

Singapore Image as a Muslim-Friendly Destination

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Abstract:- Destination image as a description of a tourist destination. Singapore is a destination country for Indonesian tourist, countries surroundings and international. The purpose of this study is to identify and describe the image of Singapore as a Muslim-friendly tourist destination. This research method is a research approach using phenomenology, the focus of the research describes the meaning of the experiences experienced by several individuals. Researchers experienced firsthand the Muslim-friendly conditions in Singapore and based on summaries from several respondents. The results of the research are the image of Muslim-friendly tourist destinations, namely: cognitive aspects, close, easy, affordable locations, lots of halal cuisine, mosques, and prayer rooms in every tourist destination in Singapore; unique aspects, many Muslim tourists, safe, comfortable, tourists can enjoy culinary at night, friendly residents, disciplined, and security is maintained, and can enjoy traveling on foot and using public transportation monorail; affective image, travel is calm and comfortable, there are directions to the mosque or prayer room, there are directions to tourist destinations, map boards, and nearby tourist destinations.

Keywords:- Destination Image, Singapore, Muslim Friendly.

I. INTRODUCTION

Before the COVID-19 pandemic all over the world, tourism was something to look forward to and a moment to behold for family, friends, and relatives. Destinations and its attractions are taken into careful consideration. For some, Indonesian tourists included, travelling abroad is one of the options available. As a nation of Muslim majority, some of Indonesian tourists choose the country of destinations carefully, in order to be sure that the destination country has sufficient facilities for prayers, halal food, and a Muslim-friendly environment.

Kusumawardhani (2018), “in addition to Singapore, Indonesian tourists are highly fond of travelling to South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, and Western Europe. Especially by end of the year holiday, these countries are packed with

visitors. The three leading popular destination countries among Indonesian tourists are Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand”.

The image of tourism destination plays a major part in tourist’s travel experience. A tourist destination must be developed to enhance the quality of travel. Every activities or purchase plays a part in the overall tourist satisfaction.

Muslim tourists, naturally, will search for halal-certified restaurants, places of worship, and comfort during the trip. Before choosing a destination, they will carefully study the reviews written by previous travelers. The good experience previous travelers had will excite potential visitors. In contrary, a bad experience will turn the visitors away.

Putri, et al (2015:4), based on this point of view, the destination image, which consists of objective enlightenment, impressions, prejudices, hopes, emotions and thoughts, will greatly affect potential tourists to choose the holiday destination.

This research aims to describe in details the Singapore’s image as a Muslim-friendly tourism destination. It can be used as reference for potential tourists planning to visit Singapore. Because going to new places, especially other countries, can make potential tourists feel nervous, worried, or confused. Therefor this research aims to summarize Singapore’s image as a Muslim-friendly destination.

II. THEORY

Tourism image according to Kotler and Keller (2008) is a feeling of disappointment or pleasure felt by someone, that arises as a result of comparing the perceived performance of the product (or result) against the expectations of customer. Prayag (2008) in Coban, (2012), tourist satisfaction is an overall measure of tourist opinions on each destination quality. Coban (2012) that measure can be considered as value on the quality of the results of the following destinations for tourism, for example, treatment and care experienced by travelers in a destination, but it is not only the result at the end of his experience. Yuksel et al. (2010)

measure satisfaction with three components, the first relates to whether or not tourists are happy with their decision to visit a certain destination, second is the belief that choosing a related destination is the right decision, and third is the overall level of satisfaction during the trip to the destination. Diarta (2009) defines the belief that tourists have about the products or services that tourists purchased or will be purchased. The image of a destination is not always formed from experience or facts, but can be formed so that it becomes a strong motivating factor or driving force for tourists to travel to the destination. Destination image based on tourist ratings may vary from one tourist to another. Coban (2012) in his research explains that that image is composed of a rational assessment results or cognitive image and the assessment of emotional or affective imagery of the destination itself.

Qu et al., (2011) in his research measures the image of tourist destinations based on three elements, namely:

A. Cognitive image

Mowen and Minor (2010) stated that knowledge is acquired through a cognitive learning process. Cognitive learning is defined as an active process in which people form associations between concepts, learn a sequence of concepts, solve problems, and get input. Cognitive relates to the possibility or tendency that individuals will perform specific actions or behave in certain ways towards certain objects, even the conative component may include the actual behavior itself. The consumer's judgment is based on the difference between a set of attribute combinations that are seen as ideal for the individual and his or her perception of the combination of attributes that actually are. In other words, the assessment is based on the difference between the ideal and the actual.

