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Muslim Friendly Services in Muslim and Non-Muslim Destinations: Benchmarking

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Abstract

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The number of traveling Muslims has increased substantially, and demands for Islamic facilities and services that adhere to their religious practices are growing exponentially. This creates business opportunities for service providers in Muslim and non-Muslim countries alike. Propelled by the growth of this new market segment, service providers such as airlines and hotels have customized aspects of their businesses to accommodate these niche demands. However, some industry players willfully ignore this market, either for fear of losing non-Muslim customers or lacking the know-how to tap into this lucrative new market. This research benchmarked some service providers (hotels) worldwide and conducted a content analysis of their websites to identify the services they provided for Muslims. The evidence shows that some hotels worldwide provide limited services to satisfy Muslim needs. Most of these hotels did not provide information about their Islamic facilities on their website, including some hotels in Islamic countries. This can be related to the social pressure (non-Muslim tourist markets), which prevents service providers from advertising their services. Lack of knowledge and research on the factors that prevent service providers from serving Muslim tourists and little information about their challenges make this area unexplored. Future research should test the research model proposed by this study and identify the factors influencing the service provider's intention to serve the Muslim market and the barriers. This paper can serve as a guideline for industry players to partake in this growing and lucrative market.

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Introduction

The travel and tourism industry is regarded as the world's largest economic sector. Tourism contributes ~10.4% to the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and provided 319 million jobs or ~10.0% of total employment in 2018 (Travel & Tourism Global Economic Impact & Trend, 2019 World). In 2018, ~140 million Muslim visitors traveled globally, which is expected to grow to ~156 million by 2020, representing ~10% of the travel segment (Global Muslim Travel, 2019). The growing number of Muslim travelers represents a global business opportunity that can be exploited by the multi-layer tourism sector worldwide (Global Muslim Travel Index 2019). The increasing number of Muslim tourists from the Middle East prompted hotel companies to cater to unique needs. Some hotels restrict the consumption of alcohol and non-halal food, as well as gambling activities on their premises, to avoid offending Muslim guests. The different levels of services provided by service providers lead to a multitude of categories and naming conventions, such as Sharia-compliant hotels, Islamic-friendly hotels, Dry Hotels, and many others. The categorization is based on the level of Islamic services the hotels provided by the hotels, from fully Islamic to partially Islamic in their respective approaches. Considering the profitability of this market segment, countries such as Indonesia, Thailand, and Malaysia made significant attempts to accommodate some aspects of Islamic attributes and create standardized criteria for industry players to offer Islamic-friendly accommodation. In contrast, some countries like the UK, Italy, and Australia follow the necessary Islamic limitation for food and entertainment that satisfy the basic needs of Muslims.

Islam is regarded as a way of life by its many adherents, and the religion governs minute details of their day-to-day conduct, encompassing food, hygiene, and social activities (Hassani & Moghavvemi, 2019). Islam prohibits the imbibing of alcohol and stipulates that its adherents must consume only halal foods, which creates an entire market segment of halal food and alcohol-free establishment in destinations frequented by Muslims. Access to halal food, especially when traveling, remains a significant concern for Muslim travelers (Bon & Hussain, 2010; Hassani & Moghavvemi, 2019), which ultimately influence their travel preferences and choice and limits their travel options, particularly to destinations where the possibility of catering to basic Muslim needs is limited. Many hotels try to cater to the needs of Muslim tourists via the provision of short-term halal services and foods for Muslim tourists; however, this approach is not universal, as many industry players willfully ignore this market for a multitude of reasons. There is a lack of information about the industry players and the challenges and opportunities they face in serving Muslim tourists. There is limited knowledge related to the willingness and readiness of the service providers to provide the product and services for Muslim tourists, which creates the need to explore these issues.

This paper details the current services and initiatives of some hotels in different countries, including non-Muslim ones, to cater to Muslim tourists and visitors. This research provided the preliminary information and proposed a model for future research to test among service providers to identify the factors that motivate or prevent them from serving Muslim tourists. This study can be utilized as a guideline for service providers (such as hotels, airlines, and restaurants) attempting to partake in this niche market. The information provided in this study will allow interested parties also to create a business model for adherents of other faiths bound by specific prohibitions and requirements.

