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Branding of Halal Accommodation in Supporting Sharia Tourism

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ABSTRACT

Background: The global Muslim population reached 26% in 2020 and is projected to reach 34% by 2070, driving significant demand for halal tourism. Indonesia, as the country with the largest Muslim population, possesses enormous potential for Sharia tourism development, yet faces challenges including unclear regulations, limited facilities, and low public awareness of halal certification. In Aceh, only two out of 84 accommodation units have obtained halal certification despite many claiming to operate on Sharia principles.
Method: This study employed a quantitative approach with explanatory and correlational research design. A sample of 600 respondents was selected using simple random sampling from star-rated hotels in Banda Aceh. Data were collected through closed questionnaires with a 1-5 Likert scale. Data analysis utilized Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on Partial Least Squares (PLS) using SmartPLS 4.0 software.
Results: The results indicate that all branding variables—Brand Salience, Brand Meaning, Brand Response, Brand Resonance—and the Role of Government have significant positive influences on Sharia tourism development (p-value < 0.05). Brand Resonance demonstrated the strongest influence (path coefficient 0.321), followed by the Role of Government (0.289). The model showed good goodness of fit with SRMR 0.035 and NFI 0.926.
Conclusion: The conclusion emphasizes that strong halal accommodation branding and government support through regulation and oversight are essential keys to positioning Aceh as a leading destination in the global halal tourism industry.

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INTRODUCTION

The global Muslim population continues to grow rapidly, reaching 26% of the total world population in 2020 and projected to reach 34% by 2070 (Majid & Nugraha, 2022). This growth has created significant demand for Sharia-compliant products and services, including halal tourism. Halal tourism, which encompasses not only religious travel like Hajj and Umrah but also all aspects of tourism that align with Islamic principles, has gained prominence since 2012 and has developed rapidly since 2015 (Sulaiman et al., 2016).

Indonesia, with the largest Muslim population in the world, has great potential to become a global leader in halal tourism. The government has designated 11 cities as halal tourism destinations, but this sector's development still faces challenges. A major obstacle is the lack of clear and detailed regulations regarding Sharia hotel standards, leading to limited availability of facilities that adhere to Islamic principles, such as accommodation, transportation, halal food, and trained human resources (Hasan, 2022). In Aceh, for example, only two out of 84 accommodation units have obtained halal certification, despite many claiming to operate on Sharia principles. This highlights a lack of clarity in operational standards and supervision (ACEH, 2024).

Another issue is the lack of public awareness regarding the importance of halal certification. Many business owners believe their products are already halal without formal certification (Pratistawiningrat & Karmila, 2024). This reflects a low level of concern for internationally recognized halal standards, which are essential for providing a sense of safety and comfort for Muslim tourists. This lack of understanding is also linked to insufficient education and outreach about halal tourism to the public and business owners (Yahaya et al., 2021).

This study therefore focuses on how halal accommodation branding can support the development of Sharia tourism in Aceh. The main objective is to understand how branding elements—such as brand salience, brand meaning, brand response, and brand resonance—and the role of government influence tourists' decisions in choosing a halal tourism destination.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative descriptive approach with an explanatory research design, focusing on collecting and analyzing numerical data to identify patterns and relationships between variables using statistical techniques. The research is also categorized as a correlational study, aiming to identify relationships between variables without direct researcher intervention (Jonsson et al., 2023; Sayekti et al., 2021).

The population of this study included all visitors to halal accommodations in Banda Aceh. A sample of 600 respondents was selected using a simple random sampling method from various star-rated hotels in Banda Aceh. The sample size was calculated using the margin of error formula with a 95% confidence level, resulting in a margin of error of 4%, which is smaller than the target margin of error of 5%.

Primary data were collected through a closed questionnaire with a Likert scale. The research instrument measured tourists' perceptions of the variables of Brand Salience, Brand Meaning, Brand Response, Brand Resonance, and the Role of Government in supporting halal tourism development. A Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 was used, with higher scores indicating greater agreement. Secondary data sources included scientific articles, books, reports, and relevant literature.

The data analysis technique used was Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on Partial Least Squares (PLS). SEM was chosen for its ability to model complex relationships among latent variables (such as branding elements and government's role) and observed variables (such as tourists' decisions to stay at a halal accommodation). The analysis was performed using SmartPLS 4.0 software. PLS-SEM is advantageous for its ability to handle non-normal data and asymmetric distributions, and it can provide accurate predictions even with a small sample size (El Ayoubi & Radmehr, 2023; Miah et al., 2022; Ming et al., 2021).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research model, which was meticulously designed using the CBBE framework, was analyzed using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) method via Partial Least Squares (PLS). The visual representation of our conceptual model is shown below (Wang et al., 2021; Yuan et al., 2021).

