

Structural Equation Modeling of Halal Sports Tourism on the Coasts of Iran

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Abstract

Purpose: Halal tourism is one of the newest phenomena in the tourism industry and specific to Muslims, and beach tourism is one of the most popular forms of tourism, and the purpose of this research is to investigate the structural model of halal sports tourism on the coasts of Iran.

Method: the research method was quantitative, and the data were collected through a questionnaire and analyzed. The structure of this questionnaire was based on the findings of the qualitative section. The research approach was based on structural equation modeling, and the questionnaire was developed and organized in the form of a 5-point Likert scale. In order to check validity and reliability, Fornell and Larcker (1981) criteria and combined reliability (Dillon-Goldstein coefficient) were used. The statistical population of the research consists of tourists, athletes and sports tourists who came to the seaside to use the beach. The sampling method in this section was chosen from the type available from beach tourists.

Results: the main results of the research included the achievements and strategies of tourism, the prerequisites and drivers of tourism, and the existing challenges of halal tourism.

Conclusion: it is necessary to have a single center in charge of coastal tourism affairs so that these coastal spiritual resources can be exploited for the proper benefit, and considering the benefits of implementing the halal sports tourism model with the aim of providing order and security in the coasts of Iran.

Keywords: Sports tourism, coasts, halal tourism, Iran.

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Introduction

Sport is a popular tool for achieving various goals, and there is little attraction that can attract and organize groups like sport (Kim et al., 2019). Tourism is a social and economic phenomenon around the world, arising from the human need for leisure, contact with nature, and the desire to visit new places and cultures (Hajinejad and Paydar, 2015). Tourism has various types, and sports tourism is one of them, and this type of tourism has had the highest growth among the different sectors of tourism (Ehsani et al., 2010). Gibson stated that sports tourism includes three types of behavior: active sports tourism, event or passive sports tourism, and sports memory tourism (Gibson et al., 2002). In another definition, Lesjak (2017), stated that sports tourism is one of the types of tourism, the scope of activities of which includes five sectors: sports events, sports attractions, sports tours, sports resorts, and sports travel, and each sector has various activities under it, and it is necessary for the relevant policy makers to pay due attention and attention to these activities in determining the policies for the promotion of sports tourism, because since ancient times, people have been traveling to participate in sports festivals (Kaplanidou, 2007).

Coastal tourism is a full spectrum of tourism, leisure, and recreational activities that take place in coastal areas and near-shore waters. Accordingly, the supply of coastal tourism products includes accommodation, catering, the food industry, second homes, and supporting infrastructure for coastal development. As the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration points out, among all the activities that take place along the coastline and near the ocean, none is growing in volume and diversity more than coastal tourism and recreation (Minoui, 2014). The changing nature of this sector and its volume necessitates attention to government programs, policies, and plans related to coastal tourism. Halal is an

Arabic word meaning the production of products and the provision of services in a way that is approved by Islamic laws and regulations (Yanes et al., 2017). In this regard, one type of tourism that has recently gained attention is Halal tourism. Accordingly, some countries have provided facilities for Muslim tourists, in addition to the opportunities they have created to attract domestic tourism (Sajjadi et al., 2018). Coastal environments are considered one of the most sensitive environmental systems. Coastal areas are of high importance and value due to their sensitive and productive ecosystems. Therefore, understanding the behavior of the coastline greatly helps better management of the coasts (Razmi et al., 2016).

In this type of tourism, adherence to religious etiquette by Muslims during travel, participation in recreational programs, and use of halal services, including halal food, are of great importance (Battour, 2018). The non-use of haram (unhalal) food items and hospitality accompanied by the observance of religious matters and Islamic principles, the slaughter of animals and cooking of food in a halal manner, the existence of separate pools for women and men, the call to prayer (adhan) and the holding of congregational prayers, and the separate prayer rooms for women and men are among the characteristics of halal tourism that are of interest to Muslim and even non-Muslim tourists (Funk & Dong, 2019). sports tourism as a sports model accounts for 15% of the tourism market, and it is predicted that this figure will increase to more than 30% by 2020 (Funk & Dong, 2019). Halal tourism is a behavioral-operational model in which the evaluation of the impacts on various tourism types in the country of Iran is present, and the halal model can lead to the development of some types of tourism such as religious, cultural, historical, medical, and ecotourism, while it can be a limiting factor for recreational, marine, and adventure tourism (Hajinejad, 2016).

