



JOURNAL OF EVENT, TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY STUDIES

<http://e-journal.uum.edu.my/index.php/jeth>

How to cite this article:

Zainol, N. A., Mustafa, E., & Willibrod, A. T. (2021). Muslim tourists' food and beverage needs and preferences during travel. *Journal of Event, Tourism and Hospitality Studies*, 1(1), 121-142. <https://doi.org/10.32890/jeth2021.1.6>

MUSLIM TOURISTS' FOOD AND BEVERAGE NEEDS AND PREFERENCES DURING TRAVEL

¹Noor Azimin Zainol, Eshaby Mustafa & Averyl Tony Willibrod

*School of Tourism, Hospitality and Event Management
Universiti Utara Malaysia, Malaysia*

*Corresponding author: azimin@uum.edu.my*¹

Received: 4/5/2021

Revised: 18/5/2021

Accepted: 28/5/2021

Published: 15/7/2021

ABSTRACT

The Muslim travel market is regarded as an encouraging market in the tourism industry at the current state. Muslim tourists prefer to select a tourist destination whereby Islamic elements are available, which permits them to enjoy their travels without neglecting the religious obligations. These elements undoubtedly will provide an enriching experience during their travels. Therefore, this paper aims to examine experiences faced by Muslim tourists in terms of their needs and preferences in the provision of food and beverage services during their travels. In order to fulfil the study's aim, 14 international Muslim participants who have travelled internationally were interviewed during the data collection process. The findings revealed that Muslim tourists seek for the convenience of finding Halal outlets/Halal food, and prefer restaurants or outlets with certified Halal logo. The participants also expressed their concern regarding the different food culture experience. This study has supported previous literatures on enhancing Muslim customers' experience in terms of food and beverage provision worldwide. Furthermore, the findings help aid in enhancing the experiences of Muslim tourists during travelling hence supporting the growth of Halal tourism. It is seen that tourist destinations and facilities that can provide the needs of faith of the Muslim tourists will exceed in the creation of memorable and meaningful tourist experience.

Keywords: Food and Beverage Provision, Halal Tourism, Muslim Tourists, Tourist Experience

INTRODUCTION

Halal tourism consists of the provision of accommodations, food and beverage, leisure, recreation and entertainment which adhere to Islamic requirements. According to Ryan (2016), Halal tourism involves travel activities undertaken by Muslims for leisure, recreational and social purposes. Muslim tourists fall under the Halal tourism segment. The Muslim travel segment is gaining momentum nowadays and therefore is distinguished as a prevailing market. Muslim tourists prefer to select a tourist destination whereby Islamic elements are presented, which permits them to enjoy their travels without neglecting the religious obligations, thus providing an enriching experience during their travels. These elements comprise of amenities and services for prayers, the provision of Halal food and beverages, liquor-free premises and services and abiding to Islamic dress codes; among others. According to Oktadiana et al. (2016), Muslim travel trends nowadays is an emergent market and the task in working with this is to recognize the imperative requirements of tourists towards the Halal tourism experience during their travels. Han, et. al. (2019) stated that 30% of world population comprises of Muslim population. Based on this figure, 12% of the travel market share is constituted by the Halal tourism. Based on Crescent Rating (2020), the Muslim travel market is a profitable upward market sector in the tourism industry as the Muslim traveller spending is said to be higher than other tourists. By 2026, the Halal segment's impact on the global economy is expected to escalate by 35% which is an estimated US\$300 billion in comparison with US\$220 billion in 2020. By that time, Muslim tourists globally are forecasted to grow to 230 million visitors, to represent around 10% of tourist world-wide figures.

Malaysia is ranked as one of the top Muslim travel destinations in the world, offering an overabundance of Muslim friendly facilities and services which serve as an option for the Muslim travel market. Positioned as one of Asia's prominent destination, Malaysia offers affluent Islamic beliefs in its tourism products and services (Butler et al. 2014). On the other hand, Muslim tourists also look for a destination that consists of a Muslim-majority community (Henderson, 2010) that can offer them a Halal-friendly tourism environment. This is also supported by Wingett and Turnbull (2017) who stated that a Halal getaway not only permits Muslim tourists to enjoy

their travels but also sustains true to their religion. This paper aims to examine experiences faced by Muslim tourists in terms of their needs and preferences for the provision of food and beverage services during their travels. The study's gap stands in the identification of the important need to consistently provide and facilitate good faith based requirement in terms of the provision of food and beverage needs and preferences for Muslim travellers during their holidays. In lieu with this, the Grounded Theory approach is applied as the underlying theory in this study. This theory will form a philosophical base which will surface categories and properties based on constant comparison of the data, thus contributing towards the formation of the conceptual framework of the study.

