

Future Expected Directions in Halal Tourism: Trends, Challenges, and Opportunities

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Abstract:

Tourism has long been a significant and evolving component of the global industries and for many nations around the world. In recent decades, the growth of tourism, which has been segmented into various markets, has resulted in the creation of niche markets that are meticulously designed and tailored to meet the specific preferences and unique needs of distinct groups, including Halal tourism. Halal tourism is a specialised tourism product that has the potential to cater, one day, to the smallest niche markets, specifically the Muslim communities, and this area is worth exploring further. This study aims to forecast the future trends in halal tourism development, and its justification is also presented. In the hospitality and tourism industry, a good understanding of the future is seen as an essential consideration in formulating the strategic design of and introducing superior products and services to meet the needs and desires of global tourists. The paper also offers deep discussion of the various challenges and opportunities related to halal tourism.

Key Words: Halal Tourism, Future Directions in Halal Tourism, Halal Tourism Trends, Halal Tourism Challenges, Halal Tourism Opportunities

1. Introduction

Tourism has long been a significant and evolving component of the global industries and for many nations around the world. In recent decades, the growth of tourism, which has been segmented into various markets, has resulted in the creation of niche markets that are meticulously designed and tailored to meet the specific preferences and unique needs of distinct groups. Halal tourism is a specialised tourism product that has the potential to cater, one day, to the smallest niche markets, specifically the Muslim communities, and this area is worth exploring further. Although Muslims were not adequately recognised as a tourism market until the early 2000s when they began to be categorised for targeted marketing, it is only in recent years that Muslim travel has been studied more seriously within the field of tourism studies (Eid and El-Gohary, 2015). This current period may represent an ideal time to conduct a comprehensive exploration in tourism sector regarding what is available and how to shape Halal tourism for a promising future (Ahmed & Akbaba, 2020).

The idea of niche marketing has drawn increasing attention and interest in tourism studies over time. In the tourism literature, niche marketing is now often seen as an important future path. Exploring a niche like Halal tourism gives hope of profit and development to the few stakeholders involved. For Muslims, leading a lifestyle associated with their religion is an essential element. In the growing tourism business, halal tourism and numerous forms of religious tourism have become crucial. From an Islamic worldview, a respected lifestyle with cultural and ethical values shapes travel practices, choices, and behaviour (Eid & El-Gohary, 2014). Matching tourism approaches with people who share similar values and culture is required. Muslim travel is an opportunity to explore the Muslim individual's ability to become a valuable customer in the Middle East and the world as the non-Muslim market grows. For this reason, exploring Muslim tourism forms and their related topics is considered necessary (Bunghez, 2021).

1.1. Background and Definition of Halal Tourism:

Without basing the entire issue of defining halal tourism through the determination of its components, in its basic meaning, halal tourism can be treated as a tourism sector serving the needs of Muslim travellers and tourists through the use of the concept of three spheres that are religiously compliant (halal). Halal tourism, the

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term corresponding to the needs of Muslim societies, has also begun to gain essential importance in the academic discourse on tourism, as well as in its practice. It is mainly aimed at Muslim communities appreciating values derived from Islamic doctrine dealing with such areas of human life as economics, health, nutrition, social relations, and management (El-Gohary, et al. 2008; Rahman, et al. 2023; El-Gohary, 2010). It is worth mentioning that the necessary historical basis for the development of halal tourism was shaped by the teachings of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), the Quran, and the principles expressed in the Islamic Sharia. The points described above, and the main principles are also reflected in the standards adopted by the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation in 2016, which have been prepared for marketing by companies, regions, and tourism products created in accordance with the philosophy and identified features, activities, or standards of halal business (Said et al., 2022).

In terms of the history of halal, the first tourism initiative for Muslim societies emerged in the 1990s in Malaysia with the creation of a network of hotels that guaranteed their guests compliance with the principles of the Islamic religion. Then, in the period of 2001-2002, the most important Muslim countries in terms of travel began to build their own offers aimed at Muslim communities of diverse cultural regions based on faithfulness to the tradition of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH). The considerable increase in interest both in traveling and in writing and researching began in the years 2014/15 (Yusof & Simpong, 2021). It should be emphasised that what accompanied both the development path and the increase in popularity of halal tourism were, among others, economic, social, and demographic elements as well. The last decade of the 20th century initiated a continuous increase in the value of the global halal market, the scope of which has been diversified (Gauthier, 2021).

1.2. Importance of Studying Future Directions:

In 2020, around 230 billion international outbound trips were recorded from Muslim travellers, even in the wake of the travel state across the world that was disrupted by COVID-19 by 73%. The growth of the market segment targeting halal tourism is on the rise and is characterised by complexity, which is particularly important to appreciate. This growth calls for halal tourism service providers to act as stakeholders who are capable of attending to the various needs of the distinct categories of Muslim tourists and, therefore, satisfying the different population groups. There are lengthy and expanding relationships that have reached as far as the improvement of services and extension of services (Alanzi, 2023).