Lau et al. (2022), in their research on the development of sports tourism in Alor Sahel, Indonesia, stated that local communities are very enthusiastic about sports tourism but lack basic skills and knowledge on how to develop and manage it. Therefore, education about sports tourism is crucial to support its development and management. . Liang et al. (2022), in their research on the topic of strategies and suggestions for the development of sports tourism in Pakistan, stated: Pakistan in terms of the underdevelopment of existing natural and sports resources, negligence in the development of the cultural foundation for the development of sports tourism, facilities Less developed hardware, security and infrastructural concerns, lack of professional talents and neglect of the government, there are concerns.

Mishra et al. (2022), in a research on motivations for participation in active sports tourism: a cross-national study (India and Poland), stated that in both countries, tourists mainly explore travel, social bonds and stress reduction that the primary motivations for travel are usually related to tourism. O'Reilly et al. (2022) stated in their research: Place images also affect the travel decisions of adventure tourists. For example, tourism marketers in places with high mountains should focus on adventure opportunities as well as image dimensions that play a role in adventure tourism travel decisions. Kodiravena et al. (2020) stated in their research: Advertising in tourism is not only intended to attract tourists, but also to create a clear and positive image of tourists. Perić et al. (2018) stated in their research: Natural attractions are the second most important motivational dimension for sports tourists that should be paid attention to.

In this regard, one of the most important existing challenges in the country's coastal

areas is the issues related to order and security. The lack of proper planning and management in the development of coastal tourism has led to the emergence of problems such as overcrowding, disorder, traffic congestion, and insecurity in some coastal areas. The development of halal sports tourism in the coastal areas can play an important role in improving this situation; as it creates appropriate spaces for coastal and marine sports, it provides the opportunity for family recreation and entertainment, and will reduce the disorder and increase security in these areas. However, how to design and implement this type of tourism while observing religious and cultural principles and regulations is still challenging and requires deeper investigation, which this research aims to address.

Materials and methods

This research uses quantitative method and comparative approach for data analysis. The data collection method includes a literature review and a researcher-made questionnaire. The statistical population of the research consists of tourists, athletes and sports tourists who came to the seaside to use the beach, and their sample size was considered according to Morgan's table. The sampling method in this section was chosen from the type available from beach tourists. The tool used in this research was a questionnaire. Since the structural equation modeling approach was used in this research, the questionnaire was compiled and adjusted in the form of a 5-point Likert scale, which is based on qualitative findings, including 5 core categories and 37 basic questions based on core concepts, and has 209 open coding findings. Finally, after collecting the questionnaires and removing the distorted and incomplete items, 384 filled and correct questionnaires were used in the research.

Table 1. Quantitative research questions are structural equations derived from qualitative research findings

The main axis of the questions	Dimensions include 5 key categories	Number of open coding option items	Number of questions	Standard coefficients	Effective questions in the structural
Halal tourism on the coast of Iran	Tourism prerequisites	29 items	1-6	S1-S6	6
	Tourism drivers	33 items	7-12	S7-S12	6
	Existing tourism challenges	56 items	13-24	S13-S24	12
	Tourism strategies	52 items	25-30	S25-S30	6
	Tourism achievements	39 items	31-37	S31-S37	7
Total	5 categories	209 items	1-37	S1-S37	37 questions

Results

Fornell and Larcker (1981) consider the criterion of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) from the constructs to be 0.50, and Bagozzi and Yi (1988) consider the criterion to be above 0.40. Based on this, as can be observed in Table (2), all the questionnaires have variances of 0.55, 0.54, 0.64, 0.57, 0.53, and 0.51, respectively, and are in a desirable condition.

Additionally, the Composite Reliability (Dillon-Goldstein's rho) was calculated to be 0.89, 0.87, 0.91, 0.88, 0.93, and 0.96, respectively, which are higher than the 0.70 criterion, indicating their acceptability. Furthermore, the reliability of the questionnaires was calculated to be 0.84, 0.83, 0.88, 0.84, 0.92, and 0.96, respectively, indicating their desirability.

