HALALSPHERE

International Islamic University Malaysia -

Travel Behaviour Impact on Muslim Identity and *Halal* Consumerism among Malaysian Young Travellers

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Abstract

Muslim travellers continue to impact the tourism and hospitality industry significantly. This study attempted to study 121 Muslim travellers' consumption behaviour and how it affected their travel behaviour. The research used a quantitative approach via structured questionnaires. The study's motivation was to understand Muslim travellers' travel behaviour better to offer adequate support, particularly when heading to non-Muslim countries. Issues regarding the inability to find payer's rooms and *Halal* food have always presented challenges to these travellers while they are on the road. Findings indicated that Muslim identity positively impacted *Halal* travel behaviour and *Halal* consumerism. Despite being far from home and in a new environment, Muslims will ensure to consume *Halal* products and services on the road. In conclusion, this study indicated that travelling Muslims would look for products and services that comply with *Syari'ah* and enable them to practise their Islamic faith while on the road. This outcome solidified the importance of Islamic tourism and hospitality, apart from catering to the *Halal* food supply in various nations, including non-Muslim countries, which also received throngs of Muslim travellers all year.

1. Introduction

Halal tourism is a type of religious tourism. This type of tourism is in line with Islamic dietary and clothing guidelines. However, *Halal* tourism is believed to draw many tourists deeply interested in Islam (Henderson, 2009; Burki, 2007). The term "*Halal* tourism" encompasses more than religion. It is tourism, excluding all substances and elements incompatible with Islam. In short, *Halal* tourism is any entity or activity that Muslims can use or participate in according to Islamic teachings. For example, delivering tourism goods and services to target customers is based on Islamic law (*Syari'ah*). Muslims mostly stay in *Halal* hotels, *Halal* resorts, *Halal* restaurants, and *Halal* trips. The principle emphasized that the action does not stop with Muslims. As a result, it includes Muslim services and items for Muslim and non-Muslim travellers. Moreover, the definition states that travel is not intrinsically religious. According to Thomson Reuters' State of the Global Islamic Economy report, the global Muslim travel market was worth $140 billion in 2013, representing 11.5% of total global spending. According to the same research, the segment will be worth $238 billion in 2019 and represent 13% of global spending. In 2019, *Halal* tourism accounted for 13% of the total value of the world tourism industry (*Halal.* plus,2021), and Muslim tourists were expected to spend 192 billion dollars worldwide in 2020, according to projections from the World Tourism Organization. This represents an increase of 126 billion dollars over the previous year. *Halal* tourism is

perceived as a new and refreshing angle within the tourism industry, tailored to the needs and beliefs of Muslims. *Halal* tourism is defined as tourism that adheres to Islamic principles and practises.

Industry players, advertisers, and policymakers must all be aware of Muslim tourist behaviour to develop *Halal* tourism infrastructure and events. All parties involved in *Halal* tourism development should be aware of Muslim tourist behaviour. It will also help them develop unique marketing messages to attract Muslim visitors.

Despite the rise of *Halal* tourism, little research has been done on the actual needs of Muslim travellers and how their religious beliefs have influenced their travel habits. Taiwan and South Korea are popular destinations for Malaysian tourists. South Korean culture, especially K-Pop, is popular in Malaysia; therefore, more Malaysians are vacationing there. South Korea's acknowledgment of the burgeoning *Halal* tourist business makes it simpler for Malaysians to visit there (Hirschmann, 2019). Before the pandemic, Malaysians were the second-largest group of Muslims visiting South Korea. Recent information also pointed out how the Middle East and Eastern countries account for more than half of all tourists that come to Europe. Furthermore, when these tourists travel overseas, facilities that allow maintaining a *Halal* lifestyle are crucial to 93 percent of them (*Halal.* plus,2021), and supplying *Halal* food and providing appropriate praying facilities are the

essential requirements expected by them. When it comes to the most popular destinations in Western European countries, there is an opportunity for improvement because only around one-fifth of the facilities for a *Halal* lifestyle are designed to be "average." This study's goals were better to understand Muslim travellers' common expectations and reactions. The study was concluded with common ground and principles in understanding Muslim traveller behaviour and how this has influenced the *Halal* tourism landscape.

1.1 *Halal* haram in Islam

The Holy *Qur'an* provides clear guidance to Muslims regarding *Halal* and haram in Islam.

> *"He has forbidden you what dies of itself (carrion), and blood, and the flesh of swine and that over which any name other than (that of) Allah has been invoked."* (*Al-Baqarah* 2:173)

> *"And eat of what Allah hath given you (for food) that which is lawful and wholesome, and fear Allah in whom ye believe."* (*Al-Mā'idah* 5:88)

Summarizing the *Halal* and haram approaches in Islam teaching, *Halal* is defined as anything permissible, at which point there are no restrictions, and *Allah* permits (Al-Qaradawi, 2007). Except for those foods explicitly designated haram in the *Qur'an*, general Quranic guidance indicates that all food is *Halal* (Riaz & Chaudry, 2004). According to the *Qur'an*, all Muslims are forbidden to consume any part of pork or food blessed by any being other than *Allah*.