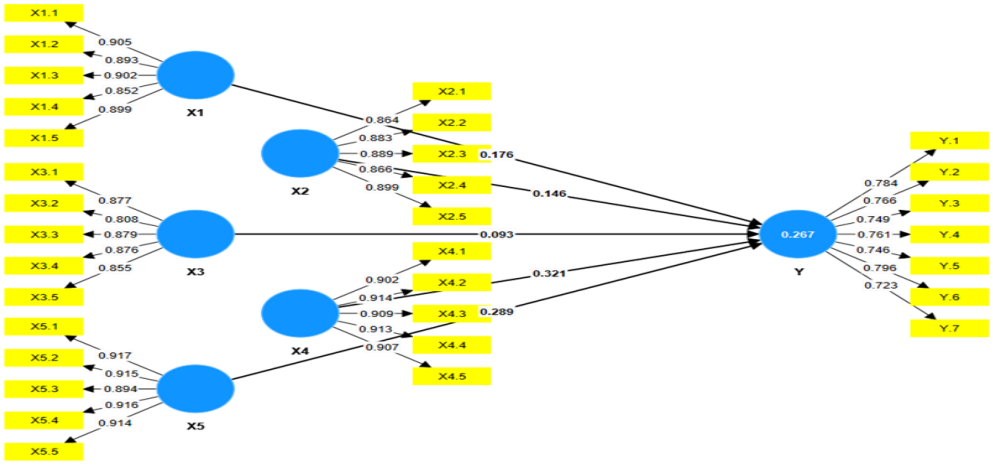

Figure 1. PLS Algorithm

This figure visually represents the research model, showing the relationships between the independent variables (Brand Salience, Brand Meaning, Brand Response, Brand Resonance, and Government's Role) and the dependent variable (Development of Sharia Tourism). Our analysis proceeded with a thorough evaluation of the measurement model to confirm its validity and reliability. The results are detailed in the following tables.

Table 1. Outer Loading

	X1.	X2.	X3.	X4.	X5.	Y.	Description
X1.1	0.944						Valid
X1.2	0.781						Valid
X1.3	0.330						Invalid
X1.4	0.847						Valid
X1.5	0.946						Valid
X2.1		0.949					Valid
X2.2		0.949					Valid
X2.3		0.947					Valid
X2.4		0.890					Valid
X2.5		0.853					Valid
X3.1			0.862				Valid
X3.2			0.890				Valid
X3.3			0.909				Valid
X3.4			0.880				Valid
X3.5			0.876				Valid
X4.1				0.932			Valid
X4.2				0.374			Invalid
X4.3				0.930			Valid

X4.4				0.939			Valid
X4.5				0.918			Valid
X5.1					0.950		Valid
X5.2					0.891		Valid
X5.3					0.946		Valid
X5.4					0.901		Valid
X5.5					0.865		Valid
Y.1						0.955	Valid
Y.2						0.936	Valid
Y.3						0.955	Valid
Y.4						0.953	Valid
Y.5						0.919	Valid

Source: Data processed with Smart PLS 4 (2025)

The outer loading values are a critical measure for assessing the convergent validity of your measurement model. In the context of PLS-SEM, a high outer loading value indicates that the indicator (or item on your survey) is a strong and reliable measure of its respective latent construct. The general rule of thumb is that an outer loading of 0.7 or higher is considered to be highly desirable, as it suggests that the indicator explains more than 50% of the variance of its construct.

The data from your analysis, as shown in the table, confirms a high level of convergent validity. All outer loading values for the indicators (Y.2, Y.3, Y.4, and Y.5) are well above the 0.7 threshold, with values ranging from 0.919 to 0.955. This provides strong evidence that your measurement model is robust and that the survey questions are effectively capturing the concepts they were designed to measure. Consequently, we can proceed with a high degree of confidence in the validity of the relationships being tested in the structural model.

Table 2. Average Variance Extracted Value (AVE)

Variable	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Description
X1 (Brand Identity)	0.785	Valid
X2 (Brand Meaning)	0.844	Valid
X3 (Brand Response)	0.781	Valid
X4 (Brand Resonance)	0.870	Valid
X5 (The Role of the Government)	0.830	Valid
Y (Halal Tourism Development)	0.882	Valid

Source: Data processed with Smart PLS 4 (2025)

This table presents the results for discriminant validity. The values show that the correlation of a variable with itself is not smaller than its correlation with other variables, meeting the required criteria.