B. Unique image

Unique image relates to the uniqueness that is owned or contained in a tourist attraction. One tourist attraction certainly has a different level of uniqueness compared to others. This uniqueness is what attracts tourists to visit a destination. The more unique or different the attractiveness of a tourism object, the more it will give a higher image of the tourism object. It is because its uniqueness cannot be replaced by other tourism objects.

C. Affective image

Affective image is more based on feelings than on beliefs and knowledge about the objects. Schiffman and Kanuk (2010) state that consumers' emotions or feelings about certain products or brands are the affective components of certain attitudes. These emotions and feelings are often considered by consumer researchers to be very evaluative in nature, which includes a person's assessment of the attitude object directly and thoroughly. The Affective Model says that individual customer assessments of a product are not solely based on regional calculations but are also based on the level of aspirations, learning behavior, specific emotions (satisfaction, aversion), mood and others .

The researcher takes the opinion of Qu et al, (Kim, Kyungmo & Hakjun, 2017) in Nia Chunashvili Isuf Tahoe (2019) that the image of a tourism destination is built based on 3 components that are arranged hierarchically, namely:

- Cognitive (Cognitive), this stage contains a component of awareness; what the customer knows or thinks about a destination
- Affective, namely how the customer feels about the destination, including feeling of likes, dislikes or neutral.
- Unique (Unique Image)
- The uniqueness of a tourist attraction, for example Papua with Bakar Batu, Bangka Belitung with beaches decorated with large granite stones, and so on.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

Methods used in this research are qualitative descriptive, surveys and direct observations during Singapore trip. The research approach uses phenomenology , because the focus of this research is to describe in details the experiences by several individuals. The researcher experienced firsthand how Muslim-friendly the environment is in Singapore, and also add to this research the experience of several respondents.

The research was carried out in Singapore in January 2020, before the outbreak of the covid 19 pandemic. Phenomenological research was done based on the experience of researcher during trips in Singapore. The research indicators are:

Table 1.

Destination Image		
Cognitive	- Quality of experience and touristic attractions - Entertainment/outdoor activities and cultural tradition	- Interesting and beautiful tours - Tourist attraction
Unique	- Local attractions - Appealing destination - Natural environment	- Local culture - Different culture from other tours - Nature tourism
Affective	- Pleasant and arousing - Relaxing and exciting	- Safety and comfort - Attractions

IV. RESEARCH RESULTS

The results of the research on the Image of Singapore as Muslim-friendly destination are classified into 3 parts, namely cognitive images, unique images, and affective images. Singapore has become one of the main tourist destinations for tourists around the world.

A. Cognitive Image

Cognitive image contains of awareness and knowledge, and information the researcher obtain regarding Singapore tourism. *Cognitive destination image* is an expression that is in the mind and then visualized by tourists about an object (in this case a tourist attraction). It aims to increase one's knowledge of the destination. According to experts, cognitive image consists of *quality of experiences, tourist attractions, environment and infrastructure, entertainments in outdoor activity, and the cultural traditions* (Qu et al., 2011).

Travelling to Singapore in 'backpacker' style. Tourists select and book tickets using Traveloka *e-commerce* or direct airlines. Hotel reservations using hotels.com or booking.com. The existence of this booking service makes it easier for tourists to booked and travel abroad in their convenience time. Price and budget can be arranged based on how much the tourists are willing to spend.

Tourist attractions in Singapore which are considered as having high desirability among potential tourists are:

➤ Universal Studio

Universal studio is a tourist attraction which presents cartoons, games, and movie-themed rides. Tourists can experience games, or attend shows of popular characters, such as transformers, minions, dinosaurs, mummies, and so on. Universal Studios is located in the Sentosa Island area. A total of 18 of the 24 movie-themed rides are specially designed for its Singapore location. There are seven movie-themed zones, each of which is uniquely designed. You will find the famous Hollywood Walk of Fame in the Hollywood zone. As you walk its version of New York streets, the landscape around you will become a charming city skyscraper, complete with mock underground station entrances.

