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Tourist Loyalty to Halal Tourism in Indonesia: The Role of Services Quality, Satisfaction, and Experience Quality

Sri Rahayu* and Mister Candra



AFFILIATION:

Department of Management,
Faculty of Economic and Business,
Universitas Muhammadiyah
Palembang, South Sumatra,
Indonesia

*CORRESPONDENCE:

sriahayufebump@gmail.com

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Abstract

Research aims: This study aims to develop an original model of halal tourism by considering the service quality variable and its effect on tourist loyalty with satisfaction as a mediator variable and experience quality consisting of halal food, halal facilities and services, and people at the destination as moderator variables.

Design/Methodology/Approach: This study adopts an empirical approach. Data were collected using questionnaire distributed to respondents that were selected through purposive sampling based on their previous visits to halal destinations in Indonesia. A total of 440 questionnaire responses were subjected to quantitative analysis using the Structural Equation Modeling.

Research findings: Our study findings indicated that services quality was one of the factors with positive, significant impacts (direct and indirect) on tourist loyalty. In addition, experience quality seemed to strengthen this impact.

Theoretical Contribution/Originality: This research offered a novel insight that that the satisfaction and loyalty of tourists visiting halal tourism can be increased through improving experience quality.

Practitioners/Policy Implications: This research is expected to be a reference and consideration for halal tourism business actors in their efforts to increase visitor satisfaction where major considerations should be put on halal accommodation and halal services. Visitor experience is an important factor to increase the number of visitors to halal tourism.

Research Limitations/Implications: The large sample size relatively complicated the timely data collection.

Keywords: Halal Tourism; Tourist Satisfaction; Tourist Loyalty; Experience Quality; Service Quality

Introduction

The study of halal tourism remains a fascinating topic to study today due to its vast spectrum of global challenges and problems. As one of countries with a high Muslim population, Indonesia has been attempting to develop halal tourism sector that provides a sense of comfort and safety to its visitors. Aspiring entrepreneurs in tourism sector can achieve significant profits by attracting the attention of investors (Pamukcu & Sariisik, 2020), and therefore, halal tourism has enormous potential to boost Indonesia's national economy. Battour and Ismail (2016) define halal tourism as any tourism object or act that is permitted by Islamic teachings to be used by Muslims in the tourism industry. Kamarudin and Ismail (2012) state that

halal tourism is one of tourism systems intended for Muslim tourists and implemented according to sharia rules. However, halal tourism does not limit its visitors based on religion; Muslims and non-Muslims can visit halal tourism. In this regard, halal refers to the provision of halal food, exemption of alcoholic beverages, objection to checking in unmarried male and female visitors together in one hotel/inn room, mandatory cover-up of private body parts, and so on. Surya et al. (2018) state that halal tourism is one part of da'wah for Muslim tourists, while for their non-Muslim counterparts, it is a health insurance because halal tourism based on sharia will prioritize good and useful aspects and eliminate the potentially detrimental elements for the tourists themselves.

Tourist loyalty is a vital part in efforts to develop halal tourism in Indonesia because loyalty would boost the number of visitors. In other words, loyal visitors are more likely to return to and recommend tourist attractions they have visited to other potential tourists. As emphasized by Cossío-Silva et al. (2019), loyal visitors are those who have high expectations regarding service quality, perceive high service, have a positive image of the destination, are satisfied with the tourist experience, will recommend to other potential tourists, and have the intention to return to visit.

Contributing factors to tourist loyalty include tourist satisfaction (Hai et al., 2020; Hung et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2021; Ullah et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2016). Previous studies have revealed that tourist satisfaction is closely related to tourist loyalty. A sense of loyalty is created when visitors feel so happy with their tourism experience that they decide to revisit the destination someday. Matolo et al. (2021) state that satisfaction is very crucial for a tourist to stay loyal to a destination, and that it would be difficult or impossible for dissatisfied tourists to plan their revisit or recommend the destination to friends or relatives.

