


A PERSPECTIVE STUDY OF ISLAMIC TOURISM FOR MUSLIMS IN ASIAN AND WESTERN COUNTRIES OF HALAL GROWTH

Abdulwahab Shmailan^A



ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Article history:</p> <p>Received 03 March 2023</p> <p>Accepted 29 May 2023</p> <p>Keywords:</p> <p>Halal Tourism; Islamic Countries; Muslim Cultural Heritage; Halal Product Demand; Halal Practices; Tourism Competitiveness.</p> <div data-bbox="172 1016 480 1263" style="text-align: center;">  </div>	<p>Purpose: The aim of this study is to examine the prevalence of halal tourism practices in Islamic countries, and the demand for halal products in both Muslim and non-Muslim countries. The study also aims to identify strategies to enhance the competitiveness of halal tourists in global markets.</p> <p>Theoretical Framework: The framework of this study is grounded on the understanding of the prevalent halal practices in tourism, and the cultural and heritage aspects of the Muslim community that influence these practices.</p> <p>Design/Methodology/Approach: This study adopts a qualitative research approach, employing interviews as the primary data collection method. The study is also informed by a review of the current literature on halal tourism practices.</p> <p>Findings: The results of this study shed light on the demand for halal products in both Muslim and non-Muslim countries, and identify various proposals to enhance halal tourism practices in Muslim countries in the future. The study also reveals the potential for a boost in halal product packaging in Islamic countries through the assessment of the Muslim's cultural heritage.</p> <p>Research, Practical & Social implications: This study contributes to the understanding of halal tourism, offering strategies for the improvement of halal tourism competitiveness worldwide. It emphasizes the importance of acknowledging and protecting the interests of Muslims, particularly in Middle East countries, within the global tourism industry.</p> <p>Originality/Value: The value of this study lies in its focus on a relatively unexplored aspect of global tourism – halal tourism practices in Islamic countries. It addresses a significant gap in the current literature, providing fresh insights into halal product demand and the influence of Muslim cultural heritage.</p> <p>Doi: https://doi.org/10.26668/businessreview/2023.v8i6.1987</p>

UM ESTUDO DE PERSPECTIVA DO TURISMO ISLÂMICO PARA MUÇULMANOS EM PAÍSES ASIÁTICOS E OCIDENTAIS DE CRESCIMENTO HALAL

RESUMO

Objetivo: O objetivo deste estudo é examinar a prevalência de práticas de turismo halal em países islâmicos e a demanda por produtos halal em países muçulmanos e não muçulmanos. O estudo também visa a identificar estratégias para aumentar a competitividade dos turistas halal nos mercados globais.

Estrutura teórica: A estrutura deste estudo está fundamentada na compreensão das práticas halal predominantes no turismo e nos aspectos culturais e patrimoniais da comunidade muçulmana que influenciam essas práticas.

Projeto/Metodologia/Abordagem: Este estudo adota uma abordagem de pesquisa qualitativa, empregando entrevistas como o principal método de coleta de dados. O estudo também é informado por uma revisão da literatura atual sobre práticas de turismo halal.

^A PhD in Business Administration. Associate Professor. Jubail Industrial College - Royal Commission in Jubail. Saudi Arabia. E-mail: asns2010@gmail.com Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-4304-7180>

Conclusões: Os resultados deste estudo esclarecem a demanda por produtos halal em países muçulmanos e não muçulmanos e identificam várias propostas para aprimorar as práticas de turismo halal em países muçulmanos no futuro. O estudo também revela o potencial para um aumento na embalagem de produtos halal em países islâmicos por meio da avaliação do patrimônio cultural dos muçulmanos.

Implicações sociais, práticas e de pesquisa: Este estudo contribui para a compreensão do turismo halal, oferecendo estratégias para a melhoria da competitividade do turismo halal em todo o mundo. Ele enfatiza a importância de reconhecer e proteger os interesses dos muçulmanos, especialmente nos países do Oriente Médio, no setor de turismo global.

Originalidade/valor: O valor deste estudo está em seu foco em um aspecto relativamente inexplorado do turismo global - práticas de turismo halal em países islâmicos. Ele aborda uma lacuna significativa na literatura atual, fornecendo novas percepções sobre a demanda de produtos halal e a influência do patrimônio cultural muçulmano.

Palavras-chave: Turismo Halal, Países Islâmicos, Herança Cultural Muçulmana, Demanda de Produtos Halal, Práticas Halal, Competitividade do Turismo.

UN ESTUDIO EN PERSPECTIVA DEL TURISMO ISLÁMICO PARA MUSULMANES EN PAÍSES ASIÁTICOS Y OCCIDENTALES EN LOS QUE CRECE EL HALAL

RESUMEN

Objetivo: El objetivo de este estudio es examinar la prevalencia de las prácticas de turismo halal en los países islámicos y la demanda de productos halal en países musulmanes y no musulmanes. El estudio también pretende identificar estrategias para aumentar la competitividad de los turistas halal en los mercados globales.

Marco teórico: El marco de este estudio se basa en la comprensión de las prácticas halal predominantes en el turismo y los aspectos culturales y patrimoniales de la comunidad musulmana que influyen en dichas prácticas.

Diseño/metodología/enfoque: Este estudio adopta un enfoque de investigación cualitativa, empleando entrevistas como método principal de recogida de datos. El estudio también se basa en una revisión de la literatura actual sobre las prácticas del turismo halal.

