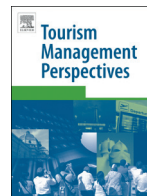




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Review

Current trends on Halal tourism: Cases on selected Asian countries

Zakiah Samori ^{a,*}, Nor Zafir Md Salleh ^b, Mohammad Mahyuddin Khalid ^a

^a Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies (ACIS), Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia

^b Marketing Panel, Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Management, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Johor Bahru, Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Halal tourism is one of the new phenomenon emerged from the growth of Halal industry. As Halal matters advancing tourism industry, many Muslim and non-Muslim countries are set to capture the Muslim tourists market by providing the tourism products, facilities and infrastructures to cater their needs. While affirming this new phenomenon, there remain a shortage of theoretical publications and research in this area. On top of that, when it comes to the real concept of Halal tourism and its trends, it has nevertheless been found that lack of research has been conducted in providing and determining the so called concept. Thus, due to the scarcity of literature and specific studies in this area this paper aims to explore and illustrate the concept of Halal tourism within the Islamic context with special reference to Quranic verse and Hadith (primary sources in Islam). Meanwhile, to appreciate the existing implementation on this concept, this paper will further provide cases on current trend of Halal tourism in selected countries in Asia. This study adopted qualitative research method and employ library research for data collection technique. The outcomes of this study include the current development of Halal tourism concept and comparison on Halal tourism cases in Asia. On top of that, it would also discover its opportunities and potentials for Muslim and non-Muslim countries to embark on the same journey.

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1. Introduction

Halal is an Arabic word linked to Islamic faith and is more than just about food products; it includes various types of products and services offered to the Muslim population. Halal can be defined as lawful or permissible under Shari'ah; it is a credence quality attribute (Jafari & Scott, 2014). Muslims, therefore, take a position of avoidance in the face of doubt where a few items could be categorized as 'Makrooh' or

'Shubhah' (questionable or detestable). Therefore, it could be further stress that Halal certification provides assurance to all Muslim consumers as it entirely fulfills the requirement as provided by the Shariah Law, which is obliged for Muslims to be adhered to.

Meanwhile, for the non-Muslims, Halal products are merely associated with quality product. It shall be further notes the element of Halal and quality product which known as *Halalan thoyyiban* have also been embedded and included in the Halal certification requirements (Jafari & Scott, 2014) This signifies that the wholesome of Halal products covers cleanliness, safety and quality in the whole supply chain, from farm to fork (Huat, 2009) and thus, Halal cannot be captured as a brand. In addition, it has been emphasized that "It is a philosophy, which while apparent and effective in branding, marketing and product development; stretches much further into disciplines such as

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: zakiahsamori@salam.uitm.edu.my (Z. Samori), zafir@utm.my, nozafira@yahoo.com (N.Z. Md Salleh), emkay@salam.uitm.edu.my (M.M. Khalid).

management, organizational behavior, cultural anthropology and sociology.” (Wilson & Liu, 2010).

Having said that, Halal tourism is one of the new phenomenon emerged from the growth of Halal industry. As Halal matters advancing tourism industry, many Muslim and non-Muslim countries are set to capture the Muslim tourists market by providing the tourism products, facilities and infrastructures to cater their needs. In spite of this growing demand and interest of this so called concept, there remain a shortage of theoretical publications and research in this area. On top of that, lack of research has been conducted in providing and determining the real concept of Halal tourism within the Islamic context. Understanding the genuine concept of this so called concept would lead to discover the existing development of Halal tourism in Asia. In the effort to appreciate the existing implementation on this concept, current trend of Halal tourism in selected countries in Asia were analyzed with special reference to Malaysia and Japan. Further, the comparisons between these two countries on the emergence of Halal tourism were explored along with discussion on its opportunities and challenges.

Undoubtedly, for Muslim, Quran provides guidance in all aspects of human activities; therefore religion influences the direction of tourism choices by tourists. As a result, many countries provide alternatives for Muslim tourists to choose by upgrading the tourism facilities for the comfortability of the tourists. Moreover, Islam is based on concepts of human well-being and a good life which stresses on ‘brotherhood and socioeconomic justice’. As results, this requires a balanced satisfaction of both the material and spiritual needs of all humans (Rice & Al-Mossawi, 2002). This implies that understanding the central role of the Quran would be a paramount essential before any discussion of tourism in Islam could be conducted (Jafari & Scott, 2014).

