

HALAL TOURISM: A NEW WORLD FOR TOURISM INDUSTRY



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ABSTRACT

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The study was ambitious to report the progression of “Halal Tourism” in different countries including Muslim majority countries and non-Muslim majority countries around the world. It was carried out by review and reference to the previous study about Halal tourism from researchers from different countries. News from official tourism website, announcement on newspaper and magazine also contributed to the latest development of Halal tourism in various counties. In most Muslim majority countries, the effort was made by investing in development of Muslim friendly travel environment such as increasing the number of in Halal certified restaurant, the number of shariah compliance hotel, the number of prayer facilities, and enhancing the local Muslim culture. For non-Muslim countries, awareness of the concept of “Halal” was been educated to the non-Muslim and the governments are more concern about the needs of Muslim travelers compared to 10 years ago. However, the mutual benefits of both Muslim and non-Muslim travelers must be taken care despite the speedy progression of Halal tourism in order to ensure the sustainability of this industry. To dates, there is no report in details about this new trend of tourism that includes a wide range of different countries. This study was hoped to be able to trigger more study on this field in order to enhance the comprehensiveness of Halal tourism around the world.

Contribution/ Originality: This study contributes in the existing literature that reported the development of Halal tourism industries by different countries in different regions of the world including Muslim majority countries such as Middle East Countries as well as non-Muslim majority countries such as Thailand and Japan.

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of Halal Tourism has been recognized for decades. The example of Halal tourism as already known, hajj(the central pilgrimage) is a journey obligatory for every Muslim who has reached the age of puberty and is of sound mind, and this must be performed at least once in one’s life provided that he or she is physically capable and has the means to do so (Jafari and Scott, 2014).

Asides from the duty and compulsory religious travel by Muslim, Muslim travellers travel with leisure purposes and working situation too. Halal tourism has emerged as a new concept that means tourism based on the Islamic teachings and ethical codes (*syariah* compliance). Jeffery, Chairman of World Travel Market, defined Halal

tourism as a type of religious tourism that represents allowable activities under the Islamic teachings in terms of behaviour, dress, conduct, and diet (Battour *et al.*, 2012)

The travel destination, hospitality, food and beverage, prayer facilities and services along the travel are big concerns for Muslim about whether they are “lawful” in the Islamic concept. Muslim nowadays seek the development of more Islamic resorts funded and owned by Islamic financial institutions, alcohol-free accommodation, hotels without indoor disco or nightlife, conservative indoor dress code for both customers and workers, the availabilities of prayer facilities on site, gender segregated fitness and sport facilities, women floors and Islamic entertainment programs (Henderson, 2009). Halal tourism has economic, socio-cultural and religious aims which are summarized by Al-Hamarneh and Steiner (2004) as: (i) the revival of Islamic cultures and the spread of Islamic values; (ii) the economic benefit for Islamic societies; (iii) the strengthening of Islam self-confidence stereotyping in comparison to other cultures and life styles.

The scope of Halal tourism is not exclusively designed for only Muslims, but inclusively covers the services for all travellers (Muslim and non-Muslim). In addition to the good servicing practices, the core of halal tourism emphasizes on the principles of *shariah* compliant aspects in both tourism management and services (Jaelani, 2017). Heyer elaborates on the massive and rapid blooms of “*Shariah* compliant hotels,” a new trend that follow the existing trend of *Shariah*-compliant banking, insurance, and more to meet the size of the growing Muslim market (Heyer, 2008). In 2016, the first *Shariah* compliant hotel was opened in Bangkok. New Zealand and Japan, the non-Muslim countries are now focusing on establishing more Halal certified restaurants to cater the demand of Muslim travellers. The website www.halalflight.com (Halal Flight, 2016) features 24 flight companies which serve Halal food and provide Ramadhan service. The global tourism market is changing its direction towards developing a model that meets the Islamic prospect. The development of the concept of Halal tourism in the recent years implies the dynamic growing demand from the Muslim tourist market.

Therefore, this paper provides the progress on the implementation of Halal tourism in different countries including Muslim-majority countries and non-Muslim countries. Different policies of Halal tourism established in several countries have been discussed in details. In addition, the potential of the selected countries in providing *shariah* compliant travel environment has been explored.

2. GLOBAL MARKET POTENTIAL OF HALAL TOURISM

The growth of Muslim population is rapid and stable around the globe. Since Islam is the second largest religion with steady increase of followers, the growth of this population is estimated to reach 25.13% in 2020 and 33.14% by 2075 (Kettani, 2010). According to Pew Research, there were approximately 1.6 billion Muslims globally in 2010 and this figure is estimated to hit 2.8 billion in 2050, which is approximately 30% of the world's total population (Economist, 2011). Muslims are more concentrated in Asia-Pacific region contributed over 60% of them, while the other 20% reside in Middle East and North Africa (where they make up 93% of the resident population), 3% in Europe and 1% in North America (Henderson, 2016). The increasing number of Muslim consumers has raised the attention of the global market to shift their commercial interest to “Halal” industry in order to meet the demand of the size and growth of Muslim population.