Conclusiones: Los resultados de este estudio arrojan luz sobre la demanda de productos halal en países musulmanes y no musulmanes e identifican varias propuestas para mejorar las prácticas del turismo halal en los países musulmanes en el futuro. El estudio también revela el potencial de aumento del envasado de productos halal en los países islámicos mediante la evaluación del patrimonio cultural de los musulmanes.

Implicaciones sociales, prácticas y de investigación: Este estudio contribuye a la comprensión del turismo halal, ofreciendo estrategias para mejorar la competitividad del turismo halal en todo el mundo. Destaca la importancia de reconocer y proteger los intereses de los musulmanes, especialmente en los países de Oriente Medio, en el sector turístico mundial.

Originalidad/valor: El valor de este estudio reside en que se centra en un aspecto relativamente inexplorado del turismo mundial: las prácticas del turismo halal en los países islámicos. Aborda una importante laguna en la bibliografía actual, aportando nuevas perspectivas sobre la demanda de productos halal y la influencia del patrimonio cultural musulmán.

Palabras clave: Turismo Halal, Países Islámicos, Patrimonio Cultural Musulmán, Demanda de Productos Halal, Práticas Halal, Competitividad Turística.

INTRODUCTION

Background

Tourism has a rising significance in the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and is considered a strategic pillar of the tourism industry in which Islamic tourism emerges as a novel concept worldwide (Alim et al., 2023). However, tourism is conserved to be a volatile business among all businesses practised currently (Zhang et al., 2021). In this context, Islamic tourism has been a benchmark due to the prevalence of Islamic law in Muslim countries, which governs

the faith and beliefs of Muslims towards tourism products. In particular, Sharia Law is fundamental to guiding the tourism practices of Muslims across the world. The Sharia Law significantly implicates notion-based tourism activities wherein Muslims are advised to follow worship and dawah-based tourism practice often known as Sharia tourism (Widagdyo, 2015). In a particular context, Islamic tourism enforces several obligations on Muslim tourists, such as praying five times a day, learning about Islamic activities, culture, heritage and legacy, and spiritual components (Battour and Ismail, 2014, Fahim and Dooty, 2014). Literature is evident that Muslim tourists differ in choosing their destinations, the motive for travel, the requirements of travel, and travel behaviours which frame their cultural backgrounds (Hassani and Moghavvemi, 2019). In a similar context, Islam significantly impacts the attitudes and behaviour of Muslims during their travel as they have to obey the duties imposed by the Sharia Law (Adel et al., 2021). Furthermore, the marketing initiatives in the tourism industry of Islamic countries depend largely on the principles of Shariaa Law (Adel et al., 2021). However, with regard to leisure activities, Muslims can enjoy similar experiences as those available to Non-Muslims. Moreover, Muslim tourists get affected by the tourism practices in Non-Islamic countries due to restrictions on the implementation of Sharia Law (Zamani-Farahani and Henderson, 2010). As the behaviour of Muslims is guided by the Quran, the hadith, Sharia tourism is a common tourism practice that enables Muslim tourists to travel in compliance with Islamic values (Sachedina, 2005, Harjawati and Ardiansyah, 2021). In this regard, Islamic values essentially guide the vendors in the tourism industry about preparing and selling animal food while prohibiting dealing with alcohol. Similarly, Islamic values restrict Muslim tourists from consuming food, such as pork, blood, and carrousel, thereby making animal slaughtering an art and proclaiming any action against it as a loss of idolatry.

A recent study by Ajmi et al. (2019); Aziz et al. (2018) regarding Islamic tourism examined the social-cultural demographics notion and explained its impact on Islamic tourism. It revealed that although the fundamental values ordained under the Sharia Law have been consistently applied to the tourism practices in Muslim countries. The participation of women the tourism decision-making has increased, which has led to women's empowerment in the context of Islamic tourism, which was avoided rather before. Besides this, according to Khan et al.'s study, due to the rising significance of the halalification process for tourism destinations, global tourism destinations are considerably sighting changes in their tourism practices ahead of the religiousness of different tourists. It is executed mainly because of the increasing customer base in the global tourism industry (Khan and Callanan, 2017). More importantly,

besides the Arab countries, Asian countries, such as Malaysia, is considered the first country where halal tourism has grown by 15.8%, contributing largely to the country's GDP (Samori and Sabtu, 2014).

However, in the particular context of Islamic tourism, not only the Muslim consumers or tourists becoming more Islamicist, but Non-Muslim countries in Europe have started to embrace Islamicist approaches to conform to the international standards of consumerism. Therefore, Non-Muslim countries have also supported the Islamic economy by accepting changes in the production of tourism products relatable to Muslim consumers (Saeed et al., 2001). Following this context, this research study entails a dynamic perspective on the growth of Islamic tourism in Non-Muslim countries to grasp an in-depth understanding of the potential and challenges disclosed by the businesses in the global tourism industry. Besides this, this study also covers problems encountered in the implementation of Islamic tourism practices, which negatively cater to the trips of potential consumers or tourists.

Aim, Objectives and Research Question

Aim

The study aims to analyse the significance of Islamic tourism for Muslims in Asian and western countries of halal growth.