Trends in halal travel, which can be qualified as world-class and can create an effective spectrum, have something regarding people who can envision the development of halal tourism, addressing the issues that this industry in general, and halal travel in particular, might face soon, and taking advantage of the corresponding trends on this market. Along the same line, making the information available to the business operators in this sector is not enough since the decision-makers also have to understand how the market will grow (Rhama, 2022). This is crucial, especially in creating policies that will help tame the rising levels of halal tourism. In trying to introduce basic theoretical models and presenting relevant empirical research supported by logic, there are various advantages one can glean: it helps in gaining trust, it helps in staying on point, and it helps in clarifying the concepts of halal tourism economic and social dynamics, especially in forecasting the development and the changes of this emerging industry.

This study aims to forecast the future trends in halal tourism development, and its justification is also presented. In the hospitality and tourism industry, a good understanding of the future is seen as an essential consideration in formulating the strategic design of and introducing superior products and services to meet the needs and desires of global tourists. This not only supports the agility of the tourism business but is also an increasing focal point for policymakers who focus on sustainable tourism to direct and manage the touristic islands in Southeast Asia from an environmental and social point of view. Changes to the product should be a customer-driven strategy to improve the customer experience by providing a unique experience in consuming the product or service (Gursoy et al., 2023).

This is related to the need to be sensitive to halal tourism products today as well as the cultural diversity of tourists who have different faiths or beliefs in defining halal standards according to their beliefs. Policymakers must also have a good understanding of future trends and directions in the tourism industry in formulating policies that shape and manage the rapid development of the tourist industry.

2. Trends in Halal Tourism:

Halal tourism has emerged as one of the most crucial and significant aspects of the travel and tourism industry over the last few decades. The rapid and ongoing changes that have been undergone by the halal tourism industry represent dynamic shifts in trends that are transforming travel and tourism across many regions of the world. The number of potential halal markets is consistently increasing, and various stakeholders in these markets have realised the profound importance of focusing on specific segments, catering to their diverse and unique

needs, and establishing a competitive edge over others (Junaidi, 2020). Many tourist destinations are currently working hard to pinpoint and target potential existing and non-existing markets for further growth of their ever-increasing clientele base. Hence it is of utmost importance to appreciate how the 'new' halal markets that are coming up can change the existing situations. The current trends of mobility and the current levels of tourism achievement have brought about a certain kind of tourists whose behaviours, anticipations and experiences require special attention.

Ever since 2010, the increase in the number of travellers who are Muslims has been noted, especially within the halal soft tourism business to newer markets such as the Maldives, China and Japan, among others with varying standards of luxury accommodation. With the halal tourism market growing at an astonishing rate, demonstrating its potential and economic benefits, various businesses and entrepreneurs are now turning their efforts towards exploiting these halal sectors (Hasan et al., 2021). This has included equipping the market with many applications and website services, serving both information and numerous online reservation systems for Muslim clients. More importantly, these halal travel products have experienced an explosion of exposure in different travel social networks as they have posted a lot of travel destinations, travel guides and travel tips content to motivate Muslim travellers (Rafiki et al., 2021). This is in a bid to foster a type of community where similar individuals can come together to travel the world and not have to compromise their beliefs. This behaviour trend resonates well with the millennials who have chosen to be the first classes as far as travel is concerned and look for places that encourage privacy and modesty aside from luxury.

The growing trend in halal tourism is a well-calibrated mix of the old and the new that makes travel satisfying even for the eccentricities of the modern and very cosmopolitan traveller. With the rise of globalisation, where diverse cultures appear to lose their uniqueness and individuals seem to lose their identity, the halal experience of travel is twofold, that is, honouring and respectful alteration of the tradition as it is accepted in the modern way of life allowing for exploratory ventures by most if not all Muslims across the globe (El-Bestawi, 2021; Schaller, 2021).

2.1. Emerging Destinations and Markets:

In the past, halal tourism was mainly taken up by the people living in the countries offering this form of travel, as well as near them in regions such as the South-East Asia and the broad Middle East. Many places and countries have already adapted and modified their infrastructure as well as services for tourists in order to satisfy these demand. With a noticeable and substantial increase in the population of Muslim travellers around the world, it is understandable why not only the traditional hubs of halal tourism (e.g. Malaysia, Indonesia, and Turkey) are extending their arms to embrace the current global trend, but many other nations are also looking into this potentially profitable market for their economies (Astuti, 2021). Once-major metropolitan areas like London, Sydney, and Shanghai have now seen the emergence of lesser-known yet competitive cities such as Sanya, Mandalay, and Palu, as these cities too have set their sights on tapping into the burgeoning halal holiday travel segment, investing billions of dollars in the expansion of the halal tourism industry (Fang, 2020).

This evolving trend appears to side-line some of the established economic and political powerhouses situated in the US and Europe. In light of this, a range of destinations worldwide is keenly taking advantage of this situation by strategically marketing themselves directly to the growing tourist market, comprised of Muslim travellers seeking culturally resonant experiences. Moreover, maintaining cultural authenticity and integrity is likely to attract an even greater number of travellers from a diverse array of backgrounds, who are seeking to explore and appreciate diversity through rich cultural experiences (Shah, et al., 2015). In parallel to enhancing the tourism sector, the Turkish government has outlined plans to make significant and robust investments across all industry subsectors and industrial regions to stimulate and boost economic growth, create jobs, and promote industry diversity. To this date, it is noted that the tourism industry generates approximately US\$99 billion in global revenue, which is certainly enticing for prospective investors and policymakers alike (Garg et al., 2020).