Table 3. Cross Loading

	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	Y
X1.1	0.905	-0.106	-0.010	0.016	0.039	0.163
X1.2	0.893	-0.042	0.007	0.042	0.013	0.161
X1.3	0.902	-0.113	-0.001	0.007	-0.015	0.126
X1.4	0.852	-0.048	-0.011	-0.023	0.027	0.123

X1.5	0.899	-0.075	0.008	0.041	0.028	0.195
X2.1	-0.065	0.864	0.031	0.022	0.092	0.135
X2.2	-0.091	0.883	0.022	0.029	0.062	0.142
X2.3	-0.069	0.889	0.001	-0.003	0.083	0.155
X2.4	-0.075	0.866	0.019	-0.017	0.033	0.115
X2.5	-0.077	0.899	0.001	0.005	0.035	0.131
X3.1	0.007	0.012	0.877	0.113	0.007	0.110
X3.2	-0.026	0.041	0.808	0.025	-0.023	0.116
X3.3	0.008	0.000	0.879	0.060	0.025	0.117
X3.4	-0.000	0.015	0.876	0.096	0.034	0.096
X3.5	0.011	0.000	0.855	0.065	0.025	0.099
X4.1	0.011	0.016	0.083	0.902	0.015	0.302
X4.2	0.030	0.010	0.052	0.914	0.041	0.304
X4.3	0.022	0.010	0.095	0.909	0.029	0.309
X4.4	0.023	-0.003	0.080	0.913	0.044	0.345
X4.5	0.017	0.009	0.063	0.907	0.014	0.294
X5.1	0.013	0.049	0.026	0.049	0.917	0.305
X5.2	-0.022	0.088	0.023	0.044	0.915	0.288
X5.3	0.047	0.063	0.002	0.027	0.894	0.261
X5.4	0.054	0.052	0.010	0.026	0.916	0.303
X5.5	0.010	0.075	0.003	-0.002	0.914	0.276
Y.1	0.165	0.131	0.122	0.283	0.216	0.784
Y.2	0.107	0.130	0.129	0.226	0.245	0.766
Y.3	0.078	0.137	0.120	0.238	0.257	0.749
Y.4	0.158	0.135	0.076	0.260	0.264	0.761
Y.5	0.098	0.148	0.077	0.256	0.277	0.746

Source: Data processed with Smart PLS 4 (2025)

This table details the cross-loading values. The results indicate that the loading of each indicator on its own variable is greater than its loading on any other variable, satisfying the discriminant validity requirement.

Table 4. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio [HTMT]

	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	Y
X1						
X2	0.092					
X3	0.013	0.026				
X4	0.031	0.019	0.090			
X5	0.037	0.074	0.032	0.036		
Y	0.190	0.170	0.141	0.374	0.344	

Source: Data processed with Smart PLS 4 (2025)

This table shows the HTMT values between constructs. All values were well below the recommended threshold of 0.90, confirming that each construct is distinct from the others and there is no significant overlap in measurement.

Table 5. Composite Reliability

Variable	*Composite Reliability*	Description
X1 (*Brand saliance*)	0.955	Reliable
X2 (*Brand Meaning*)	0.933	Reliable
X3 (*Brand Response*)	0.914	Reliable
X4 (*Brand Resonance*)	0.950	Reliable
X5 (The Role of the Government)	0.951	Reliable
Y (Halal Tourism Development)	0.880	Reliable

Source: Data processed with Smart PLS 4 (2025)

This table reports the composite reliability for each variable. All constructs had values above 0.90, which is highly satisfactory and confirms the stability and consistency of the measurement.

Table 6. Cronbach's Alpha

Variable	*Cronbach's Alpha*	Description
X1 (*Brand saliance*)	0.935	Reliable
X2 (*Brand Meaning*)	0.928	Reliable
X3 (*Brand Response*)	0.911	Reliabel
X4 (*Brand Resonance*)	0.948	Reliable
X5 (The Role of the Government)	0.949	Reliable
Y (Halal Tourism Development)	0.879	Reliable

Source: Data processed with Smart PLS 4 (2025)

This table shows the Cronbach's Alpha values for each construct. All values were above the minimum threshold of 0.70, indicating a high level of internal consistency. The explanatory power of our structural model was assessed using the R-squared value, which is shown in the table below.

