

Bridging Faith and Market: A Bibliometric Exploration of the Halal Hotel Landscape

**Mohammad Zen Nasrudin Fajri^{1*}, Abdul Latif², Abdul Latif Rizqon³,
Arie Rachmat Sunjoto⁴**

Fakultas Ekonomi dan Manajemen, Universitas Darussalam Gontor
mzennasrudin@unida.gontor.ac.id^{1*}, abdullatif@unida.gontor.ac.id,
latifrizqon@unida.gontor.ac.id, arierachmatsunjoto79@unida.gontor.ac.id

ABSTRACT.

This study explores how research on halal hotels has evolved, what themes have emerged over time, and where future scholarship should focus especially as the demand for faith-aligned hospitality continues to grow. Using a dataset of 139 documents retrieved from the Scopus database between 2009 and 2025, the study applies bibliometric analysis via Biblioshiny and VOSviewer to map publication trends, influential authors, institutions, and countries. Keyword co-occurrence analysis is used to identify thematic clusters. Content analysis of selected articles is then conducted to synthesize key research trends and challenges. The findings show that Halal hotel research is growing steadily, with Malaysia and Indonesia contributing the most. The field centers around seven key trends: certification and standardization, faith-driven traveler behavior, service quality, branding and digital engagement, internal ethical management, emerging technologies, and broader tourism integration. However, gaps remain, particularly around inconsistent standards, vague branding, and ethical questions surrounding tech use. To support future research, this study outlines 20 actionable questions tailored to the needs of practitioners. The findings provide useful direction for those designing, managing, or regulating halal hotel services, especially those aiming to bridge Islamic values with market realities.

Keywords: *Halal hotel; Islamic hospitality; Shariah-compliant tourism; bibliometric analysis; Islamic marketing*

INTRODUCTION

Halal-friendly tourism has become a mainstream trend in the travel industry. This segment has been growing very quickly according to the Global Muslim Travel Index 2018 (Mastercard and Crescentrating, 2018). The expected number of Muslim travelers worldwide reached 156 million in 2020, which accounts for 10% of the last travel market. It was expected that their expenditure would reach US\$220 billion by 2020 and the expectations increased to USD\$300 billion in 2026. This growth is expected to speed up as the Muslim population is projected to grow by 1.27 billion individuals, reaching 2.8 billion in 2050 (Pew Research Center, 2015).

This rapid expansion of the Muslim market segment, covering more than fifty countries (Ryan, 2015), has created an attractive opportunity for hotel businesses to encapsulate these products and services for this fast-growing group (Han et al., 2019). Hotels must understand some fundamental principles of Islam and create marketing strategies that are attractive to Muslim travelers (Al-Ansi & Han, 2019; Suci et al., 2021).

According to Jafari & Scott (2014), Muslim travelers have full intention of adhering to religious practices no matter where they are. Hence, providing quality halal products and services is vital for hotels in fulfilling the needs of Muslim customers. These services do not only affect destination experience but also the post-purchase behaviors, thus maintaining halal-friendly attributes is a necessity of destinations which can shape customer satisfaction and loyalty (Al-Ansi & Han, 2019).

Halal hotels are widely described as having all aspects of their operations, management and practices controlled by Islamic principles, but in real life this can be much less clear-cut. As in the practice based on Rachmiatie et al. (2022), these hotels accommodate Muslim guests through various products and services that reflect a spectrum of Islamic hospitality values. They can also be called "halal hotels," "Muslim-friendly hotels" or "sharia-compliant hotels." This inconsistency reveals a gap between the normative standards for which halal hospitality can be grouped as they are theory and its categories of practice in reality. Shnyrkova & Predvoditeleva (2022) stated that the religious values of stakeholders affect their daily decisions including business. In this sense, the variation of halal hotel products and branding perhaps relates to both level of trust hoteliers place on Islamic teachings which in turn informs their interpretation of an acceptable product for Muslim consumers.

Academically, the topic of halal hotels has been explored in a limited number of studies, including works by Henderson (2010), Rusydiana et al. (2021), and Stephenson (2014). These studies primarily focus on the concept of halal hotels and their attributes. It is necessary to undertake a comprehensive study of the literature related to halal hotels especially concerning the rising issues in this sector. Building on the existing literature, this study aims to address the gaps in previous research, particularly by mapping the bibliometric characteristics and trends of articles on halal tourism in the Scopus database. To the best of the author's knowledge, no prior research has utilized bibliometric analysis by combining search results from the Scopus database with VOSviewer for the term "halal hotel" except study by Rusydiana et al. (2021), who specifically explored the indicators of Islamic hotels. However, the scope is less comprehensive.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A Brief on Halal Hotel

Halal tourism fundamentally emphasizes the importance of ensuring that travel experiences are aligned with Islamic values, for instance halal-compliant accommodation is an important component (Henderson, 2010). According to Henderson (2010), and Stephenson (2014), halal hotels include a lot of features related to spiritual and practical needs of Muslim travelers. Common characteristics consist of ban on alcohol, inappropriate entertainment as well as artwork that does not include human or animals. They are designed to prevent beds and toilets from facing Mecca, and bathrooms have bidets. Employees wear modest clothing and frequently exhibit Islamic behaviour. Similarly, hotels should consider religious and

ethical business practices (corporate social responsibility, charitable giving like zakat, and Islamic financing). Services can include ladies-only or family floors, same-gender staff for private guests, and room-wide guidelines to dress respectfully. Halal food is the norm, while prayer rooms with mats, Qur'ans, Qiblah direction indicators and prayer times are often observed in such lodgings. Furthermore, according to Norzafir Md Salleh (2014), a halal hotel is one that does not use a transaction form based on usury and avoids providing entertainment which contains a prohibition in Islam. Arabic language services are another service which will enable Muslim tourists to travel the world with, as Arabic visitors that flood in from the Middle East prefer their native tongue (Battour et al., 2011).