2. Halal tourism concept in Islamic perspectives

2.1. Halal tourism according to Quranic perspective

Islam thus endows travel with important attributes and this is evident based on previous history (Kessler, 1992; Bhardwaj, 1998; Aziz, 2001). Few terms associated with travel and tours have been used based on different situation. The Arabic word on tourism is always linked with *siyaha* which is taken from *saha* which denotes the meaning of “move or flow”. Thus the traveling of a person from one place to another for the purpose of tourism is addressed by the word *siyaha*. The contemporary usage of *siyaha* is traveling to a city or country in order to entertain or explore new experiences (Sohirin & Shah Jani, 2014). Allah SWT has also encourages us to gain knowledge, learning through an experiences through our five senses by traveling. This has put in few places in the Quran where Allah SWT says: “Do they not travel through the land, so that their hearts (and minds) may thus learn wisdom and their ears may thus learn to hear? Truly it is not their eyes that are blind, but their hearts which are in their breasts.” (Surah al-Hajj:46).

There are several terms on tourism in the Quran. The common expression is the word *al-fasih* as contained in this verse that says, “Go ye, then, for four months, backwards and forwards, (as ye will), throughout the land, but know ye that ye cannot frustrate Allah (by your falsehood) but that Allah will cover with shame those who reject Him.”

(Surah al-Maa'idah: 3).

Apart from that, the word *Ibn Sabil* which somehow reflects on the journey of a person for the cause of Allah as the verse also says, “Alms are for the poor and the needy, and those employed to administer the (funds); for those whose hearts have been (recently) reconciled (to Truth); for those in bondage and in debt; in the cause of Allah; and for the wayfarer: (thus is it) ordained by Allah, and Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom.”

(Surah at-Taubah 9: 60).

The verse signifies that those who travel for the cause of God need to be given special allotment for charity. Another term is word *hijrah*. Rowley (1997) denotes that *hijrah* for example incorporates migration

and the Hajj to Mecca, one of the five pillars of Islam, requires Muslims to make the journey at least once in their lifetime unless prevented by physical incapacity. Previous history recorded that many companions of Rasulullah (ﷺ) migrated to other parts of Arab region and even beyond that geographical boundary with the sole aim of propagation. Tourism can also be regarded as *hijrah* to gain a new experience. It was proven that through *hijrah* a person may gain a lot of experiences and the increase of knowledge. *Hijrah* would therefore enable a person gaining greater rewards from God whenever it is conducted to respond to His religious call. For this the Quran addresses us as follow: “He who forsakes his home in the cause of Allah, finds in the earth Many a refuge, wide and spacious: Should he die as a refugee from home for Allah and His Messenger, His reward becomes due and sure with Allah: And Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.”

(Surah al-Nisa': 100).

Another expression which signifies about the tourism is the word *al-rihlah* (lit. journey) and for that it emerged a lot of books under the topic. *Rihlah* has been used specifically to travel for the purpose of education and commerce (Duman, 2011). The most famous one is the writing of Ibn Batutah. There are some other books such as *rihlah fi talab al-hadith* (journey in search of Hadith of the Prophet. The Quran records *rihlah* among Arabs for business purposes (Sohirin & Shah Jani, 2014). This can be referred to the verse that says, “Their covenants (covering) journeys by winter and summer.” (Surah Quraisy:2).

Analyzing the above term, it was recorded that the Prophet Rasulullah (ﷺ) conducted *al-rihlah* through traveling between Makkah and Syria in series of business patronized by Khadijah who later became his wife. Sometimes the word *rihlah* is also linked with spirituality which means Muslims who travel to visit the shrine in Makkah, Madinah and other places such as Jerusalem can also be called as *rihlah al-muqadassah* or *rihlah al-ruhiyyah* (lit. spiritual journey). *Rihlah* can also be claimed as thoughtful journey whenever he feels more commitment towards religious doctrine.