Objectives

- To analyse the growth of Islamic tourism.
- To evaluate the growth of halal hotels and halal services for Muslim tourism in Asian and Western countries.
- To examine the opportunities and challenges faced by the Islamic tourism sector.

Research Question

R.Q. 1. *“What is the trend of Islamic tourism and halal growth for Muslims in Western and Asian countries?”*

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The present study examines the prevalence of halal growth and Islamic tourism activities in Asian and Western countries. In this regard, the literature review chapter discusses

the already explored literature. It critically evaluates the conclusions and practices of various scholars in this research area to get a detailed overview of the research phenomenon.

Theoretical Framework

From the viewpoint of Duman (2011), Islamic tourism refers to the movement of Muslims across places that fall outside of their native environment or habitat for a maximum of 1 year. The movements cater to performing tours and travel practices motivated by Islamic values, however, wherein the movements differ from indulging any novel activities recommended by the destinations. It signifies "halal-friendly" tourism, which serves as a niche to the needs of Muslim tourists and may include halal transport, halal hotels, halal food restaurants, halal finance, and halal tour packages. All these elements of halal tourism are interconnected and give a unique perspective to Islamic tourism across different countries. In a similar context, Sureerat et al. (2015) defined halal tourism as a tourism practice that is involved providing Muslim-oriented products and services to address Muslims' needs across tourist destinations.

According to Schonherr, Bichler & Pikkemaat (2023), the irritation index theory developed by Doxey seems to be relevant in the context of halal tourism because this theory outlines that the response of tourists towards the destinations is transformation and change. Initially, the tourist perceives the tourist destination as an enjoyable place supported by anticipation and a sense of excitement and it leads to formal contracts and tourism operators only focusing on generating higher income. When more tourists visit the destination, tourism also leads to the annoyance of tourists due to the homogeneous culture and traditional values. Finally, antagonism or irritation started to develop and tourists do not perceive the destination as their favourite place to visit. In this context, it is also discussed that tourism development based on halal principles can be ensured when the Islamic culture and traditions are integrated with the tourism destinations and therefore, causing less irritation (Schönherr, Bichler & Pikkemaat, 2023).

Furthermore, Litvin, Guttentag & Smith (2022) highlighted that Plog's tourist motivation theory categorised tourists into two groups; allocentric and psychocentrics. The allocentric are the tourists who visit the tourist destinations based on their values and beliefs as well as enjoy the local culture and traditions. On the other side, the psychocentrics visit familiar destinations through the packages and do not involve in the local cultures and traditions. In this context, halal tourism in Asian countries can be promoted by encouraging tourists to visit tourist

destinations which have Islamic principles and values such as Islamic architecture. The people from the Islamic countries will also get attached to the local culture and people and hence, ensuring the development of halal tourism. The attitude of the tourists also plays a crucial role in visiting the tourist destinations regardless of the problems and challenges and allocentric tourism tends to visit the tourist destinations based on their intrinsic motivational characteristics (Litvin, Guttentag & Smith, 2022).

In a particular context of Islamic tourism, Hassan (2004) viewed Islamic tourism as a novel phenomenon in the global tourism industry that represents new ethics and norms regarding providing tourism products and services to Muslim tourists or consumers. Moreover, Islamic tourism exists to improvise a dynamic value system that cares about Islamic beliefs and values regarding travel practices performed by Muslim tourists and the businesspersons involved in it. Besides this, Islamic tourism provides privileges to Muslims that can find their identity across rife consumerism. Similarly, it protects Muslim consumers from the prevalent negligence and abuses that exist selfishly in the contemporary tourism industry. Islamic tourism also acts as a base to manage understanding among different cultures and backgrounds of the societies, thereby creating a dialogue that aims at the civilisation of the heritage and societies. Along similar lines, Hassan (2007) identified that Islamic tourism could also be referred to as religious tourism as it involves visiting religious places, such as shrines. However, it can only be conferred to a state of tourism that pacifies the requirements of Islamic values.

Nevertheless, Islamic values get shared with other religious and non-religious beliefs in compliance with the ethical code ordained by World Tourism Organization (Fisol et al., 2019). Similarly, Islamic tourism merely calls for respect for community-based tourists, which aims to benefit relationships between the local people and the Muslim tourists that are referred to as community people across the tourism destinations. Thus, it can be evaluated that the Islamic perspective of tourism transcends the mere proforma of travel as it involves following moral obligations. It is because to keep a community, particularly Muslims, well-informed about its culture, thereby making travel a worship.

The Trends and Growth of the Muslim Tourism

Tourism is an essential industry that contributes to a developing country's development and wealth, as well as poverty reduction (Quyen & Tuan, 2022). Muslim tourism is considered a significant phase in the tourism industry due to its influence on the overall demand for Muslim products. As such, Global Muslim tourism had a sound economic growth in 2011 at around

USD 126.1 billion and was estimated to grow to around USD 192 billion by 2020 (Crescentrating, 2012). Furthermore, Gabdrakhmanov *et al.* (2016) explored that Islamic tourism is being converted into a social phenomenon as Islamic tourists are willing to explore their culture by visiting places such as Mecca and Hajj. In Islamic tourism, strict norms are followed including dress codes and food. Moreover, a variety of amenities are offered to Islamic tourists such as cafeterias, swimming pools and restaurants by promoting halal services.