Halal hotels are also known as Muslim-friendly hotels. There is a definition made by Suci et al. (2021) that relates to the concept of Muslim-friendly hotel, where “This type of accommodation provides specific service satisfying the need for services related to religiously based needs of Muslim guests and also non-Muslim guests who interested in the atmosphere”. Another related concept is the Islamic hotel, which offers halal service line with it that includes Halal Food (Idris & Razali, 2016). A Sharia-compliant hotel is the one where all products and services offered are following Sharia law (Zulkharnain & Jamal, 2012). Thus, a halal-friendly hotel is known to be a facility which provides different kind of products and services following the principles that limit offerings within Islamic law, particularly the goods and wares that comply with halal needs for Muslim visitors.

As referred to Rusydiana et al. (2021), halal hotels are not limited to Muslim guests, but they also welcome the broad audience. Halal food in Islam revolves around the ideas of being clean and safe, as well a guarantee that any food offered is of high quality, which means Halal is completely trustworthy for visitors to taste irrespective of faith. That is why non-Muslim tourists will feel confident and comfortable to dine in Islamic hotel. Also, these hotels ban both alcohol consumption and gambling policies improves the physical and mental wellbeing of Muslim as well as non-Muslim guests.

The halal hotel concept is divided into three categories according to perceived value: halal for practice, rather than branding; halal as product, and halal as value (Rachmattie et al., 2022). This classification of hotels based on the value they deliver, helps to further develop distinct categories within the product that also defines desired market segments. Some hotels that fall into “the halal for practice, not branding” category, put emphasis on quality by incorporating broad Islamic concepts into their approach without literally calling themselves halal. On the other hand, “Halal as value” category represents hotels producing offerings fully in line with Islamic teachings to guests looking for tangible emotional or spiritual ties. Finally, “the halal as product” category aims to provide value for money by aligning deliverables with more mainstream expectations through added layers of halal. This heterogeneity with regard to interpretation and implementation of halal essence makes it difficult to formulate an undeniable standard model for halal hotels.

Development of Halal Hotel

The halal-friendly hotel segment has witnessed rapid growth over the last decade, due to the lucrative opportunity (Muhamad-Yunus et al., 2014). Over one hundred new hotels were planned in a range of countries (Henderson, 2010) and with numerous leading luxury hotel brands including Kempinski and Caprice Gold Turkey entering the market. Kempinski created its Shaza brand for Muslim travelers, while Caprice Gold has properties such as the Caprice Thermal Palace and Caprice Gold hotels. For one more example, the Aerostar hotel in Moscow has taken some major steps by getting halal certification for one of their kitchens and giving copies of Quran, praying mats and indicators for Qibla direction for 20 of its rooms (Sboros, 2014). Moreover, shampoo and soap in these rooms are Halal-certified and hotel management provide standard practices with two separate prayer rooms available for men and women. Likewise, the Fairmont Makati and Raffles Makati hotels in The Philippines provide their Muslim guests with Qurans, prayer facilities and Arabic-language television channels (TTG Asia 2014) Such practices illustrate an increasing recognition within the hospitality sector of the needs and preferences of Muslim travelers. Muslim-friendly services are therefore viewed by travelers among the Muslim community as important motivating factors in determining destination selection, stimulating travel within this demographics and expediting Halal tourism growth internationally.

Meanwhile, the volume of Islamic-based destinations has grown (i.e. Muslim and non-Muslim destinations) (Battour & Ismail, 2016). Halal-friendly accommodation not entirely in Asia but also Europe is increasing due to some external factors. These factors include an increasing amount of wealth found in Middle Eastern tourists (Stephenson, 2014), a growing Muslim population within Europe itself (Audi, 2015), as well as an ever-growing interest amongst Western travelers for health and culturally immersive experiences whilst traveling abroad (Stephenson et al., 2010). These patterns has driven misery for leading brands such as AlMulla Hospitality to advance their invincibility into European overall business (Henderson, 2010) which displays that halal tourism is completely a universal one with an appealing economic potential.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts a combination of bibliometric and content analysis to examine literature on halal hotels. Bibliometric analysis, a statistical method that leverages bibliographic data, is widely used to map and evaluate academic literature such as journal articles, books, book chapters, and conference proceedings (Nicolaisen, 2010). It provides key insights into various aspects of scholarly output, including keyword co-occurrence, author collaboration, co-citation networks, and geographic trends, helping to identify emerging research domains (Secinaro et al., 2020). In this context, bibliometric analysis is used to highlight areas within halal hotel research where further discussion could be valuable, clarify theoretical perspectives, and explore how policy and future research directions might be shaped (Kamila & Jasrotia, 2023). Following the framework used by (Kholidah et al., 2022)

the study proceeds in three stages: search strategy, bibliometric analysis, and content analysis.

The bibliographic data of the articles are obtained from Scopus databases. Searching of documents is conducted by using terms (“Halal” OR “Islamic” OR “Shariah compliant” OR “Muslim-friendly”) AND (“Hotel” OR “Homestay” OR “Lodging”) on abstract, title, and keywords. Limitations are applied by setting journal articles only and English language to maintain the quality of the papers. Following that, the displayed papers are selected by excluding the duplicate and irrelevant papers. A total of 139 documents are extracted for analysis.