In addition to satisfaction, tourist experience is very closely related to tourist loyalty. Previous researchers have proven that tourist experiences can shape tourist loyalty (Suhartanto et al., 2019; & Suhartanto et al., 2020). Conversely, bad experience in a tourist destination would lead to disappointment or dissatisfaction. According to Matolo et al. (2021), tourists will feel satisfied if their post-visit experience exceeds their pre-travelling expectations. In this case, service quality plays a key role in increasing tourist loyalty and satisfaction because high quality service provided by tourism managers is associated with shaping good memories for tourists. In turn, this will lead to a sense of satisfaction and loyalty to the visited destinations.

Based on the research gaps described above, this study aims to better understand and identify strategies for developing halal tourism, especially in Indonesia. Specifically, the objectives of this study are: (1) to evaluate the dimensions of experience with the quality of the halal tourism and the dimensions of service quality, (2) to evaluate the role of experience quality as the moderator, and (3) to evaluate the relationship between the quality of the tourist services after visiting with tourist loyalty and satisfaction as a mediator. This study will elaborate in detail the contributing factors to increasing tourist loyalty to halal tourism. The results of this study will greatly raise awareness of halal tourism managers in Indonesia about the most appropriate strategy to increase the

number of both Muslim and non-Muslim visitors. The indirect implication of halal tourism is the spread of Islamic laws to the general public.

Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Loyalty to Halal Tourism

According to Oliver (1999) loyalty is a commitment that is maintained from time to time with repeated purchases of a product or service. Tourist loyalty is the willingness to recommend tourist destinations to others and the intention to revisit the destinations (Zhang et al., 2014; Ekinci et al. 2013). Pertaining to this understanding, tourist loyalty is a very important part in the growth and development of tourism. Liu et al. (2020) argues that business success is synonymous with customer loyalty; therefore, creating and maintaining loyalty is an important goal in marketing.

Research on tourist loyalty is congruent with the current developments given the more advanced and developed marketing media today. Research by Pahlevi and Suhartanto (2020) and Zhang et al. (2014) found two approaches in testing loyalty, namely attitude loyalty and behavioral loyalty. According to Hussein et al. (2018) attitude loyalty includes the emotional expression of tourists related to tourism products and services, and it is measured by the tendency of tourists to revisit and support tourism products or services. Due to limitations in undertaking this study, attitude loyalty was the selected approach because attitude loyalty approach has developed when assessing the loyalty of Muslim tourists in various industries, including tourism (Eid & El-Gohary, 2015; Fajriyati et al., 2020; Malik et al., 2018; Suhartanto et al., 2020). In addition, attitude loyalty was selected over behavioural loyalty because despite behavioral loyalty can accurately measuring the past and present consumption behavior, it is difficult to distinguish between loyal customers and people who consume for convenience (Zhang et al., 2014).

The theory that underlies this research is the Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory (Oliver, 1999). This theory explains how to measure visitor satisfaction based on services, by comparing expectations with actual experiences. In relation to halal tourism, visitors naturally expect to encounter specific elements, such as halal food, prayer facilities, and a Muslim-friendly environment. Service satisfaction is important in assessing the quality of service for tourist destinations, including halal destinations (Purusottama & Wijanarti, 2022). When visitors' expectations are met, they will feel satisfied and tend to return to the place or even recommend it to others (Zulvianti et al., 2022; Ekka, 2023). Therefore, loyalty variable indicators consist of the following: (1) loyalty to products/services; (2) resistance to negative influence on the company/organization; and (3) reference to other parties (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Services Quality in Halal Tourism

Tourists who feel that they are well served will have a feeling of comfort and fun towards the services and services provider; however, bad services would revoke unpleasant

feelings. Service quality must be based on expectations that tourists are satisfied with the products or services provided (Spyridou, 2017), because service quality is one of the most important factors in achieving company goals. Additionally, Elisabeth et al. (2019) state that good service will provide good benefits for the company, while unsatisfied tourists are unlikely to buy products or use services for the second time. As an independent variable, service quality has a significant effect on customer satisfaction (Ferreira et al., 2021), in which good service makes tourists feel satisfied and are likely to revisit the place and recommend it to other prospective visitors (Zulvianti et al., 2022). Previous researchers have emphasized the relationship between service quality and satisfaction (Ferreira et al., 2021; Sulkaisi et al., 2021), and between service quality and loyalty (Sulkaisi et al., 2021). The indicators to measure service quality are reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles (Tjiptono, 2018). Based on theoretical studies and the results of previous studies, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H₁: Services quality has a positive effect on tourist satisfaction.

