
MCV	0,877	0,883	0,910	0,669
OBA	0,824	0,827	0,883	0,654

Discriminant validity by the Fornell-Larcker criterion is satisfied: the square root of each construct's AVE (diagonal) exceeds its correlations with other constructs.

Table 3. Fornell-Larcker matrix (diagonal = $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$)							
	HDI	HFDP_	InterP	IntraP	Loyalty	MCV	OBA
HDI	0,829						
HFDP_	0,611	0,769					
InterP	0,537	0,688	0,850				
IntraP	0,588	0,719	0,735	0,791			
Loyalty	0,594	0,728	0,634	0,643	0,717		
MCV	0,518	0,702	0,750	0,734	0,597	0,818	
OBA	0,704	0,746	0,620	0,634	0,625	0,701	0,809

Multicollinearity is within acceptable bounds (inner-model VIFs mostly ≈ 2 -3; maximum $\approx 3,6$), indicating no

critical redundancy among predictors.

Structural model

Table 4. Direct effects (bootstrapping)			
Path	B (O)	t	p
Object-Based Authenticity → Halal-Friendly Destination Performance	0,244	4,479	0,000
Transformative Experience → Halal Destination Image	0,219	3,001	0,003
Transformative Experience → Halal-Friendly Destination Performance	0,160	2,472	0,014

Salient indirect mechanisms also emerge. Interpersonal dynamics and organizational behavior amplify the influence of market/customer value (MCV) on HDI and HFDP_, and several mediated routes ultimately reach Loyalty through HDI.

Table 5. Specific indirect effects (bootstrapping)			
Indirect Path	B (O)	t	p
Interpersonal Process → Halal Destination Image → Loyalty	0,043	2,706	0,007
Object-Based Authenticity → Halal Destination Image → Loyalty	0,059	2,980	0,003
Minangkabau Cultural Values → Object-Based Authenticity → Halal Destination Image	0,111	3,766	0,000
Minangkabau Cultural Values → Object-Based Authenticity → Halal-Friendly Destination Performance	0,092	3,352	0,001
Minangkabau Cultural Values → Intrapersonal Process → Halal Destination Image	0,033	2,100	0,036
Minangkabau Cultural Values → Intrapersonal Process → Halal-Friendly Destination Performance	0,035	2,166	0,031
Transformative Experience → Halal Destination Image → Loyalty	0,044	2,534	0,012
Minangkabau Cultural Values → Object-Based Authenticity → Halal Destination Image → Loyalty	0,023	2,388	0,017

The structural estimates reveal three significant direct paths and several complementary mediated links. Object-Based Authenticity positively affects Halal-Friendly Destination Performance ($B = 0,244$, $t = 4,479$, $p < 0,001$), while Transformative Experience improves both Halal Destination Image ($B = 0,219$, $t = 3,001$, $p = 0,003$) and Halal-Friendly Destination Performance ($B = 0,160$, $t = 2,472$, $p = 0,014$) (table 4). Indirectly, Loyalty increases via Halal Destination Image through Interpersonal Process ($B = 0,043$, $t = 2,706$, $p = 0,007$), Transformative Experience ($B = 0,044$, $t = 2,534$, $p = 0,012$), and Object-Based Authenticity ($B = 0,059$, $t = 2,980$, $p = 0,003$), and also through the sequential route Minangkabau Cultural Values → Object-Based Authenticity → Halal Destination Image → Loyalty ($B = 0,023$, $t = 2,388$, $p = 0,017$). Upstream, Minangkabau Cultural Values strengthen Halal Destination Image and Halal-Friendly Destination Performance via Object-Based Authenticity ($B = 0,111$, $t = 3,766$, $p < 0,001$; $B = 0,092$, $t = 3,352$, $p = 0,001$) and via Intrapersonal Process ($B = 0,033$, $t = 2,100$, $p = 0,036$; $B = 0,035$, $t = 2,166$, $p = 0,031$) (table 5).

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that object-based authenticity and transformative experience operate as the primary experiential levers through which visitors evaluate halal destinations. When cultural cues are embedded in tangible objects, service scripts, and settings that are consistent with local traditions, visitors infer higher operational adequacy and smoother service delivery.^(33,34) Transformative encounters deepen personal engagement and meaning, which improves evaluative judgments about the place.^(35,36,37) The mediation pattern shows that destination image functions as the principal conduit to loyalty. Interpersonal and intrapersonal processes contribute to this channel by translating cultural and experiential inputs into a coherent image that visitors can associate with identity, belonging, and purpose. In this configuration, Minangkabau Cultural Values work largely through authenticity and people centered processes rather than as a direct shock to experience, which clarifies how a local value system travels from context to conduct. These results extend current understanding of halal tourism by specifying where cultural content enters the visitor journey and how it is converted into performance perceptions and post visit intentions. Detailed estimates are reported in tables 4 and 5.

Theoretical implications follow directly from this mechanism. Authenticity should be treated as more than

a symbolic label, since operational cues that are visibly rooted in culture are read by visitors as evidence of quality and reliability. Destination image emerges as a dominant relational node that aggregates signals from authenticity, transformation, and people centered processes, and then transmits them to loyalty. This pattern supports the view that loyalty in short stay travel is won primarily through meaning and identification rather than through functionality alone. The cultural layer therefore matters most when it is institutionalized in objects, scripts, and interactions that visitors can experience repeatedly and consistently across touchpoints.

Managerial implications are immediate. Destination managers should codify Minangkabau cues in service delivery, including architecture, craft, culinary heritage, and ritual timing, so that authenticity is observable and repeatable at scale. Experience design should aim to elicit reflection and co creation, for example through guided storytelling, participatory activities, and host guest interaction that invites personal interpretation of place. Staff training and interface design should activate interpersonal and intrapersonal processes, since these processes feed the image route that ultimately supports loyalty.

CONCLUSIONS

This study shows that authenticity anchored in local culture and transformative experience shape how visitors judge halal destinations, with destination image operating as the principal conduit to loyalty. Cultural values exert influence mainly through authenticity and people centered processes, which are then reflected in image and perceived performance. These insights clarify where and how local value systems enter the visitor journey and how experiential levers are converted into post visit intentions. The pattern is consistent across the structural estimates reported in tables 4 and 5 and aligns with the revised discussion that emphasizes interpretation and implications rather than statistics.

The study is limited by a single destination context, a cross sectional design, and non-probability intercept sampling. Self-report measures may also invite shared method variance, and there is a minor overlap between loyalty and performance that warrants continued refinement of indicators. Future research can test the mechanism across multiple destinations and seasons, employ probability sampling and longitudinal or experimental designs, incorporate behavioral loyalty, and examine boundary conditions such as perceived risk and trip purpose. These extensions would strengthen external validity while building on the pathway identified here, in which cultural values are institutionalized through authentic touchpoints and meaning rich experiences that elevate image, enhance perceived performance, and support loyal visitation.

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the results.

AUTHORSHIP CONTRIBUTION

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