Background of the Study

According to the State of the Global Islamic Economy Report (2022), Muslims spent US\$2 trillion in 2021 across the food, fashion, pharmaceutical, cosmetics, travel, and media/recreation sectors. It is forecasted that Muslim spending will reach US\$2.8 trillion by 2025 at a 4-year Cumulative Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 7.5%. Muslim spending on tourism increased from US\$58 billion to US\$102 billion in 2021 and is predicted to grow by 50.0% in 2022 to US\$154 billion and reach US\$189 billion in 2025 at a 4-year CAGR of 16.5% (MUSLIM AD NETWORK, 2022). The Muslim travel market is the second-largest globally, after China (\$168bn). Consequently, the Halal tourism industry constitutes a promising market that destinations should exploit (Battour et al., 2022).

Muslim travelers are inclined to adhere to Islamic teachings, which may impact their decisions concerning leisure and travel plans (Zamani-Farahani & Henderson, 2010; Putit et al., 2016). An Islamic 'Halal-friendly hotel concept has rapidly become attractive to Muslim and non-Muslim tourists globally. The growing number of Muslims in Europe (Yuhus, 2015), the growth of the number of Muslim tourists who have high purchasing power (Stephenson, 2014), and an increase in the number of western tourists who want a healthy lifestyle (Stephenson et al., 2010) are among the main reasons for Islamic friendly hotels. The high demand for Islamic-friendly hotels influences hotels such as Almula Hospitality and others to enlarge their coverage of Europe (Zamani-Farahani & Henderson, 2010; Muharam & Asutay, 2022).

The availability of halal-friendly services and products at the hotel demonstrates the commitment to serving Muslim guests (Muharam & Asutay, 2022). Adverting Muslim-friendly service sometimes creates new challenges for providers because it increases the possibility of losing non-Muslim customers. Those hotels with the majority of Muslim consumers want to maximize their services for this main segment, but they also do not want to lose the opportunity to attract non-Muslims. On the other hand, providers that primary market is non-Muslims do not want to lose the opportunity to taste this increasingly large segment (Muharam & Asutay, 2022).

Previous studies were mainly conducted among hotel customers to examine their travel preferences and satisfaction with hotel services. A limited number of studies studied halal hotels, while they did not provide an overview of how these hotels articulate their halal attributes (Zamani-Farahani & Henderson, 2010; Rosenberg & Choufany, 2009; Stephenson, 2014). Muharam and Asutay (2022) investigated the online disclosure practices of halal-friendly hotels in various countries. They conducted a study among the hotels that explicitly state the provision of halal food, listed on Halalbooking.com and Crescent Rating. They investigated the use of Islamic pictures and symbols on the hotel website. They tried to find the relationship between disclosure level and hotel star rating, halal-friendly rating, and guest ratings.

Features of the halal-friendly hotel

A halal hotel is defined as having appropriate entertainment, halal foods, and no alcohol to be served or consumed. In addition, in the halal hotel, beds and toilets are positioned not facing Mecca, have bidets in bathrooms, prayer rooms, prayer time information, predominantly Muslim staff, Quran and prayer mat, Qibla direction, separate recreational facilities, wudhu facilities, art does not depict human or animal, female and family floors, conservative staff dress, the same gender staff for a single guest, modest dress code, Islamic funding, and zakat payment (Zamani-Farahani & Henderson, 2010; Rosenberg & Choufany, 2009; Stephenson, 2014; Muharam & Asutay, 2022). COMCEC (2016) classified halal attributes into three categories: “Need to have,” which consists of halal food and Qibla direction; “Good to have,” which consists of temporary prayer rooms for meetings, water-friendly toilets, and Ramadan services; and “Nice to have,” consisting of no non-halal activities, segregated facilities for males and females and privacy (Muharam & Asutay, 2022).

Many players are involved in developing a standard rating system for the halal hotel, such as Crescent Rating and Salam Standard, which are beneficial for the halal hotel as they construct a standard for the industry (Muharam & Asutay, 2022; COMCEC, 2017). Furthermore, halal-oriented businesses such as Halaltrip.com and Halalbooking.com also play a role by creating unique markings for halal-friendly hotels.