In a study by Abdul Aziz *et al.* (2018), it is evaluated that the influence of social-cultural demographics remains unchanged to a considerable extent, whereas a change has been observed in the development of women's participation in the decision-making process in the tourism industry. It has led to an increased market portfolio for the tourism businesses in the global tourism industry, thereby anticipating a surging movement of Muslim tourists in future. Social relations theory can be implied that generates communication among various tourists whose main motive is to acquire knowledge about Muslim culture and promote their values.

In a particular context, Khan and Callanan (2017) argued that the rise of the Halalification process is administering the global tourism market to provide religion-based tourism products and services to Muslim tourists. However, the literature studies have not used any specific term to highlight the importance of trends in Islamic tourism. Only reviews and opinions about Muslim-friendly and halal tourism have received greater attention throughout the literature. Besides this, not only Arab countries are involved in Islamic tourism, but Asian countries, like Malaysia, have also emerged as the first Muslim country to evolve developmental Islamic tourism in the country. For instance, in 2012, Malaysia received around 25 million international tourists, which recorded a rise of 354% compared to 5.5 million Muslim tourists in 2009 (Hussin, 2018). The country registered the highest arrival of international Muslim tourists in 2012. Apart from Malaysia, Samori *et al.* (2016) affirmed that Indonesia is entering into halal business practices in tourism by conforming to the Sharia Law to provide a supportive tourism environment to global Muslim tourists. Moreover, Turkey is positively reacting to halal tourism (Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2011) as the country incorporated around 50% of arrivals of Global Muslim tourists in the country in 2011 (Duman and Kozak, 2010).

Besides this, a study by Suban, Madhan and Shagirbasha (2021), explored that Halal and Islamic tourism is coming forward as an effective business idea which helps in catering for the travel needs of Muslims. Islamic tourism has strictly adhered to tourists who rely on principles and religious practices showcased by their religion. Moreover, Islamic tourism has

increased the need for transportation, restaurants, lodging and entertainment. To adhere to the principles, several hotels prohibit casinos and nightclubs to respect the Islamic code.

Growth of Halal Hotels and Halal Services for Muslims in Non-Muslim Countries

Islamic hotels' growth has thrived considerably following the Sharia principles, which cohere with the growth of Islamic tourism. Furthermore, as per the statistics published by World Tourism Organization (2010), nearly 10% of global hotels represent compliance with the Sharia principles and are called Shariah Compliant Hotels (SCHs). The Sharia Compliant Hotels ban the reservation of alcoholic products; however, they supply Islamic products and services only. The Islamic products and services include Halal food, prayer rooms, prayer rugs, Quran, and individual services for men and women. Furthermore, the Shariah Compliant Hotels' infrastructure is strictly designed according to the Sharia principles covering the interiors and the exteriors of the hotels (Zulkharnain & Jamal, 2012).

Non-Muslim countries, such as the Philippines, Brazil, and Japan, have begun to offer halal products and services to Muslim tourists in the country in order to become Muslim-friendly destinations. In this regard, the Japan Chamber of Commerce and the Travel Agencies Association of the Philippines has organised seminars to educate and train the stakeholders in the tourism industry to respect the needs of Muslim tourists (The National, 2014; TTG Asia, 2014). Besides this, prayer rooms have been established at airports in various regions of Japan (Yan *et al.*, 2017). Furthermore, in the UK, KFC Outlets and Nando's restaurants are serving halal foods (Wilkins *et al.*, 2019). In essence, the Euromonitor International report (2015) highlighted that halal food sale has increased in Europe due to a heavy footfall of Muslim tourists on the continent. It has further reported increased market size of halal tourism in the continent as non-Muslim destinations are also supporting halal business practices. Furthermore, Yan *et al.* (2017) depicted that the tourism industry is inclined towards the promotion of conservative dress codes for employees and prohibits alcohol to respect the culture of Muslims. The increase in tourism has resulted in a significant demand for tourism due to which several new policies for halal tourism are established. The tourism industry has become a major contributor to boosting the GDP growth of halal countries.

In the Philippines, the Fairmont Makati and Raffles Makati hotels provide Quran copies, a prayer area, and Arabic-language Television channels (TTG Asia, 2014). For locations that cater to Muslim vacationers, having halal food and drinks available is essential. When visiting non-Muslim countries, Muslim visitors increasingly frequently seek Halal food and drinks

(Euromonitor International, 2015). 2014 saw the opening of prayer rooms at Japan's Narita International airport and Tokyo's Haneda International Airport (The National, 2014). The Manhattan Fish Market, a popular restaurant franchise in Malaysia, established its first location in Tokyo in 2015. The restaurant only uses Halal ingredients in all of its dishes (Shugo, 2015).

Opportunities and Challenges in the Islamic Tourism Sector

Several prospects for stakeholders involved who want to specialise in the Islamic tourism industry have been identified by a survey in the literature. One such possibility is the growth of Islamic rural tourism, which, according to Stephenson (2014), are places where guests are not offered alcohol and where amusement is strictly centred on Islamic principles. As an illustration, the traditional community of al-Saha, which is situated in the southern part of the nation, is present in Beirut. Tourists may see examples of Islamic culture in the village's architecture, art, music, poetry, and other types of art. According to Hazbun (2008), similar Islamic villages can also be built in different regions of the world, providing tourists with enriching experiences while also fostering local community growth. Islamic vacations are also noted as a possible market for the industry. Similarly, Islamic tourism aims to provide cruise ship vacations based on the Islamic faith, albeit it is not a well-established idea. According to Stephenson (2014), these cruises should cater primarily to Muslim travellers and include Muslim-focused activities. Other religious societies, including Jewish and Christian ones, have adopted the idea (Seyer & Müller, 2011).