Table 2. Condition of convergent validity and reliability of the questionnaire

Structures	Cronbach's alpha	rho_A	Composite reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Tourism achievements	0.84	0.87	0.89	0.55
Tourism strategies	0.83	0.84	0.87	0.54
Prerequisites for tourism	0.88	0.89	0.91	0.64
Drivers of tourism	0.84	0.86	0.88	0.57
Existing tourism challenges	0.92	0.92	0.93	0.53
Halal tourism	0.96	0.96	0.96	0.51

The numbers on the diagonal of Table (3) represent the square root of the variance extracted for each construct. Fornell and Larcker (1981) state that if the square root of the extracted variance for each construct is greater than the value of the relationship of that

construct with other constructs, the divergent validity of the model is confirmed. Considering the square roots of the variances obtained for each construct, it is observed that they are larger than all the existing relationships, and therefore, it can be said that the divergent

validity of the questionnaires is confirmed.

Table 3. Fornell and Locker criterion

Structures	Tourism achievements	Tourism strategies	Prerequisites for tourism	Drivers of tourism	The existing challenges of tourism	Halal tourism
Tourism achievements	0.744					
Tourism strategies	0.724	0.738				
Prerequisites for tourism	0.562	0.486	0.805			
Drivers of tourism	0.653	0.639	0.694	0.760		
The existing challenges of tourism	0.707	0.694	0.634	0.729	0.732	
Halal tourism	0.649	0.715	0.780	0.662	0.723	0.664

Based on the results in Table (3), the value of the coefficient of determination (R-squared) obtained is 1, where the acceptance criteria are 0.19, 0.33, and 0.67, representing weak, moderate, and strong, respectively. Considering the R-squared coefficients obtained, it is observed that the model has a strong fit in this metric.

The GOF (Goodness of Fit) index is also used to evaluate the model fit. To obtain the model fit, we first need to consider the average communality value of the dependent variable (0.510) and the average R-squared value of the dependent variable (1), and then substitute these values into the following formula:

$$GOF = \sqrt{\text{Communality} \times R\text{square}}$$

$$GOF = \sqrt{0.510 \times 1.00} =$$

$$GOF = \sqrt{0.510}$$

$$GOF = 0.714$$

As a result, the GOF index value is 0.714, which, given the three values of 0.01, 0.25, and 0.41 as weak, moderate, and strong thresholds for GOF, indicates a strong overall model fit.

For the purpose of model fit in the PLS software version 3, new criteria have been presented for evaluating the model fit. The reason for using plus was the appropriate predictive power and finally the modeling obtained from statistical tests.

The standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) is the newest index used in PLS software version 3, and according to Henseler et al. (2014), a value of this index less than 0.1 or 0.08 is considered appropriate, indicating that the model has a satisfactory fit. Therefore, based on the results in Table (4), it can be said that the research model has a satisfactory fit. Other model fit indices have also been calculated.

Table 4. Standardized regression weights of the default model

Routes	Beta	Critical ratio	Significance level
Tourism achievements -> Halal tourism	0.214	24.858	0.001
Tourism strategies -> Halal tourism	0.173	19.448	0.001
Tourism prerequisites -> Halal tourism	0.196	17.590	0.001
Tourism drivers -> Halal tourism	0.194	22.529	0.001
Current challenges of tourism -> Halal tourism	0.386	30.051	0.001

Discussion

The preliminary findings of this research indicate that tourism strategies have a significant positive impact on halal tourism in the coastal areas of Iran. Tourism strategies are in fact the measures and conditions that the authorities can provide for the development of halal tourism in the coastal areas of Iran. These measures and conditions can include environmental aspects of the coastal areas, which can be effective in the development of halal tourism by developing measures compatible with the environment and using facilities and equipment that are in line with environmental protection. In addition, a thorough environmental assessment of tourism activities can play an important role in increasing the presence of tourists in the coastal areas as pristine regions. Furthermore, the development of halal tourism can be facilitated through attention to management strategies. This means that attention to the creation of a halal activity framework, the elimination of cumbersome regulations, the use of opportunities and the removal of threats, political review in foreign relations, the establishment of appropriate foreign relations with neighboring countries, unity of command in the implementation of laws, the integration of laws and regulations, the non-sale of coastal areas, the formulation and adoption of specific laws defining the boundaries of sea and river coasts and their nationalization, review in governance and the identification of the main decision-making center, a sense of responsibility among officials, sports branding

