



A Viable Halal Travel Industry Requirements: Prospects And Challenges

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Abstract

Malaysian is known as the progressive and modern halal industry which produced lots of lucrative products and services to the world. Looking at the huge market potential of ASEAN, Sarawak is currently developing halal products and services in conjunction with a Tanjung Manis Halal hub which will be finished this year. Few efforts in commercializing halal industry, which in line with the Halal Industry Master Plan (HIMP) 2030 are state focus. The demand for travel and tourism industry is greatly increased after the pandemic covid-19 and there is an influx of tourist visiting Malaysia approximately 10 million tourists in 2022 as compared to 4.3 million in 2020. This study will identify the prospects and challenges of the halal travel industry sector through exploratory qualitative research papers and halal industry plan. All documents were analyzed through content analysis to generate opportunity of halal travel industry requirements. The findings show that the prospects of the halal travel industry in Malaysia and Sarawak are in high demand. Thus, the government should embed the ultimate objective of Shariah (Maqasid Shariah) in their travel industry practices enhancing the trust of the potential visitors and investors.

Keywords: Halal, travel industry, travel industry requirements, maqasid shariah

1.Introduction

Halal industry in Malaysia is well-develop with the development of halal certification, halal standards, halal eco-system and a progressive halal assurance system. Malaysia is pioneering the halal industry for 40 years ago starting with development of the halal logo in 2003 (Wan Ismail, W.R. et al, 2016). There were more than ten halal standards been published by the Department of Standard Malaysia, for instance Malaysian Halal Management System 2020, MS:1500:2004 (Malaysian Standard: Halal Food production, preparation and Storage-General Guidelines), MS1500:2009 (Halal Food: Processing), MS2424:2012 (Halal Pharmaceuticals-General Guidelines), MS1480 Food Safety according to Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP), MS1900:2014 Shariah-based quality management system and MS1514:2022 Good Manufacturing Practice for food etc. These standards had eased the halal practitioners and players to coordinate, apply and operate their premises and industry complying with the halal requirements certified by Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM).

Previously, there was Halal Master Plan for Malaysia which was in 3 phases starting from 2008 until 2020 to resolve issues regarding halal certification, halal implementation in services and operations, Malaysia halal authority in preparing the halal industry growth. In 2009, Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC) was established by Tourism Malaysia to upgrade and develop training, research and standard related to Muslim-Friendly tourism, Muslim-friendly directory, and Islamic tourism market in Malaysia. MS2610:2015 Muslim-Friendly Hospitality Services (MFHS) requirements is the first standard designed for the Islamic tourism operator and service providers in Malaysia. This standard provides guidelines and requirements for tourism operators in three areas: accommodation premises, tour packages and tourist guides.

One of the encouraging growths is the halal tourism segment. According to Global Muslim Travel Index (2022), Malaysia ranked top halal tourist destination and top Muslim-Friendly destination of the year for Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) country followed by Turkey. Among key factors contributed to Malaysia as a top travel destination due to ample praying facilities, Muslim-friendly atmosphere, and halal food according to the survey result by Dinar Standard in 2013 and Master-card Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) in 2022. Moreover, Middle East tourists can have a friendly language service of Arabic language at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport, Muslim-



Friendly prayer rooms and Arabic speaking staff entertained on their journey in Malaysia (Abdul Karim et al., 2022). To strengthen the development of Malaysian halal industry, Halal Industry Master Plan 2030 (HIMP) was designed by Ministry of Economic Affairs and Halal Development Corporation (HDC) Berhad. This Master plan highlighted the current analysis of the halal industry trends and seven strategic thrusts of HIMP 2030. Among others are enhancing halal industry- friendly policy and legislation, creating bigger market spaces for halal products and services and enhancing quality and integrated infrastructure development (Halal Industry Master Plan, 2022). In Sarawak, the Sarawak Corridor of Renewable Energy (SCORE) region was developed to enhance Sarawak economic development and accessibility at the central region along the coast Tanjung Manis to Samalaju. With good ports infrastructure and 2 billion market access, Tanjung Manis Halal Hub is one of the state initiatives to promote the competitive energy cost for Halal-Agri Food industries (Ministry of International Trade & Industry, Industrial Terminal & Entrepreneur Development Sarawak, 2023). There were few incentives created for Halal industry players in Tanjung Manis, income tax exemption for export sales within 5 years, investment tax allowance of 100% and double deduction for halal certification and quality systems expenses for food, pharmaceutical, livestock and halal logistic operators (Ministry of International Trade & Industry, Industrial Terminal & Entrepreneur Development Sarawak, 2023).