The available statistic regarding global Muslim spending on travel (outbound) reported that the amount to be \$140 billion in 2013 excluding Hajj and Umrah. Meanwhile, total global spending during the same period is estimated to be \$1,212 billion in 2013 which was 11.6% of global expenditure (Reuters, 2015)

Aside from the Muslim majority Middle East countries, China is a country with a great potential to be a Halal tourism destination and source of Muslim travellers due to their growing Muslim population and purchasing power. Approximately, China has 22 million of Muslim populations and 30,000 mosques with over 40,000 imams and Islamic scholar (Neriah, 2017). The exponential development of Muslim tourism in China has attained the attention from the China National Tourism Administration, Association of Southeast Asian Nations and

amelioration in diplomatic relation (Wang *et al.*, 2010). As China is the biggest outbound market (Kamarudin and Ismail, 2016) there is a new challenge for tourism players to attract more tourists from China to visit their countries. The China Islamic Association has established in Beijing since May 1953 (Wang *et al.*, 2010) and it shows that the Islam religion is acceptable and the demands of China Muslims tourists are still ongoing.

The World Travel & Tourism Council calculates that Muslim travellers generated a total of US\$140 billion for the global tourism and hospitality industry in 2013 and it is forecasted that the market will worth US\$238 billion by 2019 (WTTC, 2015). This huge amount has accounted for the initiative of non-Muslim countries to involve in Halal tourism. Typical leisure driven Muslim travellers tend to be relatively young and increasingly affluent. They showed preference in choosing vacation destination with majority of Muslim population or the places which practice Islam in their local society. However, there is also willingness for Muslim travellers to venture further afield.

3. HALAL TOURISM IN SOUTH EAST ASIA COUNTRIES

In year 2016, the number of Muslim travellers hit 117.7 million and is predicted to reach 168 million by 2020, according to Crescent Rating. Out of the total, 35% or 35 million Muslims travelled to Europe, while 56.7% or 66.7 million went to Asia. As the South East Asia countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore have embraced Islamic cultural among their people and local society, this region has begun to gain attention from the Muslim travellers.

3.1. Malaysia

Malaysia is a multi-confessional country. Most of the residents professed Islam and it made up 61.3% of Malaysian population in year 2013. Government data showed that the number of Muslim travellers to Malaysia has a big jump to 5.5 million since 2000, exceeding a doubling in the number of tourists overall. The total number of 5.5 million Muslim tourists visited Malaysia in 2013, compared to 1.5 million in 2000 (Todayonline, 2014). The government expected the number of Muslim travellers in Malaysia to hit 6 million in 2014 and 6.5 million in 2015 with a steady growth of 0.5 million each year.

Based on State of the Global Islamic Economy Report 2015, Malaysia leads the Halal Travel indicator ranking due to its large inbound Muslim travellers. The tourism industry in Malaysia possesses very strong potential in every aspect, including the variety of natural tourist attractions, the rich multiracial cultures, the Muslim friendly tourism environment and the abundant of different food selection. According to World Tourism Organization, Malaysia holds one of the leading positions in the list of top 10 tourist destinations across the globe. Malaysia ranked ninth behind France, the United States, Spain, Turkey and Germany in which Malaysia is the only Muslim country which is in group 10 high ranking world tourist destinations of which 23% is made up of Muslim tourists which is 4.48 million (Report, 2010). Moreover, with increasing government support and rising promotional activities, international tourist arrival in the country surged at a CAGR of around 8% during forecast period of 2011-2013 (RNCOS, 2010). In addition Malaysia has been listed in the Lonely Planet (the world's largest publisher of travel guides) for Best in Travel 2017 (Lonely Planet, 2017). Besides, Malaysia was recognized as the WEF in 2009 as the fourth out of the 133 countries (who participated in the survey) that offer competitive pricing in tourism including hotel accommodation and fuel, airline ticket taxes and airport charges low and favourable tax regime.

In fact, Malaysia has the potential development of Islamic tourism and hospitality industry as Malaysia has the arts, heritage and unique culture of the Malay Muslims. Malaysia continues to top the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) in 2015, for the sixth time in a row. The country has consistently been able to maintain its standing amongst the main three themes of Family-friendly holiday and safe travel destination Muslim-friendly services and facilities at the destination, and Halal awareness and destination marketing (Mastercard and CrescentRating, 2015). In a report by Thomson Reuters and the Dubai Islamic Economy Development Centre, Malaysia topped the

report's halal travel index as the country with the best Islamic economy ecosystem for halal travel for 2014 and last year (Reuters, 2015).

In the past decade, Malaysia put in a lot of efforts in improving Halal tourism in Malaysia and the effort encounter for the great achievement of Malaysia in Halal Tourism field. Tourism Malaysia promoted the country's flourishing Halal industry and rising Islamic tourism at the 3-day World Halal Travel Summit & Exhibition (WHTS15), which located at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre in 2015. The event is deemed the largest gathering of global Halal travel specialists ever assembled. In the summit, Malaysia's capital city Kuala Lumpur has been shortlisted in the 'World's Best Halal Tourism Destination' category while the country is one of the finalists in the "World's Best Halal Culinary Destination" category (Tourism Malaysia, 2015).

