

## Developing the Framework for Halal Friendly Tourism in Malaysia

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**Abstract:** Tourism is a sector that has been identified by government as a catalyst for the economy. In this context, Islamic tourism has been chosen as the key focus areas where it is considered to attract Muslim tourists. Halal industry has becoming a lucrative market globally either for products or services. However, the services sector such as tourism has yet to tap into this lucrative market even though the Halal travel is gaining popularity globally. Basically, Halal tourism is relatively a new concept that is gaining high demand, especially from Halal conscious traveler. However, the issue arises when there is no framework for Halal friendly tourism has been developed in Malaysia. In this discussion, the researcher has proposed a conceptual framework for Halal friendly tourism activities. From the proposed framework hopefully that one day, the standard framework of Halal friendly tourism could be established and practiced in future.

**Key words:** Tourism, hotel, halal tourism, halal friendly hotel, Islamic tourism, Malaysia

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### INTRODUCTION

Tourism is widely defined as any temporary movement of people to any activities which is away from their home or workplace and any activities done during the stay and the facilities that created to cater to the tourist needs. According to Metelka (1990), tourism is also defined as an umbrella term for variety of product and services offered and desired by people while away from home. The tourism industry is an important global industry in the world because it contributes to the development of the national economy. In Malaysia, travel and tourism remain as a highly important part of the Malaysian economy. It is also stated that this industry would be the 2nd largest contributor to the economy as it shows that Malaysia has moved up 2 notches and was ranked the 9th most travelled destination in the world last year by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (ITC, 2010). Due to this in 2010, Malaysia's travel and tourism is expected to generate MYR 98 billion (US \$29 billion) through the economic activity (WTTC, 2010).

Halal tourism is becoming one of the new products in the tourism industry which can be significant either to the Muslim or non-Muslim market. In addition, there is a need to develop tailored, this niche tourism product in order to cater to this dynamic and emerging market (Zailani *et al.*, 2011). Halal industry has shown a great potential to be a successful new source of economic growth. This industry

includes food, non-food products and also services. The global Halal industry is one of the fastest growing sectors in the world which is fueled by the rising number of Muslim tourists (Lay, 2010). The increase in demand for Halal products and services will ensure the expand the size of the global Halal market. For Halal food products, the market size is estimated at approximately US \$547 billion a year while for non-food products such as hotel and catering services, cosmetics and pharmaceuticals are estimated to be worth approximately US \$2.1 trillion annually. The rising number of Muslim population will simultaneously increase the demand for Halal products and services globally (MITIM, 2006).

Halal services such as travel and tourism is one of the sectors that carry a great potential to tap on this lucrative market. There are increasing numbers of Muslim travelers particularly those from West Asia. In 2005, the numbers of Middle East tourists travelling to Malaysia are 47,646 (MITIM, 2006). In 2007, the numbers of West Asia travelers who travel to Malaysia has also increased to 78,298 for Saudi Arabia, 27,215 for Iran, 17,650 for Kuwait and also 19,525 for Oman.

On the other hand, the Australian Tourism Bureau predicted that the Muslim travelers that will travel to Australia is expected to rise during the next 4 years which increase by 13% in 2014, Indian tourists also increase by 11% and from Indonesia by 9% (Halalfocus, 2010). With the increasing number of Muslim travelers, the marketer

and industry players need to capture this market because now-a-days, the Muslim travelers are becoming more conscious towards Halal food and services while they are having their vacation. The absence of concept or framework for Halal friendly tourism is becoming one of the problem in tapping the Halal travel and tourism market. Due to this, this study is an attempt to discuss the important elements that could support the development of framework for Halal friendly tourism in Malaysia.

**OVERVIEW OF THE GLOBAL TOURISM MARKET**

Tourism is becoming the future of economic source of a nation. The demand for world tourism shows a positive growth of the arrivals of the international tourists. According to Goeldner and Ritchie (2009), the increasing demand begins from 1950 until 2007 shows a rapid increase number of international travelers during the early postwar years (Table 1).

Table 1 shows the international tourist arrivals start from 1950-2009. From the early years of 1990-2000's, it shows a consistent growth of the internationals tourist arrivals. However, there is decrease in number in tourist arrivals in 2003 was the result from recession year in which negative factors came together such as Iraq war, terrorism fear and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). Most countries in North and Southeast Asia suffered from the declining number of tourist arrivals. The badly affected countries from the outbreak were Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Vietnam, Malaysia and Thailand. After 2003, the international tourist arrivals start to continued to show a strong growth again until 2007 which represents 898 million with 6.1% gain >2006 (Goeldner and Ritchie, 2009).