In the same trend, other countries like Japan are now strategizing for the lucrative global market. At the moment, the possible approaches to tourism strategies in Japan have been sufficiently researched put forward and discussed by different parties concerned. Additionally, given the increasing variation in types of tourism and types of tourists as well as cutthroat rivalry in the international tourism business, different destinations are now strategically focusing on the Muslim niche markets to lessen competition among each other in the global scene (Sandhu & El-Gohary, 2023; Hussain, et al., 2020; Garg et al., 2020). At the same time, countries are also participating in exchange of marketing intelligence, inter-regionally and globally, on the services they are offering and on the new tourism products developed by the countries (Zarei et al., 2020). This vital information is directed toward potential tourists, particularly those originating from Southeast Asian and Middle Eastern markets who may have a keen interest in halal tourism offerings. This collaborative burden-sharing methodology enables

multiple countries to conduct more comprehensive and extensive advertising campaigns, ultimately fostering the growth of their own individual tourist sectors in an increasingly competitive global environment.

2.2. Technological Innovations in Halal Tourism Services:

Halal tourism sector has witnessed, perhaps more than any other sector, the virtues of recent technological innovations. Technology has been of paramount importance in improving the service offering of the businesses that are focused on enhancing the travel experience of Muslim leisure tourists. Thanks to the unprecedented number of people owning smart phones in the recent past, mobile applications have been embraced by the subjects in earlier research who supported the idea of such applications use (El-Gohary, 2012). For example, some of these apps are smart enough to locate the closest praying room or mosque or even notify the user that it is time for prayers.

Further, particular sophisticated applications and other detailed sites could be able to suggest halal food outlets available to the tourist, no matter their location. Such facilities could even be included in the facilities of the hotel, for non-vegetarian guests who would wish for halal food, be it for health, moral or personal reasons (El-Gohary, 2011; Garg et al., 2020; El-Gohary, et al., 2012). The Incorporation of technology in the provision of halal services in the course of travel also facilitates the travel experience for the Muslim traveller and elevates the awareness and appreciation of the halal concept in tourism (Nisha & Cheung, 2022; Owusu-Manu, et al., 2018).

In conclusion, the surge in popularity of the digital and online world in recent years has also given rise to a whole new section of influencer culture that has become instrumental in marketing more exciting travel experiences within Muslim tourism. As social media has grown, so have the possibilities for travel communications, where the concept of an influencer is used to promote all sorts of travel and tourism activities that target the Muslim market and its various tastes and preferences. Moreover, the very essence and the sustainable features of the Muslim-friendly tourism attractions can be promoted to the other Muslim individuals who wish to travel to certain places (Berakon et al., 2023). There are various targeted marketing activities that can significantly further awaken the need of understanding this new service, which is enhanced by the modern technology, internet of course, implying digital marketing, social media promotions, search engine optimisation and others. Therefore, all the interested parties are advised to make efforts and ensure that there is a simple and satisfactory interaction with the user technology for each and every one (Destiana & Kismartini, 2020).

Accordingly, in order to meet such an ambitious target, the greatest emphasis is to be put on the logic of improvement for cashless technologies enabling flexibility in the use of vouchers designed for various purposes such as eating out, the purchase of groceries, lodging, transport, etc (Smith et al., 2020). In addition to that, the appropriate modifications and the mobile websites, which will enable the users to get the verified locations, endorsed images and videos as well as other relevant services with ease, are also crucial. This encompasses major exhibitions featuring the works of prominent photographers, thrilling seasonal events, dance shows, and magnificent art and culture, all of which help enhance the experience of the travellers (El-Gohary, 2012 and 2014).

3. Challenges in Halal Tourism:

Even with the growing body of knowledge regarding halal tourism, there is still a huge gap of well-informed studies that evaluate the likely future anticipated trends of this sector of the tourism industry. This gap in research is particularly important because halal tourism has indeed produced a variety of substantial benefits so far, both at the national and international levels, which are inherently related to a country's overall economic growth and development. The significance of these results extends beyond the academic frontier and stands to shape policy and investment in appropriate tourism facilities (Ahmed & Shuvo, 2024). One of the aims of this paper is to evaluate and review qualitatively the prospects of halal tourism in a number of settings. There are four main strands of development which combine and link tourism with religion: these are religious tourism, church tourism, tourism in developing societies, and, more importantly, Islamic or halal tourism. Each of these industries has its peculiarities with respect to their opportunities and challenges, which are important to explore and understand, given that the industry is developing. (Ahmed & Shuvo, 2024)

There are presently notable barriers to the growth of halal tourism. First, the halal norms and the processes of obtaining a halal certificate are quite intricate and challenging. As a result, many countries and even industries within the country have their own distinct definition of halal. This diversity of understanding may pose severe risks in any halal production, distribution, and even sale systems in any market. For example, there are vast disparities in the standards of sharia finance among countries in the Middle East, Asia, and the African continent. In addition, the parameters that define what a halal product, service, or even practice is, are prone to inaccuracies and misunderstanding (Hariani & Hanafiah, 2024). These challenges related to the management and endorsement of halal policies will likely remain relevant within the halal tourism sector in the near future.