H₂: Services quality has a positive effect on tourist loyalty.

Satisfaction with Halal Tourism

Satisfaction is defined as the level of one's feelings after comparing their expectations with the perceived performance or results (Kotler, 2002; Kotler et al., 1999). In this case, tourist satisfaction refers to the tourists' feeling of pleasure towards the destination they visit because their perception have matched or exceeded their expectations.

Tourist satisfaction is crucial to fulfill because it is a significant factor to the development of halal tourism. As stated by Abror et al. (2019), that satisfying employees is a very important factor in achieving the success of halal tourism. Tourist satisfaction can be used as a benchmark for the success of tourism development (Susetyarini & Mashjoer, 2018) and an important key in increasing the number of tourist visits, both first-time visitors and frequent tourists (Masjhoer & Dzulkifli, 2019).

Durmaz et al. (2022) state that consumer satisfaction will affect consumer behavior regarding their future behaviour to express their good or bad experience. Furthermore, tourists who feel satisfied because their expectations have matched the reality during the trip are likely to desire a revisit to the same place. A high level of tourist satisfaction is closely related to the willingness of these tourists to recommend the destination to people around them (Do Valle et al., 2006) and shaping customer's commitment and loyalty (Chen & Chen, 2010; Li et al. 2015). This is also confirmed by Cossío-Silva et al. (2019) that highly loyal visitors are those who have high expectations about service quality, who perceive high service provided by the tourist destination, have a positive image of the destination, are satisfied with the tourist experience, will recommend to other potential tourists, and have the intention to return to visit.

Previous studies have proven that tourist satisfaction will significantly increase tourist loyalty (Al-ansi & Han, 2019; Hernández-Mogollón et al., 2020; Khan et al., 2021). Parra-Lopez et al. (2018), Ali et al. (2019), and Alrawadieh et al. (2019) found a positive and significant relationship between satisfaction and loyalty, in which, as stated by Fajriyati et al. (2020), the consequences of satisfaction can significantly increase tourist behavior and loyal attitude. The indicators used to measure tourist satisfaction are adopted from Masjhoer and Dzulkifli (2019) consisting of the offered tourism, marketing strategies, and ease of access. Based on theoretical studies and the results of previous studies, the following hypotheses can be formulated.

H₃: Tourist satisfaction has a positive effect on tourist loyalty.

H₄: Tourist satisfaction is able to mediate the effect of services quality on tourist loyalty.

Experience Quality of Halal Tourism

Customer experience, according to Pine and Gilmore (1998), occurs when companies deliberately use services as a stage and goods as props to engage individual customers in a way that creates an event that they cannot forget. Meanwhile other researcher state that experience, in relation with tourism, is the result of someone participating directly in tourism activities (Husein et al., 2018) and a rational and emotional response to an attractive impulse that can influence tourist behavioral intentions in the future (Suhartanto et al., 2019). This study used the dimensions of experience quality based on the research of Suhartanto et al. (2020), namely halal accommodation, halal facilities and services, and people in tourist destinations.

Several researchers have found that the variable of individual experience quality is related to satisfaction (Chen & Chen, 2010; Hernández-Mogollón et al., 2020; Moon & Han, 2018), which can be contributed by good facilities in halal tourism (Abror et al., 2019). Experience quality also has a close relationship with increasing tourist loyalty (Suhartanto et al., 2020; Sukaris et al., 2020). Happy and comfortable tourists, according to Sukaris et al. (2020), tend to develop loyalty towards the destination, and therefore, are likely to return to the destination and encourage other people to travel by sharing good their good experience in the destination as a moderating variable. Rajaratnam et al. (2014) found that previous experience was able to increase the relationship between service quality and satisfaction. Based on the theoretical studies and the previous findings, the hypothesis formulated in this study is:

H₅: Experience quality can moderate the effect of service quality on tourist loyalty.