The halal tourism criteria of each country vary, and even in Muslim countries, their views on the sharia implementation may not be the same, as the condition differs in each country depending on the interpretation of Islam (Zamani-Farahani & Musa, 2012). For example, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Morocco, and Malaysia are more flexible in implementing sharia in their tourism industry, while Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Brunei Darussalam are considered more rigid (Kovjanic, 2014; Junaidi, 2020). Saudi Arabia, Brunei, and Iran do not need as much effort to provide products and services that comply with Islamic Shari'ah compared to non-OIC countries. These countries can easily comply with both the

tangible and intangible elements of halal hospitality. Turkey is an example of a secular OIC country that requires more effort than Islamic countries in implementing halal tourism practices (Boğana et al., 2020).

Many hotels in OIC and non-OIC countries are developing products and services to meet the Muslim market's needs and expectations as this market is experiencing rapid growth. Muslim-friendly hotels operate in both Muslim and non-Muslim countries, such as Russia, England, and Thailand (Battour & Ismail, 2016; Boğan & Sarıışık, 2019; Boğana et al., 2020). Indonesia, Malaysia, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey are the five leading OIC countries in halal hospitality. At the same time, Singapore, the United Kingdom, Thailand, Japan, and Taiwan are the five leading non-OIC countries in halal hospitality (Mastercard & Crescentrating, 2018). In non-OIC countries, there is a limited understanding of halal tourism, limited Muslim-friendly products and services, and a limited Muslim workforce. This condition makes it difficult for halal hotels to meet the needs of Muslim tourists (Han et al., 2019). These limitations challenge hotels operating entirely within Islamic principles (Boğana et al., 2020).

Method and design

In the first stage of the study, we surveyed 100 Muslims in Kazakhstan to examine their travel preferences (See Table 1). The travel preferences of Muslims measured Islamic travel preferences in deciding to travel (e.g., Hassani & Moghavvemi (2019); Moghavvemi & Musa, (2018)). The items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from; (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. The questionnaire was distributed online among the students and the public. Of these respondents, 56% were females, and 44% were males. In terms of the level of religiosity, 40 (40%) stated that they are very religious, 51 (51%) were moderately religious, and 9 (9%) stated that they are not religious. ~20% of respondents were above 40 years old, and 80 (80%) of the respondents were below 40 years old. 46 % were single, while 54 % were married. Regarding education, 52% were diplomas, and 48% were undergraduate and above.

Table 1. Participant characteristics

Characteristic	Group	N	%
Gender	Female	56	56
	Male	44	44
Marital status	Single	46	46
	Married	54	54
Age	Below 20	3	3
	20-30	59	59
	31-39	18	18
	Over 40	20	20
Education	Diploma	52	52
	Undergraduate	3	3
	Master	43	43
	PhD	2	2
Level of Religiosity	Not religious	9	9
	Moderately religious	51	51
	Very religious	40	40

Note. n = 100.

The results show that the main factor for Muslims when they want to travel is to find hotels with halal food (See Table 2). They prefer to travel to the countries where they can find hotels that serve Halal food (mean=3.41) and conduct their business in countries where it is easy to find hotels with Halal food (mean=3.22). They prefer to stay in the countries with halal food hotels even when they want to travel for medical treatment (mean=3.12) and experience nature (mean=3.03). They need to stay in a hotel that provides praying facilities (mean=3.19), separate sports facilities for men and women (mean=3.05), and does not serve non-halal food (mean=3.02). The results are different among the Muslims that are not religious and very religious. The very religious Muslims are stricter in their selection of hotel and halal foods.