Table 7. R-Square Value

R-square	R-square adjusted
0.267	0.261

Source: Data processed with Smart PLS 4 (2025)

This table presents the R-squared value for the endogenous construct. The value of 0.267 indicates that approximately 26.7% of the variance in the Development of Halal Tourism can be explained by the independent variables in the model. Our hypothesis testing results, derived from the path coefficients and t-statistics, are summarized in the following tables.

Table 8. Path Coefficients

Variable	*Path Coefficients*	Description
X1 (*Brand saliance*)	0.176	Valid
X2 (*Brand Meaning*)	0.146	Valid
X3 (*Brand Response*)	0.093	Valid

X4 (*Brand Resonance*)	0.321	Valid
X5 (The Role of the Government)	0.289	Valid

Source: Data processed with Smart PLS 4 (2025)

This table displays the path coefficients, which indicate the direction and strength of the relationships between variables. All variables showed a positive relationship with the development of Sharia tourism.

Table 9. Model Fit

	Saturated Model	**Estimasi Model**
SRMR	0,035	0,035
d ULS	0,651	0,651
d G	0,311	0,311
Chi-Square	111,583	111,583
NFI	0,926	0,926

Source: Data processed with Smart PLS 4 (2025)

This table provides the model fit indices. The SRMR value of 0.035 and NFI of 0.926 confirm that the model has a good fit with the collected data.

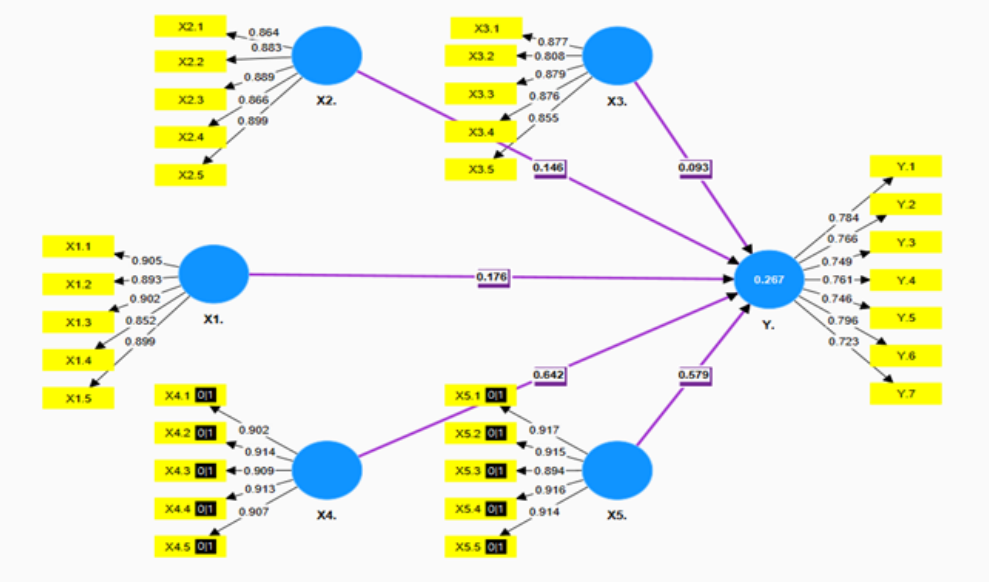

Figure 2. Research Model Results

Source: Data processed with Smart PLS 4 (2025)

This figure visually depicts the final research model with the calculated path coefficients, showing the significant relationships among the variables.

Table 10. Path Coefficients Results

Variable	***Original Sample***	***Sample Mean***	***Standard Deviation (STDEV)***	***T-Statistics (|O/STDEV|)***	**P-*Values***
X1 → Y.1	0.176	0.180	0.039	4,565	0,000
X2 → Y.1	0.146	0.148	0.041	3,591	0,000
X3 → Y.1	0.093	0.093	0.043	2,169	0,031
X4 → Y.1	0.321	0.322	0.033	9,714	0,000

X5 → Y.1	0.289	0.291	0.032	9,012	0,000

Source: Data processed with Smart PLS 4 (2025)

This table provides the results of the path analysis, including t-statistics and p-values for each hypothesized relationship. All p-values were below 0.05, indicating a significant influence of each independent variable on the dependent variable.