**Table 1: International tourist arrivals from 1950-2009**

Years	Arrivals (million)	Growth (%)
1950	25	-
1960	69	176.0
1970	166	141.0
1980	288	73.0
1990	456	58.0
1995	534	17.0
1996	570	7.0
1997	594	4.0
1998	611	3.0
1999	634	4.0
2000	682	8.0
2001	682	0.0
2002	702	3.0
2003	691	-2.0
2004	761	10.0
2005	801	5.0
2006	846	5.0
2007	900	6.0
2008	919	5.0
2009	880	4.3

United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO)

According to the United Nations of World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), the international tourist arrival data has shown a strong growth rate in this regards, the Tourism Vision 2020 forecasts that the international arrivals will exceed 1 billion by 2010, thus the figure will rise up to 1.6 billion by 2020.

**TOURISM INDUSTRY IN MALAYSIA**

**Overview of tourism industry:** In Malaysia, tourism has also been recognized as a major economic and social significance that contribute to the creating of wealth. Due to this reason, the government had granted various facilities to various tourism agencies in order to develop the other prospect area in the tourism industry such as Eco-tourism, Edu-tourism, Islamic tourism, Homestay and many more. On the other side, the government has also recognized tourism as a significant contributor to the country through foreign exchange.

In this regards, tourism sector is considered as the second largest of Malaysia income after the manufacturing sector. From year 2000-2008, total tourist arrival to Malaysia is increasing from 10,221,582-22,052,488 (Tourism Malaysia, 2008a). In line with positive growing of tourist arrival to Malaysia therefore, the tourist receipts is also showing a great and consistent growth in year, 2000 with RM 17,335.4-RM 49,561.2 million in 2008 (Table 2).

Table 3 shows the total source of major foreign earnings in tourism sector where this sector has shown a positive growth from year 2006-2008 with 37.6 billion (2006), 46.1 billion (2007) and 50.2 billion (2008) (Tourism Malaysia, 2008b).

**Table 2: Tourist arrivals and receipts to Malaysia 2000-2008**

Years	Tourist arrivals	Tourist receipts (RM/million)
2000	10,221,582	17,335.4
2001	12,775,073	24,221.5
2002	13,292,010	25,781.1
2003	10,567,915	21,291.1
2004	15,703,406	29,651.4
2005	16,431,055	31,954.1
2006	17,546,863	36,271.7
2007	20,972,822	46,070.0
2008	22,052,488	49,561.2

Malaysia Immigration Department and Division Visitor Survey (DVS), Tourism Malaysia

**Table 3: Major foreign earnings**

Sectors	RM/billion		
	2006	2007	2008
Manufactured goods	473.2	474.7	491.9
Tourism	37.6	46.1	50.2
Palm oil	21.6	31.9	46.0
Crude oil	30.8	31.8	43.0
LNG	23.3	26.2	40.7

Bank Negara Malaysia

In tourism sector, components of tourist expenditures need to be looked in order to upgrade the products and services that offered to the tourists. Expenditure on accommodation remained as the major contributor in 2008 constituting 31.2% of total tourist expenditures. Shopping expenditure indicated an increase of 0.2% compared to 2007 constituting 26.8% while food and beverages indicated negative growth at -0.4% thus, constituting 17.7% of the total tourist expenditures.

However, the spending pattern did not changed much if compared between years, 2007-2008. The average top ten per diem expenditures recorded a positive growth of 0.7% from RM 348.7-351.2 in 2008. This means that the expenditure per person per day is showing the positive number. The tourists from Saudi Arabia were the biggest spenders per person per day contributing RM 761.1 in 2008 followed by UAE contributing RM 686.5, Oman contributing about RM 674.9 and Brunei contributes about RM 469.2 (Malaysia, 2008).