Literature Review

The Muslim Tourists

The quest for the provision of Islamic services and facilities has been affected positively by the dwelling number of Muslim tourists worldwide. For the Muslim minority groups and the Muslims who live in western countries, Halal aspects are depicted as one of the most imperative social principles (Carvalho et al., 2018). The Middle East is the most popular region sought after by the Muslim tourists, with United Arab Emirates, Turkey and Saudi Arabia remaining as the market's popular terminus (Crescent rating, 2020). It can be said that the value which tourists' attach to their experience differs in accordance to the resources available to them, along with their expectation and context. Commonly, Muslim tourists usually seek for special religious requirements and culture which make them a distinctive group to cater to (Battour & Ismail, 2016; Battour, et. al., 2014). Hence, Muslims' travel intentions may not necessarily be spiritual, nonetheless in general; they always act in accordance to the Al-Quran and the prophet's Sunnah in line with the teachings and sermons of the Prophet Mohammad (Henderson, 2016). The quest for Halal food and drinks are one of the critical elements for Muslim travellers. When Muslims travel, they will consider aspects such as the availability of Halal foods, conservative entertainment, and provision of segregated facilities between men and women as prime factors (Mohsin et al., 2016). On the other hand, Nassar, et al. (2015) stated that some Muslims may not

consider Halal tourism availability as the key determinant that influences their travel preferences. Meanwhile, Battour, et al. (2017) purported that the search for Halal food as the most ultimate feature to a stress-free getaway for Muslims was even made simpler for Muslim tourists especially in Malaysia.

The Muslim tourism industry has been showing constant improvement in tourist attitudes relating to their travel motives towards a destination. Although performing Umrah and Hajj are regarded as the main travelling activities in Islam, Muslims are also allowed to travel to fulfil other purposes for example to learn and seek knowledge, and to enjoy the natural beauty of the world by embracing God's creation (El-Gohary, 2016). Thus, Malaysia is seen as being successful in catering to the Muslim market and has led the way in attracting Muslim tourists, especially tourists from the Middle East, by rendering the required services in accordance with the Muslim tourists' religious beliefs (Samori & Sabtu, 2014). The destinations that they choose to travel has been the subject of much discussion in the literature and also play an essential role in determining which locations are the most opted for. According to Battour, et al. (2010), plans to attract the Muslim tourist segment should be in line with Islamic guidelines in order to adapt to related tourism activities that can cater to the tourist as this is what the Muslim tourists seek for during their travels. Malaysia has been ranked the top OIC destinations among others, offering a plethora of dining options suitable for the Muslim travel market, consequently illustrating the importance of gastronomy in a Muslim travel context, thus being positioned as a prominent and attractive food and beverage provider injected with vibrant Malay heritage and diverse gastronomy scenes (Butler, et al., 2014).

Halal Food and Beverages

The terms 'Halal' and 'Haram' are commonly used for food identification purposes in the tourism and hospitality industry. Several studies investigated the special needs and services desired by Muslim tourists. Many studies indicated that Halal food is by far the most crucial requirement that a Muslim seek while travelling (Henderson, 2016; Mohsin, et al., 2016; Stephenson, 2014). Henderson (2016) also mentioned that Muslim tourists and other service providers are always

particular about Halal issues especially regarding the dietary rules, mainly where Islam is not the main religion in the destination country. Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura [MUIS] (2018) has outlined that all foods are considered Halal except those associated with the meat of swine and any by-product of the pig, alcoholic drinks and intoxicants, meat of dead animals, carnivorous animals such as lions and birds of prey, and any foods contaminated with the above-mentioned products. On the contrary, Battour, et al., (2017) however highlighted that in Malaysia, the quest for Halal food was much easier. This is based on the notion by Henderson (2010), which stated that this is in lieu of the higher Halal certification standards for restaurants to encourage the hotel to obtain Halal certificate, thus increasing the satisfaction and confidence levels of Muslim tourists. Moreover, Marzuki, et al. (2012) also agreed that the acquisition of Halal certification will reveal its values when Muslim customers visit Halal eating places in Malaysia bearing the certification.

The availability to access Halal food in the destination of choice is always a concern, and the Muslim market is also worried about the rise in fraudulent Halal certification of products and eateries. Studies also depict that it is most likely that Muslims tourists tend to visit destinations where Halal food is plentiful, and Muslim friendly service and facilities are available (Carboni, et al., 2017; Han et al., 2019; Stephenson, 2014). Thus, the availability of Halal food and beverage is vital for destinations that target Muslim tourists. In lieu with this, it is now common for Muslim tourists to request Halal food and beverages when they visit Non-Muslim destinations. Aiedah (2012) stated that it is common for Muslim tourists to select accommodations which are Muslim friendly and provides a clean, hygienic environment alongside Halal food which is a necessity and is required by Islamic laws. The system of Halal necessities is basically a method of life and it is usually only limited to the types of food that a Muslim is allowed to consume, whereby food and beverages are a key element for the sustenance that is needed to lead a meaningful life (Rezai, et al., 2010). Islam has outlined in the Al-Quran that the basic principle of food provision is its Halal status. Although the concept of Halal has been around for centuries, the benefits of Halal food are related to the ethical sourcing of the food and its hygienic process (Lubis et al., 2016).

Food purity as a whole is highly emphasized by Islamic law. Therefore, anything that is likely to

cause harm to one's health is considered *Khabith* and non-Halal, even if it is not explicitly stated as Haram in the Quran and Hadeeth (Alzer, et al., 2018). Meanwhile, Halal food is not just about what type of food that should be consumed, but also the process of food preparation. The Halal concept highlights many aspects to ensure the authenticity of its Halal status, namely the source of food, hygiene, and healthiness of food and can also be used as an excellent platform to encourage healthy eating habits (Rezai, et al., 2010). Henderson (2016) later added that Halal food should be fully separated from any other non-Halal food during its preparation, processing, packaging, storage, transportation, and display. As mentioned by Stephenson (2014), and later supported by Zailani, et al., (2015), if there is a lacking in the qualities of hygiene and nutrition; the concept of Halal food is deficient.