In another survey released recently by Crescent Rating, Malaysia was rated the world's top Muslim-friendly destination years with bigger Muslim countries, namely Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Turkey, trailing behind. In fact, Malaysia has been occupying the number one spot in the same survey for three consecutive years (2013-2015). In this survey, countries were ranked on how well they cater to the needs of Muslim travellers, which include easily available halal food and prayer facilities and hotels catering to the needs of Muslim guests, as well as level of safety. Among the 50 countries listed in this study, Malaysia came out on top with a score of 8.3 over 10 (CrescentRating, 2016).

In Malaysia, out of 1,574 hotels and resorts in the country, 366 or 23% have obtained the Halal certificates for the food served in their premises and 20 hotels are halal certified (The Sun, 2017). Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Datuk Seri Jamil Khir Baharom estimated 412 of three to five-star hotels registered with the Tourism Ministry will be granted with the Malaysian Halal Certificate for the food served in their restaurants by the end of 2017. The aim of this target is to boost the confidence level of the consumers especially for the Middle East countries Muslim travellers.

Being a Muslim country which places great emphasis on the comfort and convenience of its Muslim residents and guests, Malaysia perfectly caters to the needs of Muslim travellers. Many of Malaysia's accommodation including international hotel chains provide Qibla direction and prayer mats in their guest rooms. A variety of Islamic tour packages which accommodate religious needs such as prayer stops during tours and halal meals are provided by travel agencies. Mosques and prayer rooms can easily be found in each district around the country, tourist attractions, shopping malls, airports, parks and most public places. Halal food certified by the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM), Malaysia's sole Halal certification body can also be easily found in Malaysia (ITC, 2014).

Malaysia is the global leading halal hub with the effort and focus given by government has greatly aided the development of Malaysia as a new Muslim tourist attraction in recent years. The popularity of Malaysia as a travel destination for Muslim travellers are contributed by the diverse natural sources, the exquisite equatorial climate, the rich multiracial cultures and easily available Muslim friendly facilities and accessible Muslim local society.

3.2. Indonesia

Despite having five official religions and hundreds of ethnic groups, Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world that contribute 12.7% of the world's Muslims. According to a recent report, approximately 222 million people, or 87% of its population are Muslims (Michael Lipka, 2017). Therefore, Indonesia is the best potential country in South East Asia which has the ability to drive its main focus of tourism industry towards the direction of Halal tourism. In the end of 2016, Indonesia has firmly committed to the path of becoming the ultimate Halal tourism destination of the world. The country dominated the World Halal Tourism Award 2016 by winning 12 awards out of the total of 16 categories. The winners were announced at the awarding ceremony held on 7th December 2016 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. Leaving only 4 other categories in which Indonesia did not send any nominees, Indonesia took home 75% of all awards (Ministry of Tourism Indonesia, 2016). In the

development of halal tourism, the Law of Ministry of Tourism No.2/2014 on guidelines for implementation of syariah hotel business, article 1, which referred to the principles of syariah Islamic law as stipulated fatwa and/or approved by the Indonesian Ulama Council (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, MUI). Government of Indonesia also focuses on Halal Tourism for the past few years. International recognition for Indonesia's development of this sector is also growing. The Sofyan Hotel Betawi (located in Jakarta) won the Best Halal Hotel award during the 2015 World Halal Travel Summit in Abu Dhabi ([The World Folio, 2016](#)). Halal tourism in Indonesia has good economic prospects as part of the national tourism industry ([Jaelani, 2017](#))

Since the 12th century, the religion has left a deep cultural footprint that can still be felt today. As kingdoms scattered across the archipelago converted to Islam, many Arabic words were adopted into local lexicons. Also, before the formation of the Republic of Indonesia, Malay, Acehnese and other native languages were often written in Arabic script. Numerous inscriptions on historical buildings remain from this period for visitors to see ([TWF, 2016](#)).

Indonesia is recognized as a well-known vacation destination for Muslim travellers. Other than the famous sun and beach suitable for Muslim couples for honey moon vacation, the country offers comfortable and warm atmosphere for Muslim travellers. The warm weather, affordable travel costs, and variety choices of halal food which is widely available contributed to the satisfaction of Muslim travellers. Places of worship are readily accessible with more than 600,000 mosques in place across the country.

3.3. Thailand

A Buddhist-majority country, Thailand has emerged as a strong contender in the halal tourism industry, even when compared to its Muslim-majority neighbours Malaysia and Indonesia. Despite a decade of political turbulence, Thailand has seen an explosion in tourist arrivals, from 13.8 million annual visitors in 2006 to a record 32.5 million in 2016. Western travellers made up most of the travellers in Thailand as usual while the highlights goes to the increase of Muslim travellers. An analysis of government figures shows visitors from key majority Muslim nations in the Middle East and Asia have risen from 2.63 million in 2006 to 6.03 million in 2016 ([Jerome, 2017](#)).