#### **THE DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAMIC TOURISM IN MALAYSIA**

Due to the increasing number of Muslim tourists visit to Malaysia the Minister of Tourism Malaysia started to initiate and encouraging tourist's arrivals from the Muslim countries by promoting and developing the Islamic or Halal tourism sector. This can be shown by the increasing number of Chinese Muslim tourists to Malaysia in year, 2003 was 50,000 and the figure has gone up to 94,000 people in 2008 (Bernama, 2009). Apart from that the Tourism Ministry has set up an Islamic Tourism Centre to boost the development of tourism sectors in order to tap the potential of the global Muslim market. The Tourism Minister at that time Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said said that the establishment of the centre was in line with the government's initiative to make Malaysia as a foremost tourist destination in the world. Beside that the purpose establishment this centre was also to tap this lucrative market and also to cater the needs for Muslim travelers when their traveling.

With the ideas and intention of promoting and developing the Islamic tourism activities, therefore the Islamic Tourism Centre has been established on 16th March, 2009 at Auditorium, Al-Azim State Mosque, Malacca. This centre has been launched by the governor of Malacca Tun Mohd Khalil Yaakob and the Minister of Tourism Malaysia Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said. The activity involve in this centre such as to serve as a focal point for tourism market research particularly for emerging

tourism market such as Middle-East country which would contribute the significant contribution towards the economic development in Malaysia (ITC, 2010).

#### **THE NEED TO TAP THIS MARKET**

There are some reasons of promoting these Halal tourism activities. One of the key reasons includes the increasing numbers of tourist from the Gulf region or West Asia countries. In 2009, tourist arrivals from West Asia to Malaysia reached about 284,890. With the increasing number of Muslim tourists visited to Malaysia, simultaneously there will be a huge demand for Halal products and services to be offered. This is because many Muslim travelers recently are more Halal conscious who prefer Halal foods or Halal friendly services while staying in the hotels or having vacation in certain places. In a case of Arab Muslim travelers they preferred more Muslim destination packages which provide Halal friendly products and services such as Halal foods, halal friendly facilities and services in the hotels (MITIM, 2006). The other key reason of promoting Halal tourism sector is because the West Asia or Middle-East tourists are the big spender tourists as compared to tourists from other countries. Arab tourists normally spend on average 10 times more than other tourists when they travel to Malaysia. The next key reason of promoting Halal tourism activities because of the global impact from the September, 11 terrorist attacks on the United States in 2001 and the sub-sequent unforeseen terrorism has affected the world tourism industry (Al-Hamameh and Steiner, 2001). After this terrorist attacked the travelling policy against the Arab tourists has become more rigid in many countries, especially in the United States, United Kingdom and Australia and European Nations. As a result, Malaysia as well as other Asian countries such as Indonesia and Brunei was found to be one of the favorite alternative vacation destinations for the Arabs tourist (Ibrahim *et al.*, 2009). There will be a correlation between Halal tourism and Malaysia economy if this sector becomes one of successful sector in future. This is because it is assumed that the Halal tourism is one of the niche products in the tourism industry which have their own market segment.

Furthermore, as we know Halal products and services have its own market thus tourism sector known as a second largest sector contributor towards Malaysia economy and also to the foreign earnings to the country. By promoting the Halal tourism, it will also contribute to the economic growth of a nation. This is because this

industry will expand and generate the country economy which is similar analogy as Halal food industry and Islamic banking that expand the market segment through this Halal industry.

### **TOURISM FROM THE ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE**

Tourism refers to activities that occur when tourists travel. It is described as the activities of person traveling to and stay in places outside their usual environment for not >1 consecutive year for leisure, business and other purpose not related to exercise of any activity remunerated from within the place visited (WTO, 1995). Keiser (1998) and Simpson and Weiner (1998) defines tourism as the theory and practice of touring, traveling for pleasure and recreation as it is stated in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED).

As such, tourism from Islamic perspective comes out with various definitions such as Rehlah, Ziarah, Siyahah, Umrah and Hajj. The word Rehlah is defined as a gathering into groups in one place either at seaside, waterfalls and other recreation places for having vacation and activities with family or friends. The word Ziarah is defined as a visit to Holy or sacred places or to see person or visit places. This is also related to a visit of family and friends' houses or any sacred places such as Mecca and Madinah. The word Siyahah comes from the Arabic word of Saha which means travel throughout the world. In this context, the term Siyahah means travel and tourism. Umrah is the Arabic word that means some act of worship which includes Ihram, Tawaf, Sai and Tahlul without doing free-standing and the elements of compulsory Hajj while Hajj means the 5th pillar of Islam that Islam requires a person to go to Mecca and perform various rituals associated with it obligatory to the Shariah principles. In the Quran, it is stated that tourism is a part of ad-din (way of life) and travel is fundamental to Islam (Chapter 29: Verse 20; Q22:46) (Pickthall, 2007). Islam also encourages travelling as long as it is not contravene to the Shariah principles. Din (1989) stated that traveling in Islam is a purposeful activity that aims to achieve physical, social and spiritual goals. In the Quran, there are many verses that outline the fundamentals of tourism as prescribed by the Shariah. People are encouraged to travel and ponder of what had happened before their times thus make it as an experience or knowledge in their life. Visit to the Islamic historical places such as Mecca and Madinah is also encouraged, so that people can learn and realize on God's power.