> *"Prohibited to you are dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than Allah, and [those animals] killed by strangling or by a violent blow or by a head-long fall or by the goring of horns, and those from which a wild animal has eaten, except what you [can] slaughter [before its death], and those which are sacrificed on stone altars, and [prohibited is] that you seek decision through divining arrows. That is grave disobedience. This day those who disbelieve have despaired of [defeating] your religion; so fear them not, but fear Me. This day I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favor upon you, and approved Islam as a religion for you. But whoever is forced by severe hunger with no inclination to sin - then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful."* (*Al- Mā'idah* 5:3)

Islam is one of the world's most significant and rapidly growing religions, accounting for 25% of the world's population (1.8 billion people) (Sabidin, 2015). The *Halal* issue is now globally recognized and receiving significant attention. In Arabic, *Halal* means "permissible" or "lawful." It refers to anything permissible under Islamic law and adheres to the *Syari'ah* concession (Hanzee & Ramezani, 2011). Hussain, Abd. Ghani, Mohammad, and Mehad (2012), Batu *et al.* (2014), and Qureshi *et al.* (2012) all agreed with Hanzee and Ramezani (2011) that *Halal* means "permissible" or "lawful" under Islamic law (*Syara'*), citing the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*. It is also

defined as a designation for any object or action that is permissible to use or engage in under Islamic Law. Haram is the inverse of *Halal*, which means forbidden and unlawful according to the Al-*Qur'an* and Sunnah. Islam is a natural way of life that incorporates the concept of a financial framework based on human collaboration and fraternity, and it is based on interview and dietary laws for all humankind. *Halal* refers to anything free of any part that Muslims are not permitted to consume. This is referred to as 'pork-free' in its physical presence, including sustenance substances such as gelatine, compounds, lecithin, and glycerine, as well as added substances such as flavourings and colouring (Zakaria, 2008). In Islam, *Halal* is defined as anything permissible, at which point there are no restrictions, and *Allah* permits (Al-Qaradawi, 2007). Except for those foods explicitly designated haram in the *Qur'an*, general Quranic guidance indicates that all food is *Halal* (Riaz & Chaudry, 2004).

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In time with the progression of *Halal* study, the *Halal* concept is no longer limited to the scope of food and beverages anymore, as various scholars (Muslims and non-Muslims) have understood that *Halal* and haram also involve other aspects of living which define the *Halal* lifestyles, which *Allah s.w.t* requires.

1.2 The Muslim population

Over the next two decades, the Muslim population in Sub-Saharan Africa is expected to grow by 60%, from 242.5 million in 2010 to 385.9 million in 2030. Similarly, the non-Muslim population in this area is rapidly growing; however, by 2030, the Muslim population is expected to outnumber the non-Muslim population. By 2030, Muslims are expected to account for more than 10% of the total population in ten European countries: Kosovo (93.5%), Albania (83.2%), Bosnia-Herzegovina (42.7%), Republic of Macedonia (40.3%), Montenegro (21.5%), Bulgaria (15.7%), Russia (14.4%), Georgia (11.5%), France (10.3%), and Belgium (10.3%). By 2030, Russia will have Europe's largest Muslim population. According to projections, the Muslim population is expected to grow from 16.4 million in 2010 to 18.6 million in 2030. Over the next two decades, it is expected to increase by 0.6% annually. In comparison, Russia's non-Muslim population is expected to decline at a 0.6% annual rate over the same period.

In France, the Muslim population is primarily composed of North African immigrants. In 2010, there was a net influx of approximately 66,000 Muslim immigrants. Similarly, Spain had a total of 70,000 immigrants. Muslim immigrants were expected to be nearly as numerous in the United Kingdom as in France, at 28.1%. In the next two decades, the Muslim

Muslim Population by Region

	2010		2030	
	ESTIMATED MUSLIM POPULATION	ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE OF GLOBAL MUSLIM POPULATION	PROJECTED MUSLIM POPULATION	PROJECTED PERCENTAGE OF GLOBAL MUSLIM POPULATION
World	**1,619,314,000**	**100.0%**	**2,190,154,000**	**100.0%**
Asia-Pacific	1,005,507,000	62.1	1,295,625,000	59.2
Middle East-North Africa	321,869,000	19.9	439,453,000	20.1
Sub-Saharan Africa	242,544,000	15.0	385,939,000	17.6
Europe	44,138,000	2.7	58,209,000	2.7
Americas	5,256,000	0.3	10,927,000	0.5

Population estimates are rounded to thousands. Percentages are calculated from unrounded numbers. Figures may not add exactly due to rounding.

Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life • *The Future of the Global Muslim Population*, January 2011

Figure 1 Muslim Population in 2010 and the expected percentage in 2030

population in the United States is expected to nearly triple, from 940,000 in 2010 to 2.7 million in 2030.

Figure 1 shows the Muslim population by religion in 2010 and 2030. Thus, the principal drivers of *Halal* growth are the growing Muslim population, the economic growth within the Muslim world, and the increasing disposable income.

1.3 The travelling Muslims

The rise in the Muslim population corresponds to increased demand for *Halal* products due to religious concerns (Hameed & Abdullah, 2015) and purchasing power (Kabir, 2014). According to the World Tourism Organization, Muslims are expected to spend $220 billion by 2020, with the number of Muslim tourists increasing to 156 million from 121 million in 2016. This indicated the growing demand for *Halal* tourism globally. According to the World Tourism Organization, Muslims are expected to spend $220 billion by 2020, with the number of Muslim tourists increasing to 156 million from 121 million in 2016. With a growing middle class and rising disposable income, many countries – Muslim or not – are attempting to attract these tourists. Malaysia, the United Arab Emirates, Indonesia, and Turkey are among the world's most famous Muslim travel destinations.

As a result, the hospitality industry must adapt to changing *Halal* requirements to meet the needs of Muslim tourists, especially given the sector's employment potential. Hotels and restaurants should, at the very least, serve *Halal* food to their guests, according to CrescentRating. While many airports such as Narita and Incheon now provide *Halal* food and prayer rooms, some still do not have passenger washrooms or ablution facilities.

1.4 The research framework

This study was conceptualized from a framework developed by Stark and Iannaccone (1994), who offered an approach regarding the mobilisation of firms toward fulfilling religious customer needs. Their approach termed supply-side theory, concentrated solely on religious businesses, not religious customers. The theory supported those market operators in a largely secularised and diverse society who have worked to provide religious customers with their products, resulting in new market segmentation and a push to recruit new consumers to boost profit margins.

This study suggested that the customer has high expectations of the restaurant, hotel, and public facilities during traveling. Additionally, the research model proposed that Muslim identity is the direct predictor of travel behaviour while travel behaviour is significantly related to *Halal* consumerism (Figure 2). Human attitudes and decisions in performing tasks requiring going from one place to another, including choosing the mode of transportation and the distance travelled, are described as "travel behaviour" (Bartosiewicz & Pielesiak, 2019). Such patterns are frequently driven by various constraints, including time constraints, schedule constraints, and money and travel expenditures (Recker, McNally & Root, 1986). Younger people, according to Gilbert and Terrata (2001), are more likely than older people to like traveling overseas because they perceive it as a luxurious lifestyle. These individuals, also referred to as millennials, were born between 1981 and 1997 and are between the ages of 22 and 38.

Figure 2. Research framework

Muslim consumers are motivated to live a *Halal* lifestyle by their Islamic selves or identities in the hopes of receiving benefits from *Allah* (God) in the hereafter. Doing good actions and avoiding that which is haram (which may be translated as "prohibited" or "non-permissible") in order to avoid sinning and receiving punishment is what is meant by "leading a *Halal* life" (Alserhan, 2010).

Holt (2002) proposed that consumer behaviour reveals the significant amount of merchandise consumers consume. It is influenced by various elements, including culture, seasonality, and the price of the items, to name a few of these aspects. In this context, individuals' values and beliefs are what we mean when we talk about culture. Religion is one of the most important things that contribute to civilization. Religion is the term used to describe a well-defined body of ideas, values, and practises that individuals adhere to behave following a set of predetermined standards or guidelines. The values, doctrines, and beliefs transmitted through religious communities and organisations may influence people's decisions and preferences. According to Mansori (2012), an individual's views, identity, and values are significantly impacted by religion to a substantial degree. Because of this, it impacts the decisions that individuals make, which in turn has repercussions on their consumption. The influence of a person's religious beliefs on their purchasing choices may have either a beneficial or a negative impact.

1.4.1 Muslim consumers and their expectation

The cognitive aspect of religiosity can be thought of as belonging to the realm of intra-personal religiosity. In contrast, inter-personal religiosity can be considered the behavioural expression of religion, including participation in organised religious activities that influence the desire to purchase (Mukhtar & Butt, 2012). The devotion a person feels toward a specific religion varies significantly from person to person. It has a direct impact on buying habits in the market as well as brand loyalty (Khraim, 2010) and Muslim customers tend to consume to sought *Halal* products and services because of their dedication to Islamism, committing themselves to the Islam way of life (Choi & Rahman,2018). Travellers from countries with a majority Muslim population might have different expectations regarding their holiday compared to those Muslim travellers from a minority or non-Muslim country. The essential requirement for all Muslim travellers when deciding on a holiday destination is the availability of *Halal* food. Other factors that would play an essential role in the decision-making process would be the availability of mosques or other prayer facilities (Crescentrating, 2014). Thus, the following hypothesis was proposed.