However, the new emerging halal tourism advances seems devoid of critical factors like sociocultural assimilation and conservation. In most countries, these tendencies to promote halal tourism face certain barriers including the need to reconcile the internal Muslim tourists' religious practices and the local communities' ways of life. Such cultural dissonance can hinder the experience and authenticity of halal tourism products. Thirdly, sharia law has different meanings and interpretations in different countries, hence the guidelines concerning halal practices differ. This confusion further complicates the issue of what is halal for the travellers.

Moreover, the owners of the hotels and/or general managers, sharia compliant hotel managers and halal tourists, among others, often appear uninterested in the specific provisions and tenets of halal tourism. While it is true that tourists visiting a country with a different predominant religion may educate themselves and actively seek to engage with religious buildings, places of worship, religious homes, religious events, as well as enjoy religiously compliant food and beverages, the questions arise: Are cultural and religious tourists genuinely interested in staying at religious hotels and participating in organised religious tours? These queries remain unanswered and are worth further exploration.

In conclusion, the management practices of halal tourism are at the moment quite orthodox and mainly shaped by the state. For instance, sharia compliant hotels and other provisions within the reach of halal tourism, are not marketed or availed to the tourists much in advance before their arrival into the host nation, which limits the appeal and availability of such facilities to tourists (Jaelani, 2022). This form of approach normally adopted in the promotion of halal tourism tends to lower the appeal of halal tourism to travellers who wish to have compliant experiences therefore hindering the expansion and growth of the industry and its branch activities.

3.1. Regulatory and Certification Issues:

A large number of researchers have widely highlighted the grave issue suffered by almost all stakeholders in the halal market owing to the absence of uniform systems in the halal certification process. Marketplace discussions among practitioners and stakeholders continue to highlight the necessity of effectively managing internal corporate issues, particularly the inconsistencies that often arise between production practices and halal standards. This inconsistency is of significant concern, especially since the numbers relating to undeclared non-compliance are typically alarming and disturbing for any potential customer or consumer. The social management of provenance and adherence to production standards presents a unique opportunity to establish a distinctive point of difference from other suppliers in the competitive market (Islam et al., 2023). Indeed, the lack of standardisation in the halal certification process complicates the creation of genuine consumer trust in halal-certified products and services, making it a pressing issue that needs to be addressed for the overall health of the industry.

It appears that there is no single global standard that is universally adopted or widely recognised within the industry. Furthermore, no global, overarching, or wholly authentic halal brand currently exists in the market. This absence creates additional complexities in the governance surrounding which constituent parts must be certified as halal for any overarching brand to be considered truly halal (El-Gohary & Eid, 2012; El-Gohary, 2013; El-Gohary, et al., 2021). The halal dietary requirement may involve greater complexity than any other dietary consideration on a global scale. However, it is noteworthy that no intricate and functioning system of production standards or point-of-service certification currently exists in any Western, developed nation. Some key governance themes that emerge from this extensive discussion include the significant investments of time and money required, the necessity for a diverse volume of products often lacking in isolated niche court cases, and the imperative to refine production mechanisms to ensure that authentic products marketed as needing to comply with legal, religious, and consumer standards are available.

For tourist service providers, the ramifications of non-compliance can lead to severe health-related reputational risks that may tarnish their image. Additionally, non-compliance not only prevents these service providers from fully capitalising on a burgeoning global market for halal products, but it also entails an opportunity cost through the potential loss of trade in this rapidly expanding sector. Therefore, to effectively attract Muslim customers, it is crucial to possess a thorough understanding of the prerequisites that dictate compliance with halal service standards (Jahidi et al., 2024).

The increasing use of halal services, in particular halal food and beverages in the tourism industry, bears much resemblance to the marketing of various other dietary requirement brands. In this regard, it is necessary and possible to seek the in-depth analysis of interrelationship of factors: law, religion and different stakeholders in their business markets. The da'wah aspect, which is oriented towards global communication and the promotion of Islam, can be seen as the basis of many halal-related and sometimes non-halal marketing initiatives geared towards the global marketplace. It is therefore particularly important to appreciate that such knowledge is critical to most practitioners who are in operation in different countries or developing contexts that all present vastly different

situations (El-Gohary, 2016). Considering the fact that knowledge-sharing initiatives amongst industry participants are regarded as critically important for the implementation of any Muslim services development program. Educational institutions also play an essential function in introducing these niche markets' suppliers to the halal tourism marketing 'game', as well as risks and benefits of its practice.

One must attain a prominent level of cultural sensitivity so as to appreciate why potential coffee shop consumers, both Muslims and Non-Muslims have different driving forces. The choice between opting for certified or non-certified halal products barely scratches the surface of a broader web of legal, ethical, and religious obligations that come into play. This leads us to question whether a Muslim individual genuinely desires to consume sharia-compliant French fries sourced from a food bazaar that he cannot, in good faith, partake from? Moreover, do these fries genuinely sustain or fulfil his innate human quest for meaning and direction, or are they merely an element of a tourist experience? What ultimately might guide or orient him in that specific location, or perhaps in other alternatives? In conclusion, the author believe that a significant opportunity for future development lies in addressing the factors surrounding certification and the enforcement of legal standards. These issues are profoundly important, as they are central to the fabric of humanity itself, even if they seem relatively minor in the broader context of niche markets (Muslichah & Ibrahim, 2021).