These articles were then analyzed using two key tools: VOSviewer and Biblioshiny, which helped uncover essential themes and insights relevant to halal hotel in the target fields. In bibliometric stage, Biblioshiny was employed to analyse halal hotel research growth and coverage in the chosen domains. It gave a statistical summary with regards to yearly trends in publication, major journals involved, and top contributing authors, institutions and countries. We then explored the structure of the research network using VOSviewer including analysis of co-authorship to find major contributors and institutions as well as mapping keyword co-occurrence to identify dominant research trends.

In the end, our content analysis stage concentrated on the clusters we created through our co-occurrence connection map. This included an analysis of the papers in each cluster to identify trends and collate prior findings. This stage also covered a review of the proposed avenues for future research highlighting how, if at all, halal hotels are being analyzed in the areas of economics, management and business.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Publication Development

Table 1 shows the description of the main information on the bibliographic data of the papers in halal hotel scope for analysis. The research on halal hotel has been gradually gaining a lot of momentum in the last decade. A total of 139 publications from 97 journals, books and other sources cover the period between 2009 and 2025. The subject has a promising annual compound growth of 11.85%, which demonstrates growing academic interest in the area. Average age of each document is about five years with just over 10 citations indicating an increasing impact in academic discourse.

Table 1. Main information of the paper dataset in halal hotel research

	Description	Results
Main information	Timespan	2009:2025
	Sources (Journals, Books, etc)	97
	Documents	139
	Annual Growth Rate %	11.85
	Document Average Age	5.4
	Average citations per doc	10.38

Authors	Authors	393
	Authors of single-authored docs	20
Authors Collaboration	Single-authored docs	21
	Co-Authors per Doc	3.27
	International co-authorships %	19.42
Document Types	article	98
	Book	1
	book chapter	15
	conference paper	20
	letter	1
	review	4

Source: Biblioshiny-Bibliometrix

The authorship landscape is dominated by 393 authors, but only 20 of those are solo authors. The co-authorship score is about 3.27 authors per paper, indicating a healthy collaborative culture. Interestingly, approximately 20% of the publications includes international collaboration indicating the global nature of halal hospitality issues. The majority of publications are journal articles (98 papers) followed by conference papers (20), book chapters (15), and a handful of reviews, books, and letters.

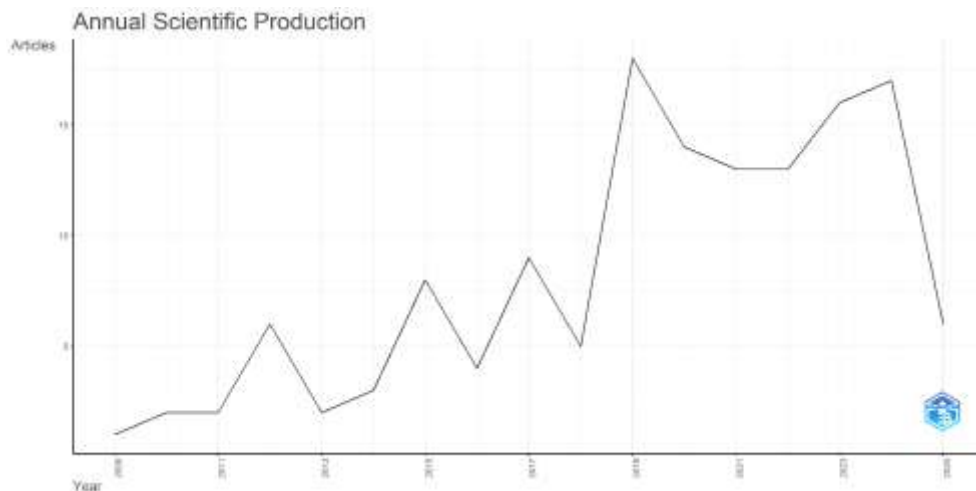


Figure 1. Annual Publication on Halal Hotel

Source: Biblioshiny-Bibliometrix

As depicted in figure 1, academic interest in halal hotel research has developed over time. Early in 2009 the field started slow with one or two publications a year, and it had an irregular but generally upward evolution with both dips and surges. A major turning point occurred in 2018 when researchers began publishing articles on the topic with over 15 publications in that particular year alone highlighting its emergence as a scholarly focus. There was a small drop off after this peak, but output had remained relatively positive and stable from 2019-2023

indicating interest, and research activity. In general, the trend indicates that halal hotel research has grown from a niche issue to a more widely studied theme in recent years. In all likelihood this is the result of increasing global demand for ethical tourism, Sharia-compliant finance and Muslim-friendly services.

Most Impactful Authors, Institutions and Countries

The core contributors for halal hotel research in terms of the number of published documents are highlighted in Table 2. Four publications each among three authors namely, Alam A, Qurtubi and Zahari MSM are notable who could be placed at key position in shaping this budding field. They are followed closely by a group of authors included Ariffin AAM, Kahlifah Z, Michael Hall C, Ratnasari RT, Razalli MR and Sulaiman Y with 3 papers each. Their consistent output clearly shows they are engaged and leading the conversation in halal hospitality. Another important contributor to this literature is Ahmat Y, with two publications. This list, though not the best indicator of scholarly impact, shows the authors who have produced prolifically and helped advance halal hotel studies as well as displayed them on the world stage.

Figure 2 provides a timeline of research activity from the top contributing authors in the halal hotel field. It illustrates not only when these authors published their work but also how frequently and how influential their contributions were over the years. Alam A, Qurtubi and Zahari MSM are the most frequent contributors having active publication from 2020 to 2024. Alam A wrote several papers with a big impact in 2023 and 2024 which can be seen by its bigger blue circles (a lot of articles to cite per year in relatively high citation counts). Michael Hall C and Ratnasari RT also stand out for their contributions in recent years, with Ratnasari RT's 2022 output showing a relatively high citation impact. On the other hand, previous contributors to this subject area such as Zahari MSM, Razalli MR and Ahmat YC have written substantial groundwork literature dating back to 2012. However, they seem to have published less regularly in the recent years.