Hypothesis 1, (H1): Muslim customers have high expectations of the hotel, restaurant, and public facilities during travelling.

1.4.2 Muslim identity and travel behaviour

Religious beliefs, as well as religiosity, which is concerned with how religious an individual is and where religion fits in that individual's life (Verbit, 1970), can internally impact a person and determine whether he or she belongs to a specific religious group or follows a specific set of rules in daily life, including travel and leisure behaviours. Previous research suggests that this is the case. Previous research also suggests that religiosity is concerned with how religious an individual is and where religion fits in that individual's life (Cukur *et al.*, 2004). A person's spirituality, much like religion, influences their life

and helps decide elements of human existence such as emotions, relationships, cognition, conduct, and morality. Such implications resulted in the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2, (H2): Muslim identity positively influences travel behaviours.

1.4.3 Travel behaviour and consumerism

There is a likelihood of a significant connection between one's dedication to Islamism and their identification with the *Halal* brand. According to Muhammad and Mizerski (2010), religious devotion is one of the primary elements that affects consumer behaviour in the marketplace. This commitment may be understood on two levels: internally and externally. External religious commitment consists of expressions of religious attachment, devotional practises, and membership in a religious community that plays a vital role in one's life. Internal religious commitment encompasses religious identities, attitudes, beliefs, and values, whereas external religious commitment consists of expressions of religious attachment, devotional practises, and membership in a religious community (Mokhlis & Spartks, 2007). Based on this, the following hypothesis was drawn:

Hypothesis 3, (H3): Travel behaviour positively influences *Halal* consumerism.

1.4.4 Travel behaviour, Muslim identity, and Halal consumerism

Previous research conducted by Bouchon (2013) resulted in the formulation of the premise that Islamic beliefs and behavioural practises impact Muslims' leisure and travel behaviour in the United States. According to the findings, at least seven Islamic beliefs and behavioural practises playing a significant part in deciding where, when, and how Muslims in the United States would prefer to travel and spend their leisure time. These beliefs and practises influence how Muslims behave. Religion comprises values, principles, doctrines, and beliefs that believers must uphold. As a result, people's actions and behaviours are heavily impacted by their faith's teachings. Their beliefs influence their thoughts and decisions. The teaching specifies which foods are permitted and which are not for Muslims to consume. Thus, the following hypothesis was postulated.

Hypothesis 4, (H4): Travel behaviours mediate the relationship between Muslim identity and *Halal* consumerism.

2. Materials and methods

2.1 Questionnaires

This study was conducted among youth between the age of 15 to 34 within the UUM campus community, including students, staff, and business owners operating on the campus. Using Krejcie & Morgan (1970) with a 15,000 population, 375 questionnaires were distributed manually and electronically. 121 responses were collected and analyzed using SmartPLS software.

A set of questionnaires with five sections have been developed, which consist of 76 items on demographic information (part one), expectation while traveling (part two), Muslim identity (part three), travel behaviors (part four), and *Halal* consumerism (part five). All items in parts two through five

were adapted from various earlier scholars' sources and were chosen for their excellent Cronbach's alpha values. Table 1 summarizes the measurements employed in this investigation and their Cronbach's alpha values. A score greater than 0.70 implies that the measurement tool has high reliability and suitability for usage (Nunnally, 1978). However, for this study, the minimum acceptable level was set at 0.60 (Sekaran, 2010), even though it could be as low as 0.50 in practise, which would still be acceptable for factors containing *only* two or three items but are theoretically significant concerning the conceptualization of the construct under study (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 1996; Blaikie, 2003; Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 1: Cronbach's alpha

Measure	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha (α)
Expectations on Hotel	8	0.807
Expectations on Restaurant	5	0.685
Expectations of Public Facilities	3	0.635
Muslim Identity	5	0.748862
Travel Behaviour	5	0.889106
Halal Consumerism	10	0.937280

3. Results

3.1 Descriptive analyses

The demographic data of 121 respondents indicated that 71% of respondents were female, and 91% of all respondents were between the ages of 15 and 25. From the 121 responses, 100% are Muslims who travel mainly for pleasure (91.74%) and 4-7 times per year (89.26%), with monthly incomes ranging from RM3000-4000 per individual.