Table 2. Measurement Items

Questions	Mean n=100	Standard Deviation n=100	Not religious Mean n=9	Moderate religious Mean n=51	Very religious Mean n=40
I prefer to travel to countries where I can easily find hotels that serve Halal food.	3.41	1.3	1.22	3.26	4.04
I prefer to conduct my business in countries where it is easy to find hotels with Halal food.	3.22	1.4	1.11	2.96	3.97
I prefer to experience nature in countries where it is easy to find Halal food and hotels.	3.03	1.27	1.22	2.62	3.0
I prefer to choose countries for medical treatment where it is easy to find Halal food and hotels.	3.12	1.37	1.22	2.68	4.05
I only eat in a restaurant with a halal certificate.	2.72	1.42	1.33	2.38	3.4
I prefer to fly with airlines that provide praying opportunities onboard.	2.9	1.44	1.33	2.46	3.75
I prefer to choose hotels with separate sports facilities for men and women.	3.05	1.35	1.88	2.46	4.0
I prefer to stay in a hotel that provides Qibla stickers and prayer mats.	2.9	1.4	1.11	2.38	3.9
I prefer to stay in hotels that do not serve non-halal food.	3.02	1.3	1.44	2.60	3.85
I prefer to stay in a hotel which provides praying facilities.	3.19	1.3	1.88	2.70	4.05
I prefer to stay in hotels with Islamic design and architecture.	2.56	1.4	1.22	2.06	3.42
I predict I will use a hotel with Islamic facilities when I travel.	3.13	1.4	1.22	2.60	4.17
I have very seriously thought of staying in a hotel with Halal food.	3.17	1.3	1.66	2.68	4.07
I plan to stay in a hotel with a Halal restaurant.	3.14	1.4	1.22	2.66	4.12
I intend to travel to countries where I can find Halal food and hotels with Islamic facilities.	3.32	1.3	1.22	2.94	4.22

The results of the first stage of the study show that hotels with Halal food and Islamic facilities are essential factors for Muslims when planning their trip. Therefore, we investigate the current situation of the hotels (service providers) in different countries to find how they respond to Muslim demands.

A general search was conducted through Google to find hotels that provide Islamic-friendly services. We found some websites that listed the names of the hotels providing Islamic services in Europe and the United States. We conducted a content analysis to analyze the information provided on the hotels' websites. Some hotels provide information related to the services that they are providing. At

the same time, on some websites, there is no information related to their Islamic services and the facilities they provide for Muslim tourists.

Results

Content analysis of the websites

Essential Islamic attributes are available in some of the hotels in the countries that are members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC, 56 Countries). However, their approaches differ significantly. The majority possess the necessary infrastructure and understanding of the halal ecosystems and attributes required for the development of Halal tourism. Countries such as Malaysia, Turkey, Singapore, and Indonesia show a keen interest in Muslim-friendly facilities and accommodations. Many hotels in these countries implement essential Islamic attributes to attract Muslim tourists. Few hotels, such as De Palma in Malaysia and Riyanto Sofyan in Indonesia, are fully Sharia-compliant and implement all Islamic features advertised on their websites.

Japan and South Korea, the UK, Australia, France, Russia, Switzerland, Spain, Hong Kong, Belgium, and Thailand are some examples of non-OIC countries that are keenly targeting Muslim tourists via the provision of Muslim-friendly tourism services. Some hotels in Australia provide various facilities such as Middle Eastern menus in their restaurants, halal foods, and prayer facilities. Fairmont Makati and Raffles Makati hotels in the Philippines provide copies of the Quran, prayer rooms, and Arabic-language TV channels. The luxury hotel Lord Milner in London and the Holiday Villa chain feature a Qibla (prayer) direction sign in their rooms. At the same time, the Sacher Hotel in Vienna (Austria) provides prayer facilities and special meals before sunrise and after sunset for Muslims during the month of Ramadan. Best Western, the world's largest hotel chain, introduced Halal hotels in Malaysia, Bahrain, and Oman. The Ritz Carlton hotels in Dallas and New York serve Muslim guests halal meals upon request. They also have Middle Eastern chefs on staff and offer rooms with spaces allowing gender-segregated settings. To satisfy Muslims' needs, Zurich-based luxury travel agency Premium Europe launched the Halal booking engine in Europe for Muslim travelers. It helps Muslim travelers identify hotels that meet their needs, from halal food, bidets in rooms, female-only spa facilities, and pork-free cooking arrangements. Examples of practices in different countries are detailed in the following sections. The benchmark countries are divided into OIC countries and non-OIC countries.