Universal studio visitors can exit and re-enter the studio in the same day with the stamp/ticket. This tourist attraction can be considered as Muslim-friendly, because it provides prayers' room for Muslim.



Fig 1. Location of the prayer room at Universal Studio
Source. <https://www.sunburstadventure.com/place-prayer-di-universal-studio-singapore.html>

The prayer room at Universal Studio is quite comfortable and has air-conditioned, provide ablution space, and prayer mats are available although the room is not too spacious. There are mosques in Universal Studios vicinity, but it takes 1 hour to get there. The Temenggong Daeng Ibrahim Mosque is located around Universal Studio, but the tourist have to ride the monorail to the mosque. Therefore, it is not recommended to travel to Universal Studios on Fridays, because of the Friday prayer service.

For culinary delights in the Universal Studios area, there are restaurants which provide halal food which Muslims can enjoy. There are Malaysian food available, chicken-based food such as McDonald's, and briyani rice. The different in Singapore McDonalds does not sell rice like its Indonesian counterpart which normally Indonesian loves to eat rice for lunch and dinner.

➤ Marina Bay

Located in the heart of Singapore, Marina Bay has plenty of activities for Singapore visitors. There are iconic attractions such as the Merlion Statue and the three high-rises that make up Marina Bay Sands, as well as the Art Science Museum. This destination is not to be missed by anyone visiting Singapore. In terms of Muslim-friendly tourism in Marina Bays, there is a mosque called Maolan Mohd Ali MC Mosque, it is a clean, comfortable, and easy destination for Muslim tourists to experience.

➤ Kampong Glam

One of the oldest urban areas in Singapore, it is a blend of ancient traditions and modern lifestyles. Kampong Glam Singapore has a beautiful mosque, it is called the Sultan Mosque. This mosque itself is considered as a tourist destination. Around the mosque there are also halal cuisines, including nasi padang, nasi beriyani, and nasi lemak. There are many Muslims in this area who perform Friday prayers. The location of Kampong Glam is also in the Arab village area and

many Muslim tourists choose this area to stay and enjoy local culinary.



Fig 2. Sultan Mosque Personal Documentation

➤ Culinary Center

There are many Indian, Indonesian and Middle Eastern restaurants available in Singapore selling halal certified food. Little India and the Arab Quarter are halal culinary centers that are sought after by tourists. In particular the Arab Quarter, which has a variety of Turkish, Lebanese and Egyptian restaurants serving delicious halal food. While dine in there, we can take time to wander around the narrow streets and alleys to see everything from one-of-a-kind clothing by local designers to the various fabrics, rugs and souvenirs in this bustling and colorful venue.

Singapore also provides a shopping center that can be enjoyed by Muslim tourists to find their needs, such as in Mustafa. The shopping center is very complete, and can cater to different needs we may enjoy while travelling in Singapore. Indeed, there are several halal culinary centers available for Muslim travelers.

B. Unique Image

Unique image relates to the uniqueness that is owned or contained in a tourist attraction. One tourist attraction certainly has a different level of uniqueness compared to others. This uniqueness is what attracts tourists to visit a tourist attraction. Coban (2012) *Unique destination image* is the response from tourists that arises because the attractions possess an experience that incomparable to other tourist attractions. It aims to make an attraction feel more special. Unique images consist of *natural environments, appealing destinations, and local attractions.*

Natural environment, Singaporean's culture are discipline and obeying the rules. This country is clean, tidy, and the people are disciplined. When queuing for the train or monorail, no one is jostling, all queues are on the track. The area is clean and there are no trash to be found, every nooks and crannies has its own trashcan. There is a unique morning view in Singapore, in the Kampong Glam area. You often see janitors in the morning to keep things in order. Even for simple task like destroying used cans.

Appealing destinations means cultures which differs from other destinations. Based on the results of observations, Muslims will have no hard time finding places for prayers, signs pointing to Mosque location are easy to find, as well as finding halal food and drinks. It can be concluded that Singapore is a Muslim-friendly tourist destination. Discipline habit in this country is also a different aspect especially from Indonesian visitors.