From a different perspective, recent polls have revealed that there is a sizable desire among Muslims for Muslim-friendly activities that may be fulfilled through Islamic tourism. According to a poll conducted by Dinar Standard in 2012, more than 50% of Muslim travellers said that Muslim-friendly services are the main factor affecting their travel choices. There continues to be a sizable development potential in many other markets, given that Muslim nations only account for 12% of all tourists visiting, which is excessively allocated among Turkey, Malaysia, and Egypt. Exploiting these prospects for Islamic tourism is not without its difficulties, though. Apart from this, travel companies from all over the world that are modifying their trips to be Muslim-friendly by including elements like halal cuisine and itineraries are projected to grow fiercely. These companies have been structured around prayer schedules and are predicted to increase competition in Islamic tourism (Battour *et al.*, 2017). Middle Eastern security issues have also been mentioned as a possible barrier to progress (Carboni *et al.*, 2014). It is clear from the study above that there is extant literature on the

subject. The review pointed out that the available literature was all a single evaluation of the relevant markets that lacked a full assessment of how those markets interacted with one another and how they varied to find patterns. The current study fills this knowledge gap and makes an effort to provide a systematic and comprehensive understanding of the notion of Islamic tourism and the expansion of Halal services in non-Arabic and non-Muslim nations worldwide.

Significance of the Study

The study is highly significant for enhancing Islamic values and holds high vitality in designing tourism services and fulfilling their primary needs, which leads to international development. However, the Islamic tourism industry is lagging in offering a variety of tourism facilities. Therefore, the present study will depict the utmost significance for hotels and travel planners of Islamic tourism belonging to Halal economies to modify their offerings and services to increase the potential of the Islamic tourism industry (Kamali, 2021). Along with this, the study will provide great scope for developing better services by analysing the beliefs, attitudes and religious intentions, and other industry trends of tourism, thereby offering an improved trip package. Moreover, the increase in the trend of customised services has changed the requirements of Muslim tourists. Therefore, the study will be critical in helping hotel authorities, travel agencies, and airline authorities to offer customised services by assessing the prevailing trends.

The increasing trends and growth of Islamic lifestyle as Sharia'h products and emerging services, including halal food, Islamic finances, and tourism, have acquired great importance for the worldwide economy. Moreover, the rapid rise in Muslim tourists has motivated the tourism industry to indulge in offering innovative products and services that align with the principles of Islamic tourists (Ruzulan *et al.*, 2022). However, even after attracting a variety of potential tourists, Islamic tourism is a new concept for tourism practices. Therefore, the study focuses on addressing the gaps in the Islamic tourism industry by providing comprehensive information about prevailing Islamic trends so that the concept of Islamic tourism can be flourished. In addition, the OIC and Halal countries such as Iraq, Bahrain, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan possess decent infrastructural facilities that are prominent in fulfilling the choices of Muslim tourists.

Furthermore, Islamic tourism significantly contributes to economic development and immense growth in OIC countries if the service offers are appropriately designed. Furthermore, the existing practices and theories reveal immense diversity in Islamic tourists' employment of

Muslim practices. Many times, Islamic tourists are inclined towards non-Muslim destinations like Europe and manage their requirements by switching to Halal food and different religious aspects, including prayer spaces (Rahman *et al.*, 2021).

In contrast, many Islamic tourists are not indulged in adjusting their needs as they prefer options and destinations that consider their religious aspects. However, there is an increasing need to create awareness about the intentions of Muslims to engage in Islamic tourism, as some Muslims only travel to visit friends or for business purposes. In contrast, several Muslims travel to spread Islam's religious beliefs and values and worship Allah (SESRIC, n.d). Therefore, the study will seek to fill the gap by analysing qualitative data and examining various practices for enabling effective Islamic tourism.

The travel motivation theory can be aligned with the study which helps in understanding the reasons and desires for tourism such as interpersonal escape. Moreover, the 'push and pull' factors and social motives also contribute to generating the desire to travel.

METHODOLOGIES

Introduction

The research methodology chapter is an integral part of the research as it provides information about the data collection method. Moreover, it provides proper reasoning behind the research philosophy and approach, along with ethical considerations fulfilled while conducting the study.

Research Approach

The two types of research approaches that provide the framework for data collection are the inductive and deductive research approaches. The inductive research approach moves from specific to general, while the deductive research approach moves from general to specific (Karamagi, 2021). The study uses an inductive research approach to address the study's research question. The inductive research approach enables the collection of qualitative data and helps in generating generalised findings about the research area. Along with this, the use of the inductive research approach begins with observation, data collection and then analysis to draw a meaningful conclusion (Leavy, 2017). Thus, the present study also observes the existing theories and concepts associated with Islamic tourism and then gathers data to address its research area, making it the most suitable approach for the study. The deductive research

approach is used for testing existing theories, and as the study intends to avoid testing existing theories, its use has been avoided.