The global halal industry is expected to grow to USD 5.0 trillion in 2030 and the highest contributors are from the Asia Pacific region worth of USD 2.8 Trillion (HIMP, 2022). Medical devices and medical tourism are the new emerging opportunities sector in the halal industry. However, there is still a lack of research highlighted on halal medical tourism guidelines and requirements in ASEAN countries. Losses of the post pandemic was a high impact to the human resource and brands of halal tourism industry in UAE, Malaysia, Indonesia and Asia Pacific regions (El-Gohary, 2021). There were lots of travel motivation among tourists, for instance social activism, halal medical tourism, technology, environment, religious motive and halal education tourism (Global Muslim Travel Index, 2022 ; El-Gohary, 2021).

2. Literature Review

With the current technology industry and Industrial Revolution 4.0 there is a need to have a dynamic and futuristic application for Muslim-Friendly traveler to cater current Muslim lifestyle. According to GMTI (2019) new halal travel services with deeper integration of artificial Intelligence and professional human services, instant halal food and attractive hotel service integration are yet to be offered in Muslim and non-Muslim countries. A systematic literature review was done in articles on the prospects and challenges of halal travel industry requirements. The searching was done in Google Scholar, Academia, Research Gate, Scopus website and Directory of Open Access Journal using the following search phrases were entered namely "Halal tourism" "Halal travel" "Tourism requirements" "Prospects of halal travel industry" "Challenges of tourism industry" and "Challenges of travel industry". The inclusion criteria were met by more than 10 articles. All these peer-reviewed articles and standard were released between 2015 and 2023. The relevance of the articles to the subject, the calibre of the study, and the rigour of the methodology were taken into consideration when choosing them.

Table 1.0 Systematic Literature Review of Prospects of Halal Travel Industry

NO	AUTHOR (S)	YEAR OF PUBLICATION	COUNTRY BEING STUDIED	FINDINGS
1.	Malaysian Standard	2015	Malaysia	Providing transportation for women guests to travel safely and in the absence of their <i>mahram</i> . The tourism agencies should offer tourism packages with Islamic value reflection. It also offers great business for halal certified restaurants where they can easily be promoted under this standard. Providing shariah compliance protection plan to the tourist.
2.	Mandalia et al.	2022	Indonesia	They were huge potential of Muslim-Friendly tourism in the West-Sumatera, Indonesia. The prospects are



				good accessibility to the hot spring area, women dedicated swimming area, halal food, prayer room and enhance the Muslim-friendly information services in a digital form to ease Muslim tourists.
3.	Aliffia & Komaladewi	2021	Indonesia	Most significant attributes attracted Muslim travelers are the halal food quality, the availability of halal tourism information in the travel destination area and the prayer room facilities. To improve the Muslim-friendly services it is very important to have halal food certification and tour operator need to have a good Muslim-Friendly facilities and services information to be more competitive.
4.	Waehama et al.	2018	Malaysia and Thailand	The potential of halal hotel in Thailand is very good. More than 650,000 Muslims visited Thailand. In Malaysia, the halal industry has full support from the government and the prospects for halal tourism industry for both, international Muslim tourist and domestic tourist are greater.
5.	Mohd Fauzi et al.	2020	Malaysia	Unclear halal marketing strategy among tourism operators to cater Muslim and Non-Muslim travelers to their countries. A need to have halal marketing or brand strategy to cater the emergence of halal market in non-Islamic countries.
6.	Rizki & Aminah	2023	Japan	The number of Muslim-friendly facilities and halal certified restaurants in Japan are rising tremendously. Halal Japan and Halal Gourmet Japan mobile application had help tourist in checking halal status of Japan's products and halal restaurant.
7.	Anwar, A.z et al.	2022	Indonesia	The existence of social media support, help the tourism operators a lot in promoting Muslim-friendly tourist area in Indonesia to all levels.
8.	Malaysian Standard	2015	Malaysia	Tourist guide with multilingual speaking is really targeted in MFHS standard especially those who is fluent in Arabic speaking.