3.2. Cultural Sensitivities and Adaptation:

Accumulated research has increasingly highlighted that religious stereotypes often stem from a fundamental lack of understanding regarding the intricate and multifaceted religious convictions that characterise Muslim communities. Most notably, those who are devout adherents of Islam do not consistently express their faithful observance in a singular manner. The variety of religious beliefs, practices, and modes of observance found throughout the Arab world, Europe, and North America demonstrates a remarkable diversity. Thus, the extent to which Muslims seek out or require services that are halal-certified can vary significantly, influenced by numerous factors. These might include personal convictions and the nature of the religious environment prevailing in either Muslim-majority nations or those where Muslims are a minority (Eid & El-Gohary, 2015).

With the increasing cultural sensitivity, a harmonic issue arises to those considering where to invest in the sectors of tourism, and this is due to the need to make changes on the basic attributes of halal tourism in relation to present-day religious clients, who may come with varying levels of religiosity or none at all (Eid & El-Gohary, 2015). The relevance of this subject is brought out due to the prevalence of the training aids on halal and haram practices that are quite useful in safeguarding the cultures while encouraging the common practices. It allows one to harmoniously incorporate the operating systems of the contemporary world without necessarily compromising the core beliefs. Conversely, when a potential tourist operates from a conviction rooted in the principles of the adorned, there exists a substantial opportunity to add extra value to their experience, which could, in turn, enrich the cultural content that they engage with (Eid & El-Gohary, 2015; Saraç et al., 2023; El-Gohary, et al., 2017). To adequately adapt the variety of offerings to meet the diverse expectations of travellers, comprehensive education and training of staff members is essential.

The recognition and genuine appreciation of religious values form the foundation upon which adaptations can be made to enhance and enrich a visitor's experience. It is incumbent upon the receiving society to take on the responsibility for change, while the tour operator is tasked with establishing the necessary preconditions for effective staff education and training initiatives.

4. Opportunities in Halal Tourism:

As the number of Muslim travellers is projected to grow significantly into the future, the size and diversity of the halal tourism sector is expected to continue to expand in a remarkable way. As such, the potential economic impact of greater investment in this dynamic area is considerable and extends well beyond just halal food and prayer facilities. It also encompasses a wide array of secondary services, including Islamic finance, shopping, cultural experiences, and a variety of entertainment options. In addition, an additional advantage for stakeholders is the knowledge of how the values of consumers (both Muslims and non-Muslims) change over time, thus providing new avenues for their business reaping (Eid & El-Gohary, 2015). Many destinations and nations have created unique halal tourism policies along with captivating marketing strategies, which expanded their reach to the Muslim population and other tourists in need of halal amenities. (Berakon et al., 2023).

The best practices of destination management organisations (DMOs) claiming a stake in this segment have dealt with promotion of halal integration in brochures, introduction of new tourism brands/ sub-brands targeting Muslim travellers and promoting the experiences of the customers including use of Islamic stars and scholars. In addition, there has been the introduction of a number of focused and well-structured routes or joint assignments aimed at interlinking a number of countries that would complement ones already in existence and

which perhaps would also seek the entire Muslim tourists who are seeking alternative countries. Successful examples of DMOs tapping into this growing market include Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore, Turkey, Indonesia, and Dubai, each demonstrating an adaptable approach that caters distinctly to the preferences and needs of Muslim tourists.

Similar trends in business and consumer behaviour suggest that marketers may have a unique and valuable opportunity to serve and gain customers through innovative halal product or service offerings. With the notion of the “century of the Muslim customer” as a pivotal frame for opportunity, Islamic consumers alongside the burgeoning net export of Islamic lifestyle products and services (often referred to collectively as ‘halal’) emerge as a significant contributor to what is being called a “profitable economy,” which is further labelled as an ‘Islamic economy.’

Given the current trends among consumers, it is envisioned that these economic opportunities within the halal sector are substantial enough to also capture the attention of non-Islamic or mainstream customers who are increasingly aware of diverse market offerings. This is further evident through the established relationships between halal food and lifestyle with overarching trends focusing on ethical consumption, health-conscious choices, and quality standards in products and services (El-Gohary, 2020). This essential shift in understanding the market segment positions halal offerings as an economy that holds more significance than merely serving as a niche consumer segment that can stand independently. Armed with these insights, opportunities vastly extend to the fields of marketing practitioners, enabling them to adopt strategic approaches that could lead to improved and more valuable performance across firms (Elasrag, 2022). Through such a comprehensive lens, the halal brand value offers valuable perspectives regarding the potential for income increment and growth (Eid & El-Gohary, 2015). Therefore, convergence and collaboration could be actualised through partnerships that encompass not only within the halal business community but also with corporations, government entities, halal certifiers, and any other relevant stakeholders who can contribute to this thriving ecosystem.