for each coast, the preparation of an appropriate logo and slogan for tourism in Iran, and the adoption of facilitating laws for the entry of Muslim and non-Muslim tourists into the country can be effective in the development of halal tourism in the coastal areas of Iran. The research results in this section are in line with (Lao et al., 2022) and (Mishra et al. 2022).

In addition, in the executive domain, the implementation of strategies based on the findings of this research was an effective factor in the development of halal tourism. This means that in the coastal areas, the implementation of certain measures, such as the presence of female lifeguards on the beaches, wastewater treatment and prevention of sea pollution, the allocation of the provision of recreational and welfare services to qualified companies, the selection of capable individuals in the executive responsibility of tourism activities, the organization of regular and permanent local conferences, exhibitions, and festivals, the division of labor and public participation in the path of tourism development and progress, the examination of opportunities, limitations, strengths and weaknesses of the sports tourism model, the creation of think tanks to provide a halal model for beaches, the creation of recreational-incentive plans with appropriate facilities for young couples, the use of healthy and competent personnel in service centers on halal beaches, the training of active religious preachers in the field of halal sports tourism as practical preachers on the beaches, the necessity of establishing specialized halal

sports tourism agencies, the creation of handicraft production and supply centers and local food restaurants on the beaches, and the holding of indigenous and local sports competitions can be effective in the development of halal tourism. Also, providing tourism infrastructure in the Iranian coastal areas can be an effective factor in the development of halal tourism. This can be done by providing the necessary infrastructure for factors such as the separation of swimming areas for women and men, the destruction of private beach fences and the nationalization of beaches, the creation of large and standard public service beaches, the construction of infrastructure according to needs, appropriate for the age of individuals, the construction of facilities for children, youth and the elderly, the construction of coastal beaches and villas in a suitable model with the Islamic world, the construction of coastal villas for newlyweds (young couples), and the construction of coastal villas for families. Also, in the field of sports, the implementation of strategic measures can accelerate the development of halal tourism on the beaches. The research results in this section are in line with (Liang et al., 2022) and (Liang et al. 2022).

Promoting water and coastal sports, dedicated sports and recreational parks for women and men, the complementary nature of sports and halal tourism, innovation in coastal recreation and sports, localization of leading countries' coastal sports and recreation, and the development of advertising for the Islamic, sports, and recreational community can be considered effective strategies for the development of halal tourism. Furthermore, based on the findings of this research, having strategies in the field of investment can be a factor in the development of halal tourism on the coasts. This means that the formulation and design of appropriate mechanisms to attract investors and ensure the return on investment, the establishment of coastal pools for men and women, the introduction of coastal tourism

projects for investors, and the creation of numerous and diverse coastal sports complexes can be considered as fundamental actions in the field of investment for the development of halal coastal tourism.

The second part of the findings and other results of this study showed that the prerequisites of tourism can have a significant positive effect on the development of halal tourism. Given the novelty of the concept of halal tourism, it seems that providing the necessary infrastructure for the development of tourism can be in various areas of society. Among the prerequisites of society can be the proper definition of halal and national and religious culture, the management of the sexual health of the society, compatibility with the comprehensive criteria and culture of Iran, the culture and beliefs of the society, and the effective cultural issues. On the other hand, the development of halal tourism also requires having the prerequisites of tourism. These prerequisites can be through the nationalization of beaches and forests, halal tourism and sports laws for domestic and foreign tourists, beautiful beaches, sightseeing, pilgrimage, and recreational spots, a variety of climates in the northern and southern regions of the country in different seasons of the year, visa-free entry of tourists to free zones, diversity of ecosystems, forests, and plains. Also, in the individual domain, providing individual prerequisites such as managing pleasure and removing superficial pleasures with numerous physical and spiritual consequences, strengthening the spirit of monotheism in the human being, understanding truth and knowledge, and religious counseling can be effective on the development of halal tourism in Iran. The research results in this section are in line with (Lao et al., 2022) and (Liang et al. 2022).