Data Collection

This section describes a methodological plan for the qualitative research, which is focused on the exploration of the important and research-specific secondary studies that are performed by the use of the qualitative research method. The primary reason behind the inclusion of both forms of data sources is that both of the data sources are necessary for executing the triangulation as well as for improving the data validation (Fielding, 2012). The main focus of this research work is on analysing the growth prospects of Islamic tourism within non-Arabic as well as non-Muslim countries. The researcher is capable of acquiring the secondary data findings by conducting market research for diverse markets. The major advantage of using secondary data in research is that it saves the time of the researcher and enables the collection of a wide range of literature in the shortest time (Groenland & Dana, 2019). Apart from the secondary method, in order to obtain primary data, the researcher is required to make visits to the different targeted regions in order to have a face-to-face conversation with the research enthusiasts. The duration of the currently projected interview is between 30 minutes to 1 hour. The interview method of data collection ensures the researcher in gathering valid responses from the participants, making it the most suitable method for the present study. The primary method would require a considerable proportion of time as well as money (Cronin, 2014). The major rationale behind the use of primary data in the study is that it helps in obtaining the most updated information. Along with this, the use of primary data also increases the overall reliability and validity of research, thereby improving the quality of research findings (Clarke & Braun, 2013). Hence, apart from the primary method, the cross-sectional data exploration is performed by means of the secondary method. After the collection of the prevalent secondary sources, it becomes simple to extract facts about the emerging trends as well as patterns identified in the domain of Muslim tourism. Moreover, future outcomes cannot be predicted without having proper information about the modifications that have occurred in the past times.

Sampling for Primary Data

For the selection of the interview participants, purposive sampling has been implemented, which helps the researcher to show reliance on their own opinions and judgments

by assessing the characteristics of the participants or population. Purposive sampling is highly beneficial in obtaining prominent qualitative responses, which ultimately promotes précised results. Moreover, the sound judgment of the researcher in this sampling helps save time and cost (Lohr, 2019). Thus, 25 respondents are selected for the interview method as this number of respondents is highly sufficient for providing the needful and reliable data findings from the interviews. Out of 25 respondents, 15 provided their consent for the research. The tourism industry is identified to provide a sample of experienced professionals from the tourism business segments who have considerable knowledge about Islamic tourism. For procurement of the reliable sample size for this research, it is essential to include tourism experts as well as local tourism stakeholders based in Malaysia as well as Saudi Arabia. Thus, 15 tourism experts are included in the study which makes the sample size of the research 15.

Search Strategy for Qualitative Data

Furthermore, while collecting reliable data from trustworthy data sources, the researchers faced a considerable range of problems. The research projects collect peer-reviewed articles which can be easily offered acceptance by the research panel. Furthermore, under the secondary method, governmental as well as industry-specific authentic publications along with the media reports are also essential to be reviewed for confirming credibility and reliability. Moreover, the secondary research has discarded the research papers and journals that are older than 10 years. Along with this, keywords like Islamic tourism, Western countries, Asian countries, Significance, Prevalence and Halal have been searched on databases like Google Scholar, JSTOR, PubMed and Scopus. The use of these databases has ensured the collection of reliable and research-relevant articles for the study.

Data Analysis

In order to interpret and evaluate the research findings, the current research has applied a qualitative analysis strategy named thematic analysis. Under this technique, distinct themes are developed as well as identified following the conceptual framework of the research. The use of the thematic analysis technique has supported the researcher in performing critical comparisons as well as analysis of the prevalent secondary literature sources. Thematic analysis is also implemented for framing the uniform data findings for deriving meaningful conclusions as well as recommendations.

The researcher is also required to execute the thematic content analysis strategy after organising the interview with 15 respondents. Thematic analysis is beneficial for the recognition of the fundamental themes in line with the interview responses. Moreover, by the base theory strategy, coding is also implemented for examining similarities as well as differences within the provided interview responses (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Respondents are reviewed through coding the participants, such as "Respondent 1", to preserve the confidentiality of respondents.

Ethical Considerations

All the ethical considerations are followed to prohibit response bias, and no questions are developed to get specific responses from participants. Further, the right audience is being targeted for an interview to make sure that realistic and transparent views are gathered for the analysis. Moreover, the responses were also filtered to ensure no bias was associated with the data. Furthermore, the data collection procedure contains interviews which help in enabling replicability towards qualitative research, thereby leading to transparency. Moreover, the transparency criteria have been applied to enable an open-coding approach for the obtainment of unique criteria consisting of different techniques for analysing the research process, data availability, and analysis. Moreover, inter-rater reliability is also utilised to ensure immense reliability and accuracy of the qualitative data and avoid errors (Aguinis and Solarino, 2019). It is ensured that only those participants that provide their consent for the research take part in the study, which helps to ensure the ethics of voluntary participation.

The objective of the current research is conveyed properly to 15 respondents. For procurement of the interview participants, the constructed questionnaires involved a section for the procurement of reliable information about the experiences as well as interests within Islamic tourism or the generalised Islamic hospitality sector. After this, the research-specific questions are developed for the respondents.

In this context, it is further analysed that a maximum number of the research respondents refused to perform a recording of their personal opinions. Therefore, notes were transcribed throughout the interview process. After completion of the research work, respondents are given a chance to check as well as confirm the correctness of the transcribed notes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

An interview is conducted with 15 tourism experts who have adequate knowledge about the latest trends in Islamic tourism in Asian and Western countries. In this context, the results chapter presents the findings derived from the thematic analysis of the interview data. The procured interview data is examined by providing a thorough underpinning with the support of the former literature studies (Khan *et al.*, 2019).