4.1. Economic Impact and Investment Opportunities:

Halal tourism can contribute to everything from job creation and economic diversification to small and medium-sized enterprise development, youth empowerment, and community empowerment. Many locations around the globe have seen additional growth in associated sectors such as agri-tourism, travel retail, banking, and education services as a result of halal tourism offerings. The halal sector and various investments and opportunities associated with two of the key trend drivers of halal tourism are notable. One is the demand for healing and self-care travel with a forecasted worth of \$1.7 trillion by 2022 (Orleni, 2022; Morrison et al., 2022). The other catalyst is identified as unique, historical, culturally aligned, and nature-based travel experiences sought by 38% of Muslim leisure tourists (Morrison et al., 2022). These include travel to natural and cultural world heritage sites, including ancient forts, castles, and palaces. There are 1,121 world heritage sites representing some 168 countries and 11 natural sites awaiting classification (Orleni, 2022). Just 93 Muslim destination markets have natural and cultural world heritage sites, of which 52 offer beach and heritage tourism. The big opportunity is the Muslim beach and tropical beach tourism experience, creating a \$280 billion target market. The gold market in Muslim-majority countries is at least \$108 billion in the category of those consumers who are under the age of 29 (Di, 2021).

In order for these investments to occur, it is necessary that public and private sector partnerships take place to achieve the requisite synchronised destination development. Investors are beginning to see solid returns on investment for those who have created high-quality halal tourism products, resulting in satisfied guests who return. Investment in such National Halal Parks often sees a return on investment within four years. Places such as Borobudur in Bali, Indonesia, the top destination as voted by Muslim travellers, are now attracting up to 100,000 visitor arrivals every month (Suryanto et al., 2022). Robust growth rates on the African continent continue to see increased investment in developing Muslim-friendly destination products (El-Gohary, et al., 2021). Small to medium investments are sought in creating ultra-luxury destination offers to target growing amenity remittance and global Muslim wealth seeking upscale halal tourism experiences. Market development is required in attracting new wealth generators such as doctors, pharmacists, hospital and clinic owners and managers, sustainable tropical agribusiness investors, IT telecommunication, energy sector operators, high value-added manufacturers, and arabesque design-oriented construction industry.

Market development is required to attract these markets to such locations in Africa and become part of a new market growth concept invented by the remittance development and marketing agency. This manufacturing-based market enables the promotion of a destination compliance and manufacturing network seeking to capture a 4% share of the global halal market every year. This 4% share is the targeted goal for remittance markets seasonally promoting communities as places to live, work, invest, and play, leading to investment value, growth,

and destination connectivity. It is the market development concept also being utilised for a manufacturing company (Morrison et al., 2022).

4.2. Innovative Marketing Strategies:

The importance of targeted marketing specifically designed to appeal to Muslim values, culture, and norms is critical for halal tourism product development and strategic approaches. Destinations that have been successful at engaging with a Muslim audience include Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore. Another is Egypt. Qatar has also recently launched a campaign to promote winter holidays within the region for European Muslims, offering a culture and faith-based experiential holiday offering.

Halal tourism is a growing and emerging market, which has reached the mass market today. Hence, the use of digital marketing becomes essential for reaching potential customers (El-Gohary, 2012). Strategies for promoting would need to appeal to Muslim values and attract the customers of the product because of its authentic, ethical nature. Part of the challenge lies in using marketing language that is appealing to customers and is not exploiting the religion for marketing purposes. This is where narrowing down the research topic is advantageous as a more specific search for keywords and search engine optimisation keywords needs to be found and tailored specifically to a Western Muslim and other Muslim audience and region targeted. By definition, halal tourism is about the experience of healing and health, which includes both body and mind. It should give the opportunity to truly unwind, find oneself, and provide a calming experience that is not based on the offering of fandom. Consumers' personal perceptions of this are a valuable focus of market research, allowing for targeted market research aimed at the most profitable segments of the market (Charan et al., 2024).

5. Future Research Directions

For future studies, it is necessary to conduct a gap analysis in the existing literature. Through systematic reviews, scholars can identify areas that have not been fully explored and are worth examining in hypothesis-driven studies. This research suggests that there are many opportunities to conduct future studies on halal tourism. Firstly, this niche area is receiving an increasing number of global studies, with studies focused on particular halal products, tourists, consumer behaviour, and market dynamics. Secondly, new and unfolding trends in halal tourism can be observed, particularly drawing on geopolitical issues around the world. Thus, there is an urgency for future research to continue investigating this area. Furthermore, researchers must also focus on climate change, which is shaping halal tourism practices. Notably, the idea of intersectionality (illuminating potential issues of hijab and politics, rather than ethnicity) seems particularly timely.

More specific areas for future research opportunities include potential innovative religious practices, women-only and woman-centred tours, and the expectations and obligations of Muslim employees working in the halal tourism industry. Regardless of future directions, the area requires an interdisciplinary approach drawing on cultural and religious studies, anthropology, consumer behaviour, hospitality, and tourism studies. Finally, since this is a primary area of concern and interest for governments around the world, research in industry partnerships or collaborative research in halal and Islamic tourism is particularly welcome. Collaboration between academia, industry, and key government stakeholders is essential for addressing the needs of each sector in the halal market, improving the broader social benefits as well as supply chain and income generation. Above all, the research contribution lies in the appropriateness of case studies to guide the research agenda in the service of evidence-based policy. This is because the sector is growing at an accelerated rate hence the need for new research. In this respect, such research is both timely and carries prospects of sustainability and long-term possibilities.