Natural environment or tourism in Singapore with nature vibes, namely Garden By The Bay, Singapore Botanical Gardens, Singapore Zoo, Cloud Forest, Changi Beach, Mount Faber Park, Butterfly Garden, and others. These attractions offer prayer rooms. Something that is unique and different when traveling in Singapore is the comfort of being a pedestrian and using every public transportations especially for Indonesian visitors.

C. Affective Image

Consumers' emotions or feelings about certain products or brands are considered the affective components of certain attitudes. These emotions or feelings are often considered by consumer researchers to be very evaluative in nature, which includes a person's assessment of the attitude object directly and thoroughly. Affective image is an individual customer's assessment of a product not solely based on regional calculations but also based on the level of aspirations, learning behavior, specific emotions (satisfaction, aversion), mood and others.

Artuğer, S., et al. (2013), an effective destination image is an expression that appears in the minds of tourists and their like or dislike in associate to the destination visited. It aims to influence or change the attitude of tourists. Affective images consist of pleasant, arousing, relaxing, and exciting.

Based on the research results, divided into 2 categories, namely 1) *Pleasant and arousing*, and 2) *Relaxing and exciting*. Based on *Pleasant and arousing* or a sense of security, traveling in Singapore feels safe and comfortable. Enjoying culinary at night can also be done safely and comfortably.



Fig 3. Halal culnar in Jalan Kayu Personal Documentation



Fig 4. Minang House, Orchard Road Personal Documentation

The ease of getting halal culinary in Singapore makes Muslim tourists feel safe and comfortable. Padang-based cuisine is also sold in this country, although the price is higher compared to getting the same menu in Indonesia.

Judging from *Relaxing and exciting* or something fun, it can be described through various Muslim-friendly tourist destinations that provide facilities for worship and halal culinary. Every tourist destination has facilities for worship and halal culinary. Visiting Singapore feel no big difference for Muslim tourists. Because Singaporean are disciplined, friendly, and easy to get the information they need. Muslims who wear the hijab are also allowed to enjoy destinations in Singapore. There are information signs for mosques, prayer rooms, halal cuisine, road directions, and directions. This makes it easier for tourists to do many kinds of tourist activities in Singapore. The following are the results of the research obtained regarding directions, mosques, and prayer rooms provided in public facilities.



Fig 5. Zamzam Restaurant



Fig 6. Street sign to Madrasah Islamiah



Fig 7. Masjid Al-Falah Personal Documentation

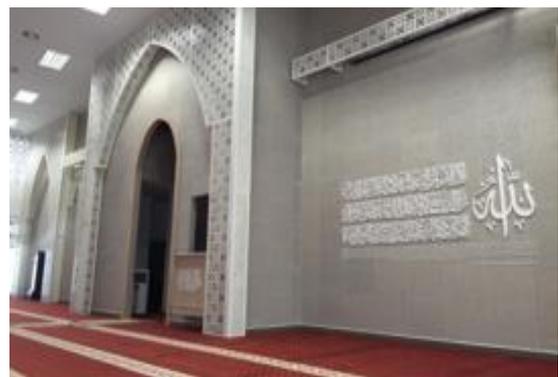


Fig 8. Interior of masjid Al Falah Personal Documentation



Fig 9. Musholla sign in Changi Airport Personal Documentation

There are many facilities for Muslim tourists to do activities in Singapore. There are many halal cuisines available in tourist attractions. There are directions signs to make finding those facilities easier for tourists, road congestions are none-existent, safe vehicles ride, and public transportation is available such as the MRT (Mass Rapid Transportation), buses and taxis that makes it easier for tourists to commute.

V. CONCLUSION

Singapore can be considered as a Muslim friendly destinations among their neighbor country, Indonesian travelers.

Based on the researches detailed previously, it can be concluded the factors of the image of a Muslim-friendly tourist destinations, namely ; **cognitive aspect**, the location is close, convenient, affordable, halal culinary options, mosques are nearby in every popular tourist attraction in Singapore; **unique aspects**, many other Muslim tourists, safe, comfortable, tourists can enjoy culinary at night, friendly residents, disciplined, and security is maintained, and can enjoy traveling on foot and using public transportation monorail; **affective imagery**, travel is calm and comfortable, there are directions to the mosque or prayer room, there are directions to tourist destinations, map boards, and directions to nearby tourist destinations.

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