Table 2. 10 Most Influential authors in halal hotel research

Authors	Number of Documents
Alam A	4
Qurtubi	4
Zahari MSM	4
Ariffin AAM	3
Kahlifah Z	3
Michael Hall C	3
Ratnasari RT	3
Razalli MR	3
Sulaiman Y	3
Ahmat Y	2

Universiti Teknologi Malaysia	5
Al Akhawayn University	4

Source: Biblioshiny-bibliometrix

Table 4 shows that Indonesia is a leading country in halal hotel research with the highest number of papers amounting to 125 compared to any other countries. The robust performance corresponds to the long-standing curiosity of this nation towards Islamic hospitality and growing academic infrastructure for tourism and halal related studies. Turkey comes a distant second with 24 documents, and the following countries, Jordan (8) and United Arab Emirates (7), are known their relative positioning in strategic Islamic tourism markets. Regional dedication to faith, hospitality and culture is highlighted by these nations.

Table 4. 10 Most Influential Countries in halal hotel research

Countries	Number of Documents
Indonesia	125
Turkey	24
Jordan	8
United Arab Emirates	7
Iran	6
South Korea	6
Sweden	6
UK (abbreviation remains uppercase)	5
China	4

Source: Biblioshiny-bibliometrix

Non-Muslim majority countries are among the top contributors: Sweden (6), South Korea (6) and UK (5). This signifies a wide, international academic inclination towards halal hospitality, probably fueled by the development of worldwide Islamic travel business sectors and the requirement for comprehensive tourism research. In the meantime, it also be involved because Iran (6) and China (4), two countries that are gaining relevance in this particular sector.

Co-occurrence Analysis

Figure 3 presents the thematic landscape of halal hotel research based on keyword co-occurrence, grouped into five distinct clusters. These clusters reflect the major research directions and how various concepts interlink within the field. Table 4 displays the strength of every keyword for each cluster in terms of link, total link strength and occurrence.

Cluster 1 (Red) centers on foundational concepts such as “hotels” (occurrence: 17), “Malaysia” (12), and “Shariah-compliant hotel” (6). These terms show high connectivity, particularly “hotels,” which has the strongest total link strength (50), indicating its central role in the literature. Keywords like “service

	Islamism	11	13	4
	Religiosity	5	7	4
	Spirituality	4	4	3
	Tourism	15	26	7
Cluster 3 (Blue)	Commerce	9	10	3
	Halal certification	7	8	4
	Halal tourism	21	30	20
	Islamic tourism	13	16	8
	Muslim-friendly hotel	3	4	3
	Muslim tourists	2	2	3
	Tourism industry	5	5	3
Cluster 4 (Yellow)	Halal hotel	5	6	5
	Hotel industry	20	30	11
	Islamic hotel	12	16	7
	Muslim tourist	4	5	3
	Perceived value	8	11	6
	Satisfaction	10	11	6
	Shariah-compliant hotel	7	7	3
Cluster 5 (Purple)	Case-studies	9	11	3
	Customer satisfaction	10	10	6
	Halal industry	9	10	3
	Muslim friendly hotels	2	2	3
	sharia hotel	10	14	9
	sharia hotels	1	1	3

Source: Authors' own

In Cluster 3 (Blue), the emphasis shifts to commercial aspects and institutional validation, with high-frequency keywords such as “halal tourism” (occurrence: 20; link strength: 30) and “Islamic tourism” (8). Terms like “halal certification” and “commerce” suggest growing interest in business models, market potential, and standardization in the halal hotel sector.

The group in Cluster 4 (Yellow) explores customer-centric concepts such as “perceived value,” “satisfaction,” and “Islamic hotel.” The keyword “hotel industry” shows strong link strength (30) and occurrence (11), indicating a strategic focus on positioning halal hotels within the broader hospitality landscape. The presence of “Muslim tourist” and “Shariah-compliant hotel” highlights the emphasis on alignment with Islamic values in delivering quality experiences.

Finally, Cluster 5 (Purple) represents more specific and localized investigations, featuring terms like “case-studies,” “customer satisfaction,” “sharia hotel,” and “Muslim friendly hotels.” These keywords suggest empirical research and

context-driven insights, often using localized data or examining unique aspects of halal hotel operations.

Trends of the Existing Literature

Seven trends in halal hotel research are built based on themes identified in the bibliometric clusterization of co-occurrence. Trend 1 on standardization stems from Cluster 1, which focuses on halal and Shariah-compliant practices. Trend 2 on religiosity and guest motivation reflects Cluster 2 with keywords like Islam and attitude. Trend 3 on service quality combines Clusters 1 and 4, while Trend 4 on branding and marketing draws from Cluster 4. Trend 5 on internal management connects with Clusters 1 and 5. Trend 6 on innovation is driven by Cluster 3, and Trend 7 on tourism ecosystems blends Clusters 2 and 3.

Trend 1: Institutionalizing Halal Standards and Shariah Compliance

One of the recurring themes emerging in halal hotel research is the need to establish standardization for halal practices and Shariah compliance frameworks in the hospitality sector. Despite countries such as Malaysia positioning themselves on the international stage as leaders in halal tourism, in practice Shariah standards are not uniformly applied across hotels. Numerous hotels interpret the shariah compliance based on vague or fragmented interpretations (Musa et al., 2019; Sulaiman et al., 2021). As a result, this variance creates big gaps between halal branding and the actual delivery of Islamically appropriate services– in particular with regard to facilities, financial operations, and staff conduct. It's not just a matter of practice, but also regulation: most hotels have no clear guidance from government agencies or religious authorities on how to properly implement Islamic requirements in their operations, while many live with uncertainty.