Organization of Islamic Cooperation Members

In some Muslim countries such as Saudi Arabia, Dubai, and Iran, accommodation providers and hotels are bound by Sharia law as determined by the government. Shariah-compliant hotel is the default choice

(Zamani-Farahani & Henderson, 2010). Saudi Arabia is a Muslim country that implements the strictest form of Sharia rules. The free intermingling of men and women, alcohol, and nightclubs are strictly prohibited. Women are forbidden from checking into hotels or traveling without being accompanied by a male family member (Abdullah, 2007). In Dubai, several hotel groups have announced the development of hotel chains complying with Sharia law. The Jawhara hotel chain, UAE-based Time Hotels, Almulla Hospitality- operating in Europe and North America- Shaza Hotels, and many others provide halal food and services to Muslim guests, prohibiting the consumption of alcohol on their premises, and provide separate recreation areas for men and women.

In Qatar, halal tourism is one of the five critical areas prioritized for tourism development. Qatar is a Muslim country with a halal ecosystem, such as the availability of Halal food, mosque, prayer facilities in malls, Muslim-friendly hotels with prayer rooms, Qibla signs marked in rooms, toilets with sprayers, and other relevant facilities. Most of the hotels provide basic Islamic features in their hotel not advertised on their websites.

Statistics showed that in 2016, 160 hotels were adhering to the halal concept in Turkey, with 28 resorts dedicated to Muslim travelers; however, there were no Halal-certified hotels in the country. Some hotels have a separate swimming pool and alcohol-free spaces (turkiyegelisiyor.com); they do not serve alcohol or pork, and their workers dress following Islamic customs. They also provided prayer rooms, salons, spas, massage, and other services for both men and women.

Indonesia developed strategies to position its different regions as competitive Halal tourism destinations. The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy of Indonesia designated three provinces in Indonesia as Halal tourist destinations: Lombok, West Sumatra, and Aceh. Lombok won two World Halal Travel Awards in 2015: “World’s Best Halal Destination” and “World’s Best Halal Honeymoon Destination.” Riyanto Sofyan owns a chain of nine sharia hotels across Indonesia and implemented Sharia attributes in all hotels, including two in Jakarta. The calls for prayers are sounded five times a day, they provide alcohol-free cocktails, and MTV has been removed from the TV channels list.

Malaysia has been named the number one destination for Muslim travelers for four consecutive years from 2011 to 2014 by the Crescent Rating of Singapore, based on the availability of Halal food, access to prayer facilities, and Muslim-friendly services in the hotels (Islamic Tourism Centre, 2015). A few hotels in Malaysia followed the Islamic standard to the letter and positioned themselves as Shariah-compliant hotels, such as the De Palma Hotel in Ampang. Other hotels in Malaysia implemented the necessary attributes such as prayer rooms and the availability of halal foods or pork-free foods for Muslims.

Non-Organization of Islamic Cooperation Member

Thailand is among the top 10 Muslim-friendly destinations in the world (GMTI 2015). It is pushing for halal tourism and launching marketing incentives for Muslim-related agencies. Hospitality companies, hotels, and tour operators are encouraged to adopt the Islamic standard of equipping the hotel with prayer facilities, including ablution rooms, prayer rugs, Qibla direction, women's prayer garments, and restrooms with rinse spray hoses. The recent hosting of the Thailand Halal Assembly in Bangkok further strengthened Thailand's position of catering to Muslim tourists by providing prayer facilities at the airport, Arabic-speaking staff, and halal food options at Muslim-friendly hotels, restaurants, and tourist attractions throughout the country. Al-Meroz Hotel in Thailand targets Middle Eastern and Muslim tourists from Europe and China.