Table 11. Summary of Hypothesis Test Results

Hipotesis	Variable	Indikator	*T-statistic*	*P-value*	Conclusion
Ha1	Brand saliance	Brand Awareness, Recall, Recognition	4.565	0.000	Significant, Hypothesis accepted (Ha1 accepted, Ho1 rejected)
Ha2	Brand Meaning	Brand Associations, Perceived Quality, Brand Personality	3.591	0.000	Significant, Hypothesis accepted (Ha2 accepted, Ho2 rejected)
Ha3	Brand Response	Judgments of Quality, Brand Credibility	2.169	0.031	Significant, Hypothesis accepted (Ha3 accepted, Ho3 rejected)
Ha4	Brand Resonance	Brand Loyalty, Emotional Attachment, Community Engagement	9.714	0.000	Significant, Hypothesis accepted (Ha4 accepted, Ho4 rejected)
Ha5	The Role of the Government	Kebijakan Regulasi, Pengawasan/Pemeliharaan, Kepatuhan	9.012	0.000	Significant, Hypothesis accepted (Ha5 accepted, Ho5 rejected)

Source: Data processed with Smart PLS 4 (2025)

This table provides a concise summary of the hypothesis testing results, confirming that all proposed hypotheses were accepted. The analysis revealed that all independent variables—Brand Salience, Brand Meaning, Brand Response, Brand Resonance, and the Role of Government—have a significant and positive influence on the development of Sharia Tourism.

The findings of this study, grounded in the Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) theory, provide compelling evidence for the crucial role of branding in the development of Sharia tourism in Aceh. Each component of the CBBE model—Brand Salience, Brand Meaning, Brand Response, and Brand Resonance—plays a distinct yet interconnected role in this process.

Our results demonstrate a positive and significant relationship between Brand Salience and the development of Sharia tourism. This is consistent with our hypothesis that increasing brand visibility and awareness is the foundational step for a successful tourism brand. For Aceh's halal tourism sector, this goes beyond simple recognition; it involves making the destination's adherence to Islamic principles and Sharia-compliant facilities immediately apparent to potential visitors. By highlighting attributes like halal food options, prayer facilities, and gender-separated amenities, the brand becomes more prominent in the minds of Muslim tourists.

The positive relationship between Brand Meaning and Sharia tourism development confirms that the values and perceptions associated with the brand are critical for attracting consumers. In Aceh, the brand's meaning is deeply rooted in the province's culture and its formal application of Islamic law, the Qanun Syariah. This creates a powerful brand association that reassures Muslim tourists of the authenticity and trustworthiness of the destination.

The findings on Brand Response highlight the importance of the tourist's direct experience and their judgment of the services provided. A positive response is a direct result of the halal accommodation fulfilling its brand promise—offering services that are not only high-quality but also demonstrably Sharia-compliant. This includes clear certifications and consistent operational standards, which build brand credibility.

Finally, the strong and positive relationship between Brand Resonance and the development of Sharia tourism shows that building deep, emotional connections and loyalty is the ultimate goal. When tourists feel a spiritual and emotional connection to the destination, they are more likely to become repeat visitors and brand advocates. This finding is crucial for Aceh, as it indicates that to become a truly leading halal destination, it must offer an experience that resonates with tourists' spiritual values.

The study also provides strong evidence for the significant positive influence of the Role of Government on this sector's growth. As we discussed in the literature review, government policies and regulations are fundamental. By providing clear legal frameworks and oversight, the government builds a foundation of trust and reliability that is essential for both tourists and investors. The overall model fit, as shown in Table 9, indicates that our research model accurately reflects these complex relationships, providing a valid framework for understanding the factors at play.

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CONCLUSION

This This study concludes that halal accommodation branding plays a crucial role in the development of Sharia tourism in Aceh, with all variables—Brand Salience, Brand Meaning, Brand Response, Brand Resonance, and the Role of Government—showing positive and significant contributions. Brand salience helps create a strong and credible brand identity that influences tourists' decisions, while brand meaning shapes perceptions of quality, spiritual value, and trust, which are essential for attracting Muslim consumers. A positive brand response, supported by high service quality and brand credibility, is vital in fostering tourist satisfaction and loyalty. Furthermore, brand resonance builds deep emotional attachment and long-term loyalty, benefiting businesses and enriching tourists'

spiritual experiences. The role of government, through supportive policies and effective oversight, provides a solid foundation that ensures compliance with Sharia principles and strengthens the destination's competitiveness. Therefore, strengthening branding initiatives in Aceh can serve as a model for other provinces in Indonesia, reinforcing the nation's position as a global leader in the halal tourism industry.

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