Consequently, this is become a purpose of why Islam encourages it follower to go for travel. Based on references and Verses stated in Al-Quran, the purpose of

touring in Islam are to get a lesson for people who are disobey to Allah S.W.T (Quran Chapter 6:Verse 11), (Pickthall, 2007). Then, from the verse stated in (Chapter 7: Verse 86), it showed the lesson of the consequence for the corrupters (Pickthall, 2007). Even though in Islam, it is encourage for Muslim to go travel however, there are certain things that should be avoided such as travel for the purpose of prostitution, travel for gambling purposes, travel for commit crime such as involved in distributing drug, murder, rape and other. In Islam, the Muslims travel for certain purposes that they want to achieve in their life such as they travel for committing religious worship and devotion to God, travel for the purpose of seeking knowledge, education and experience. Besides, they also go for travel to expand their business trade having recreation with friends and family and also for diplomatic relationship or for their business purposes.

### **GLOBAL MARKET FOR THE HALAL INDUSTRY**

The growth of Halal consumer market represents the significant potential for industries players to tap into this huge and lucrative market. Increase in demand and awareness towards the Halal foods products and services was made this industry shows a potential to be succeed as a new source of economic growth. This is because the Halal industry covers in many aspects of daily life such as food, non-food products including pharmaceuticals, cosmetics and toiletries, health products and also area of Halal services includes logistics, packaging, branding and marketing and travel and tourism services. Halal market value for both food and non-food products is estimated valued at US \$2.1 trillion annually which shows the great potential for this market (MITIM, 2006). The increasing demand for Halal products and services is expected to continue with the increasing size of the Muslim populations in the world. There are 1.73 billion Muslims in the world today representing 23% of an estimated 2009 world population of 6.8 billion (Karuddin, 2009). However, it is estimated by year 2010, there is increasing number of global Muslim population which will growth as 1.85 billion of Muslim population. The increasing number of Muslim population worldwide has shown the great potential in capturing and making business for Halal products and services from this Muslim market, especially from the Middle-East countries. Normally, Middle-East consumers do have high disposable incomes which make it as a potential market for not only for Halal products but also for services particularly for travel and tourism services that highlighted, there is a real demand for Halal travel, led by tourists from Southeast Asia and the Middle East. Many investor and marketers have seen this Halal

industry as a lucrative industry which is able to generate wealth in the Halal business either for domestic or international trade.

### THE PROPOSED FRAMEWORK FOR ISLAMIC TOURISM

After discussing too much about the need to tap the market for Halal friendly tourism and to cater the unique needs for Muslim travelers therefore, there is a need for the industries to develop a framework for Islamic tourism activities. This is regard to the increasing number of Muslim market and high average expenditure, especially from Middle East traveler for Halal friendly services in the tourism industries.

Therefore, Halal foods, other facilities such as accommodation, transportation and services should be provided as Halal friendly services in order to cater the Muslim market. To capture this new market of Halal tourism, the government and industry players should develop a fundamental of Halal tourism facilities.

The fundamental of Halal friendly tourism includes the components such as Halal friendly hotel, Halal transportation (Halal airlines), Halal food premises, Islamic tour packages or any other Halal activities such as Halal logistics and Islamic finance which support it in order to develop the niche of Halal tourism product in future (Fig. 1).