Tourism to Japan is heavily promoted in mainly-Muslim Southeast Asia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Indonesia (Muslimink, 2017). Seminars organized in different regions in Japan invited hoteliers and restaurateurs to learn how to cater to Muslims. In August 2013, Hotel Granvia Kyoto became the first hotel in Western Japan to acquire the Local Halal Certificate. To obtain the certification, the hotel's cafe-restaurant "Le Temps" received new tableware and cookware for Muslims and sourced new halal suppliers for their supply of chicken and beef. In guest rooms, a traverse table indicating the direction of Mecca and a floor mat is available for use for prayers. The City of Kyoto and Kyoto Convention Bureau (KCB) have extensively promoted the brand to tourists worldwide. They have a webpage dedicated to Islamic Hospitality, listing hotels and food outlets that comply with their faith and practices (Gulf Business, 2014).

France, with 10% of its population Muslim, made significant efforts to accommodate some aspects of Islamic culture and provide Islamic facilities in some tourist places, hotels, and restaurants. Examples of hotels that offer Islamic services are Fouquet's Barriere, Park Hyatt Paris-Vendome, Lancaster, and Shangri-La Hotel. Fouquet's Barriere provides prayer mats, Qurans in the room, and halal food on demand. In the Park Hyatt Paris-Vendome, the rooms are well-equipped for Muslim travelers, with a range of facilities such as prayer mats, copies of the Quran, and a non-alcoholic minibar, all conveniently available on request to make the stay more comfortable for Muslim guests.

England pays special attention to the needs of Muslim tourists. Many halal-certified hotels provide halal food all year round. The luxury Lord Milner in London and the Holiday Villa hotel chain feature a Qibla (prayer) direction sign in their hotel rooms. The Landmark London and Café Royal Hotel provide services such as Arabic television channels, halal food, and the Middle Eastern menu during peak season or upon request. DUKE's hotel provides copies of the Quran and halal food on request. Haymarket hotel offers a vast range of services for its Muslim guests. For the few necessities the hotel

may not have on hand, the hotel tries to meet them within 24 hours. Corinthia Hotel London provides pork-free cuisine, a female-only sauna, and female-only housekeeping staff that can be easily requested.

In Switzerland, most 5-star hotels can respond to the majority of Muslim needs. In contrast, some hotels with Muslim ownership or those located in Swiss cities have proactively incorporated some or all of these amenities into their services or organized them upon request. La Reserve, Geneva, offers Islamic-friendly food, a Middle-Eastern menu, female spa facilities, and Arabic television channels. Le Richemond, Geneva provides a copy of the Quran, prayer facilities, a non-alcoholic minibar, Islamic-friendly dining facilities, and bidets in the bathrooms. The Mandarin Oriental, Geneva, offers Halal food, female housekeeping staff (for female guests), and prayer mats for Muslim guests.

Russia's largest hotel chain, Aerostar Hotel, recently launched a "halal service" in response to the growing demand for Muslim-friendly tourism. Through this program, the hotel is committed to providing pork-free meals (Muslim breakfast), allocating prayer rooms, and giving out copies of the Quran to Muslim guests. ~20 rooms out of the 308 are equipped with a ritual basin and a prayer mat. Also, the prayer rooms for men and women are separated, with separate kitchens, allowing them to cook for themselves, while all their meals do not contain pork or ham. Two prayer rooms are available; one for men and another for women. The 6th Moscow Halal Expo 2015 International Exhibition opens its doors to cover all sectors of halal business, including halal tourism, which sparks the interest of hotel owners and investors.

The Italian government has been keen on enhancing its tourism and positioning the country as a Muslim-friendly destination with the availability of halal foods and services, which led to the rise of halal-certified restaurants running private gardens to produce a wide range of halal foods (Di Foggia et al., 2011). Bed and Breakfast is a small accommodation founded in the capital city, which has not been modified or adapted to accommodate Islamic guests. Still, owners arrange Halal food on request and with prior notice. Grand Hotel des Bains created the first beach for Muslim women when Muslim tourists were hosted at the resort. In these establishments, after the departure of the Muslim guests, most of the facilities and services are no longer available, nor are they mentioned on the website of the hotel or any other available advertising material. When catering to Muslim guests, they remove alcohol from their rooms and tables. When Muslim guests arrive, they are willing to order some halal-certified foods from various Italian companies. None of these services are listed on their website for fear of being misunderstood and wrongly perceived by Italian tourists, while the hotel is listed on the Halal Tourism websites.