Muslim Tourists Experience

It is generally accepted that Halal tourism is gaining more attention, thus paving its way as a significant part of the international hospitality and tourism industry. The Muslim tourist population is also rapidly increasing in number year by year and is contributing to a large percentage of the global tourist proportion. Therefore, this can be taken as an opportunity to cater for Muslim tourists' needs and preferences during their travels and permit them to execute spiritual obligations while travelling. Thus, Muslim friendly tourism facilities and services that can be offered comprise of Halal lodging, Halal transportation, Halal eateries, Halal tour packages and Halal finance. A Muslim traveller's needs may vary from other non-Muslim traveller's needs. Amadeus (2016) mentioned that 72% of Muslim tourists seek comfort when visiting known destinations without compromising "family-friendly" activities. This is supported by Battour et al. (2017), Yeo et al., (2016), and Han et al. (2019). As stated by Vargas-Sánchez and Moral-Moral (2018), food and lodging are among the most important elements of concern among Muslim tourists during their travels, thus food and beverage facilities and accommodation destination experience contribute significantly to tourist satisfaction.

Prayag and Hosany (2014) purported that self-serving factors are one of the travel motivations. It dwells on the necessity for relaxation or wanting to experience something diverse, which

motivates towards a more general travel. Halbrook (2006) stated that the value tourists' attach to their experience differs according to their expectation, the context, and the means available to them. This is in line with this concept, whereby Muslim consumers are generally a unique group with special religious requirements (Battour & Ismail, 2016; Battour, et. al., 2014). Furthermore, the number of Muslim millennial travellers are increasing nowadays and they are distinct from previous generations and other millennial travellers, with a unique set of values, needs, expectations and experiences in their travel consumptions and expenditure pattern ship (Halal Trip, 2017). Previous studies have highlighted the concept of a notable tourist experience as the travelling experience may encompass positive or negative memories that the tourists acquire after personally experiencing special and surprising tourist activities and events (Kim et al., 2012). It is understood that the availability of Halal food and Halal activities, good infrastructure, steady economic stability, the availability of Halal businesses, as well as political and social stability were the factors sought by Muslim tourists when travelling. These motives actually have had an impact towards travellers because such motives can bring about the urge to gain new experiences whilst travelling (Chen & Shoemaker, 2014) or to experience the actual Muslim atmosphere especially for those Muslim tourists who are living in a Non-Muslim country.

METHODOLOGY

Underpinning Theory

This study is based on the grounded theory approach. According to Glaser and Strauss (1967), grounded theory is defined as the process for 'the discovery of theory from data systematically obtained from social research.' This theory may be used as a research philosophy, whereby the researcher approaches a research question without a theoretical context. Based on this underlying theory, the study's question is developed and hence, data are gathered relative to the question. This is later explained via subsequent data analysis to support the researcher's contention about how the data may be used to respond to the research question. Following rigorous data analysis involves the process of constant comparison of the data obtained, categories and concepts that are identified. As further mentioned by Glaser and Strauss (1967), by comparing where the facts are

similar or different, the properties of categories can be generated, which will increase the categories' generality and explanatory power. Based on this process, the identification of emerging category is vital to support the conceptualisation of the theoretical framework. Ultimately, a situation of theoretical saturation is attained where no new categories or properties emerge from the gathering of further data.

Research Design

Due to the nature of the study which evaluates travellers' experiences regarding their needs and preferences on food and beverage offerings during their holidays, this study can be considered as exploratory in nature. Thus, qualitative research enquiry was applied to answer the research aims. Qualitative researchers attempt to make sense of, or provide an interpretation of, observed phenomena relative to meanings attributed to these phenomena by individuals involved in specific incidents or situations. On the other hand, a quantitative approach will not be able to capture the personal experiences in depth in such as compared to utilizing the qualitative perspective. The questions were developed based on the research aims and were pilot tested on four Muslim travellers, who were not involved in the actual data collection. The target population of this study was international Muslim tourists. In lieu with the selection of participants for this study, purposive sampling was utilised as the most preferred alternative for identifying the participants with the common characteristic to have travelled either within or outside their countries. These international Muslim tourists are the international students of Universiti Utara Malaysia and the participants were chosen to be interviewed based on their travel experience on travelling either within or outside of their countries. Prior to the interview, the researcher provided the participants insights regarding the current study and let the participants explore their understandings of the key issues relating to the Muslim travel experience, especially in terms of their food and beverage service experience needs and preferences.