To understand the diversity of expectations of Muslims while traveling, a descriptive analysis has been done on three measures: (1) expectations of hotels, (2) expectations of restaurants, and (3) expectations of public facilities. There are eight items with five points Likert scale for expectations on the hotel (1=not important, 5 = very important). The mean for the overall measure for expectation towards the hotel is 4.30,

reflecting the high expectation of customers towards the hotel while traveling. Specifically, during traveling, Muslim customers highly expect that the hotel provides the following items; the presence of qibla stickers or direction points pointing towards Makkah city in the hotel room, *Halal* food or *Halal* restaurant in the hotel, a copy of the Holy *Qur'an*, prayer mat, and a prayer timetable in the hotel room, bed and toilet placements that do not face the direction of Makkah, Islamic financial method, segregated minibars for alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks in the hotel room, segregated swimming pools for males and females, and separated floors for non-family patrons and guests with family. Among all the items for expectation towards the hotel, the mean for the availability of *Halal* food or *Halal* restaurant is the highest value while the separated floors for males, females, and families is the lowest (Refer to Table 2). For expectations towards the restaurant, there are five items with five points Likert scale (1=not necessary, 5= very important). The mean for the overall measure for expectation towards the restaurant is 4.14, which indicates the high expectation of customers towards the restaurant while traveling.

These results show that during traveling, Muslim customer feels that it is essential for the restaurant to meet a few requirements such as having *Halal* food, having a clear *Halal* restaurant, practicing Islamic financial way, having a waitress serve female customer, and waiter to serve the male customer and to have a private cabin for family dining. Among all the requirements, the availability of *Halal* food has the highest mean value; meanwhile, the availability of waitresses to serve female customers and waiters to serve male customers are the lowest (Refer to Table 3). As for expectations towards the public facilities, there are three items with 5 points Likert scale (1=not important, 5=very significant). The mean for the overall expectation towards public facilities is 4.29, which shows customers' high expectations towards public facilities while traveling. The results indicate that the Muslim customer feels that it is essential to have prayer facilities/rooms at tourism sites, airports and other public areas, Islamic financial services or banks, and information on any places that will hold a Muslim interest (e.g., Islamic information center, Islamic community) (Refer Table 4). According to the customers, the availability of prayer facilities/rooms at tourist sites, airports, and other public areas is the top priority among the available options, while the availability of Islamic financial services or banks is the least. The descriptive analysis confirms the H1; the

Table 2: Descriptive analysis for expectations of hotel

	Placement of Qibla stickers or direction point towards Makkah city in the hotel room	Availability of *Halal* food or *Halal* restaurant in the hotel	Provision of a copy of the Holy *Qur'an*, prayer mat, and prayer timetable in the hotel room	Bed and toilet positioned not face the direction of Makkah	Practise Islamic financial way	Separate minibar for alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks in hotel room	Segregated swimming pools for men and women	Separate floors for male, female, and family
N Valid	121	121	121	121	120	120	121	121
Missing	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
Mean	4.60	4.72	4.34	3.94	4.26	4.58	4.26	3.71
Mode	5	5	5	4	4a	5	5	5
Minimum	2	3	2	1	2	1	1	1
Maximum	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5

customers have high expectations of hotels, restaurants, and public facilities during traveling.

Table 3: Descriptive analysis for expectations of restaurant

	Availability of *Halal* food	Availability of clear *Halal* sign at the restaurant	Availability of *Halal* food	Availability of waitress to serve female customers and waiter to serve the male customer	Availability of *Halal* food
N Valid	121	121	121	121	121
Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	4.75	4.65	4.21	3.45	3.62
Mode	5	5	5	3	4
Minimum	3	3	2	1	1
Maximum	5	5	5	5	5

Table 4: Descriptive analysis for expectations on public facilities

	Availability of prayer facilities/rooms at tourism sites, airports, and other public areas	Availability of Islamic financial services or banks	Availability of information in regards to any places that will hold a Muslim interest (e.g., Islamic information center, Islamic community)
N Valid	121	121	121
Missing	0	0	0
Mean	4.69	4.02	4.16
Mode	5	4	4
Minimum	3	1	2
Maximum	5	5	5

3.2 The relationship between Muslim identity, travel behavior and halal

Muslim identity consists of 35 items related to the act of religiosity during traveling. On the other hand, travel behaviour includes ten Muslim practises, while *Halal* consumerism has five items reflecting Muslim purchase intentions during traveling. All items were constructed using a 5-points Likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree). All the data from the survey items were analyzed using partial least square structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) to justify the relationship between Muslim identity, travel behaviour, and *Halal* consumerism.

The results from the measurement model (Table 5) show that the items for Muslim identity, travel behaviour, and *Halal* consumerism met reliability criteria as the Cronbach alpha value for all the variables are more than the generally accepted benchmark, which is 0.70 (Hair *et al.*, 2010). To have sufficient convergent validity, the average variance extracted (AVE) value must be greater than 0.5, and composite reliability must be greater than 0.7 (Chin, 1998b). Based on the analysis, the instruments of the study have sufficient validity and convergent reliability.