In addition, the development of halal tourism requires attention to sports prerequisites as well. In fact, attention to creating conditions where people can have family leisure activities

on the beaches, and having a well-planned schedule for hosting events and festivals throughout the year, providing sports and coastal tourism facilities, and organizing cultural and sports family programs on the beaches can be effective in the development of halal tourism. In the infrastructure domain, attention to some prerequisites can also develop halal tourism. These include the required investment for construction, improving the quality of coastal buildings and infrastructure, and considering the expectations of investors, which can provide a desirable living experience for halal tourists. Additionally, in the Islamic domain, attention to some prerequisites can be an effective factor in the development of halal tourism. Attention to halal food and hygiene in the food industry, the reward of looking at the sea, the abundant recommendation of tourism in hadiths, the emphasis of Islam on swimming, and the avoidance of serving alcoholic beverages can be among the Islamic measures for the development of halal tourism on the coasts.

The third part of the findings of this research showed that tourism drivers are effective on the development of halal tourism. Among the drivers of halal tourism in the coastal areas are the motivating drivers. In fact, the authorities can improve the development of halal tourism by creating a suitable environment for it, through providing conditions for the creation of epic and self-sacrificing events at the sea and the coasts of Iran, creating interest and desire for halal, fun and healthy tourism, the public benefit of the coasts, and the plan for moral protection of the guests. Additionally, the effective Islamic factors, namely the religious beliefs of the people of Iran, providing the best and most beautiful halal model for matters that are haram, the balance between halal and haram, compliance with the official laws of the country, creating the dominant religious environments in the coasts, the dominance of Islamic laws in the country, and the rich Iranian and Islamic culture, can turn the coasts into a

desirable tourism environment for families. However, the most important action in the field of tourism for attracting tourists is marketing initiatives, which require more specialized marketing strategies. Addressing these initiatives along with religious and Islamic issues can develop halal tourism in the coasts and establish it as a new tourism domain.

The fourth part of the research findings showed that addressing the existing challenges in tourism is effective in the development of tourism. In fact, attention to infrastructure issues, including providing family recreational facilities, creating infrastructure for necessary halal tourism, providing facilities in hotels, not destroying beaches by handing them over to oil facilities, fisheries, etc., providing sea travel between coastal cities of Iran and building passenger ships in the north of the country can be effective in addressing the infrastructure problems for halal tourism in the question. In addition, in the management domain, attention to management drivers can accelerate the development of halal tourism. Some of the behind-the-scenes factors involved in coastal management and resolving and clarifying all ambiguities in this area, determining a specific tourism authority and granting full authority to the Ministry of Tourism, preventing the profiteering of some organizations, preventing the dominance of various agencies and organizations, and sufficient awareness of officials of the existing capacities of the coasts, rational attention to the social realities in the coastal areas and attention to legal obligations are effective factors on the development of halal tourism in the question. Furthermore, it seems that having new approaches for executive affairs can play a key role in the development of halal tourism in the coasts.

In addition, the attention of some facilitators, including religious facilitators such as religious beliefs, beliefs about mahram and non-mahram, religious beliefs and national beliefs, the proper introduction of Islam as a progressive religion

that addresses all human needs, and social facilitators such as respect for the customs of the society, attention to the culture of the local community on the coasts, and a reminder that the coasts are a reminder of the sacrifices and heroism of Iranians against enemies, the use of the capacity of public institutions and their support and support, and management facilitators such as creating coordination and integration between religious centers and official tourism and sports centers in the country, improving the quality of halal certification and tourism branding, creating political security, an annual calendar of sports tourism activities for each of the country's coasts, government guarantees to the private sector for investment security and return on investment and compensation in the event of changes in national laws, and diversity in multimodal land, rail, air and sea transportation, and sports facilitators such as creating a health trail to provide public services for walking, cycling and sports along the coasts, creating coastal parks providing tourism services in all four seasons, and planning events can facilitate tourism development.