Sample of the Study

As previously highlighted, purposive sampling was applied as this study is exploratory in nature. Purposive sampling is vastly applied in qualitative research for the identification and assortment

of information-rich cases for most effective use of limited resources. Cresswell and Plano Clark (2011) also stated that it involves ascertaining and choosing individuals or groups of individuals that are well versed with a phenomenon of interest. This is in accordance with Galvin (2015) who purported that 14 participants would be sufficient to reach data saturation in coming up with relevant themes to explain the phenomenon of concern. Participants were approached personally and the researcher explained in detail the purpose of the interview regarding their travelling experience and what is expected from the participants. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and classified based on the aim of the study. Later, the interview transcripts were analyzed via the thematic content analysis to make sense of the data to produce the relevant themes. The emerged categories and sub-categories reached its saturation and were deemed trustworthy as there were no other new categories that surfaced based on careful iteration of the transcripts. The questions were developed based on the research aims, following the Grounded Theory perspective whereby suitable questions to be posed in the pursuit to surface the necessary categories and concepts to elucidate the conceptual framework. There were two parts to the semi-structured questions. The first one, Part A, covers the demographic background of the participant while the second part, Part B questions the Muslim tourist's needs and preferences in terms of food and beverage provision whilst travelling. The analysis starts with the discussion on the participants' demographic profiles.

RESULTS

This section discusses the findings from the interview transcripts, after careful iteration and rigorous analysis of the collected data. This section will proceed with the participant's demographic profile and then the thematic content analysis of the interview transcripts.

Demographic Profile of Participants

The participants' profile is a list of the participants' code, gender, religion, education level, their countries of origin and the country that they have visited. Fourteen participants were selected and have agreed to be interviewed. The participants were international students of Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) and most of the participants have experienced travelling to a Muslim country,

besides Malaysia and are familiar and aware of the existence of Halal tourism. Based on Table 1, most of the participants are from the Middle East, with five participants from Jordan, two from Syria, and one from Yamen. Other international participants were from the Southeast Asian region with five participants from Indonesia and one from Singapore. All participants are Muslims and most of the participants have experienced Halal tourism from their travel experience. It is observed that there are more male participants compared to female participants and they have shared more about their travelling experience compared to female participants in the interview session. Most of the participants interviewed are male, whereby nine were male participants and the rest are female participants. The participants came from various educational background, where seven out of the 14 participants were undergraduate students, making up a majority of the informant's proportion, whilst four participants were master's degree students and three were Ph.D. students. The list of countries visited by the participants comprised of Muslim countries (Malaysia, Syria, Turkey, etc) and non-Muslim countries (United States of America, Holland, etc).

Table 1

Participants' Profile

Participants	Gender	Religion	Education Level	Country of Origin	The country that has been visited/ travel
P1	F	Muslim	Degree	Singapore	Amsterdam
P2	F	Muslim	Degree	Jordan	Bangkok, Thailand, and Korea
P3	M	Muslim	Ph.D	Syria	Turkey, UEA, Syria, the United States, and Malaysia
P4	M	Muslim	Master	Indonesia	Malaysia and Vietnam
P5	M	Muslim	Ph.D	Jordan	Saudia Arabia and Malaysia
P6	M	Muslim	Master	Syria	Iraq and Malaysia
P7	M	Muslim	Ph.D	Jordan	Singapore, Turkey, and Malaysia
P8	M	Muslim	Degree	Indonesia	Hat Yai, Thailand, China and Malaysia
P9	F	Muslim	Degree	Indonesia	Singapore and Bali Indonesia

P10	M	Muslim	Master	Jordan	Turkey and Malaysia
P11	M	Muslim	Master	Jordan	Thailand, Italy, and Malaysia
P12	F	Muslim	Degree	Indonesia	Tokyo, Japan, and Singapore
P13	F	Muslim	Degree	Indonesia	Bali, Indonesia, and the United Kingdom
P14	M	Muslim	Degree	Yamen	The United States, UAE, and Malaysia

Experience Encountered Relating to Food and Beverage Provision

Based on the interviews conducted, data was analyzed via thematic content analysis in answering the study’s aim. Muslim tourists' experiences relating to the food and beverage provision during their travels are identified. Based on careful iteration of the transcripts, three themes emerged. The three themes are known as the convenience of finding Halal outlets or Halal foods, the restaurants/outlets with certified Halal logo, and the experience regarding different food cultures. Table 2 shows the themes and the frequencies recorded in relation to respondents’ encounter with food and beverage provision during their travels. .

Table 2

Themes of Experience Encountered relating to Food and Beverage Provision

Themes	Respondents
The convenience of finding Halal outlets/Halal food	R2 R3 R4 R6 R8 R10 R14
Restaurants/outlets with certified Halal logo	R1 R9 R12 R13 R11
Different food culture	R5 R7 R11 R14

The Convenience of Finding Halal Restaurant/Halal Foods

The issue of Halal food and food outlets is imperative to Muslims. This also includes matters related to food provisions. This key-based system in the faith-based needs of a Muslim tourist assures the consistency in the way Halal food outlets are assured Halal. However, not all countries acknowledge Halal certification, especially non-Muslim countries and it is hard for a Muslim tourist to find a Halal food outlet in those respective countries. The search for Halal food should be made simpler and hassle-free for Muslim tourists. According to R6,

“During my travel to Iraq, it gave me a positive experience during my travel because I had great food and beverages served which it did not give me a problem since I am a Muslim, and finding Halal food there is quite easy because everything was certified with the Halal logo and also because Iraq is also a Muslim country which also makes me comfortable and no hesitation when it comes to food and beverages.” (R6)

