

Tourist Guiding in Halal Tourism: Case of Southeast Asia

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The growing interest in Halal tourism activity represents a prolific lens for scholars and practitioners in the tourism arena to study its concept, its role, and its potential to affect the sustainability of Halal tourism industry. The success of tourism industry is highly dependent on traveler experience with respect to customer service, experience, facilities, comfort, and delight. The notion of Halal tourism is connected and geared to the adoption of Islamic principles and practice in all aspect of tourism activities such as in Halal hotel, Halal restaurant, Halal spa, Halal package tour, Halal transportation, Halal warehouse, and Halal retail. Halal tourism market reached USD 181 billion in year 2018 and is expected to grow every year. The number of Muslim travelers to Southeast Asian countries has rapidly increased as Southeast Asia (SEA) is known as a dynamic environment with a total Muslim population around 240 million.

INTRODUCTION

Globally, international tourism activity shown substantial growth of Muslim traveler across the globe. This include both Muslim tourist arrivals and Muslim tourist receipt in many countries. As published by Global Muslim Travel Index (GTMI) 2017, the number of Muslim tourist has increased from 121 million to 156 million in year 2016. In fact, it is projected that Muslim tourist to spend US\$220 billion by year 2020. Many countries (both Muslim and non Muslim countries) are now start to attract Muslim travelers. Recently, Whitehead (2019) stress that Muslim tourist spend will be increase to \$380 billion by year 2023. Earlier report by Thomson Reuters and Dinar Standard (2013), Halal tourism is valued at USD 137 billion in 2013 and expected to reach USD 181 billion by USD 181. With the steady growth on Halal tourism, offering Halal tourist guide, Halal tour or Halal operator is substantial.

According to Mohsin et al (2016) and Rahman (2019), Halal tourism is the tourism activity that adhere to value and Islamic principle in Islam. Halal tourism can be defined as a demand of Muslim traveler that need convenient to observe their religion during their holiday. At present, Halal tourism and hospitality is widely recognized and enhanced especially with regards to Halal inflight catering, Halal entertainment, Halal hotel, Halal food services, halal medical services, Halal Spa and Saloon and many more (Rahman 2018a). As such, developing Halal market segments could attract more Muslim tourist to come and develop further the Halal tourism industry. This is vital since halal tourism is dependent on tourist experience during the holiday and looking forward for their experience towards Halal customer service, Halal guidance, as well as Halal facilities.

With the recent development on Halal tourism and significant growth of Muslim travel market, it is essential for tour operator and tour guides to have comprehensive understanding of the special needs of Muslim travelers. This is necessary to provide Muslim travelers with a substantial service for their comfort during their holiday. In fact, it is important for tour guide and operator to fully understand the preference of Muslim travelers as it will also help the travel guide and tour to improved their service performance and sustain in the business. The term of tourist guide was preferred for use in this study in compliance with the World Federation of Tourist Guide Association (WFTGA) adopted terminology.

The guiding activity may include activity such as a place of attraction, religious places, food attraction, shopping places and many more. A recent study by Tatar et al (2018) and Rabotic (2010) highlights the importance of multifaceted role of tourist guiding in contemporary tourism. Tourist guiding term is preferred to use in this study as it is the terminology used by World Federation of Tourist Guide Association. The 'guide' word represent the manage and arrange activity for the travelers in enhancing traveler or tourist experience and enhance the destination of the tourist. Align with the Halal development worldwide with the increased number of Muslim travelers globally, therefore this paper aim to elaborate in detail on tourist guiding in Halal tourism in Southeast Asia (SEA) as a main reference case. This paper will start with discussing the definition on Halal tourism and provide generic information about Muslim travelers in Southeast Asia, followed by Muslim tourist guiding core elements. In the next section, the researcher then focuses on the Emerging Tourist Guide Association in all eleven countries in SEA region as a main case in this research. In conclusion, the paper also presents some recommendation for future research with highlighting the key implication to the social, scholars and practitioners.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Halal Tourism: Concept and Provision

Halal tourism can be define as tourism activity that consist of product or services that meets the Islamic requirement and the need of Muslim travelers. This is not limited to Halal food or dietary that conform to Islamic teachings and Islamic values, but also other Halal activities during the holiday such as Halal hotel, halal spa, Halal swimming, Halal medical and others. From the academic point of view, research on Halal tourism starts gaining popularity about a decade ago. Research on halal tourism is also increased which cover many areas and many issue. With regards to Halal Tourism definition from scholar's point of view, below Table 1 present a number of Halal tourism definition from past studies.

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