Puwarest Ahmadthirakul, managing director of Royal Thai Travel and Trading Co Ltd, said Muslim travellers were attracted by Thai hospitality, lifestyles and facilities available even though the country is not a Muslim nation like Malaysia and Indonesia. About 90% of his company's clients are Muslims coming to Thailand mainly for leisure and medical checks. The high season for Muslim tourism in Thailand is June and July when the weather is hottest in the Middle East ([Mcclatchy Tribune, 2015](#)).

Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport has been ranked by halal travel website CrescentRating as the most Islam-friendly airport in a non-Muslim country ([MCR, 2015](#)). The launching of direct flights to Thailand from the Middle East helps the positive trend in total arrival numbers from the region ([Tourim Authority of Thailand, 2016](#)). Farhat International CEO Mushtak Abdulgafoor said that in 2014, 6.44% of "24x7Rooms.com" bookings were for Thailand showed an improvement to 7.33% of the business is towards Thailand.

The Thai island of Phuket and other provinces along the Andaman coast are well known as major destinations for beach-loving tourists. It is a little-known fact that Muslims made up around a third of the population in Phuket and its surrounding areas. They are prepared to welcome Halal tourism ([Afia, 2012](#)). Oraphan Chainin and Hamzah Abd Rahman examined the Asian Muslim tourist's behaviour and needs at Andaman Gulf of Thailand ([Sriprasert et al., 2014](#)). They revealed that seeing and experiencing a foreign destination is the main reason for visiting Andaman Gulf of Thailand. Internet is the major source of tourism information. The most popular theme of trip is Sun and Sea. Majority of tourist hired a car and travel with family. There are high needs towards the placement of Qibla stickers or direction towards Makkah city in hotel room, availability of Halal sign at Halal restaurant, and availability of Mosque. This study provides useful information for policy makers and business managers in formulating the strategy and program to enhance Halal tourism potential in Andaman Gulf of Thailand.

Under a campaign focusing the Islamic market, Thailand launched a mobile application for Muslims in year 2015. The mobile application launched by Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) aimed to direct and suggest Muslim friendly products, services and facilities along the trip. The app, for iOS and Android, is both an online and offline guidebook that will help Muslim visitors find mosques, halal restaurants and hotels, shopping centres with prayer rooms, and other facilities around the country. The first halal hotel Al Meroz, designed to suit the needs of Muslims, will celebrate its first anniversary in the coming December. The four star Al Merozis first halal hotel in Thailand, located in Bangkok hoping to attract more Muslim visitors and boosting one of the few bright spots in its economy (Reuters, 2016).

3.4. Singapore

There are some needs that Muslim travellers find and seek. For example, they seek for halal food, prayer facilities, Ramadhan services, water-friendly washroom, no non-halal facilities and lastly, recreational facilities and services with privacy. According to MCR (2015) Crescent Rating have produced ranking of Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) among OIC and non-OIC destinations. In categories of non-OIC, Singapore is on the top positions which is at rank 1 with 68.4 score for GMTI. If consider all destinations including OIC and non-OIC, Singapore still at the top which rank 8 after 7 OIC destinations such as Malaysia, UAE, Turkey, Indonesia, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Oman.

Singapore basically have provided more halal facilities focusing on the Halal food, development of mosque and Ramadhan services to cater the need of Muslim travellers during fasting month. There are many destinations in Singapore that have Halal certified restaurants. Singapore serves wide variety of cuisine from Halal-certified restaurants such as the international food chains like Pizza Hut and McDonalds. According to Henderson (2016) over 2600 premises in total had been certified Halal until 2013 by Majlis Ugama Islam (MUIS) or can be called Islamic Religious Council of Singapore. According to Lada *et al.* (2009), the market sales of Halal certified companies in Singapore have increased.

Besides, Singapore also has built over 70 mosques for Muslims and those mosques are basically situated at the main locations and can be spotted by Muslim travellers easily (Kessler, 2015; Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC), 2016). On the other hand, Ramadhan buffet services are the important needs seek by Muslim travellers while travelling during Ramadhan. Singapore is one of the countries that are being able to cater the need of Muslim travellers during Ramadhan. There are night markets that offer variety of local street food at Geylang Serai during whole month of Ramadhan. This night markets not only attract Muslims but also non-Muslims (COMCEC, 2016).

Crescentrating Pte Ltd is one of the Singaporean companies that focusing on the development of halal friendly travel and services in Singapore. Labelled as *The World's Leading Authority on Halal & Muslim Friendly Travel*, they provide the facilities which include halal food, halal certified restaurants, prayer facilities and halal friendly accommodation for both Muslim and non-Muslim tourists.