Based on R6 responses, when a Muslim tourist travels to a Muslim country, it is not that difficult to access Halal restaurants and also Halal food and beverages, hence the dining experience became more comfortable and there were less doubt regarding the food. R10 also has a similar perception with R6. He stated that,

“I visited Turkey and as we all know Turkey is one of the Muslim countries, I have no worries about finding Halal food and beverages there as most of the eateries are Halal and nearby and very convenient. This will affect a positive impact towards my travelling experience.” (R10)

However, R2 stated differently;

“During my travel to Bangkok, the lack of Halal restaurants was challenging, because they only focused on non-Muslim tourists as if the Muslim tourists are still not well known there. Same goes when I was travelling to Sulawesi Indonesia, the country does provide food and drink, but I don't know if it is Halal certified by the Muslim organization or kitchen. Thankfully my friends helped me out. If not, I wouldn't know if the food I ate is Halal or not.” (R2)

Even though some Non-Muslim countries have acknowledged Halal tourism but some specific cities like Bangkok, still lack Halal restaurants and food. This situation could trigger Muslim tourists' and hence they are hesitant in finding food and beverages especially in a modern city that is famous for the Non-Halal activities. Adding further, Muslim tourists that have experience travelling to the United States do not possess the convenience of finding Halal restaurants and

Halal food there. R3 stated that;

“Halal food and beverage is the thing that every Muslim thinks about whenever he or she is travelling. Especially when we travel to a non-Muslim country. It is challenging, for example during my trip to the States and to have to find a Halal restaurant in the middle of Las Vegas is a bit harder than I have thought and it is a place where Muslim tourists should expect to face these types of problem when it comes to finding Halal food.”(R3)

Travelling to one of the well-known Non- Muslim cities in the world, a Muslim tourist should have already expected to face this kind of situation. This opinion is also supported by R14 who stated that,

“It’s hard to find a Halal restaurant in the States, even finding a Middle Eastern restaurant is difficult. But as this kind of situation is already expected and being a vegetarian during my trip there was my only option.” (R14)

Based on the responses of R14, he has experienced a similar situation to R3 where finding Halal restaurants and Halal food in the United States was quite a challenging ordeal, even for a simple Middle Eastern restaurant. The only option for R14 was to order vegetarian food during his trip, as to avoid taking any Non-Halal food and beverages. Meanwhile, for a Muslim tourist who is a food enthusiast, this dilemma could also be a challenge when travelling to a Non-Muslim country.

Restaurants / Food Outlets with Certified Halal Logo

Based on the findings, an added aspect that Muslim tourists will consider other than the convenience of finding a Halal restaurant and Halal food while travelling is whether the restaurants/outlets are certified with Halal logo or not. This theme is the second theme that emerged. Some Muslim countries such as Malaysia itself mostly have a strong Halal certification program, which helps Muslim tourists to identify the Halal outlets through the display of the Halal logo. Nevertheless, not all countries have a Halal certification, thus, it is hard for Muslim tourists to find any Halal food outlet. According to R1,

"I ensured that before entering the restaurant I will first ask the workers if it is a Muslim certified restaurant, even though it is a Kebab selling restaurant."

(R1)

Therefore, the first thing that R1 will do after being able to find a Muslim restaurant is asking whether the restaurants have a certified Halal logo. In a similar note, R9 stated that,

"When I was in Singapore, surprisingly Singapore was very particular regarding Halal certification and provided a Muslim friendly service ecosystem. I experienced a positive vibe during my travel and they provided me with the local delicacies which were very mindful and the food there was all safe and healthy to be consumed because it had the "Halal logo" on every restaurant we enter and even on the packet of the food in the convenience store." (R9)

Based on R9 responses, even though Singapore is not a Muslim country, they had acknowledged Halal tourism and finding a restaurant with Halal logo is quite easy for Muslim tourists. This signifies that the non-OIC countries are also starting to be conscious of Halal tourism and also Halal food preparation. According to R12,

"I think it was great, there were many Halal restaurants to my surprise at Tokyo and they even have a Halal logo displayed inside and outside the restaurants, even though not every country has the same Halal certification and might have a minor difference among standards but as long it is safe for Muslims to consume, it is fine with me." (R12)

RP12 said that she was surprised that a well-developed country like Tokyo, Japan was very conscious of Muslim tourists and Halal-friendly tourism. Initially, she was worried that she could not find any Halal food and beverages during her travels, so she would always bring an extra bag just for food rations like canned foods, instant noodles, and snacks just in case they did not manage to find any Halal eateries during their travel.

Different Food Culture

When travelling to a foreign country, not everyone can adapt to the different cultures of food and beverages in that country, whether the tourist is a Muslim or Non-Muslim. R5 stated that,

“During my visit to Saudia Arabia for ‘Omrah’, regarding the food in the accommodation, it was bad because it was a different culture and the food sometimes you cannot eat especially the food introduced in the accommodation and effect my appetite to eat. But the food and beverage outside of my accommodation were amazingly nice, and I tried a few new dishes that look appetizing and new experience for me.” (R5)

Based on the responses by R11, he also faced a similar situation whereby he had a problem adapting to the food and beverage culture where not everyone is able to simply eat anything especially different types of local cuisine and cultural delicacy. However, sometimes, the main cause of this is because the accommodation that prepares the food and beverage does not have good attempt to understand the customers’ background and make the dish or beverage look appealing and appetizing in the eyes of the guests. This leads guests to experience an uncomfortable dine in experience at the accommodation.