Responding to this challenge, scholars have suggested the establishment of a more reliable and standardized system for halal certification. For example, one of their main criticisms of world famous guidelines like CrescentRating and Salam Standard, among others, is that they mostly emphasize Maqasid Shariah while ignoring some dimensions, like property protection and guest safety; apart from emphasizing private dimensions (Yahaya et al., 2020). Furthermore, Rachmiatie et al. (2022) found that hotel owners in Indonesia have a varied perception about halal branding, varying from marketing and operational approaches on one side to value centre of operations approach on the other side; and these differences will further complicate standardization of halal practices thereafter. Rasmuddin et al. (2024) and Sucipto et al. (2021) as well advocate for a halal assurance framework that integrates food, accommodation and facilities upon which there should be the same standards of compliance; otherwise varying standards will compromise consumer trust and the sanctity of religion.

Trend 2: Faith-Based Motivation and Consumer Religious Identity

Muslims want several kinds of halal hotels to cater their preferences which are not only influenced by just the demographic dimension include age, income or education background but as importantly integrating religiosity into consideration.

Research by Dassouli et al. (2025) and Md. Ithnan & M. Ariffin (2020) also affirm that religious commitment has a significant effect on the intention to stay in halal-compliant accommodation, indicating that Muslim tourists are not only highly concerned about having comfortable or affordable accommodation but rather align with the spirituality aspect. It shows the evolution and understanding of how Muslim travelers should be approached; no longer are they simply seen as pure economic decision-makers, but value-driven individuals seeking pursuits to experience their faith identity.

However, religious motivations are not uniform and overlap with other personal values. Osman et al. (2024) found in a non-representative study that emotional, cognitive and social benefits shape satisfaction significantly but pure Islamic or altruistic motives were less dominant. Koburtay (2022) point out that Islamic environments increase spiritual well-being, however, strictness in religious enforcement creates discomfort for guests as a psychological and tangible issue, particularly in luxury contexts. The findings suggest halal hotels should accommodate guests in an Islamic environment with flexibility to avoid making them feel constrained, enhancing both satisfaction and inclusivity.

Trend 3: Enhancing Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

A further notable issue that frequently occurs within the literature relates to the provision of service quality and its subsequent effect on customer satisfaction and loyalty in halal hotels. Several studies show that Islamic service standards by themselves are not sufficient for achieving guest satisfaction, and must be paired with the relentless provisioning of core hospitality services at high levels of consistency and quality. For example, Jeaheng et al. (2019) demonstrates that the key prerequisites for inducing positive affective responses by Muslim guests are privacy, halal dining offerings and behaviorally respectful staff. Similarly, Nazari et al. (2020) shows that smaller Islamic hotels are characterized by the fact that they often offer better facilities for guests if their development and standards meet customer expectations, which in terms of tourism include aspects such as the provision of prayer space, halal food and an alcohol-free environment. These studies support that spiritual, emotional, and functional elements of service must work together trait for halal hotel.

In the same vein, Yusof et al. (2024) and Chikaputri et al. (2023) contextualizes the literature by introducing perceived value and organizational climate as mediators of customer experiences. A hotel with a culture of service excellence, driven by the staff and management that supports positive employee behaviour is likely to receive better ratings and intentions to re-visit from guests. Arasli et al. (2023) based an analytical study with online hotel reviews strengthen this argument through the finding of dominant service dimensions such as cleanliness, food quality, and facilities in guest satisfaction stories. Halal hotels need to do more than provide surface benefits; they need to offer memorable experiences, particularly in person and online. The bottom line is successful halal hospitality requires a merger

of Islamic values and professionalism delivery to cater the higher demands of worldly Muslim travelers.

Trend 4: Marketing Strategy and Digital Communication in Halal Hospitality

Researchers emphasize that halal tourism is becoming increasingly competitive and requires more distinct branding and communication in halal hospitality. This lack of market differentiation has resulted in Islamic hotels struggling to attract Muslim consumers while also serving the same guests from outside the faith group. Alserhan et al. (2023) argues that good branding improves visibility and religious identity at the same time; but with modern marketing practices, they are constantly negotiable for beauty between a very wide array of groups. Scholars encourage reframing halal branding away from its religious-based definition towards value-based attitudes that emphasize the benefits of a wider range of hospitality offered at halal establishments.

The impact of digital tools, especially social media are significant. Alam et al. find that Visual content such as Instagram videos heavily increases engagement and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) whereas text-heavy elements like hashtags have little impact. The Islamic character of halal hotels tend to be contingent and flexible with respect to target audience and channel (Muharam & Asutay, 2022). Such selective self-presentation mirrors an evolving marketing strategy that combines authentic representation of Islamic values together with strategic flexibility, allowing halal hotels to address the needs of multiple cultural and consumer segments while also maintaining core Islamic tenets.

Trend 5: Organizational Strategy and Human Capital in Halal Hotel Management

There is an expansion of research on strategies inside the resort that specifically drive performance especially in human resources development and management. Studies by Joeliaty et al. (2020) and Wook et al., (2021) show that infusing Islamic values of honesty, trust and halal orientation into organizational culture boost the motivation and effectiveness of ethical leaders. Such values are rooted in religion but also provide competitive advantages by promoting engagement and authenticity in service delivery.

To go beyond the conventional management, researchers are also developing alternative models such as waqf-based hotels with social and spiritual purposes colliding with business operations. Ali et al., (2024) present waqf hotels as hospitality projects where profits are recycled back into community benefit programs. However, applying such models in non-Muslim-majority contexts is problematic. Abbasian et al., (2024) assumes that slow-paced acceptance of halal hospitality in countries such as Sweden is caused by a secular mindset among citizens and financial difficulties. While it is important to align with Islamic ethics, contextual adaptability and discretion according to local environments play a big role in the sustainability of these companies.