The category of travel enjoined in Islam may be described as “purposeful” tourism which differs from the common practice of mass tourism which is motivated mainly by pleasure and hedonistic pursuits. Indeed the official definition of the “tourist” excludes those engaged in employment, whereas in Islam work (trading) is encouraged as for instance during the hajj season. The secular meaning of tourism also implies vacation or a non-work involvement which is a form of leisurely diversion from the work situation. The vacation trip is meant to be a relaxing and invigorating experience (Din, 1989; Sanad, Kassem, & Scott, 2010).

Within the spiritual context of tourism, pilgrimage has been central themes and indeed may have been historically the impetus and origin for what is today called tourism (Jafari & Scott, 2014). Religion may influence on the day to day activities of Muslims, whether at home or traveling, and thus it shapes the choice of a destination for discretionary purposes and what is done at the destination (Jafari & Scott, 2014). Various verses in the Quran encourage people to travel and make a journey as this would instill awareness towards the Oneness of Allah. Allah SWT put his words: “Travel through the earth and see how Allah did originate creation; so will Allah produce a later creation: for Allah has power over all things.”

(Surah al-Ankabut: 20).

This verse implies that one purpose of tourism is for consideration and contemplation. Muslims are advised to travel around the world to contemplate the creation of God. Likewise, in Surat Al-An'am, Allah SWT urges people to roam about the earth to consider the destiny of those who preceded them, especially those who cast aspersions: “Travel through the earth and see what was the end of those who rejected Truth.”

(Surah al-An'am: 11).

The similar implication has been upheld where Zakaria & Abdul-Talib (2010) claim that traveling and touring are highly encourage in Islam and normally it is associated and interrelated with hospitality. The similar effect of verse could also be found in another verse where

Allah SWT says: “Do they not travel through the earth, and see what was the end of those before them?” (Surah Mohammed: 10).

In addition, apart from achieving physical purpose, traveling has also been encouraged in Islam in order to gain spiritual and social goals (Pickthall, 1976; Yusuf, 2005; Zamani-Farahani & Henderson, 2009). The verses related to this could be found in few places in the Quran for example Allah SWT mentions: “Travel through the earth and see what was the end of those before you: most of them worshipped others besides Allah.” (Surah al-Rum: 42). In another verse, Allah says: “Many were the Ways of Life that have passed away before you: travel through the earth, and see what was the end of those who rejected Truth.” (Surah ali-Imran:137). He further says: “Travel through the earth and see what was the end of those who rejected Truth.” (Surah al-An'am:11). “For We assuredly sent among every People an apostle, (with the Command), “Serve God, and eschew Evil”: of the People were some whom God guided, and some on whom error became inevitably (established). So travel through the earth, and see what was the end of those who denied (the Truth).” (Surah al-Nahl:36). “Between them and the Cities on which We had poured our blessings, We had placed Cities in prominent positions, and between them We had appointed stages of journey in due proportion: “Travel therein, secure, by night and by day.” (Surah al-Saba': 18).

Given that various Quranic verses on traveling has taken place in the Quran, Zamani-Farahani and Henderson (2009) further point out that few lessons could be derived from the above Quran verses is that the possibility of complete submission to God through seeing the beauty and bounty of His creation; grasping the smallness of man reinforces the greatness of God. To conclude, Rimmawi and Ibrahim (1992) stresses that tourism should not be misinterpreted as a waste of precious time by which it should be spent in accordance with Allah SWT pleasure.

On the other hand, traveling to some extent symbolizes the element of patience and perseverance (Zamani-Farahani & Henderson, 2009). Similar view has been recorded by another literature where Din (1989) signifies that the ultimate goal of travel is to instill the realization of the weaknesses of man and appreciate the greatness and the oneness of God through observation of the “signs” of history and man-made wonders, all of which are gifts of God. Hashim, Murphy, and Hashim (2007) meanwhile contend that the achievement of spiritual goal may be fulfilled when we are able to reinforce one's submission to God. On the other hand, the aim of traveling within the social context is to encourage and strengthen the bond of *silaturrahim* (Muslim relationship) among the *Ummah*. His view has a similar effect with Eickelman and Piscatori (1990) where they further claim that for the purposeful movement, a component of spiritual journeys need to be taken into account i.e. by stressing on the services towards God as this would eventually leads to fostering unity among Muslim community (*Ummah*).