CONCLUSION

Discussion

Based on the recorded transcripts and careful iteration process in relation to the grounded theory approach, it is evident that a few categories and concepts have emerged. The categories and concepts were coded into specific themes which provided the basis for the development of the theoretical framework for this study. This is in line with the philosophy of the grounded theory approach, the identification of emerging category was identified to support the conceptualisation of the theoretical framework (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). As previously highlighted, the participants encountered three main themes during their holidays relating to food and beverage provision, which are the convenience of finding Halal outlets/Halal food, the convenience of finding

restaurants/outlets with certified 'Halal' logo and lastly, the experiences regarding the different food culture. The first theme is regarding the convenience of finding Halal outlets or Halal food. Henderson (2016) mentioned that Muslim tourists and other service providers are always particular about Halal issues especially dietary rules, mainly where Islam is not the main religion. The key base in the faith-based needs of a Muslim tourist is the consistency in the way Halal food outlets are assured Halal. However, not all countries acknowledge Halal certification and it is hard for a Muslim tourist to find a Halal food outlet. The search for Halal food should be made simpler and hassle-free for Muslim tourists during travelling. When Muslim tourists travel to a Muslim country, there should not be a problem in finding Halal outlets/food as it is a Muslim country that serves the majority Halal food and beverages. Nevertheless, if Muslim tourists travel to a non-Muslim country and a country that does not acknowledge the Halal tourism it may be a problem for Muslim tourists to find Halal foods.

The second theme is related to the restaurants or outlets with a certified Halal logo. Finding a Halal restaurant that has a certified Halal logo is another aspect that concerns Muslim tourists. There is a definite rise in the alarming rate at which false Halal certifications in food outlets and eateries have increased over the years, which can be misleading for Muslim tourists. Marzuki et al. (2012) stated that Halal certification reveals its values when Muslim customers visit Halal eating places in any Muslim country with the certification sometimes not all Muslim restaurants are run or owned by a Muslim owner. In order to ensure that it is safe and 100% Halal, the restaurant should acquire the Halal logo certification and display them at the restaurant so that Muslim tourists or consumers know that they are able to dine at the restaurant. Henderson (2016) also purported that this is an important requirement especially in destinations where Islam is not the main religion as there are consequences regarding dietary rules for Muslim tourists. The positive memorable experiences relating to food and beverage provisions are also the main concern of Muslim tourists when travelling especially to a Non-Muslim country that may not acknowledge Halal tourism. Aside from accommodation, food and beverage is also a main concern among Muslim tourists as it is one of the faith-based needs of Muslim tourists to ensure the consumption of foods that are assured Halal. There are various studies reflecting on this

notion (CrescentRating, 2016; Henderson, 2016; Mohsin et al., 2016; Stephenson, 2014) which indicated that Halal food is the most important element which is sought for during Muslim tourists' travels.

By establishing more Halal restaurants/outlets and Halal food, it could make the Muslim tourists feel more at ease and less doubtful regarding local Halal food, as asserted by Battour et al. (2017). Other than that, according to Marzukiet al. (2012), they stated that Halal certification reveals its values when Muslim customers visit Halal eating places which are certified. Therefore, the increase in restaurants certified with the Halal logo would also impact the Muslim tourist's experience as some Muslim countries such as Malaysia itself mostly have a strong Halal certification program, which helps Muslim tourists to identify the Halal outlets through the display of the Halal logo. The final theme is about the different food culture experienced by Muslim tourists during travelling. Not every person can accept the taste of food, especially food that is not familiar and originates from a different country to the tourist. Even though the food and beverages are Halal and safe to consume, if the person is not used to eating that type of particular food, it can be a problem for them, especially during their travels. When a Muslim tourist experiences this type of situation where he or she does not like the different food culture due to cultural differences, it could bring a somewhat negative experience to the Muslim tourist. Battour et al. (2013) purported that Muslim tourists strongly prefer to travel to places which offer facilities and amenities comprising facilities for prayer, provision of Halal foods and adhering to Islamic dress codes, among others.

Nevertheless, not all countries have Halal certification and it is hard for a Muslim tourist to find a Halal food outlet even though the accessibility of Halal food and beverage is critical for destinations that aim for the Muslim tourists. That is why the awareness regarding the influence of Halal tourism should be paid attention to, especially by those countries that do not acknowledge Muslim tourists, to open more Halal outlets and food and beverage. Thus, the accessibility of Halal food at any destination is very important for Muslim tourists. According to Shafaei and Mohamed (2015), it is imperative to comprehend Muslim tourists' needs and behaviors so as to create and provide relevant product and services in the Halal tourism market.

By fulfilling the needs and preferences of Muslim tourists, it is agreed that the destinations which can provide facilities associated to the faith-based needs of all levels will be the most successful in creating a memorable experience for their Muslim customers. Muslim tourists are unlikely to visit a destination lacking these attributes (Battour et al., 2010). Therefore, in order to capture the Muslim tourist market segment, service providers should give particular attention in the provision of convenient Halal eateries, having eateries with certified Halal logos, and paying attention to the customers' preference in terms of the selection of food to offer and to cater to international Muslim tourists. Finally, a situation of theoretical saturation is attained where no new categories or properties emerged from the gathering of further data. Hence, Figure 1 depicts the theoretical framework of the current study.