5.1. Gap Analysis in Existing Literature:

There is almost no undertaking, which comes without developing gaps, which can provide useful information in one or more disciplines that can be considered to be in any way short of an accomplishment. As it is not only pinpointing and drawing attention to the existing research deficits that gap analysis is about, but also, it helps to orient new research in interesting new and perhaps, relevant fields. That makes the life of every scholar and researcher who seeks to add to knowledge much easier. Up to now, everyone understands the significance of information relating to halal tourists, their consumption habits, and their target markets, as well as their unique applications from a marketer's or a tour operator's standpoint. These insights play a vital role in the development of operational strategies that cater specifically to this demographic. Within the broader context of halal tourism, food and beverage operations stand out as one of the key business lines in the intricate multimodal halal tourism transport system.

Nonetheless, it is worth emphasising that the food and beverage industry as well as the management of culinary operations in a context of intermodal transportation which encompasses several modes of transport is still in its infancy and calls for deeper understanding. Further, the deployment of halal compliant multimodal food

and beverage supply chains is mostly punctuated with disjunctions and is often based on personal idiosyncrasies of the research community as opposed to systematic interrelations of components of the system. If the full potential of halal tourism is to be reaped, there needs to be more empathy on the interconnectedness of these vital areas.

The use of fresh theoretical approaches or cutting-edge ideas from other sectors such as finance, economics, and the developing area of interdisciplinary social sciences is becoming very crucial in the halal tourism industry. This field remains underexplored and virgin in terms of its potential contributions, paving the way for fresh research trajectories. In essence, an ethnic Islamic response to tourism and catering operations functions on the foundational basis of concepts that are deeply rooted in economic, psychological, and sociological theories. Therefore, it is essential to frame new conceptual orientations that successfully integrate the multifaceted arguments and insights presented in this research into the broader field of economic sociology. This integration will enable stakeholders to fully comprehend the operational challenges and intricacies associated with halal tourism, thereby enhancing the overall understanding of the sector.

The study of halal markets, particularly with a primary focus on addressing religious needs while also integrating relevant concepts from social sciences, remains a relatively uncommon approach within the tourism literature. There is a significant gap that must be addressed regarding plans to meet the critical considerations of operational service presentation, considering the in-depth operational background. This area is one of the noteworthy themes that must be thoroughly explored and leveraged to contribute further to the associated field of halal tourism. Moreover, the post-pandemic landscape presents an opportune moment to assess the effectiveness of evolving religious trends, which should be regarded as an incredibly interesting and impactful study subject. The tourism industry finds itself in urgent need of extensive contributions and serious discussions that aim to operationalise societal trends while rapidly adapting to the changing landscape of religious demands and expectations (El-Gohary, 2021).

To address these needs, the future research focus on Islamic or halal tourism should look towards developing this aspect further. For this end, comprehensive gap analysis methodologies and appropriate systems to advance the research should be adopted without delay. It is essential that subsequent research projects are multi-method based, inciting instant enthusiasm and growing willingness to build new initiatives with stakeholders and researchers from different uplifting sectors. For the purpose of preparing an appropriate research plan stretching over many years, it is necessary to devise a new research portfolio as well as a clear-cut research structure. Bridging the divide between theory and practice calls for new focus that considers the needs of the consumers and the stakeholders, while at the same time making use of existing synergies in industry and society (Al-Ansi et al., 2023).

To sum up, in-depth analysis should start to uncover important consumer demand in the food and beverage market concerning halal-friendly wholesale and transportation. Scholars need to generate actionable investigative insights to tackle the evolving and practical solutions surrounding such consumer needs, thereby ushering in a new era of understanding and responsiveness. The construction of a core group of serious scholars dedicated to this field, the identification of new challenges, and the opening of marketing opportunities particularly in this emerging and evolving industry, alongside practical examples of effective cross-substantive partnerships between the private and public sectors, will all serve to enhance the management processes grounded on contemporary evidence while also addressing the complex dynamics of ongoing and emerging platforms. In the absence of these initiatives and efforts, it becomes necessary to put in place regulatory systems that will specifically be able to prevent any threats projected towards profit and sustainability in this sector.

5.2. Potential Impact of Climate Change on Halal Tourism:

One of the emerging and clearly understood trends that calls for further attention in future studies on the existing and possible challenges in the spheres of the environment and Halal tourism, relates to the analysis of climate change and its effects in general and tourism in particular. Limitations must be imposed in terms of the scope of the study by paying regard to the effects of climate change like the expected rise in sea levels and occurrence of disasters which are likely to have a profound impact on important destinations in the Halal tourism market or the countries which supply Muslim tourists to these countries (Aji et al., 2021; Astuti, 2021). To the best of the author knowledge, and as of the current state of research, synergy of all the existing topics and subjects regarding Halal tourism and climate change research has shown that it is possible to divide the future environmental settings that will affect this sector into three categories. First, in relation to some basic issues of a geographical nature that need to be emphasised, a number of Halal-friendly or Shariah-compliant destinations are designed and operate for Muslim tourists only (Hanafiah et al., 2021). These areas face extreme risks from climate change, which threatens their existence as viable tourist sites.

Secondly, even within the Halal tourism sector, accommodation services are arguably the most accessible in terms of offering services that have been assessed and certified as fit for eco-friendly use as per environmental principles either by governmental levels in different countries or by private organisations (Alsharief & El-Gohary, 2017). Therefore, considering the observable aspects of these transformation trends showing that tourism is being transformed towards eco-centric and sustainable management practices, the last few decades have seen the introduction of many such eco-friendly accommodations that are also Halal, offering services, which have been designed in consideration of the environmental effects and fully respect the moral beliefs. A range of environmentally friendly lodging and services has been increasing as well as diversifying, which leads to a conspicuous increase in the opportunities available for eco-friendly certifications. This, in turn, makes it possible to balance the cultural policies and the environmental sustainability concerns in the strategic planning and development processes of the future.