Based on the theoretical studies and previous findings above, the empirical model can be illustrated in Figure 1.

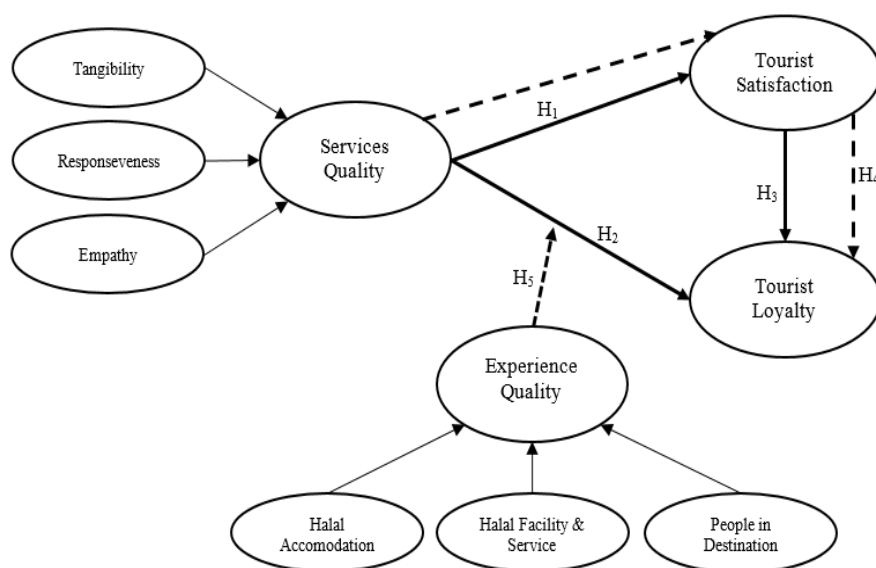


Figure 1 Empirical Model Research

Research Methods

There have been plenty of research on tourist satisfaction and loyalty to halal tourism, including those by Abror et al. (2019) and Han et al. (2019). However, there remain lack of comprehensiveness in these studies that have not been addressed. The present study applied quantative method analyzed the data using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM-PLS) analysis. This study only used the primary data collected using a questionnaire that was arranged based on the objectives of the research, and assessed using a 5-point Likert scale (5 = strongly agree; 4 = agree; 3 = neutral; 2 = disagree; 1 = strongly disagree). The respondents were selected using the purposive sampling from a population of all visitors (local and foreign) to halal tourism in Indonesia. The selection was based on the consideration that these tourists have visited or are currently visiting halal tourism. Further classification was made based on age, gender, education, and travel experience. The number of samples were determined using a method by Hai et al. (2020) by multiplying 24 indicators by 10, which equals to 240 respondents. In this study, the questionnaire was distributed to around 500 respondents and we received 440 responses in total. Therefore, the number of respondents has met the requirement..

The measurement of the SEM-PLS model was carried out in two stages, on the outer model and the inner model. The outer model was done to determine the validity and reliability of the data, while the inner model determined the causality of latent variables. To observe the significance of mediation and moderation, bootstrapping was run on the SmartPLS application. Hypothesis testing was carried out with reference to Hai et al. (2020), in which if the significance value of the p-value is smaller than 0.05 then the hypothesis is supported, but if the significance value of the p-value is greater than 0.05, then the hypothesis is not supported.

The analysis model can be reflected as follows.

Path Analysis Models

$$t_{Satis} = \beta_1 Serv_Qty + e$$

$$t_{Loyal} = \beta_1 Serv_Qty + e$$

$$t_{Loyal} = \beta_1 Satis + e$$

$$t_{Loyal} = \beta_1 Serv_Qty + \beta_2 Satis + e$$

Model Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA)

$$t_{Loyal} = \beta_1 Serv_Qty + \beta_2 Exp_Qty + \beta_3 Exp_Qty * Serv_Qty + e$$

Results and Discussion

Respondent Characteristics

Characteristics of respondents in this study can be illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1 Selected characteristics of the survey respondent