Trend 6: Emerging Technologies and Innovation in Halal Hospitality

Emerging technologies are reshaping halal hospitality. Recent literature has focused on this new trend Along with the expansion of industry across global borders,

digital solutions are recognized as obligatory for enhancing accessibility, tailoring individual service offering, advancing innovation. Aysan & Syarif (2025) identify opportunities using NFT and metaverse for improving branding advantages, loyalty programs, virtual hotel experiences with operations metrics. Despite the exciting opportunities they present, these technologies also pose ethical questions with respect to Shariah compliance especially around data privacy and the validity of virtual transactions. Lately in these discussions, the point to consider, is that all innovations must be based on Islamic teachings.

More importantly, technology is simplifying and enhancing the halal travel experience (Khopid et al., 2024) explores mobile applications that assist in finding halal-certified hotels and services, emphasizing how cultural and religious representations can be ensured through stakeholder feedback. Papastathopoulos (2022) has used a model to measure halal service quality in order to assist Muslim and non-Muslim operators similarly. Such developments represent part of a much larger push towards digital solutions that accelerate information circulation, enable trust, flexibility and adapting religious authenticity.

Trend 7: Broader Ecosystem of Halal Tourism and Muslim Travel Behavior

Recent waves of research locate halal hotels in a larger Muslim travel ecosystem, noting that they do not operate in a vacuum but rather constitute part of an even larger cultural and economic and policy landscape. Tangvitoontham & Sattayanuwat (2022) finds that GDP and population determine Muslim tourist flows; however, religious factors such as halal food access, prayer facilities and Muslim-friendly environments often weigh heavier. This suggests that national tourism destinations need to invest consistently in both infrastructure and culture-sensitive hospitality.

Jalasi et al. (2023) and Raof et al., (2023) argue that Muslim travelers are more inclined and concern about halal assurance, religious atmosphere and destination reputation that could be less well marketed in the mainstream context. On the other hand, Hadasali et al. (2022) underscored that post-pandemic, safety measurements such as CHSE protocol need to adhere with Shariah principles in order to restore faith wherever it helps to regain trust from traveler who adheres with their belief. Alam et al. adds that guest reviews, from sites like TripAdvisor, reveal a wealth of information highlighting both spiritual moments and missed service opportunities. Together, these studies confirm that halal hotels operate within an active religious-tourism ecosystem and underscore the need for such hospitality management strategies to be holistic in order to support culturally relevant and competitive hospitality experiences.

Discussion

Halal hotel is a booming industry, however there are interrelated challenges inhibiting its long-term sustainable growth, global market positioning and consumer trust. Both internal operational gaps and systemic barriers in regulation, perception, infrastructure and market adaptability cause this.

However, one of the major problems is the absence of standardisation and well defined regulatory guidelines. Despite being referred to as the forefront of halal tourism, in countries like Malaysia and Indonesia, many hotels still run without clear halal architecture certification or a standardized definition of Shariah accommodation (Musa et al., 2019; Sulaiman et al., 2021). According to Rachmiatie et al. (2022), halal branding differs among business owners, with some seeing it as a commitment based on values and others benefiting from using halal branding for the sake of market, resulting in inconsistency when delivering services and confusion among consumers. The existing global rating systems such as CrescentRating and Salam Standard are also criticized for not being comprehensive enough because they lack important parameters such as solid protection of property and operational transparency (Yahaya et al., 2020). The industry needs an international, if not at least regional certification system or risk being undercut by inconsistencies and authenticity dilution.

One of the biggest struggle is how to strike a good balance between Islamic identity, branding and consumer diversity. Many hotels, classed as Islamic adjust to the normal hospitality offering and in so doing tend to lose their appeal for both Muslim and non-Muslim travellers alike (Alserhan et al., 2023). The absence of unique market positioning devalues the brand clarity sought for by halal hotels and also contributes to reduced competitive advantage. Furthermore, Muharam & Asutay (2022) found evidence of hotels cultivating selective religious self-presentation on different platforms where some emphasized Islamic values whereas others did not show any respect for religions; this is also a tension between authenticity and market adaptation.

There is need for a missing link between Islamic morals and ethics and the internal operations and leadership in every organization from the point of view of human resources and management. Even though the benefits of instilling Islamic values and principles like honesty, trust and halal-oriented employee embedded within organizations (Joeliaty et al., 2020; Wook et al., 2021), Shariah principles are still often applied as a front-end feature instead of being foundational. This separation decreases harmonization and makes it impossible to engage in comprehensive Islamic hospitality.

While technological innovation promises advantages, it introduces new layers of complexity. Though tools to support clear communication and accessibility gaps like mobile apps (Khopid et al., 2024), or service perception models (Papastathopoulos, 2022) are being introduced as per the need of the hour; far-fetched trends such as NFTs and metaverse-based branding (Aysan & Syarif, 2025) draw Shariah compliance and ethical scrutiny. These include data privacy, permissibility of virtual interaction, and compatibility of digital assets with Islamic law. It's not just about adopting technology, rather enabling innovations without compromising on religious mandates or guest trust.

Similarly, structuring halal hotel concepts in contexts with non-Muslim majorities pose both structural and cultural challenges. Abbasian et al. (2024)

discusses limited public awareness, financing challenges, and political resistance to halal hotel models in secular contexts such as Sweden. Halal hotels need to do more than simple service adaptation and also involve in educative outreach with cultural diplomacy to promote acceptance.