Thus, Singapore is top in the list of non-Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) destinations and can be considered as friendly as the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) destinations (Kessler, 2015). The potential for halal tourism to grow in Singapore is high since 15% of the population is Muslims and also proximity to other Muslim countries like Malaysia and Indonesia (COMCEC, 2016).

4. HALAL TOURISM IN MIDDLE EAST COUNTRIES

According to the statistics provided by Ministry of Tourist and Culture Malaysia (2016) six Middle East countries were listed in the top ten source markets for Islamic tourism. These countries are Saudi Arabia (US\$17.8 billion), Iran (US\$14.3 billion), United Arab Emirates (US\$11.2 billion), Qatar (US\$7.8 billion), Kuwait (US\$7.7 billion) and Turkey (US\$4.5 billion). Since the September 11 tragedy, the tourism destinations among Muslims

have shift drastically from Western countries to Muslim countries especially Middle East Countries (Al-Hamarneh and Steiner, 2004) which subsequently makes way for the halal tourism market.

4.1. Saudi Arabia

According to Jeddah Chamber of Commerce & Industry (JCCI) (2016) tourism industry is the second highest contributor to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth. As of December 2015, the tourism industry is valued at US\$21.33 billion while the religious sector is valued at US\$5.68 billion with 19 million pilgrims in year 2015 and is expected to increase to 30 million in year 2025. In year 2014, it was reported that 11.2 million Muslim visitors arrived in Saudi Arabia with an expenditure of \$7,718.10 (COMCEC, 2016).

Saudi Arabia has been the most important international tourism destination mainly due to the annual pilgrimage to Makkah by Muslims worldwide (Ahmed, 1992). The concept of multi-ethnic-oriented cultural and pilgrim tourism has been the main focus of tourism development in Saudi Arabia (Al-Hamarneh and Steiner, 2004). Billions of dollars were transferred internationally every year for the transportation, accommodation, entertainment, food and beverages in the tourism industry (Ahmed, 1992). Over the recent decades, Saudi Arabia has shifted their tourism development beyond the Islamic traditional pilgrimage (Al-Hamarneh and Steiner, 2004). Saudi Arabia is developing their tourism industry in culture and heritage tourism, sports tourism, ecotourism, recreational and festival tourism, shopping tourism, and exploration and adventure tourism (SCTA, 2016). In addition, the government has been very supportive to promote tourism in Saudi Arabia by providing trainings for the locals such as the program “Development of Skills in Dealing with Tourists” organized by Saudi Commission of Tourism and National Heritage (SCTA, 2016).

Saudi Arabia is very strict with the Shariah rules to be implemented in their country compared to other Muslim countries (Battaour *et al.*, 2010). Hence, in the tourism industry, the Shariah-compliance is a must and hotels in Saudi Arabia are obliged to abide with specific regulations (Henderson, 2010). This has created the ‘Sharia-compliant hotel’ terminology which has specific attributes such as “no alcohol to be served or consumed on the premises; halal foods; quran, prayer mats and arrows indicating the direction of Mecca in every room; beds and toilets positioned so as to not face the direction of Mecca; bidets in bathrooms; prayer rooms; appropriate entertainment; predominantly Muslim staff; conservative staff dress; separate recreational facilities for men and women; all female floors; guess dress code; Islamic funding” (Rosenberg and Choufany, 2009; Henderson, 2010). Rayhaan Hotels and Resorts by Rotana is an example of a Sharia-compliant hotel (Rotana Hotels, 2017). Besides that, the Rosewood Corniche Hotel in Jeddah also applies a halal-based business strategy by dedicating an entire floor exclusively for women (Abdullah, 2007).

4.2. Turkey

The Muslim visitor arrivals in Turkey in year 2014 has been reported to be 7.1 million, second highest in the list of top 15 OIC destinations by Muslims with an average expenditure of \$6,606.90 (COMCEC, 2016). The total number of tourists in Turkey has been increasing over the years since year 2006 with the total number of tourists in year 2015 was over 41 million (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2017). It is expected that by year 2023, the country will receive 63 million tourists with tourism earnings of US\$86 billion (Duman and Tosun, 2010).

The tourism industry in Turkey initially started with the establishment of the Tourism and Promotion Ministry in 1963 (Duman, 2011). However, the rate of this industry is slow before 1980s as political disturbance occurred in the 1960s until 1970s. With the Tourism Incentive Act in year 1982, the tourism industry began to improve and legislation, planning and infrastructure for tourism were being established. As the politic and economic development in Turkey began to stabilize since year 2002, Turkey has been one of the popular destinations among tourists including Muslim tourists. Turkey offers great potential in the tourism industry as it provides breath-taking view of beaches, mountains, caves, and underwater. Three major tourism cities are Antalya,

Istanbul and Mugla. The emergence of halal tourism industry began in year 2002, after the 2002 elections in which a conservative political party named Justice and Development Party, also known as AKP, took over the government. As the economic and political progress of conservative Muslims in Turkey increase, the halal tourism industry also increases. The halal tourism market in Turkey targets three groups, namely, the Turkish citizens living and working in European countries, the upper class tourists with conservative Islamic lifestyles, and foreign Muslim tourists especially from Middle East countries.