Conceptual Framework

Service providers' willingness and readiness to provide the product and services is an essential and long-standing research question that raised much research to identify the internal and external capabilities

that influence them to serve the specific market. Researchers used different theories and models to investigate the company's abilities and environmental factors. Evidence shows that internal capabilities such as financial ability and profitability of the market are the main factors that influence the companies to take action. In tourism, researchers used many theories/models, including motivation-opportunity-ability (MOA) (ölander & Thøgersen, 1995), to identify the probability of consumer participation. The theory suggests that consumers experience three types of barriers, including the motivation to participate (desire to act), the ability to participate (skills and knowledge to act), and the opportunity to participate (the absence of environmental barriers to action). Thus, consumer participation is determined based on the level of these three factors. Motivation to participate captures motivational factors such as social norms, attitudes, and beliefs about the outcomes. The ability construct is related to skills and knowledge elements that highlight the role of the required abilities to perform the desired action. Opportunity is associated with favorable conditions that increase the action's possibility. These three components have influenced the desired behavior.

Considering the current services that hotels provide for Muslim tourists and the lack of information related to their willingness and ability to serve them, the MOA model can be used as a theoretical foundation to explore and identify service providers' opportunities and challenges. Motivation to participate can capture social norms (Non-Muslim tourists' view to use the hotel if the hotel targets the Muslim market), attitude (the attractiveness of the idea of serving Muslim tourists), and beliefs about the outcome (the profitability of the market). Ability is related to the financial capacity and related knowledge about the Halal service and products that should be served to Muslim tourists. Opportunity can measure the market opportunity, industry effort, and facilities to serve the market. It can measure the industry's policy, rules, and regulations to conceptualize its service for the specific target market. These three factors determine the service provider's intention to provide Islamic-friendly services for Muslim tourists (See Figure 1).

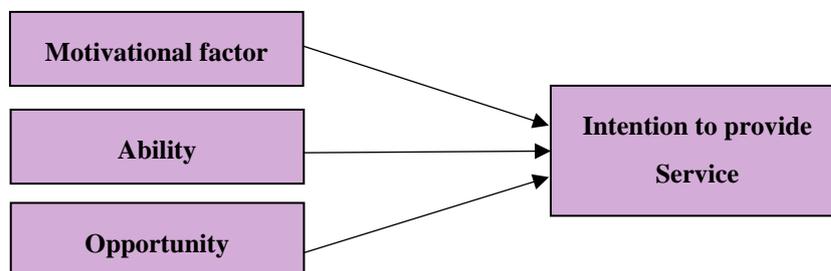


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Conclusion and Future Research Perspectives

The lack of halal food and service are the main barriers preventing Muslims from traveling. This study benchmarks some hotels worldwide providing necessary Islamic attributes for Muslim tourists. The results show that most Muslim countries provide halal food and services for Muslim tourists, and it is easy to find a hotel with Halal food and facilities in these countries. On the other hand, the necessary Islamic attributes are implemented in some hotels worldwide interested in attracting Muslim tourists. Hotels in western countries do not provide any information (related to Islamic attributes practiced in their hotel) on their Websites. At the same time, they advertise their services on the other websites with a Muslim audience. They do not advertise these services on the hotel website because they fear antagonizing non-Muslim customers. However, this is not just limited to western countries; most hotels in the OIC countries also do not publish any information related to Islamic attributes on their websites. This could be due to similar fears of alienating non-Muslim customers.

These show that even though the Muslim market is attractive, the industry players are reluctant to provide specific facilities or advertise to attract Muslim tourists. However, the spending power of Muslim tourists and demands encourage industry players to customize their service and serve this market accordingly. Information about the factors preventing hotels from providing services for Muslim tourists is limited. This research proposed a model that future research can test among the industry players to identify the service providers' motivational factors, internal capability, plans, or challenges they may face if they advertise for Islamic services. Future research should be conducted as empirical studies to investigate the readiness of hotels and accommodation industry to implement the Islamic-friendly services and the barriers and challenges they face. The research on non-Muslim customer perception towards hotels providing Islamic-friendly services will shed some light, provide more information for industry players and policymakers, and facilitate their decision-making.

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