2.2. Halal tourism according to Hadith (Prophetic Tradition) of Prophet Muhammad SAW

To further strengthen the evidence found in the Quranic verses related with tourism, various Hadith related to tourism, travel and journey are enormous. This signifies that both primary sources in Islamic law would become a paramount consideration in understanding the real concept of Halal tourism. The respective Hadith gives greater emphasis on the wisdom of travel and tourism reflecting on the past history where multiple rewards will be granted to the travelers who are seeking a journey to attain the pleasure from Allah SWT. Ibrahim Abu Isma'il As-Saksaki narrated where Rasulullah (ﷺ) reported to have said: *I heard Abu Burda who accompanied Yazid bin Abi Kabsha on a journey. Yazid used to observe fasting on journeys. Abu Burda said to him, “I heard Abu Musa several times saying that Allah's Apostle said, When a slave falls ill or travels, then he will get reward similar to that he gets for good deeds practiced at home when in good health.”*

(Sahih al-Bukhari: Vol. 4, Book 52, Hadith 239).

In another Hadith narrated by Ibn `Abbas: (as regards the Verse): “You shall surely travel from stage to stage (in this life and in the Hereafter).

(It means) from one state to another. That concerns your Prophet.” Sahih al-Bukhari: Vol. 6, Book 60, Hadith 4.

While affirming that travel and tourism has very much encouraged in Islam, Rasulullah (ﷺ) further stresses that the traveler might be facing difficulties and hurdles throughout their long journey. This reflects the previous history that have been mentioned earlier where the traveler would be facing various obstacles and in one's life time. Hence, for that reason, Islam has give exemption (*rukhsah*) to travelers to carry out certain duties which are obligatory when they are not on a journey. Travelers, for instance, may postpone fasting when traveling during the month of Ramadan, shorten or combine prayers and perform special prayers (*witr* and *nawafil*) while riding on the back of a horse or camel. Similarly the above exemption and *rukhsah* given to the travelers has also been highlighted in various places in the Quranic verses.

One of the respected Hadith associated with the above Hadith narrated by Ibn `Abbas where it is reported that Rasulullah (ﷺ) “once stayed for nineteen days and prayed shortened prayers. So when we travel led (and stayed) for nineteen days, we used to shorten the prayer but if we traveled (and stayed) for a longer period we used to offer the full prayer.” (Sahih al-Bukhari:Vol. 2, Book 20, Hadith 186).

Similarly, Ibn `Umar narrated that Rasulullah (ﷺ) “used to offer (Nawafil) prayers on his *Rahila* (mount) facing its direction by signals, but not the compulsory prayer. He also used to pray *witr* on his (mount) *Rahila*.” (Sahih al-Bukhari:Vol. 2, Book 16, Hadith 11).

The above Hadith clearly implies that for the tourism to become Halal tourism, the traveler should fully abide to their religious obligation in all kind of situations. It could be further noted that the advantages, reward and wisdom of travel would only be successfully achieved if they fulfill their duties and roles as a servant (Khalifah) by conducting their religious duties as instructed by Islamic principles.

As for the other aspect, travelers in Islam pose higher dignity and they should be treated kindly with compassion. This is evident based on Hadith narrated by Abu Shuraih Al-Ka'bi: where Rasulullah (ﷺ) says: “Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, should serve his guest generously. The guest's reward is: To provide him with a superior type of food for a night and a day and a guest is to be entertained with food for three days, and whatever is offered beyond that, is regarded as something given in charity. And it is not lawful for a guest to stay with his host for such a long period so as to put him in a critical position.” (Sahih al-Bukhari: Vol. 8, Book 73, Hadith 156).

The implications of the above hadith are, apart from the obligation upon the host community to give charity to the travelers, and compassionate treatment for the traveler should be given to them. This denoted that Islam enjoins a system of reciprocal hospitality which would promote fraternal affinity among the *Ummah*, hence, this would enable even the poor to travel.

It then further uphold in another Hadith narrated by `Uqba bin `Amir where Rasulullah (ﷺ) says: “You send us out and it happens that we have to stay with people who do not entertain us. What do you think about it? He said to us, If you stay with some people and they entertain you as they should for a guest, accept their hospitality, but if they don't, take the right of the guest from them.”