We find that halal hotels are detached from the wider religious-tourism landscape despite being shaped by infrastructural, policy and consumer factors. As Tangvitoontham & Sattayanuwat (2022) found, when choosing travel destinations Muslims often prioritise religious and lifestyle factors such as the provision of halal food, prayer spaces and family-friendly environments over economic drivers including price or distance. However, these aspirations are still not properly reflected in tourism marketing (Jalasi et al., 2023; Raof et al., 2023). Moreover, there are significant discrepancies between promises in branding and the guest experiences reported on platforms like TripAdvisor (Alam et al., 2023), the reason brands must continue to manage qualitative experiences as layers of a responsive feedback loop.

Future Research Directions

Based on the literature and identified trends, future research in halal hotel studies should be guided by the practical needs of different stakeholders, policy makers, hotel operators, marketers, tech developers, and destination managers. Grouping research in this way ensures that findings directly address real-world challenges and support the sustainable growth of the halal hospitality sector.

For policymakers and certification bodies, one of the most urgent research areas is the development of standardized halal certification frameworks. Many hotels still operate with unclear or inconsistent interpretations of Shariah compliance (Sulaiman Y, 2021; Rachmiatie, 2022). Future studies should explore how unified standards can be developed and adopted across cultural and legal contexts. Research is also needed on integrating halal hotels into national tourism policies, especially in light of post-COVID health standards that must align with Islamic cleanliness principles (Hadiasali, 2022).

Hotel managers need research that clarifies what aspects of service quality most impact Muslim guest satisfaction (Jeaheng, 2019; Yusof, 2024). Equally important is understanding how to balance Islamic values with comfort and inclusivity for a diverse Muslim clientele (Osman, 2024). Studies on integrating Islamic ethics into leadership and HR strategies are also essential (Joeliaty, 2020; Ali, 2024).

For marketing professionals, future research should explore the role of visual content and selective religious branding in shaping consumer perceptions and trust (Alam, 2024; Muharam, 2022). Meanwhile, technology developers need studies that assess the Shariah implications of emerging tools like NFTs and metaverse-based hotel experiences (Aysan, 2025), as well as user-centered design for halal travel apps (Khopid, 2024).

Lastly, for destination planners, research on Muslim traveler motivations and ecosystem-wide halal tourism coordination (Tangvito, 2022; Jalasi, 2023) will be

vital. This structured, practitioner-focused research agenda ensures more actionable, impactful contributions to the evolving halal hotel industry.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study maps the progress of halal hotel research and uncovers the themes that have shaped the field over the past 15 years. Through both bibliometric and thematic analysis, it becomes clear that this area of scholarship is not only growing but also diversifying. From discussions about service quality and guest satisfaction to the role of religiosity, ethics, and digital innovation, the research reflects the complexity of aligning hospitality with Islamic values in a global market.

At the same time, several challenges remain. Certification standards are often inconsistent, branding lacks clarity, and many hotels struggle to integrate Islamic principles beyond surface-level offerings. Meanwhile, the use of technology, such as blockchain or metaverse platforms, raises new questions about ethics and Shariah compliance. Importantly, halal hotels are still not fully embedded in broader tourism ecosystems, which limits their visibility and impact.

To move the field forward, this study proposes a research agenda that speaks directly to the real-world concerns of practitioners, from hotel managers and marketers to policymakers and tech developers. By bridging academic inquiry with practical relevance, future research can help shape a halal hospitality sector that is both spiritually grounded and globally competitive.

REFERENCES

- Abbasian, S., Onn, G., & Nordberg, D. (2024). The perception of halal concept of hoteliers in the light of social exchange theory: A Swedish study. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights*, 7(4), 2403–2421. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JHTI-01-2023-0038>
- Alam, A., Tri Ratnasari, R., Latifathul Jannah, I., & El Ashfahany, A. (2023). Development and evaluation of Islamic green financing: A systematic review of green sukuk. *Environmental Economics*, 14(1), 61–72. [https://doi.org/10.21511/ee.14\(1\).2023.06](https://doi.org/10.21511/ee.14(1).2023.06)
- Al-Ansi, A., & Han, H. (2019). Role of halal-friendly destination performances, value, satisfaction, and trust in generating destination image and loyalty. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 13, 51–60. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2019.05.007>
- Ali, S. N. M., Arshad, H., Fauzi, N. S., Ling, N. L. F. J., & Chuweni, N. N. (2024). Beyond Profit: Exploring Waqf Hotel Management Through Fiqh Al-Awlawiyyat Lens. In B. Alareeni & A. Hamdan (Eds.), *Navigating the Technological Tide: The Evolution and Challenges of Business Model Innovation* (Vol. 1082, pp. 454–463). Springer Nature Switzerland. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-67434-1_43
- Alserhan, B., Zeqiri, J., Gleason, K., Said, B., & Armutcu, B. (2023). POSITIONING OF ISLAMIC HOTELS: A CORRESPONDENCE ANALYSIS APPROACH. *GeoJournal of*