Respondent Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage
Age	Under 25 years old	175	39%
	25 years to 45 years old	184	41%
	Over 45 years old	87	20%
Gender	Male	203	46%
	Female	243	54%
Education	Up to High School	157	35%
	Bachelor Degree	191	43%
	Postgraduate	98	22%

Table 1 illustrates the classification of the respondents based on age, gender, and education. Halal tourism was dominated by female visitors, those aged 25-45 years, and those graduated a Bachelor’s degree. People aged 25-45 are at their productive stage who face more demanding responsibilities, and therefore, generally seek for recreational activities which they find from halal tourism. Meanwhile, more female tourists visiting halal tourism may be due to the guaranteed comfort and safety for women in halal tourism.

Goodness of Fit Model

The results of the SEM model suitability test using Smart-PLS are illustrated in Table 2. Based on the fit model test, the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) value is $0.056 < 0.10$, so this model fit the data and was proper for the analysis of Structural Equation Modeling.

Table 2 Fit Model Result

Fit Model	Saturated model	Estimated model
Standardized root mean square residual (SRMR)	0.056	0.056
d_ ULS	0.249	0.352
d_ G	0.302	0.315
Chi-square	757.022	738.680
Normed-Fit Index (NFI)	0.873	0.874

Reliability Test

Reliability testing used the composite reliability values with the provisions according to Hai et al. (2020) that the reliability value measured using composite reliability with a threshold for the accepted value is above 0.7. The results of reliability analysis in Table 3 indicate that all reliable variable were distributed.

Table 3 Reliability Test Result

Variable	Composite Reliability
Experience Quality	0.880
Service Quality	0.953
Tourist Loyalty	0.957
Turist Satisfaction	0.959

Validity Test

The results of the outer loading test can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4 Outer Loading & AVE Result

Constructs	Indicator / Dimension	Loading	AVE
Experience Quality	Halal Accommodation	0.866	0.709
	Halal Facilities & Service	0.872	
	People in the Destination	0.786	
Tourist Satisfaction	Tourism on offer	0.954	0.871
	Marketing Strategy	0.923	
	Ease of access	0.949	
Tourist Loyalty	Faithfulness	0.915	0.882
	Resistance	0.952	
	Referring	0.951	
Service Quality	Tangibility	0.942	0.887
	Responsiveness	0.909	
	Assurances	0.948	

Based on the Table 4, the outer loading values of all indicators for each variable are greater than 0.5, so all indicators are significant and convergently valid based on the bootstrapping assessment of the outer loading. In addition, the AVE value is also greater than 0.6 (Hai et al., 2020), so it can be concluded that the item is valid.

Effect of Variables

Table 5 illustrates the direct and indirect impacts of services quality on tourist loyalty with the tourist satisfaction variable as a mediator.

Table 5 The results of testing hypotheses path

Hypothesis	Direct Effect	Original sample	T statistics	P values	Supported
H ₁	Services Quality -> Satisfaction	0.819	34.688	0.000	H ₁ is supported
H ₂	Services Quality -> Loyalty	0.358	7.735	0.000	H ₂ is supported
H ₃	Satisfaction -> Loyalty	0.522	9.189	0.000	H ₃ is supported

Hypothesis	Indirect Effect	Original sample	T statistics	P values	Supported
H ₄	Experience Quality -> Loyalty	0.427	8.938	0.000	H ₄ is supported

Table 5 shows that the t-statistics services quality value on tourist satisfaction is 34.688, or greater than the t-table value of 1.650, and the p-value of 0.000 is smaller than the alpha value of 0.05. Therefore, H₁ was accepted, meaning that services quality has a positive and significant impact on the tourist satisfaction of halal tourism in Indonesia. The t-statistics services quality value on tourist loyalty is 7.735 which is greater than the t-table value of 1.650, and the p-value of 0.000 is smaller than the alpha value of 0.05. It means, H₂ was accepted, conveying that services quality has a positive and significant impact on tourist loyalty halal in Indonesia. Meanwhile, the indirect impact was measured by the value of t-statistics experience quality value on tourist satisfaction through satisfaction, namely 8.938, which is greater than the t-table value of 1.650, and the p-value of 0.000 is smaller than the alpha value of 0.05. Therefore, H₃ was accepted, meaning that services quality indirectly has positive and significant impacts on tourist loyalty through satisfaction of halal tourism tourists in Indonesia.