Based on studies being done internationally, the prospects of Muslim-friendly tourism are tremendously in 4 sectors; halal food, facilities, tourism attractions and promotion. There is a need to have a good promotional strategy and facilitate the halal industries practitioners with the understanding of Islamic value for them to remain sustain in the industry.

Researchers in Malaysia highlighted that special transportation for women, designated branding strategy for halal industry, Muslim tourist guide with good multilingual speaking and tourism packages with Islamic value are prospects of halal tourism industry. Halal tourism industry practitioners need to understand shariah principles to guide them in providing services, facilities and practicing Islamic value in their operations. The review of literature on the challenges of halal travel industry was done on the articles, standards, current government policies and research project initiatives. There were lots of findings by researchers on the weaknesses and challenges of halal travel industry in Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, and others. Table 2.0 shows the systematic literature review of halal travel industry challenges that need to be addressed by all parties.

Table 2.0 Systematic Literature Review of Challenges of Halal Travel Industry

NO	AUTHOR (S)	YEAR OF PUBLICATION	COUNTRY BEING STUDIED	FINDINGS
1.	Abdul Karim et al.	2022	Malaysia	Challenges faced by hotel operators in their service operations were giving Muslim-friendly services to Muslim guests and giving benefits to the non-Muslim guests. Hard to comply with halal standards and halal certification requirements
2.	Mandalia et al.	2022	Indonesia	Challenges of the Muslim-Friendly tourism services are the absence of halal food certification, cleanliness, and the environmental hygiene of tourism area. Providing Ramadan services to Muslim tourists. Upgrading the internet access.
3.	Shafaei Mohamed &	2015	Malaysia	Competition with rich culture countries rooted in Middle Eastern regions. Women wearing scanty and sunbathing naked in tourism website which tarnished Malaysia as Islamic tourism destination. Loss of non-arab Muslim tourist visiting Malaysia.
4.	Malaysian standard	2015	Malaysia	The washroom facilities should have a bidet and hand shower to ensure the aspect of cleanliness is well-kept.
5.	Mohd Fauzi et al.	2020	Malaysia	Lack of halal certification alignment among International Halal certification bodies. This caused the increasing cost for halal implementation in the companies. Non-Muslim countries are controlling the trading of halal processed food and halal products.



6.	Elastrag	2016	International	Absence of international schemes to accredit Halal certification bodies especially in food industry. Most food producers are from non-Muslim country however little number of accreditation bodies to avoid unnecessary imitation.
7.	Business Emirates	2009	Middle East	The rise of vaccination refusal among Muslim-majority country due to perceived of porcine gelatin in vaccines. Accommodating both Muslim and Non-Muslim at the same time. Especially beach destination and 4-star hotels and above, issue with improper attire for sunbathing and exclusive bar for non-Muslim guest.
8.	Rehman	2019	Oman	Lack of public transport, medium for communication and customer outreach.
9.	Waehama et al.	2018	Malaysia and Thailand	The biggest challenges faced by hotel operator in Thailand is shortage of staff and difficult to find Muslim staff with only 5% Muslim population in the country.
10.	Rizki & Aminah	2023	Japan	Dependence on foreign tourist and operational cost affected the halal business continuity in Japan. It happened during the pandemic. Most halal business owner in Japan are non-Muslim, they might easily stop their business. This will make difficulties to the Muslim tourist to meet their religious needs.
11.	Anwar, A.z et al.	2022	Indonesia	Inadequate access road to the tourism area in Indonesia. Lack of religious facilities and cleanliness of toilet need to be upgraded.

Major challenges of halal tourism industry are top producer for halal food, products, services, and transportation are from non-Muslim countries. Lack of supply for halal raw materials. For example, meat. Demand for halal raw materials is high, however lower number of Muslim halal raw materials producer. Second challenges, the halal food is certified by International Halal Certification Bodies which some are recognized by JAKIM however remains limited oversight by impartial certification bodies. Lack of halal certification alignment among International Halal certification bodies caused the increasing cost for halal implementation in the companies. This impacted recognition of halal certification below halal global best practices due to a lack of commonly accepted halal standards globally. Most researchers agreed that accommodating both Muslim and Non-Muslim tourists at the same time are challenges for hotel operators. They need to give a strong explanation of banning alcohol beverages, gambling, and smoking to other guests in the guest rooms. With a good understanding of religion, the hotel operator will be able to resolve this issue.