Thematic Analysis

Theme 1: Islamic tourism and its significance

In the current section, the included respondents are inquired regarding their personal perspectives on the direction of Islamic tourism. In this context, all the research participants are identified to reveal their thoughts to reduce confusion about Islamic tourism. In this regard, 80% of the respondents expressed their disagreement with having knowledge about the Islamic tourism-related concept. In this relation, Respondent 1 asserted, *“I believe that confusion is existent regarding the conceptual understanding of Islamic tourism. I think that very little emphasis is provided on the Islamic tourism-based concept and there is confusion between the practices of promoting the Islamic cultural heritage as well as the idea of executing the tourism practices that are Muslim-friendly”*. Hence, there are diversified perceptions related to the conceptual understanding of Islamic tourism. In the views of some respondents, Islamic tourism aims to put a sheer focus on the culture and traditional practices of Islam. However, in accordance with other participants, Islamic tourism is the key practice of executing the tourism process in a Muslim-friendly manner by putting constant trust in Islam. On the other hand, Respondent 2 added further details regarding Islamic tourism by stating, *“I have seen that even the nations that follow non-Muslim culture tend to attract the tourists as well as organise the Islamic tourism without the inclusion of elements corresponding to real halal. Islamic tourism is an opportunity for the generation of more sources of income.”* Therefore, the travel motivation theory is justified as the intentions of Muslims for indulging in Islamic tourism are for social factors such as culture, tradition, and promotion of Islamic heritage. Further, it has also been analysed that a variety of non-Muslim nations focus on targeting tourists, but they fail to consider the halal elements, which acts as a drawback. However, their main concern is to generate income by widening their tourism. Therefore, the findings will help non-Muslim

countries to work more on improving halal elements and spreading Islamic culture to attract tourists.

During the initial time of receiving popularity, Islamic tourism was perceived as a quite appealing process where the respondents believed that Halal tourism is required to include the cultural as well as heritage-based attributes of Islam as well as the other elements related to traditional tourism. Apart from the above, Respondent 9 explained clearly that, *“In my views, on the primary grounds the Islamic heritage, as well as Islamic culture, is the integral constituent of Islamic tourism in addition to the idea of Halal which seem to be quite indivisible. However, I feel Islamic tourism is not confined to the above elements and it also has space for the activities such as leisure, food, sightseeing, as well as recreational activities such as swimming, hiking, trekking, historic exploration and more”*. The participant's opinion also aligns with the travel motivation theory as it reveals that Islamic tourists also prefer a significant amount of local sightseeing, hiking, food, and relaxation, along with a significant consideration of Islamic culture and heritage. These arguments and responses hold a vital significance for travel agencies in Muslim countries to present their Islamic heritage in a positive and improved way to attract Muslims. Moreover, the tourism industry and society can also primarily benefit from increased tourism by focusing on leisure activities such as swimming, trekking, food, and relaxation. These contribute to attracting Islamic tourists and will contribute to immense economic growth, positively impacting society.

The business market for non-Muslim travellers is expansive, even in cases where the locations of Islamic tourism entice Muslim travellers. To maintain competitive potential as well as acquire profits, the Islamic tourism destination needs to allure other diverse segments of consumers. The generalised idea among the respondents is that the sites for Islamic tourism are identified to be Muslim as well as non-Muslim-friendly. Several respondents exclaimed that the net proportion of Muslim travellers having tolerance and liberal attitude towards the dressing sense of other cultures have risen. This indicates that Muslim travellers are not having any objection towards the attire of other individuals during vacation. Moreover, the tourism market is highly diversified for being targeted on a proper basis. It can be done by researching the target audience's requirements by using a drop shipping model and diversifying product and service offerings. The target market theory can be aligned with the tourism industry as it helps in the determination of tourists who are more likely to indulge in Islamic tourism. For this, a demographic approach can be applied by targeting countries with Muslim populations and providing them with innovative offerings with halal elements. In addition, the theory of

reasoned action can help determine specific intentions behind tourists' behaviour and evaluate factors for particular attitudes. Therefore, the perceived norms from this theory help in effective decision-making. Moreover, recognising the utility of segmentation as a strategic approach to target diverse groups of travellers may enhance the use of the segmentation strategy among destination marketers.

Theme 2: Need for inclusion of segments within Islamic tourism

The respondents considered in this research are interviewed regarding the importance of the inclusion of the segments within Islamic tourism that are diversified based on nationality, profession and demographic basis. Apart from the above, many respondents also believe that segmentation is necessarily needed. For instance, one respondent asserted, *"In my views, Muslims residing in the Western countries have increased desires for receiving high service quality as they have been receiving high-class tourism services in the Western regions."* Thus, the respondent feels that it is significant to consider the country of the traveller before segmenting the visitors for Islamic tourism. On the other side, one respondent has exclaimed that for the tourism sector, segmenting the Islamic marketplaces is highly complex.