Based on Table 5, the following equation models are illustrated.

$$t_{Satis} = 0.819Serv_Qty + e$$

$$t_{Loyal} = 0.358Serv_Qty + e$$

$$t_{Loyal} = 0,522Satis + e$$

$$t_{Loyal} = 0,819Serv_Qty + 0,522Satis + e$$

To understand the impact of experience quality as a moderator of the effect of services quality on tourist loyalty, it can be illustrated in Table 6.

Table 6 The results of testing hypothesis MRA

Hypothesis	Moderated Effect	Original sample	T statistics	P values	Supported
H ₅	Service Quality x Experience Quality => Tourist Loyalty	0.049	3.160	0.002	H ₅ is supported

Table 6 shows that the t-statistic value of experience quality as a moderator for the effect of services quality on tourist loyalty is 3.160, while the t-table value is 1.650 and the p-value is 0.000 which is smaller than the alpha value of 0.05. Therefore, it accepts H₅, meaning that experience quality can moderate the positive and significant effects of services quality on tourist loyalty.

Based on Table 6, the following MRA model is illustrated.

$$t_{Loyal} = 0,358Serv_Qty + 0,097Exp_Qty + 0,049Exp_Qty * Serv_Qty$$

The full analysis model for the combination of path analysis and MRA can be seen in Figure 2.

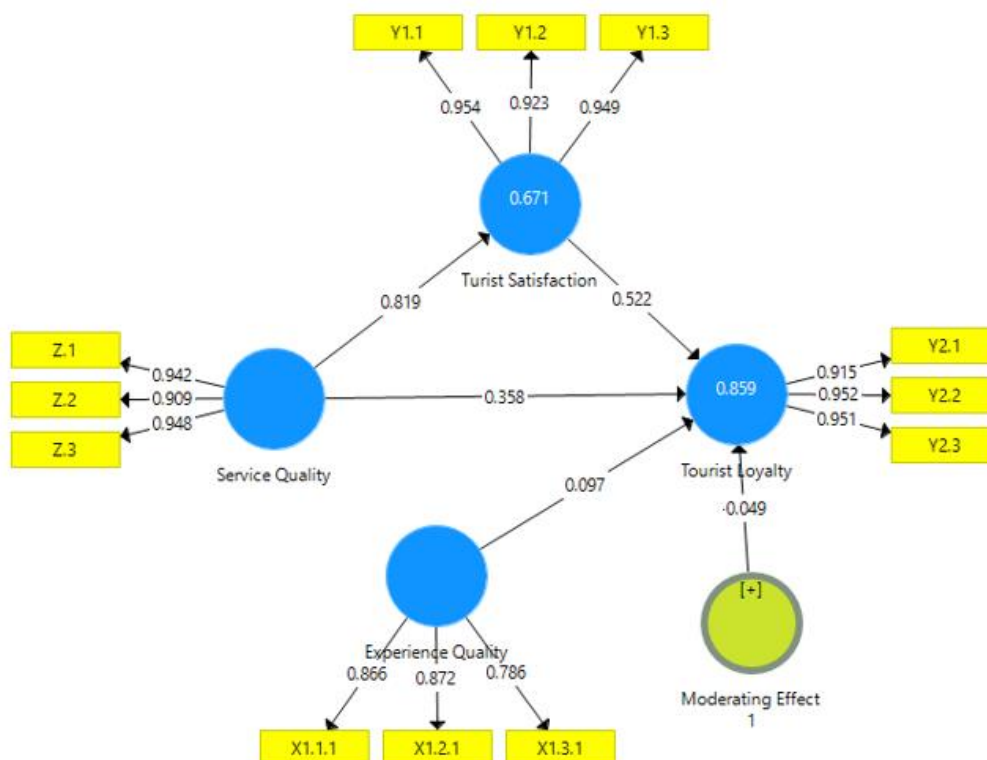


Figure 2 Full structure equation modeling (SEM) moderation-mediation combination

Discussion and Theoretical Implication

This study aims to analyze the influential factors of tourist loyalty to halal tourism in Indonesia, using experience quality and satisfaction as moderators and mediators. Research on halal tourism is still very relevant to the development of tourism in the world, especially considering the increasingly complex problems around this sector that require continuous scientific development. Tourist loyalty has captured the attention of many researchers because it is a vital part in encouraging the progress of halal tourism.