As a result, it is an obligation upon the host community to give reciprocal favor. Allah SWT has clearly shows the punishment received upon the denial on the part of the host community to treat the travels with compassion and kindness. This has been recorded where it was narrated by Abu Said, Rasulullah (ﷺ) says: “some of the companion of Rasulullah (ﷺ) went on a journey till they reached some of the Arab tribes (at night). They asked the latter to treat them as guests, but they were refused. The chief was then bitten by a snake. When asked for help to cure the bite, the traveler refused, saying that since they were earlier on denied of hospitality, the travelers would only recite the *Ruqyu* for some payment.” (Sahih al-Bukhari: Vol. 7, Book 71, Hadith 632).

As highlighted in the above discussion, Islam encourages traveling and there are a lot of wisdom and advantages granted upon traveler. In spite of this higher recognition, it is still subjected to certain

conditions laid down by Islamic rulings and principles which should be adhered to and followed by those intended to start a journey. It shall be further submitted that, many Muslims travel around the world and this trend is increasing tremendously. This is due to the existence of budget airlines, more relax rules on visa for Muslim tourists, the increased and stable economic development of Muslim countries and changing of life-style among young Muslim tourists (Duman, 2011; Lean, 2012). The next section discusses the current trends on Halal tourism at a multiracial and non-conservative Muslim country and development of Halal tourism at non-Muslim country such as Japan.

3. Current trends on Halal tourism

Case 1. Balancing multi-racial, cultural and religion for Halal tourism at non-conservative Muslim country: Malaysia.

Ever since the September 11 incident, Malaysia has becoming one of the top Muslim tourists' destinations (Hamzah, 2004). As more stringent rules imposed on Muslim tourists in the West, they shifted their travel destination to the East. In 2012, it is estimated that 5.44 million Muslim tourists arrival equivalent to 21% of total tourists arrival in Malaysia. In fact, Malaysia remains to be the top Muslim tourist destination for four consecutive years since 2011 (Islamic Tourism Centre, 2015).

The Muslim tourists market in Malaysia has shown high and consistent growth rate since 2001 (Mohd Salleh, Othman, Mohd Noor, & Hasim, 2010). This is due to heavy tourism promotions held by Malaysian government which is successful in attracting Muslim tourists especially from Middle East (ME) to visit Malaysia. The ME tourists are a lucrative and important niche market in Malaysia tourism industry because of their lavish spending pattern (Mohamad Taiyab, 2009; Risi, 2012). For instance, UNWTO estimated that each ME tourists spend RM7000 in each vacation, while other tourists spend an average of RM2300 during each visit to Malaysia (Risi, 2012). In the effort to satisfy ME Muslim tourists market, the government initiated 'Feel-at-Home' campaign such as "Ain Arabia", the street that portrays Middle Eastern cultures and foods, upgrading the signage in Arabic language, multi-language menu at the restaurants and brochure for tourist information, employment of Arab-speaking staff at hotels, tour agents and shopping complexes (Shafaei & Mohamed, 2015).

In a bigger picture, Malaysia positions itself as a popular Islamic tourism country by offering rich Islamic values in most of the tourism supplies, products and services. This includes the availability of Halal food almost everywhere in Malaysia, rich Islamic heritage and culture, friendly Muslim population and Islamic travel trail (Shafaei & Mohamed, 2015). As Muslim has to follow strict diet everywhere they go, Halal food is one of three important elements that contribute to a stress free holiday abroad (Battour, Battor, & Mohd Nazari, 2012). Therefore, in 2010, Malaysia embarked to set a higher standard on Halal restaurant at hotels in order to satisfy Muslim tourist by encouraging hotels to obtain Halal certificate at least for common restaurant (Abdul Hamid, 2010). Nonetheless, providing Halal food is not a big challenge for Malaysia since 60% of the population is Muslim. Tourists could find Halal food available at street stalls to fine dine restaurants in Malaysia.

In terms of accommodation, Malaysia as a non-conservative Islamic country has started to provide extensive range of Islamic accommodation for the comfort of Muslim tourists. Muslim friendly hotels are divided into three categories that represent the most extensive to the least extensive Islamic values provided by the hotels (Md Salleh, 2014). Table 1 indicates the levels of Muslim friendly hotels available in Malaysia.