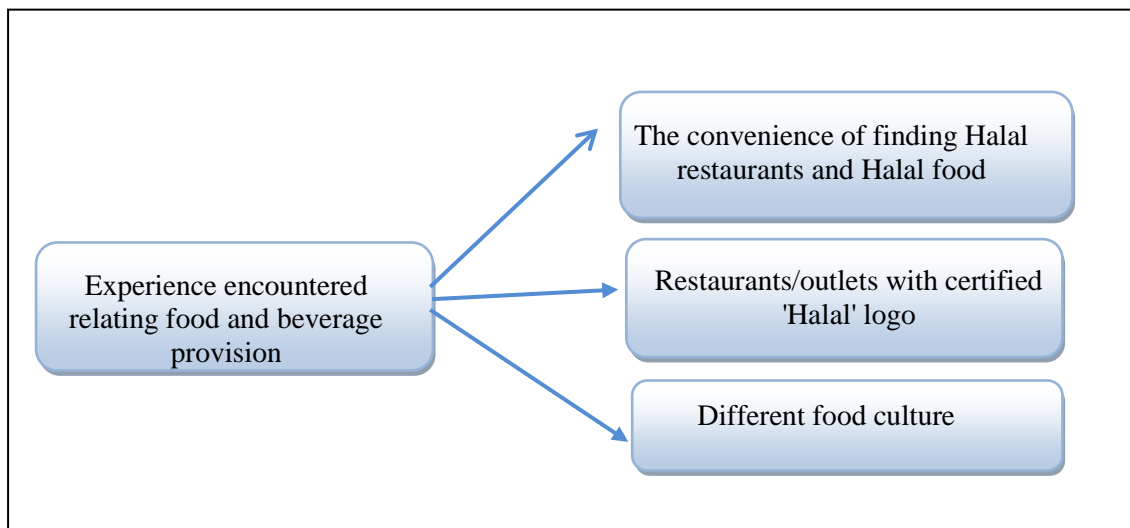


Figure 1

The Theoretical Framework of the Current Study

Conclusion and Recommendation

As the Halal industry is becoming one of the fastest growing industry in the global economy, it is important to consider which provision needs improvement and development so that the Halal tourism industry is able to be maintained not only currently, but also in the future. The findings from this study play a huge impact in the food and beverage sector on the Muslim tourist's experiences. It is important to maintain these aspects in sustaining the provision of food and beverage that complies with the Muslim friendly eateries to determine the success of the Halal

tourism industry. The results of this study will assist the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture (MOTAC) and other stakeholders who continue to strive to improve and provide better advancement towards Halal tourism that can meet the customers' demands especially Muslim tourists during their travels, which could help to improve the chances of increasing more market share if they can fulfill the demands and preferences of the travelers.

This study can help future studies in the tourism and hospitality industry, especially towards the future of Halal tourism sustainability and also Muslim tourists. It could also help future researchers to explore more regarding Halal tourism's most common provision which not only comprises of food and beverage, but also accommodation and destination attraction provision for Muslim tourists. Shafaei and Mohamed (2015) stated that it is important to understand Muslim tourists' needs and behavior in order to create a suitable product of the Halal tourism market. Hence, it is suggested that more data is collected from Muslim tourists relating to their thoughts and opinion on improving the Halal tourism system in the future by providing a clear comprehension of the Halal tourism sustainability concept towards the improvement of food and beverage provision.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for profit sectors.

REFERENCES

- Aiedah, A. K. (2012). Young consumers' attitude towards halal food outlets and JAKIM's halal certification in Malaysia. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 121, 26 –34.
- Amadeus. (2016). Halal travelers 2016. <http://www.amadeus.com/msite/global-report/2016/en/pdf/whitepapers/halal-travel-report-2016.pdf>

- Battour, M., & Ismail, M. N. (2016). Halal tourism: Concepts, practises, challenges and future. *Tourism Management Perspectives, 19*, 150–154.
- Battour, M., Ismail, M. N., Battor, M., & Awais, M. (2017). Islamic tourism: An empirical examination of travel motivation and satisfaction in Malaysia. *Current Issues in Tourism, 20*(1), 50–67.
- Battour, M., Battor, M, & Bhatti, M.A., (2014). Islamic attributes of destination: Construct development and measurement validation, and their impact on tourist satisfaction. *International Journal of Tourism Research, 16*(6), 556-564.
- Butler, G., Khoo-Lattimore, C., & Mura, P. (2014). Heritage tourism in Malaysia: Fostering a collective national identity in an ethnically diverse country. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research, 19*(2), 199-218.
- Carboni, C., Perelli, C., & Sistu, G. (2017). Developing tourism products in line with Islamic beliefs: Some insights from Nabeul–Hammamet. *The Journal of North African Studies, 22*(1), 87-108.
- Carvalho, S. W., Fazel, F., & Trifts. (2018). Transgressing a group value in a transcultural experience: Immigrants' affective response to perceived social identity threats. *Journal of Business Research, 9* (October), 326-333.
- Chen, S. C., & Shoemaker, S. (2014). Age and cohort effects: The American senior tourism market. *Annals of Tourism Research, 48* (September), 58-75.
- CrescentRating. (2018). Muslim travel index (GMTI) 2017. <https://www.crescentrating.com/gmti/detail.html?spot=8&s=3>
- Cresswell, J. W., & Clark, P. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed method research*. 2nd ed., Sage- Thousand Oaks.
- Cusack, B. (2018). Hey Airbnb, what about Egypt? *Forbes*.
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/brennancusack/2018/06/25/heyairbnbwhataboutegypt/#2b99c5261fdf>
- El-Gohary, H. (2016). Halal tourism, is it really Halal? *Tourism Management Perspectives, 19*, 124-130.
- Galvin, R. (2015). How many interviews are enough? Do qualitative interviews in building