The coefficient of determination (R^2) indicates the extent to which the external latent constructs explain the variation in the endogenous latent construct. This model has an R^2 value of 0.578. (Table 6). Thus, Muslim identification and travel behaviour can account for 57.8% of *Halal* consumption differences.

Table 6: Value of coefficient of determination (R^2)

Dimension	R Square
Halal consumerism	0.577643

The effect size (f^2) is a supplementary test to R^2, in which changes in R^2 are detected when an external variable is omitted from the model. The difference was determined by re-estimating the model twice (with and without the latent variable inclusion). According to Cohen (1988), these findings indicate that while Muslim identification has little effect on *Halal* consumption, travel behaviour significantly affects *Halal* consumerism (Table 7).

Table 5: Measurement model

Construct	Items	Loadings	AVE	CR	Cronbach α
Halal Consumerism	HPI1	0.911568	0.800287	0.952411	0.937280
	HPI2	0.927395			
	HPI3	0.839206			
	HPI4	0.888392			
	HPI5	0.903831			
Muslim Identity	MId2	0.732696	0.497349	0.831694	0.748862
	MId4	0.669262			
	MId6	0.712184			
	MId12	0.724481			
	MId16	0.685499			
Travel Behaviour	TB1	0.485937	0.509680	0.910085	0.889106
	TB2	0.479451			
	TB3	0.751993			
	TB4	0.741130			
	TB5	0.781754			
	TB6	0.766474			
	TB7	0.809589			
	TB8	0.691846			
	TB9	0.731042			
	TB10	0.805542			

Table 7: Effect sizes value

Variables	Included	Excluded	f-squared	Effect Sizes
Muslim ID	0.577643	0.571040	0.0156	None
Travel Behaviour	0.577643	0.1548	1.0012	Large

The structural model was used to assess the relationship between latent constructs and other latent constructs, which is also where the hypotheses are tested. Based on the analysis, the results show that Muslim identity has a positive significant relationship with travel behaviour. Similarly, travel behaviour positively correlates with *Halal* consumerism (Refer to Table 8). This analysis confirmed hypotheses 2 and 3.

Table 8: Structural model

Hypothesis	Relationship	Std.Beta	Std. Error	t-value	Decision
H2	MId -> TB	0.347594	0.085862	4.048297	*Accepted
H3	TB -> HC	0.712515	0.123370	5.775446	*Accepted

Table 9: A mediation analysis

Hypothesis	Relationship	Std.Beta	Std. Error	t-value	Decision
H4	MId-TB-HC	0.248	0.081349	3.050	0.089

3.3 Mediating impact of travel behavior

According to Table 9, the indirect effects (std. beta) were significant, with a t-value larger than 1.96. Additionally, as Preacher and Hayes (2008) demonstrate, the indirect effects of 95%t Boot Confidence Interval (LL & CL) do not straddle a 0, suggesting that mediation occurs. As a result, it is possible to conclude that travel behaviour has a sizable mediating impact. The mediation study demonstrates that travel behaviour mediates the connection between Muslim identity and *Halal* consumption, supporting hypothesis 4.

4.0 Discussion

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), practically all nations have enacted some form of travel restriction, such as travel bans, visa controls, and quarantines (UNWTO, 2020). As a result, foreign travel was nearly halted in April and May of 2020. Inbound visitor visits fell 74% between January and December 2020, totalling almost 1 billion trips. However, excluding the pre-COVID months of January and February 2020, the drop in arrivals is 84%. As the tourism industry looks to bounce back post Covid-19, the spotlight is again directed to *Halal* tourism worldwide. As more countries open their traveling restrictions and international borders, global tourism activities are steadily resuming. This included Muslims travelling for pilgrimage to Mecca as well. Recovering *Halal* tourism is imminent and inevitable. Thus, the effort to cater to this sub industry shall resume steadily in this crucial recovering stage.

The potential for growth in *Halal* tourism is becoming more recognized worldwide. In the global tourist industry, it represents the largest and most valuable untapped niche market in the world - Muslim vacationers. Traditionally, *Halal* tourism has been associated with religious pilgrimages such as the *Hajj* and *Umrah*. Over time, the definition of this phrase has been broadened to encompass Muslims who travel for both

work and pleasure. *Halal* tourism combines the provision of nutritious and high-quality *Halal* meals and beverages according to the concept of *Halal* and the day-to-day needs of a practicing Muslim, such as travel and entertainment (Azam, Abdullah and Abd Razak, 2020). This new growth in the world of *Halal* tourism has created a need for industry participants to modify their products and services to satisfy the demands of this increasing market segment. Prior to the Covid-19 epidemic, the number of international trips from Malaysia in 2016 was reported to be 11.9 million, and it was expected that this figure would increase to 14.2 million in 2021. Despite the country's sluggish economy and its currency's relative weakness compared to the U.S. dollar, the number of Malaysians leaving the country to go to other nations continues to climb. Malaysians have a tremendous desire for travel, and more places are adapting to accommodate the predominantly Muslim population of Malaysia (Hirschmann, 2019).