The government of Malaysia facilitates the development of tourism by improving shopping experience for Muslim tourists. For example, it is a requirement for shopping malls to provide prayer room, ablution facilities and Halal restaurants in Malaysia (Islamic Tourism Centre,

Table 1
Levels of Muslim friendly hotels in Malaysia.

Type	Islamic services
Basic	Halal food, no alcohol, Qiblah signage, prayer mat, bidet in the room
Intermediate	Separate recreation facilities for male and female, Musolla, no adult entertainment, prayer time, Mosque location
Extensive	Zakat counter, Islamic related brochure, classes, Azan at floor level, Islamic tourism packages

Source: (Md Salleh, 2014).

2015). The rules and regulation set by the local governments have improved the service quality and provide comfort for tourists to shop in Malaysia. Major shopping complexes at Kuala Lumpur have signage written in Arabic language for the ease of ME tourists. Nonetheless, it is observed that the availability of Muslim needs facilities are still lacking at the tourists spots such as parks, museum and historical sites.

As there is an increasing trend of Muslims travel around the world, this market is a promising market segment to Malaysian tourism industry (Md Salleh, 2014). In order to attract more Muslim tourists to visit and return to Malaysia, it is important to improve the Islamic tourism related facilities. High quality tourism services provided in all related fields such as hotels, restaurants and tourist destinations are significant to address Muslim tourist needs, ensuring repeat visits and sustaining positive image of Malaysia among Muslim tourists (www.tourism.gov.my).

Case 2. Halal tourism development at non-Muslim destination: Japan.

Tourism in Japan attracted 12 million foreign visitors in 2014, slightly more than Singapore (Bank, 2013). Japan has 16 World Heritage Sites, including Himeji Castle and Historic Monuments of Ancient Kyoto. It is interesting to note that the number of foreign tourists has been increasing for the last three years from 8.3 million in 2012 to 13.4 million in 2013.

For Japan, the Muslim tourists are majority from Malaysia and Indonesia. Table 2 indicates that in 2014, the growth of Malaysian and Indonesian inbound market to Japan has increased by 41.3 and 16% respectively. This could be due to the reduction value of Yen and the eases of visa requirement for Malaysian (since July 2013) and Indonesian (recently) to enter Japan (Japan, 2014). According to the Japan National Tourist Organization (JNTO), a combined total of more than 230,000 tourists visited Japan from the predominantly Muslim nations of Malaysia and Indonesia in 2012, more than double the 140,000 tourists who visited Japan in 2011. As Malaysia and Indonesia population consists of more than 50% of Muslim people, it could be considered that there are more than 250,000 Muslim tourists visiting Japan in 2014. As the number of Muslim tourists is expected to increase by year, Muslim tourists could be an important niche market in Japan.

In response to this, Japan embarks to provide a comfortable tourist experience for Muslim. Basic Muslim tourists' needs such as a proper place to pray and Halal food have been provided to ensure the convenience of Muslim tourists at airport and selected shopping complex. For example, at both Narita and Kansai International Airport, there are more prayer rooms being made available for Muslims and the popular Japanese food such as Udon and Ramen are certified Halal so that Muslim tourists could treasure Japanese food (www.halalmediajapan.com). In addition, a prayer room is also available at one of shopping complex in Osaka city. For Halal food, many Halal restaurants are mushrooming in big cities of Japan such as Tokyo,

Table 2
Number of foreign tourist (including Malaysia and Indonesia).

Years	Number of foreign tourists	%	Malaysia	%	Indonesia	%
2011	6,218,752	–	81,516	–	61,911	–
2012	8,358,105	34.4%	130,183	59.7%	101,460	63.9%
2013	10,363,904	24.0%	176,521	35.6%	136,797	34.8%
2014	13,413,567	29.4%	249,534	41.3%	158,688	16%

Source: Japan National Tourist Organization.

Kyoto and Osaka and many main restaurants have obtained Halal certification. In addition, the advancement of technology of mobile phone contributed to the comfort of Muslim tourists by providing information on the location of Halal food restaurant in the phone applications. For example, Halal Navi helped Muslim tourist to locate the Halal restaurant and provide reviews from the customers.