- energy consumption research produce reliable knowledge? *The Journal of Building Engineering, 1*, 2-12.
- Halal Trip (2017). Muslim Millennials Travel Report, 2017. <https://www.halaltrip.com/attraction/downloadlink/?file=ht-muslim-millennial-travelreport-2017.pdf>
- Han, H., Al-Ansi, A., Olya, H. G. T., & Kim, W. (2019). Exploring halal-friendly destination attributes in South Korea: Perceptions and behaviors of Muslim tourists toward a non-Muslim destination. *Tourism Management, 71*, 151-164.
- Henderson, J. C. (2010). Sharia-compliant hotels. *Tourism and Hospitality Research, 10*(3), 46–254.
- Henderson, J. C. (2015). Halal food, certification and Halal tourism: Insight from Malaysia and Singapore. *Tourism Management Perspective, 19*(B), 160-164.
- Henderson, J. C. (2016). Muslim tourists, tourism industry responses and the case of Japan. *Tourism Recreation Research, 41*(3), 339–347.
- Kim, J., Ritchie, J. R. B., & McCormick, B. (2012). Development of a scale to measure memorable tourism experiences. *Journal of Travel Research, 51*(1), 12-25.
- Kuan-Huei, L, & Iesham, A. M. (2019). Muslim tourists' food sensitivity, travel, and accommodation choices. *Journal of Gastronomy and Tourism, 3*(4), 261-270.
- Lubis, N., Mohd-Naim, N. F., Nazurah, N. Minhaz, A., & Ahmed, U. (2016). From market to food plate: Current trusted technology and innovations in halal food analysis. *Trends in Food Science & Technology, 58* (December), 55-68.
- Marzuki, S. Z. S., Hall, C. M., & Ballantine, P. L. (2012). Restaurant manager and halal certification in Malaysia. *Journal of Foodservice Business Research, 15*(2), 195-214.
- Mohsin, A., Ramli, N., & Alkhulayfi, B. A. (2016). Halal tourism: Emerging opportunities. *Tourism Management Perspective, 19*, 137-143.
- Nassar, M. A., Mostafa, M. M., & Reisinger, Y. (2015). Factors influencing travel to Islamic destinations: An empirical analysis of Kuwaiti nationals. *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research, 9* (1), 36-53.

- Oktadiana, H. Pearce., P. L., & Chon. (2016). Muslim tourist's need: What don't we know? *Tourism Management Perspective*, 20, 124-130.
- Prayag, G., & Hosany, S. (2014). When Middle East meets West: Understanding the motives and perceptions of young tourists from United Arab Emirates. *Tourism Management*, 40 (February), 35-45
- Ryan, C. (2016). Halal tourism. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 19, 121-123.
- Rezai, G., Mohamed, Z., & Shamsudin, M. N. (2012). Non-Muslim consumers' understanding of halal principles in Malaysia. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 3(1), 36-46.
- Samori, Z., & Sabtu, N. (2014). Developing halal standard for Malaysian hotel industry: An exploratory study. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 121(19), 144-157.
- Shafaei, F., & Mohamed, B. (2015). Involvement and brand equity: A conceptual model for Muslim tourists. *International Journal of Culture Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 9(1), 54-67.
- Stephenson, M. L. (2014). Deciphering "Islamic hospitality": Developments, challenges, and opportunities. *Tourism Management*, 40, 155-164.
- Vargas-Sánchez, A., & Moral-Moral, M. (2019). Halal tourism: State of the art. *Tourism Review*, 74 (3), 385-399. <https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-01-2018-0015>
- Wingett, F., & Tumbull, R. (2017). Halal holidays: Exploring expectations of Muslim-friendly holidays. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 8(4).<http://.doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-01-2016-0002>
- Yeo, B. L., Naina, R. H., & Muda, M. M. (2016). A study of Malaysian customers purchase motivation of halal cosmetics retail, examining theory of consumption value and customer satisfaction. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 37, 176-182.
- Zailani, S., Kanapathy, K., Iranmanesh, M., & Tieman, M. (2015). Drivers of halal orientation strategy among halal food firms. *British Food Journal*, 2143-2160
- Zamani-Farahani, H., & Henderson, J.C. (2010). Islamic tourism and managing tourism development in Islamic societies: The cases of Iran and Saudi Arabia. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 12(1), 79-89.