The fifth and final part of the findings of this research indicates that the achievements of tourism can be effective in the development of halal tourism on the coasts. This means that when the authorities can provide the necessary facilities for tourism on the coasts, progress can be witnessed in this field, and this progress can include diverse consequences in various fields, including economic prosperity, earning foreign exchange, brand development, and the expansion and promotion of Islamic tourism, as well as the creation of unity and the development of international relations with Muslim countries. Therefore, the attainment of these great achievements can be through consequences such as creating a competitive advantage with halal tourism, observing Islamic laws and official regulations to attract tourists, the presence of large numbers of domestic and foreign tourists, the expansion of

health tourism on the coasts, creating joy and filling the leisure time of tourists, the formation of modern tourism, the introduction of high-quality Iranian goods and services at the international level, and the global and domestic prominence of Iran in the field of coastal halal sports tourism, all of which are achieved through the improvement of tourism conditions on the coasts. Moreover, in the religious realm, the improvement of conditions in the promotion of religious obligations and morals, the strengthening of religious beliefs and halal beliefs, the strengthening of people's religion and worldly life, and cultural and religious proximity to neighboring countries can improve the development of tourism and its resulting consequences. The research results in this section are in line with (Lao et al., 2022) and (Liang et al. 2022).

The development of halal tourism in the coastal areas can also have significant achievements in the realm of livelihood, including creating a source of welfare, recreational and sports income, local employment, prevention of currency outflow, retaining indigenous local forces in coastal cities and regions, introducing high-quality Iranian goods and services at the international level, selling goods, services and handicraft products, and providing stable and sustainable employment throughout the year for service providers. All these factors can be the consequences of the development of halal tourism in the coastal areas. Moreover, in the domain of social conditions, this field can have a positive impact on improving the quality of services for tourists, adherence to family and promotion of marriage, sustainable development, and development of the local community. On the other hand, the development of halal tourism can bring peace and sanitation to the beaches, and in the field of diplomatic management, it can facilitate relations, generate revenue for the whole country, and promote the rule of law. Finally, in the field of sports, it can develop water sports and facilitate the hosting of water sports events,

as well as the activation and branding of the country in water sports.

Since the tourism industry has experienced significant development over the past decades, and simultaneously, the complexity of this field has increased considerably, as both the structure and tourists have undergone significant changes, it is necessary to define new markets and new activities for tourism development. A review of the studies conducted shows that in none of the research, the discussion of halal tourism has been a concern, and researchers have not paid attention to this important aspect, which is one of the principles of Islamic nations. Accordingly, it is necessary to conduct research in this area to better understand this aspect of sports tourism activities and how to utilize its potential.

Conclusion

According to the results of the current research, the development of halal sports tourism in the beaches can play an important role in improving this situation; Because by creating suitable spaces for beach and sea sports, it will provide the possibility of fun and entertainment for families and will reduce irregularities and increase security in these areas.

In general, the most important results of the current research can be identified Iran's attractions with the help of halal tourism, cultural affinity and friendship with neighboring countries, job creation and prevention of currency outflow, adherence to family and promotion of marriage, family peace, sustainable development and development of local community. He mentioned creating security and comfort on the coasts, promoting Iran's international management, especially among Islamic countries and the region, strengthening diplomacy and rule of law, promoting more specialization in water sports, recognizing talents and hosting international water and beach events.

Finally, it is suggested that the trustees invite knowledge-based companies for the development of halal tourism in the beaches by announcing a call. The trustees should encourage the interested and investors to participate in the field of halal tourism in the beaches through granting special facilities and tax exemptions. It is also suggested that by building private beach residences (villas) and seaside resorts in large quantities on all beaches that have swimming pools, saunas, and jacuzzis, etc., for family use and same-sex groups, they will be made available to the public in compliance with standards and privacy.

One of the limitations of the current research is the lack of sufficient and accurate information about halal sports tourism and the specific needs of this market in Iran. Some other limitations include: the impact of cultural and social differences in different regions of Iran on the acceptance and implementation of the final research model, lack of sufficient awareness among the general public and international tourists about the benefits and possibilities of halal sports tourism in Iran.

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