The banning is not only a rule but prohibitions that need to avoid by all religions to bring a prosperous life. Other than that, the tourism operators should ensure the facilities and services are hygiene and cleanliness to ensure the return of loyal tourists. This will also bring benefits to their hotel staffs and nearby community.

3. Research Methodology

This research is conducted to explore the nature prospects and challenges of the halal travel industry. It will help researchers to develop a better understanding of the subject area based on previous studies. Library research on the secondary data was used to gather the systematic review of the relevant literatures. Thematic analysis was used to discover the prospects and challenges in halal travel industry articles, standards, guidelines, and requirements. According to Boyatzis (1998) and Patton (2002) thematic analysis is widely used in qualitative data analysis method. It is becoming unique, flexible, valuable, and popular in qualitative data analysis. Braun and Clarke (2012) thematic analysis provide qualitative researchers with a foundation in the basic skills needed to engage with few qualitative approaches. This method is considered the most proper to investigate at the early stage of study which uses interpretations.

4. Findings & Discussions

Based on previous studies and Muslim-Friendly Hospitality Services (MFHS) requirements, there were lots of prospects in halal industry and halal tourism industry. Enhancing the MFHS to suit the current Muslim tourists meet will bring benefit to the country's economic sector. The Muslim-Friendly Hospitality Services (MFHS) requirements, provide a great job creation for the younger generation to explore. Among other things is to be a tourist guide with good body language skills, wearing modest attire and has knowledge of Muslim-friendly directory and requirements. They also can apply to work with the travel agent or selling Muslim friendly tourism packages. The tourism agencies should offer tourism packages with Islamic value reflection. This offers a good business opportunity for Muslim to explore and provide a high value of Islamic atmosphere and arts for example, calligraphy arts and Islamic souvenirs.

Halal tourism is strongly connected with the Muslim market segment in the world. Muslim tourists need to adhere to the shariah principles. Shariah principles is principles of legal and regulation of Allah pertaining to the life and welfare of humankind to live prosperously in both lives. The shariah principles are embedded in MS2610:2015 Muslim-Friendly Hospitality Services (MFHS) requirements for the tourism operators and halal practitioners. MFHS standard covers three main components of Islamic supply chain including accommodation premise, tour packages and tourist guide. According to Islamic Quality Standard (IQS) for hotel and accommodations, there are five measuring factors of shariah principles, for instance the quality of physical facilities, the quality of services, halal foods, Muslim prayer facilities and hotel operation.

Consequently, Muslim tourist strongly need to perform their duties in any situation and while travelling to other countries. Adequate and clean prayer facilities with gender segregation, halal certified food and restaurants, halal tourism attractions and Muslim-friendly accommodation with clear *qiblat* direction are utmost important to them. These are the elements of necessity (dharuriyah) in the ultimate objective of shariah (Maqasid shariah) which need to be provided by the tour operators. Through accommodating halal friendly facilities, this will create a good well-being of mankind and righteous of society and preventing harm to the society. Eventually, ensure the preservation of the religion among Muslim, by achieving benefits for everyone and preventing harm from others.

5. Conclusion

Malaysia with multicultural setting, heritage, halal cuisine, Muslim-Friendly services and attractions are a worthy destination for Muslim. Young generation should start to reap these business opportunities to give benefits and get profits in the halal industry. Few effective initiatives need to be done to increase the large halal tourism market in Malaysia and in ASEAN. Among others, strategic marketing and branding for halal tourism industry, increase halal tourism awareness through campaigns, upgrade the halal tourism attractions in Malaysia and producing skilled tourism operators and tourist guides. Tourism service operators need to maximize the implementation of halal business to ensure the rising number of tourists visiting Malaysia are well-tapped.



Further research can explore areas on evaluating strategic branding of Malaysia as the prominent Islamic destination, halal medical tourism guidelines and the effective measuring factors of halal services in the tourism industry.

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