Since the motive to travel among Malaysian and Indonesian is to find new knowledge and enjoy the rich culture of traditional Japan, visits to small cities are getting popular nowadays (Australia, 2013). Rural areas in Japan are known for its well-kept Eastern culture and untouched natural sceneries. Nonetheless, several challenges anticipate Japan in catering the needs of Muslim tourists in small cities. The biggest challenge is to create awareness on what is Halal and how to prepare Halal food among tourism suppliers such as restaurant and hotels. Even though the number of restaurants which obtained Halal certificate is increasing at big cities it is still difficult to find Halal restaurant in small cities.

One possible reason is because at rural area such as Akita Prefecture, Islamic practice is less known due to limited exposure on Islamic knowledge. Many types of Halal standards available in Japan are provided by NGO such as Japan Muslim Association and profit oriented companies. The Halal certificate consultants create further confusion on how to obtain Halal certificate. As a result, the adoption of Halal certificate at hotels and restaurants are slow because the requirements to get Halal certificate is difficult, the standard appears to be different from one consultant to another. In addition, language barrier is also a challenge to host Muslim tourists in Japan. As Japanese at rural areas communicate in their mother tongue language which is Japanese, the process of getting information on tourist destinations and transportation seems difficult for Muslim tourists. Currently, there is limited number of tour operators which could communicate in English. Therefore, the English information could be made available at social media, travel webpage and mobile application to assist the Muslim tourists while traveling in Japan.

Halal tourism in Japan has big potential given the increased number of Muslim population worldwide and trend to travel abroad among Muslims. As consuming Halal food is a must for Muslim even during traveling, it is important for Japan to deal with the challenge of making Halal food available at big and small cities in order to sustain Islamic tourism in Japan.

4. Conclusion

This paper highlights the importance of traveling for Muslims by referring to Quran and words of Prophet (pbuh) as a primary source of Islam. While traveling, there are rules and regulations that Muslim has to follow. It includes among others; fulfilling all the religious duties such as prayer and fasting with certain easiness (*rukhsah*) would be made available to such condition; prohibition for women to travel alone without company (*Mahram*); fulfilling the duties as a servant and *khalifah* with good intention for the purpose of acquiring knowledge and appreciate the Oneness of Allah SWT Almighty through His creation. Besides that, this study found that as more Muslims travel worldwide, Muslim countries such as Malaysia has already advancing Halal tourism by providing extensive Islamic services to cater to the Muslim tourists needs. In other part of Asia continent, Japan has opened its tourism market to attract Muslim tourists and address basic Muslim tourists' needs in order to satisfy this lucrative and growing tourists segment.

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Zakiyah Samori holds a bachelor of laws (LLB) (Hons) from International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) in 2004. Then in 2005 she obtained a second degree in Bachelor of Laws. (Shariah) (Hons) at the same university and completed her Master in Comparative Laws (MCL) in 2007 there. She currently serves as a Senior lecturer at ACIS since 2007. She has actively involved in writing and publishing some articles in academic magazine, refereed journals and proceedings. She has also actively attending and presenting her works at both international and national conferences. Apart from that she has also involved in research project since 2007. She has the interest in legal studies, halal industry, hospitality, Shariah governance and Islamic studies. Currently she is now pursuing her PhD in the area of Shariah governance for halal industry in Malaysia.



Nor Zafir Md Salleh is currently a lecturer at Faculty of Management, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia since 2003. She obtained her MBA in 2003. She has vast experience in the banking and manufacturing industry before pursuing an academic career. She is actively attending and presenting her research findings in both international and national conferences. She has the interest in management, marketing, hospitality, Shariah-compliance services and service innovation. She is now pursuing her PhD in the area of Muslim-friendly hospitality in Malaysia.



Mohammad Mahyuddin Khalid is currently a lecturer at Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA since 2009. He holds a Bachelor of Islamic Studies (Syariah)(Hons), Masters of Economics and Diploma of Islamic Judicial Administration and Legal Profession from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. He is actively involved in writing and presenting his works in both international and national conferences. He has the interest in Islamic banking and finance, halal management and Islamic studies. He is now pursuing his PhD in the area of Risk Management of Islamic banks in Malaysia.