The halal tourism concept in Turkey is mainly applied in the accommodation facilities (Duman, 2011). As 98% of Turkish population is Muslim, halal food is not a pressing issue as most products are aligned with the halal concept (Akyol and Kilinc, 2014). Although the current legislation provided by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism does not directly banned the selling of alcoholic beverages, the requirements does not specifically stated that the four-star and five-star holiday villages to have open or closed bar and discotheque or nightclub in the premises (Duman, 2011). In addition to that, the requirement to have a bar in two-plus star hotels was omitted from this legislation. For hotels which apply the halal tourism concept, alcoholic beverages in bars are not allowed and the originally discotheque and nightclubs are renovated into prayer rooms. For swimming pool, seaside facilities and hot-spa facilities, separate spaces are created for men women while applying dress codes in certain areas and banning photography. Adenya Hotel & Resort was the first hotel to receive a halal certificate from the World Halal Association (Akyol and Kilinc, 2014). Turkey has been the main reference point for other Middle East countries in developing the halal tourism concept and continues to improve their services in this concept (Carboni *et al.*, 2017).

4.3. Other Middle East Countries

Other Middle East countries which are in the top 15 OIC destinations by Muslim tourists are United Arab Emirates (6.5 million Muslim tourists with average expenditure of \$7,734.20), Bahrain (5.9 million Muslim tourists with average expenditure of \$1,175.30), Iran (4.1 million Muslim tourists with average expenditure of \$942.50), Jordan (2.0 million Muslim tourists with average expenditure of \$2,696.40), and Egypt (1.9 million Muslim tourists with average expenditure of \$1,470.40) (COMCEC, 2016).

The cultural tourism has been the greatest influence of tourists to visit the Middle East countries (COMCEC, 2016). For example, in Qatar, the balance between the preservation of heritage buildings and building modern attractions is one of the key priority areas in the tourism development. On the other hand, United Arab Emirates focuses on their shopping attractions especially in Dubai and Abu Dhabi. *Hotelier Middle East (2008)* has reported that most tourists in the Middle East preferred to stay in Shariah-compliant hotels during their trip. As Saudi Arabia and Turkey are developing more Shariah-compliant hotels, other Middle East countries are also growing towards that direction (Hesham *et al.*, 2013). This has contributed to vast amount of Shariah-compliant hotels to be developed by hotel companies (HME, 2008; Rosenberg and Choufany, 2009; Henderson, 2010) such as Almula Hospitality (Almula, 2014) Jawhara (Jawhara, 2017) Landmark Hotel Group (Landmark Hotels and Suites, 2016) Shaza Hotels (Shaza Hotels, 2016) and Tamani Hotels and Resorts (Tamani Hotels and Resorts, 2016).

These Shariah-compliant hotels had taken extra measures to ensure the halal tourism concept was implemented. For example, in year 2008, Sheikh Abdel Aziz Ibrahim, owner of the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Egypt had instructed his employees to empty every alcohol bottle on the premises into the River Nile (Shenker, 2008). The alcoholic drinks were then replaced with juices. Meanwhile, in Bahrain, the government had banned serving alcohol in one and two-star hotels as well as hosting live music events (Michael Pizzi, 2014). The government wished to propose a law which prohibited the sale of alcohol in the country. Furthermore, majority of hotels in Qatar provide prayer facilities to their guests such as prayer rooms, prayer mats, prayer timetables and Qibla signs in the room (COMCEC, 2016). While an increasing number of hotels in Dubai provide Muslim-friendly facilities, the prayer facilities can be found almost in all shopping malls and theme parks. In Iran, the Iran Islamic Revolution gave a great impact to the tourism industry (Arasteh and Eilami, 2011). The government had made a clear

statement to only earn revenue from halal sources. Therefore, gaming centres, pubs and unisex salons were forced to close after the revolution, along with the banning of female images in tourism promotion. The State Tourism Committee Chairman also planned to implement a new dress code to stop tourists from wearing revealing outfits.

5. HALAL TOURISM IN NON-MUSLIM COUNTRIES

Nowadays, Muslim travellers' behaviour has changed where they are now seeking for destinations that can provide high level of services and can fulfil their needs. They are basically seeking for destinations which can provide them with Muslim-friendly facilities. Some of the non-OIC countries have taken actions regarding this change where they are improving their facilities and services to fulfil Muslim travellers' needs. This improvement can be seen in the average Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) in the non OIC countries that has increased from 47.7 in 2015 to 50.3 in year 2016. It clearly illustrates that the non OIC countries have taken an effort to improve the Muslim-friendly facilities such as the access to prayer spaces, airport facilities, accommodation options and improving dining options and Halal assurances in their countries where all the average score for the facilities mentioned is increasing from 2015 to 2016 (MasterCard and CrescentRating, 2016).