Our study confirms that, first, service quality has a positive and significant impact on tourist satisfaction. In other words, if the quality of the tourism services offered can match or even exceed tourist expectations, tourists will feel satisfied. Conversely, less memorable services can disappoint tourists. This supports the findings of Sulkaisi et al. (2021) and Shyju et al. (2021) that service quality has a significant effect on increasing customer satisfaction. Second, service quality has a direct and significant positive effect on tourist loyalty. Service quality is reflected in three dimensions, namely tangible, responsiveness, and empathy which collectively have significant outer loading. This finding shows the positive impact of service quality on tourist loyalty. It means that tourists who experience quality service when visiting halal tourism will grow tourist loyalty and are likely to revisit the tourist attractions, and even recommend them to other people, friends or relatives. The same rules apply to any types of tourism, including halal tourism. This finding supports Wantara (2015) and Akroush et al. (2016) that service quality has a positive and significant effect on loyalty.

Third, this study has confirmed that satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on tourist loyalty. In other words, if tourists feel satisfied and happy with the features offered by halal tourism, then tourists are likely to be loyal to halal tourism by, for example, having the intention to revisit, recommending halal tourism to friends or relatives, and sharing their interesting experience of halal tourism to other people. This finding supports Asmelash and Kumar (2020), Kim (2008), Rasoolimanesh et al. (2019), Ali et al. (2019), and Rahayu (2015) that tourist satisfaction is closely related to tourist loyalty. Fourth, indirect correlation is observed from service quality which has a positive and significant effect on tourist loyalty mediated by tourist satisfaction. It demonstrates that tourist satisfaction has a role in mediating the effect of service quality on tourist loyalty. That is, if the perceived service in tourist destination is of high quality and pleases tourists, then they will feel satisfied with these services. In turn, happy and satisfied tourists are most likely to revisit and recommend the tourist attractions, or in this case, halal tourism, they have visited. It supports the findings of Wintara (2015) and Sulkaisi et al. (2021) that satisfaction is able to mediate the relationship between service quality and loyalty.

Fifth, the quality of experience can moderate the quality of service on tourist loyalty. Also, quality experience can strengthen the influence of service quality. In other words, if the tourists perceived that the tourism provides high quality services that bring good experience, then tourist loyalty will be boosted. The results of this study support the findings of Rajaratnam et al. (2014) that the visitors' previous experience can increase the relationship between service quality and loyalty.

Conclusion

This study discusses that the quality of tourism services in halal destinations shows a positive contribution to tourist satisfaction and loyalty. These findings contribute to the literature, particularly on service quality by providing insights into its relationship with tourist loyalty through satisfaction and the role of experience quality as a moderator.

The results of the study clarify the service contribution that has been passed by quality tourists while traveling in halal destinations. Service quality is a very important factor and must always be considered by tourism managers. Creating a good experience and quality service that tourists feel when traveling must be carried out on an ongoing basis and adapt to technological developments. This is so that tourists who have visited are expected to revisit, recommend the destinations to other potential tourists, and share good stories about the tours they have visited. Recommendations from experienced tourists are the most appropriate marketing strategy in increasing the number of tourists, both foreign and domestic tourists.

The main limitation of this study is the overly large samples which made the researchers difficult to collect data and generalize the results. It was recommended for future researchers to consider more in-depth investigation, especially regarding halal tourism and its relation to experience quality, service quality, satisfaction, and tourist loyalty. In addition, future researchers can also consider religiosity as a moderating effect between the variables studied, as well as the linkages of halal tourism to the sustainability of future tourism.

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