Lastly, it is worth noting that the interventions of marketing professionals, as well as those of regional players and local businesses, are invariably expected to be preventive in nature, protective of the economic targets against adverse changes in the environment and climate. Such adaptation is important because it seeks to create a higher level of responsibility and in turn encourages eco-resilience, making the tourism sector more sustainable as a whole (Assaker, 2020).

6. Conclusion and Recommendations:

This paper provides future visions on the field of halal tourism, examines, and discusses important trends, challenges, and opportunities that industry practitioners are likely to face in the near future of halal tourism. The paper places a strong emphasis on what industry practitioners could or should do to address such an emerging vacation pattern. Overall, the author hope that the findings of this paper will inform and equip industry practitioners, public sector policymakers, and other stakeholders in the halal tourism sector with some strategic insights to make the most of future business opportunities in this field. As with every single tourism sub-segment, the extent of convenience of halal tourism for travellers is largely a question of perception. There is a spirited contestation over what passes for halal or Muslim-friendly, and what the values and tenets of Islam stand for as far as travel is concerned. The future of halal tourism looks promising, and, with the right strategies and investment, it can help to trigger social harmony, and better understanding of each other's culture, and people.

Of particular importance industry practitioners needs to keep close tabs on the current and emerging trends in the field to monitor the uncertainties and challenges that may affect the purchase decision-making process, marketing approach, and image campaign, as well as the socio-demographic profile of halal-conscious travellers with a view to designing and promoting product alternatives. Leading policymakers and industry actors are recommended to unite efforts across sectors, particularly the tourism, Islamic finance and investment, health, and pharmaceutical sectors, to combat the challenges identified. The findings of this research can be applied in the formation of policy and business strategy. Hence, stakeholder participation and collaboration are important. Scholars are suggested to work and invest in halal tourism research and development. Trends that are relevant to halal tourism can evolve. Ongoing research and development can help forecast industry patterns and needs.

6.1. Summary of Key Findings:

The aim of this paper has been to present the readers with a wide, in-depth understanding of future expected directions in halal tourism. The paper predominantly touches upon three outstanding aspects. The first deals with trends in both Muslim traveller demographics and changing consumer mind-sets worldwide. There is a growing curiosity in and demand for halal services and destinations. The second aspect concerns the main hurdles in halal tourism that we currently document, namely the lack of uniform regulations and certification bodies, poorly adjusted travel offerings, and remaining cultural conflicts between local inhabitants and Muslim travellers. Finally, a look at the investment interests in this area, the primary potential economic benefits, and current research gaps are discussed. What we know about future halal tourism trends affirms the general consumption direction in the halal market and provides some guidelines on how to reach this potentially most attractive customer group.

This decade may witness an even more significant revolution in halal tourism and prepare or modify one's offers and operations to cater to these new client expectations. In relation to this, the often-repeated statement that halal tourism intimacy and understandability must be introduced to meet halal visitors' satisfaction is valid. Moreover, it is worth underscoring that the halal tourism industry operates within the same universe of commercial and cultural paradigms as its customer, which can elicit the need to re-evaluate the strategy and take customer-focused steps. Initiating research on this client group universally lacking sufficiently accurate research methodologies and practical benchmarks is recommended. Key halal tourism trends cannot be analysed with

customers in mind, meaning the business-minded development of the halal tourism conscience must be pursued in collaboration with academia.

6.2. Policy Recommendations for Stakeholders:

This paper highlights some points where an alternative version or perspective can be applied to stakeholders to support them in halal tourism. Firstly, major stakeholders should provide a clear direction through the establishment of a regulatory framework for supporting halal certification and tourism bodies. This may include cooperative relationships between many sectors, including government agencies related to religion, tourism, health services, and education, as well as industry, community, and youth. Educational institutions as third-party evaluators can support the monitoring process of the halal certification body. Policy needs to be enforced based on the country's conditions and must have the agreement of all stakeholders in the implementation. The author suggest further changing the paradigm so that not only stakeholders in the field apply halal, but also halal tourism can reach the wider community. Campaigns to raise awareness can be considered the next stage because of their attractiveness to non-Muslims for travel participation. The next step involves a continuing relationship.

Countries that are promoting halal and Muslim destinations can cooperate with countries that have just established a standard. Countries where halal trade caravans arrive can also be targeted as cooperation partners in halal tourism. One of the main commodities that have the potential to raise the economy and optimise cooperation is the mosque; hence, collaboration with Islamic countries is possible. Countries that engage in educational and technological innovation cooperation can also be potential partners. Opening cooperation will help increase opportunities in the era of globalisation and free trade in the virtual world. A long-term strategy becomes a prominent issue to continue to run halal tourism. It is also a concrete step in dealing with challenges at the national and international levels, whether related to environmental issues, safety, empowerment of the local community, or ongoing halal issues. Sustaining coherence and uniformity in differentiating halal tourism requires policy, regulation, accreditation, non-certified halal services, marketing aspects, as well as strategic management in running the guidelines, enlightening the stakeholders.

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