5.1. New Zealand

As reported by the Statistics New Zealand (2013) the tourist arrivals every year from year 2003 until 2013 were around 2 million tourists. In year 2013, it is recorded that the tourist arrivals were 2,636,896 tourists in which 540,128 tourists were from Asia while 37,184 tourists were from Africa and Middle East. From this statistics, Malaysian tourists were reported to be at a total of 25,152 people. Although the statistics of Muslim travellers to New Zealand is not reported, the preference of Malaysian tourists to travel in New Zealand is quite high based on the statistics and the Muslim population in New Zealand has also increased up to 28% between year 2006 and 2013, from 36,072 people to 46,149 people (Wilson, 2013).

While Hall and Sharples (2003) and Hall *et al.* (2003) agreed that wine plays an important role in attracting tourists as wine taste varies according to different regions, New Zealand, a non-Muslim country has taken interest in providing halal food for the tourists (Hassan and Hall, 2003). Tourism New Zealand stated that New Zealand has the potential to the tourism destination for Muslim tourists due to the availability of halal slaughtered meat in the country (Hassan and Hall, 2003). This is because about 80% of sheep and 50% of cattle are slaughtered according to the Shariah laws. Furthermore, Middle East is also one of the major exporter of New Zealand for meat and dairy products. Although New Zealand has a high rate of slaughtered meat, the Muslim tourists and locals still argued that the availability of halal food is scarce. Many restaurant and food companies in New Zealand had no halal verification by a recognized Muslim authority creating doubtfulness among Muslims. Hence, the Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand (FIANZ) has taken the initiative to write to the Minister of Consumer Affairs to resolve this issue by providing certain assurance and means to detect halal food in New Zealand (Hassan and Hall, 2003).

4.2. Japan

Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is established to protect and safeguard the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony among various people of the world (OIC, 2017). According to COMCEC (2016) there are three regional grouping under OIC member countries which are Arab Group, Asian Group and African Group. Since halal food is important especially for Muslim traveller, many destinations including the non-OIC destinations seeing the potential of halal food and halal tourism to emerged, thus they improving their offerings so that their destinations will fulfilled the needs of Muslim traveller.

For instances, even though Japan is not included in OIC member countries, the Japanese Government have taken action to increase the availability of Halal food and other Muslim-friendly facilities. This is because according

to Samori *et al.* (2016) the Muslim tourists in Japan are from Malaysia and Indonesia and the number of Muslim tourists is expected to increase by year, thus Muslim tourist is important especially for their market.

According to Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) produced by Crescent Rating, Japan is rank 8 with 49.1 GMTI score among non-OIC destinations and rank 34 among OIC and non-OIC destinations. Even though Japan is non-OIC destinations, 50% Muslim travellers visit non-OIC destinations. This has lead Japan to increase their efforts for developing Muslim travel guides and also conducting awareness campaigns and educations to increase the understanding on this Halal tourism (MasterCard and CrescentRating, 2016).

The focus of Japan in providing halal tourism is halal food, prayer rooms, availability of mosque and water-friendly washroom. Since Muslims travellers are always concern on Halal food, there are many Halal restaurants with Halal certification especially in big cities in Japan such as Osaka, Kyoto and Tokyo (Samori *et al.*, 2016). Furthermore, there is also Manhattan Fish Market which serving 100% Halal components for its menus and other hostels like Ryokan, traditional Japanese hostel which also serving halal meals. The availability of halal meals in the destinations will motivate them to visits and also give a new experience to Muslims travellers to try famous and popular cuisines such as Udon and Ramen (Battour and Ismail, 2016; Samori *et al.*, 2016).

One of the examples of Muslim-friendly facilities is prayer room complete with wudhu' facilities for the easiness of Muslim to perform their prayers. This prayer rooms have been installed in Japanese International Airports, Narita International Airport and Kansai International Airport (COMCEC, 2016; Samori *et al.*, 2016). Besides, the constructions of mosque at convenient and easily accessible locations such as Tokyo Mosque bring Japan to be more attractive to Muslim travellers (COMCEC, 2016).

Besides, availability of water-friendly washroom sometimes becomes a concern for Muslim Travellers. This is because using water to clean oneself after going to toilet is one of Muslim etiquette. Therefore, the availability of inbuilt bidet in most of the Japanese washroom indirectly provides easiness for Muslim traveller (COMCEC, 2016). Thus, it can be seen that Japan will attract more Muslim travellers since they have all the Muslim-friendly facilities and most importantly Halal food.