This includes restaurants, airlines, hotels, and tour operators. The market potential of more than 50 Muslim nations and a Muslim population of no less than 1.6 billion people creates enormous chances for those ready to satisfy the needs of Muslim-friendly tourist products and services to succeed in this market. To travel easily within Muslim countries, *Halal* travellers also want to travel freely throughout non-Muslim countries. Some families also like to demonstrate to their children the diversity and variety of the globe and the reality of various cultures. However, this poses several problems that they must address and factor into their planning, including cultural comfort, service expectations, variety, and various activities accessible for different family members, among other things. In a similar vein, the travel tastes of tourists all over the world are impacted by several different variables. In contrast to behaviour constrained by various constraints, travel preferences represent the places individuals want to visit. Therefore, choices may not be primarily constrained by financial limitations but rather by how they choose to use their resources (Kattiyapornpong & Miller, 2007; Shuping *et al.*, 2021). Anyone involved in the tourism business should be familiar with the travel preferences of tourists to understand how to entice visitors to choose them as their next vacation destination and keep them there.

4.1 Muslim traveller's expectations

Muslim travellers have increased in recent years. Previous studies have discovered that this travel population has travelled worldwide and contributes significantly to the economies of the receiving countries. Recognizing this, Muslim-majority countries such as Malaysia have increased their efforts to attract this demographic of tourists (Yusof & Ramli, 2019). While Malaysian tourism businesses eagerly prepare Muslim-

friendly facilities, little is known about the expectations of Muslim travellers from Malaysia visiting other countries worldwide. The study's findings indicated that Muslim travellers placed massive importance on hotels, restaurants, and public facilities while on the road.

According to this study, Malaysian Muslim travellers focused on four distinct elements during their travels. The elements included the availability of *Halal* food or *Halal* restaurants within the hotel, the placement of a Qiblah sticker in their room, separate storage for alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages in the minibar or throughout the hotel, and the provision of praying tools such as a prayer mat and a copy of the *Qur'an* in their rooms. On the other hand, these travellers paid little attention to the different flooring in hotels for women, men, and family occupants. These findings corroborated Yusof and Ramli's (2019) and Yusof, Mohd Syariff, and Omar's (2019) previous research on international tourists visiting Malaysia. More foreign countries are showing interest in entertaining Muslim tourists and going beyond to ensure these expectations are met. When hosting the Japan Olympic Games in 2021, countries like Japan had taken numerous initiatives to ensure Muslim tourists and athletes were appropriately treated even before the Games began. Due to its Muslim-friendly approach, Japan continues to be a popular destination for Muslim travellers over the years. Japan's tourism industry is highly appreciative of the growing Muslim market, and ongoing efforts are being made to understand better and meet specific needs (Penn, 2015). Seminars were being held in various regions by the public and private sectors to inform and educate hoteliers and restaurateurs on *Syari'ah* compliance products and services. Since 2010, more businesses have even sought *Halal* certification (Chen, 2015), which can be obtained from the Japan *Halal* Association (JHA).

Similar to Japan, South Korea remains one of Malaysian Muslims' most preferred travel destinations. According to Han, Al-Ansi, and Olya (2019), food and beverages are the most critical considerations for Muslim visitors to South Korea. Muslim visitors to South Korea expect to be served *Halal* food and beverages at tourist attractions, and non-*Halal* food or mixed items containing pork and alcohol, on the other hand, should be avoided in specific locations to comply with Islamic law. Restaurants and hotels continue to be encouraged to display recognized *Halal* certificates and logos on their menus to attract and earn the trust of Muslim customers. Ongoing efforts are rigorously carried out with the local government's support, making Korea the top destination for young Muslims.

4.2 Muslim identity influence on travel behaviour

Findings from this study indicated that Muslim identity has a positive significant relationship with travel behaviour. This means that Muslims are aided by their religion in the context of collective action. Religion is an essential component of an individual's way of life; it is a system that is culturally and spiritually practiced, as well as a set of beliefs, values, and social norms that guide one's conduct in daily activities. Religion tends to govern how individual acts, particularly those who incorporate religion into daily activities. This approach includes practicing religion in business practises and work environments and is reflected clearly in their lifestyles, as is the case with many Muslims. Muslim behaviour is shaped by Islam, which assumes the welfare benefits system, created not only for one's benefit but also for others. By redirecting internal motivational forces away from utility maximization, which is associated with a material reward system, Islam shapes the

behaviours of Muslims. Observing Muslims will notice that they carry their religion within them and their outward behaviour and actions. This study supported these statements, which found that Muslim identity had a positive impact on *Halal* travel behaviour. Muslims expect to be able to practise their faith, such as praying while traveling, and to be able to do so under the requirements of their faith.