Within the tourism industry, tourists are recognised to raise their concerns for basic security as well as safety which influences the visitation rate towards the selected locations along with the tourism-based prospects. The unstable political scenario, as well as security provisions within the Mid-Eastern nations, has influenced the respondents towards exploring the potential influence of political happenings upon Islamic travelling activities. All the research respondents have emphasised the concerns of the tourists related to security. The fluctuating perceptions of the visitors surrounding the safety aspects in the Mid-Eastern regions are the main focus area of the considered research problem. Respondents 1, as well as 9 have suggested that Mid-Eastern regions are safe as well as steady on the international level. This can be executed in the form of a well-planned promotional campaign that is used in diverse media channels. One respondent also exclaimed that Saudi Arabia is a considerable nation which is politically stable, and it is an ideal nation for promoting Islamic tourism.

Discussion

It can be discussed from the overall findings of the study that the tourism sector needs to be better acquainted with the concept of Islamic tourism, which is the major challenge faced by the industry. Thus, it is imperative to focus on Muslim-friendly tourism activities to promote the growth of Islamic or halal tourism in Asian and Western countries to promote the overall

growth of the tourism industry. The results obtained from primary research further highlight that Islamic tourism is not only confined to religious beliefs but also focuses on providing a recreational experience to tourists by exposing them to fun activities like swimming and hiking. The previously explored literature also supports the above discussion by stating that now many hotels in Western and Asian countries provide a personalised experience to Muslim tourists keeping in mind their religious sentiments. The hotels are providing prayer rooms along with swimming pools for recreational purposes to promote the growth of halal tourism (Gabbrakhmanov *et al.*, 2016). Asian countries like Malaysia have emerged to be the most important tourist destinations for Muslim tourists. The country is effectively promoting halal tourism activities, which have attracted the attention of Muslim tourists resulting in the growth of Islamic tourism in Non-Muslim countries (Hussin, 2018).

It can further be discussed from the overall findings of the research that most Muslim tourists wish to receive high-quality halal services in Western and Asian countries. It depicts the need to segment Islamic tourism to enhance the growth and profitability of the tourism industry at the global level. Along with this, as the proportion of Muslim tourists has risen in the last decade, Western and Asian countries need to target this group of tourists to retain stability in the highly competitive business world. The previously explored literature also states that non-friendly Muslim services at hotels and tourist spots are the major challenge Islamic tourists face, which decreases their satisfaction level. When Muslim tourists travel to Western countries, managing their routine and travelling becomes a difficult task for them, which denotes the need to include segments in Islamic tourism (Rahman *et al.*, 2021).

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

The study focuses on the perspective of Islamic tourism and halal tourism in Western and Asian countries. The first research objective of the study analyses the growth of Islamic tourism. In this regard, Islamic tourism is identified to be a considerable practice which is significant for offering tourism opportunities to both pilgrims as well as regular visitors. Islamic tourism is also a fast-emerging market, comprising positive opportunities for raising tourism growth. Moreover, there is also a need to promote Islamic tourism to encourage Islamic heritage and culture. Islamic tourism is also beneficial for denoting the relevance of Islam-based heritage and culture towards non-Muslims and Muslims. In recent years, significant growth has been witnessed in Islamic tourism activities due to increased awareness towards halal tourism.

However, the proportion of Sharia Complaint Hotels, which promote Islamic tourism and ban the usage of alcoholic products, is not strict.

The second research objective examines the growth of halal hotels and halal services for Muslim tourists in Western and Asian countries. Regarding this, it can be deduced from research findings that Asian countries like Malaysia and Indonesia are promoting Islamic tourism to a great extent. The hotels in these nations provide Muslim-friendly services to Muslim tourists to enhance their overall travelling experience. Countries like Brazil are also promoting the use of halal products so that the needs of Muslim tourists can be met. Along with this, Western countries are also increasing the awareness level of stakeholders involved in the tourism sector towards halal and Islamic tourism to attract Muslim customers. Muslim tourism is gaining importance in catering as well as restaurants by serving halal food products to Muslim tourists. Along with this, prayer rooms are also being built at airports and in hotels in Western countries to improve the overall stay experience of Islamic tourists.

The third and last research objective explores the opportunities and challenges faced by Islamic tourists. It can be concluded in light of the last research objective that the unavailability of Muslim-friendly services is a significant challenge Muslim tourist face. Western countries still need effective changes in their tourism products and services to attract Islamic tourists to gain higher growth. However, with increasing awareness of halal tourism, the tourism industry is making significant changes in its services and restaurants to provide high-quality stay experiences to Islamic tourists.

Research Implications

- The research study contributes to enabling societal, economic, and industrial development by highlighting different aspects of Islamic cultures believed by Muslims, which will facilitate the diversification of tourism services and change their product offerings. The innovation in product offerings will help in ensuring economic development and GDP growth, along with significant growth of the tourism industry by boosting the number of Muslim tourists.
- In addition, the policy and managerial implications of the study are directed at hotel authorities and policymakers of Muslim countries to develop relevant policies to offer discounts and incentives to Islamic tourists, which will attract them.
- Moreover, the study will also help the policymakers to create policies about maintaining hygiene, restricting alcohol, and ensuring high safety for tourists. Further,

it can help airline authorities create discount policies and different perks for food and relaxation.

- In addition, the study also contributes to enhancing the social networks between Muslims and non-Muslims by increasing their engagement in different nations. It will promote a significant transfer of culture and beliefs and ensure respect for Muslims' traditional beliefs.
- Further, the study will help non-Muslim nations modify their service offerings to increase Islamic tourism. Lastly, the research study can help future academic researchers as it offers prominent information about Islamic tourism, which can be used as a major research foundation for future research.

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