6. CHALLENGES OF HALAL TOURISM IN BECOMING THE NEXT KEY PLAYER IN TOURISM INDUSTRY

Halal Tourism is a new phenomenon that emerged from the growth of Halal industry in both OIC member countries and non-OIC countries. Many countries including Muslims countries and non-Muslim countries are competitive to capture Muslim tourists by catering all Muslims needs in tourism industry (Battour and Ismail, 2016; Samori *et al.*, 2016). There are some key drivers contributing to muslim travel market growth. The first and most crucial factor is the rapid increase of Muslim population which is expected to reach 26% of the world's population by 2030 (MasterCard and CrescentRating, 2016). Besides, the increasing accessibility of Halal tourism information also affected the Muslim travel market growth. Advanced technology such as smartphones and progressive internet availability help Muslim travellers to plan their trip with ease. Furthermore, many destinations have begun to adapt their products and services to fulfil the needs of Muslim travellers. The increasing number of Muslim-friendly facilities and availability of Halal food have contributed to the decision made by Muslim travellers to travel to a specific destination. Certainly, these travel detonations included places in the non-OIC countries. Non-OIC countries focus on the concept of "Muslim Holiday" and adapting the services to cater the Muslims' needs and attracting them. GMTI 2016 shows that non-OIC destinations have improved their facilities towards creating a Muslim-friendly environment and moved up their ranking at a faster pace (MasterCard and CrescentRating, 2016).

However, there are challenges in developing and marketing Halal tourism. According to Battour and Ismail (2016) marketing of Halal tourism is not easy since the demands of non-Muslim and Muslim tourist varied. Some of the non-Muslims travellers may decide not to travel to particular destinations with the considerations that the Halal hospitality do not provide services or product desired. For example, unmarried couples will have lower

tendency to accommodate *Syariah*-compliant hotel because they do not want to sleep separately with their partners. As there are variances in the demands of Muslims and non-Muslims travellers, Halal tourism could be seen as a constraint for tourism planning development. Thus, to ensure the mutual understanding and needs of both Muslims and non-Muslims travellers, the planning and design of tourism industry must be very comprehensive to figure out the way to encounter this challenge. This concept was supported by [Battaour et al. \(2010\)](#) where they stressed on the challenges faced by some of the secular governments in some countries especially the non-OIC countries as the tourism developers may oppose the Halal tourism development and create restriction with it. The main reason behind the hindrance is the profit based policy which the consequences of losing a huge number of non-Muslim tourists are unbearable. The tourism developers concerns about the implementation and practices of halal hospitality according to *Syariah* law will limit the services provided and thus drives non-Muslim travellers away.

Furthermore, some Muslims travel to learn and experience the culture available in those particular countries. For example, Malaysians especially the young and self-planned travellers tend to travel to the small cities in Japan to experience the traditional culture of the Japanese. However, the awareness of Muslim travellers needs were not recognized in those small and out skirted cities. In shorts, the tourism suppliers have low awareness on the Halal concept, for instance, the proper way to prepare Halal food is not educated to them. This can reduce the possibility of Muslims travellers to visit those places. Thus, increase the awareness of Halal Tourism especially among tourism suppliers will undeniably motivate and attract more Muslims to visit those places without hesitation ([Samori et al., 2016](#)).

On the other hand, language barrier is also one of the challenges in faced by implementing Halal tourism thoroughly. The local societies speak and communicates in their mother tongue language and has low recognition in international language. Difficulties arisen for tourists including Muslim and non-Muslim travellers when they acquiring information regarding the destinations, transportations and even communicate with local people. The difficulties of communications will set the travellers off by selecting others communicable tourist destination instead of having uncertainties while travelling in these countries Therefore, all information for tourist should be provided in English in any reachable media such as social media, travel webpage and also mobile application including Muslim friendly application ([Battour and Ismail, 2016](#); [Samori et al., 2016](#)).

Besides, since alcohol will be forbidden as it is not comply with *Syariah* requirement; some countries may not try to implement halal tourism. Typical international hotels will provide some specific services by serving variety of alcoholic drinks that earned them a high ranking for their hotel. As Islamic law is conflicting with the current world standards, this can be a challenge causing some countries not opt for this Halal tourism. Some countries even impose penalties to the hotels which forbid alcohol that refer to the case of the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Egypt. The Egyptian tourism ministry threatened the hotels by decreasing its class from five stars to three stars if they continue to exclude alcohol drinks from their restaurant's menu ([Battaour et al., 2010](#)).

7. CONCLUSION

This paper highlights the concepts of Halal tourism and current practices of Halal tourism. Some regions discussed in this paper are categorised as Asian Countries like Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and Singapore whereas Middle East Countries like Saudi Arabia and Turkey. This paper also discussed on other non-Muslims countries such as New Zealand and Japan. All those regions have realised on the potential of Halal Tourism as the attraction of tourism industry. Some of the countries have started provided Halal tourism facilities and needs such as Halal food, prayer facilities, Ramadhan services and also water-friendly washroom. However, they need to face all the challenges in providing halal tourism such as to provide the services that cater the needs both Muslims and non-Muslims, to increase the awareness of Halal Tourism among tourism supplier, the language barriers among Muslims' tourist and the destinations and lastly the conflict between current world standard and Islamic teachings . Despite those challenges, the growing in Muslim populations, the increasing access to travel information and many

destinations that have begun to adapt their products and services to fulfil the needs of Muslim travellers will become the key drivers for Muslim to travel to those countries. In a nutshell, Halal tourism is an emerging trend and can be seen as market opportunities to OIC member countries and non-OIC member countries.

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