4.3 Travel behaviours and *Halal* consumerism

The result of this study also indicated that travel behaviour has a significant impact on *Halal* consumerism. This meant that travellers who practiced Muslim behaviours such as praying, reading *Qur'an*, and fulfilling *Syari'ah* requirements as Muslims, tended to ensure they consumed *Halal* products and services. Travellers whose behaviour reflects their inherent compliance to Islamic practises and Muslim lifestyles, without a doubt, will ensure that consumerism will reflect such beliefs and practises.

> *"Verily actions are by intentions, and for every person is what he intended. So the one whose 'hijrah' (migration) was to Allah and His Messenger, then his 'hijrah' was to Allah and His Messenger. And the one whose 'hijrah' was for the world to gain from it, or a woman to marry her, then his 'hijrah' was for what he made 'hijrah' for"* (Al-Bukhārī and *Muslim*).

This hadith indicated that his intention must be clear as a Muslim. Any behaviour a Muslim adopts must reflect the intention and is always in direct obeyance to *Allah* and the practise of Islam. This is parallel to what was mentioned by World Travel Market in 2007, explaining how *Halal* tourism is a type of religious tourism that conforms to Islamic teachings guidelines on behaviourisms, dress, conduct, and diet. Anything that is not within the concept of Islamic behaviour and culture is not considered *Halal* or *Halal* tourism. Thus, even while traveling, Muslims are bound by their religion and comply with its requirement.

4.4 The mediating role of travel behaviour on Muslim identity and *Halal* consumerism

Findings from this study indicated that Muslim traveling behaviour would eventually affect their *Halal* consumerism. While practicing Islam is easy in Muslim countries, such convenience might be rare in non-Muslim countries. Thus, it is normal for Muslims to choose travel destinations that will allow them to maintain their identity while traveling freely. However, results in this study also indicated that Muslim identity has less than a significant impact on *Halal* consumerism. This would mean that while Muslims travel, their *Halal* consumerism will be dictated by their travel behaviour instead of their Islamic identity.

The travel locations probably dictate such findings. Some localities are less friendly to the Islamic approach compared to others. While non-Muslim countries such as Japan, some parts of Europe, and the United Kingdom are highly receptive to Islam, others might not. Muslims traveling to such countries would have to adapt and figure out the best way to adhere to *Syari'ah* requirements to the best of their abilities. In such locations, the travellers would have to make do with whatever facilities might be available or look for some Muslim immigrant settlements to get *Halal* food mainly. In any case, if they failed to do so, other alternatives would be to consume a vegetarian

diet devoid of non-*Halal* meat while in the country. Even in countries such as Japan, the Muslim-friendly amenities are mainly focused on the large cities such as Tokyo, Osaka, and Kyoto or smaller counties with famous tourist attractions such as Mount Fuji. In other parts of the country, especially the rural area or small towns, Islamic friendly amenities, including *Halal* food, is still a rarity; thus, Muslim visitors must equip themselves with their packet foods and figure out their prayer arrangement.

Such conditions suggested how with Islamic friendly conditions, the travel behaviour of Muslims will be as close to their religious requirement, while without the conditional condition, these travellers will have to use convenience and availability of opportunity to practise their religious requirements, including *Halal* consumerism.

5. Conclusion

The importance placed by Malaysian travellers on staying in *Syari'ah*-compliant hotels, eating at *Halal* restaurants, and consuming *Halal* food while traveling brought to light several issues and challenges. Countries such as South Korea, Japan, China, and the United States may find it easiest to comply with the requirement for *Halal* food because they have been exposed to and are familiar with the concept and requirement of Islamic dietary requirements as a result of their participation in the *Halal* food and beverage sectors as suppliers and service providers. Nevertheless, other requirements, such as *Syari'ah* compliance hotel facilities, may not be as familiar to the public and, as a result, may not fit well with the general concept of hotel services.

Despite these initiatives and advancements, some countries still face shortcomings regarding being a staple tourist destination for Muslims. Issues such as the lack of knowledge of Islamic religion in practise, which is associated with a small local Muslim population, can be attributed to a lack of knowledge of Islamic religious practise. While *Halal* foods are available in many countries with significant Muslim minorities, they may be challenging to come by and expensive (Yusof & Shutto, 2014). The certification cost for restaurants is still high, with an estimated cost of approximately US$ 2761(Salleh and Nor, 2015).

Despite these challenges, countries like South Korea and Japan continue to invest heavily to offer Muslim-friendly facilities. Their willingness to proceed with such initiatives will undoubtedly continue to draw in many Muslim travellers.

Acknowledgements

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