**Halal friendly tourism activities:** The words Halal tourism or Islamic tourism refers to any religious travel such as

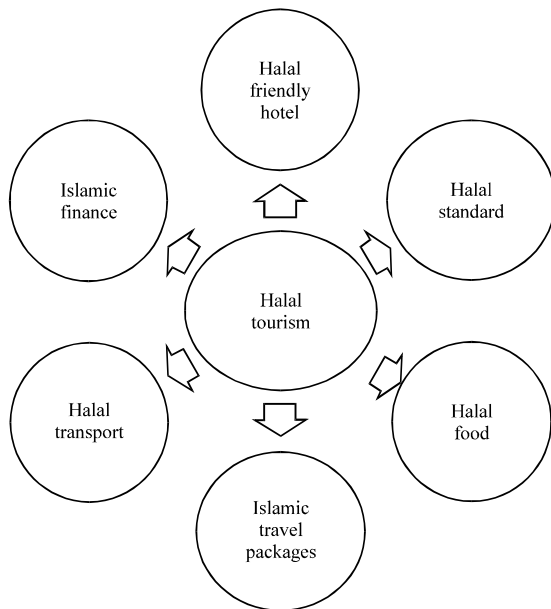


Fig. 1: Fundamental of Halal friendly tourism activities

Umrah, Hajj or visiting to any religious or Holy sites (Muhammad, 2008). Furthermore, Halal tourism also known as any activities that permissible under Islam including Halal airlines, Halal food, Halal Friendly hotel, Islamic tour packages or any activities which is comply to Islamic principles. However, according to Fazal Bahardeen, the approached to this industry may be in different perspective look at how the individual interpret it. In this study, a briefly discussion will be discussed for the Halal friendly tourism activities.

**Hotel industry:** Hotel is an establishment that provides services such as accommodation, food and drinks for guest or temporary residents who intend to stay at the hotel (Medlik and Ingram, 2000). As stated by Jones and Lockwood (1989), the hotel industry is commonly known as lodging industry which providing overnight accommodation to the guests. Further, the hotel also defines as an operation that provides accommodation and ancillary services to the people that away from home. Moreover, hotels also are the multistoried of lodging facilities that are range in size from 20-100's rooms (Jones and Lockwood, 1989). In addition, the hotels also would contribute to the economic of the country. This means that when the guests or visitors visit and stay at the hotels simultaneously, the guest will spend their expenditure to the hotel services therefore, it will contribute to significant towards the local economies.

**Halal friendly hotel:** Halal friendly hotel is one of the hotels which provide the Halal services to the Muslim travelers. This type of hotel is not only limited to serve Halal food and beverages but the operation throughout the hotel would also be managed based on Islamic principles. The basic facilities and services which comply to Islamic principles such as providing Halal food and drink, no alcohol beverage being served in the hotel premises, Qibat sign provided in each room, Prayer mat, copied of Holy Quran provide Ramadhan facilities such as for Iftar for Ramadhan buffet and also Sahur. Halal friendly hotel should also focus on their operation, design of the hotels and also their based financial of the hotel. This means that the facilities of the hotel should be operating as accepted in Shariah principles. For examples, the facilities such as spa, gym facilities, swimming pool, guest and function room should be separated for males and females.

**Halal food premises:** Food and beverage products served in a restaurant have to be Halal. All animals such as chicken and cow must be slaughtered according to Shariah principles. All food ingredients must be Halal and

go through Halal compliant process. Each kitchen in the hotel or restaurant should have Halal certificate endorsed by Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM). Furthermore, the utensils and equipment in the premises should also free from any Haram stuff. No alcoholic drinks should be served in the premise or restaurant. Malaysia standard prescribes practical guidelines for the preparation and handling of Halal food and to serve as a basic requirement for food product and food trade for business in Malaysia. Based on the Halal standard MS 1500:2009 (Second revision), it stated all the procedures in preparing, handling, storage and producing the Halal food. It covers from slaughtering, the hygiene and sanitation aspect in preparation of food, the processing of food and handling, distributing and lastly serving to the consumer (DSM, 2009). In order to provide the Halal food, it should be stored, transported, displayed and sold with the labeled of Halal and segregated with the non-Halal food products.

#### **MANAGEMENT FROM ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE**

**Halal standard:** In order to develop a concept or framework for Halal friendly tourism therefore, the Malaysia standard can be referred as a guideline to be applied for this new Halal friendly tourism concept.

**MS 1900:2005:** The Malaysia standard has also provided a general guideline for Quality Management System for an organization. This guideline endorsed by Department Standard Malaysia also known as Quality Management System requirements from Islamic perspectives (MS 1900:2005). Regarding to the guideline, it is stated the way for an organization to be managed based on principles and practice of quality management from Islamic perspectives. The MS 1900:2005 is one of the standards that have been endorsed so that it will support to the Islamic law under the Malaysia Legal System (DSM, 2005).

The Quality Management System from Islamic perspectives would probably refer to the existing ISO 9001 whereby the Shariah requirements are being incorporated in this international standard. MS 1900:2005 specify the requirement for Quality Management System that an organization are responsible to provide the product and services that meet customer and applicable to regulatory requirement. The organization also should ensure towards customer satisfaction must be met through the effective application of the Quality Management System in their organization. Furthermore, Quality Management System from Islamic perspectives has also given a specific

guideline on Shariah compliance requirements in every aspect of Quality Management System through MS 9001:2000 requirements.

**Islamic finance:** In order to develop a framework for Halal friendly hotel therefore, Islamic financing would be one of the elements in supporting this Halal friendly activity. In general, Islamic finance requires participation in sharing the profit and loss among of all parties who involved in this finance enterprise. Islamic finance also prohibits interest (riba) as it is one of the root causes of some unfair economic. Interest or riba defined as increase or excess in an exchange or sales of commodities which increase to owner without giving in return any equivalent counter value (Yusuf, 2009). Furthermore, it is clear in Holy Quran that Islam offer an interest-free business system, (Zainul *et al.*, 2004). There are some Verses that revealed on the prohibition of interest (riba):

○ you who believe, do not practice usury, changing doubled and redoubled (interest) but have fear of God: You may well attain your goal (3:130)

○ you who believe! Be afraid of Allah and give up what remains (due to you) from riba (usury) from now onward) If you are (really) believer (2:278)

Allah has cursed the one who takes interest, the one who pays it, the one who signs the contract and the one who witnesses the contract (Al-Tarmizi; Yusoff, 2002)

Moreover, Islamic finance also consists of Islamic insurance or known as Takaful. Takaful derived from the word Kafal which means to take care of one needs (Yusuf, 2009). This Islamic insurance is an exchange of contract between two parties to protect one of them from any unexpected risk. Al-Qaradawi (1994) also stated that in Islamic Shariah, insurance is for individuals against risk or danger which provision will be provided for assisting them to overcome disasters which may happen to them. Islamic insurance transaction involves two parties. The first party (insured) will pay an amount as general termed as premium to the second parties (insurer) to provide financial protection against to loss or disaster occurred in future within the agreed period. However, if the loss or disaster does not occur then the first parties (insured) will get the total premium amount paid share of profits from the total premium. The Islamic insurance companies are mostly link to the Islamic banks thus, the business transaction are supervised based on Shariah principles.

**Halal transportation/Halal airlines:** Halal transportation also refers to Halal airlines. This Halal airline services should provides Halal services to those Muslim travelers for whom choosing their air services to travel. This airlines services should provides the Halal friendly services such as Halal foods and beverages provide prayer facilities and also samak cleansing in their food operation. Examples of airlines services which offer this type of Halal friendly services in their airlines such as Emirates, Gulf air, Malaysia airlines and Qatar airways.

**Islamic travel packages:** Increase numbers of travelers who are conscious towards Muslim tour and travel packages would made an eager for the industries players to offered the tour packages that comply to the Islamic requirement. Islamic tour package has also being welcomed by Tourism Minister Datuk Sri Dr. Ng Yen Yen which she stated that Malaysia will make a move on the promotion of Muslim or Islamic tour packages due to the increase number of Muslim Chinese tourists to Malaysia. The Islamic tour packages include visit to the mosques, Islamic monument such as in Terengganu, promote an event during the Ramadhan month such as promoting Halal food stalls and Halal hotel buffets and also Islamic tour package include bring all the travelers to attend the exhibition regarding on Halal products and services.

### CONCLUSION

Halal tourism is a new fundamental business that been initiates in order to cater Muslim needs while they are traveling away from home. The initiative of developing the framework for Halal friendly tourism in Malaysia which will be focus more on Halal friendly hotel concept is essential because the industry players from tourism sector believe and realize, there is huge market for the Muslim now-a-days who is seeking for the Halal friendly services when they are traveling. Because of the demand from the Muslim market towards Halal friendly services therefore, there is essential for Malaysia to develop a framework or concept for Halal friendly tourism to be applied by the government. With the emerging of standards such as Halal food, Halal cosmetic and quality management from Islamic perspectives then it would be able in supporting this Halal travel and tourism to be developed.

Furthermore, the industry players also foresee that by developing the Halal travel and tourism services therefore, it will directly fulfill the Muslims needs thus, it will become one of the niche product for the tourism industry in Malaysia.

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