- Tourism and Geosites*, 46(1), 108–117. <https://doi.org/10.30892/gtg.46112-1006>
- Arasli, H., Saydam, M. B., Gunay, T., & Jafari, K. (2023). Key attributes of Muslim-friendly hotels' service quality: Voices from booking.com. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 14(1), 106–127. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-11-2020-0341>
- Audi. (2015). Muslim population projected to nearly match Christian by 2050. *The Wall Street Journal*, 2.
- Aysan, A. F., & Syarif, M. F. (2025). Shaping the halal tourism industry landscape through NFT and metaverse: New horizons for halal brand and halal booking hotel. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 16(1), 123–140. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-07-2023-0206>
- Battour, M., & Ismail, M. N. (2016). Halal tourism: Concepts, practises, challenges and future. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 19, 150–154. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2015.12.008>
- Battour, M., Ismail, M. N., & Battor, M. (2011). The impact of destination attributes on Muslim tourist's choice. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 13(6), 527–540. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.824>
- Chikaputri, K. K., Qurtubi, Sutrisno, W., Helia, V. N., & Yanti, R. (2023). *Effect of inventory and facilities on service quality: A case study in sharia hotel in Indonesia*. 020062. <https://doi.org/10.1063/5.0126057>
- Dassouli, S., Satt, H., Chetioui, Y., & Semahi, M. (2025). The extended theory of planned behavior in customer's intention to visit halal hotels. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 16(6), 1573–1592. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-01-2024-0026>
- Hadiasali, A. E., Wijaya, S., Widjaja, D. C., & Jaolis, F. (2022). THE INFLUENCE OF SHARIA HOTEL INDICATORS TOWARDS ITS COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AND GUEST INTENTION TO STAY: AN APPRAISAL. *Malaysian Journal of Syariah and Law*, 10(2), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.33102/mjssl.vol10no2.401>
- Han, H., Yu, J., Lee, J.-S., & Kim, W. (2019). Impact of hotels' sustainability practices on guest attitudinal loyalty: Application of loyalty chain stages theory. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 28(8), 905–925. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19368623.2019.1570896>
- Henderson, J. C. (2010). Sharia-Compliant Hotels. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 10(3), 246–254. <https://doi.org/10.1057/thr.2010.3>
- Idris, J., & Razali, A. R. (2016). A STUDY OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS ISLAMIC HOTEL: ASSESSING ON KNOWLEDGE AND RELIGIOSITY. *Proceeding of the 2nd International Conference on Economics & Banking*.
- Jafari, J., & Scott, N. (2014). Muslim world and its tourisms. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 44, 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2013.08.011>
- Jalasi, A., Ambad, S. N. A., Ishar, N. I. M., & Rafiki, A. (2023). Exploring Factors Influencing International Muslim Tourists' Intentions Towards Homestays in Sabah, Malaysia: In A. Rafiki, A. G. Pananjung, & M. D. T. P. Nasution (Eds.), *Advances in Logistics, Operations, and Management Science* (pp. 83–95). IGI Global. <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-6684-7519-5.ch006>

- Jeaheng, Y., Al-Ansi, A., & Han, H. (2019). Halal-friendly hotels: Impact of halal-friendly attributes on guest purchase behaviors in the Thailand hotel industry. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 36(6), 729–746. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2019.1631940>
- Joeliaty, J., Ahmad Faisal, Y., & Wendra, W. (2020). An Analysis of Strategy Formulation for Halal Hotel Human Resources in Indonesia. *Cogent Business & Management*, 7(1), 1842008. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2020.1842008>
- Kamila, M. K., & Jasrotia, S. S. (2023). Ethics and marketing responsibility: A bibliometric analysis and literature review. *Asia Pacific Management Review*, 28(4), 567–583. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apmr.2023.04.002>
- Kholidah, H., Hijriah, H. Y., Mawardi, I., Huda, N., Herianingrum, S., & Alkausar, B. (2022). A Bibliometric mapping of peer-to-peer lending research based on economic and business perspective. *Heliyon*, 8(11), e11512. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2022.e11512>
- Khopid, M. A., Afwani, R., Dwiyanaputra, R., Nugraha, G. S., Sayuti, R. H., & Hananza Putrawan, F. A. (2024). The Roles of Hotel Industry and Travel Agents in a Scrum Team for an Integrated Halal Tourism Application Based on Android. *2024 International Conference on Information Technology and Computing (ICITCOM)*, 283–288. <https://doi.org/10.1109/ICITCOM62788.2024.10762058>
- Koburtay, T. (2022). Guests' Happiness in Luxury Hotels in Jordan: The Role of Spirituality and Religiosity in an Islamic Context. *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration*, 23(5), 987–1005. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15256480.2021.1881942>
- Md. Ithnan, I. H., & M. Ariffin, A. A. (2020). Behavioral Intention Towards “Halal Hotels”: Religiosity or Ethnicity? *WSEAS TRANSACTIONS ON BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS*, 17, 58–74. <https://doi.org/10.37394/23207.2020.17.8>
- Muhamad-Yunus, N., Abd-Razak, N., & Ghani, N. (2014). Consumer purchase intention towards Sharia Compliant Hotel (SCH). In S. Radzi, M. Bakhtiar, Z. Mohi, M. Zahari, N. Sumarjan, C. Chik, & F. Anuar (Eds.), *Theory and Practice in Hospitality and Tourism Research* (pp. 155–159). CRC Press. <https://doi.org/10.1201/b17390-31>
- Muharam, I. N., & Asutay, M. (2022). Online disclosure practices of halal-friendly hotels. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 13(1), 119–132. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-12-2018-0239>
- Musa, A., Kadir, S. A., Ibrahim, M., Jusoh, N., Tahrim, S. N. C., & Din, N. M. (2019). Authorities Perspectives Towards the Implementation of Shariah-Compliant Hotel in Malaysia. *Research in World Economy*, 10(2), 10. <https://doi.org/10.5430/rwe.v10n2p10>
- Nazari, N., Abd Rahman, A., Ab Aziz, Y. B., & Hashim, H. (2020). The effect of customer satisfaction on the performance of the small an medium-sized hotels. *Tourism*

- and Hospitality Management*, 26(1), 69–96.
<https://doi.org/10.20867/thm.26.1.5>
- Nicolaisen, J. (2010). Bibliometrics and Citation Analysis: From the Science Citation Index to Cybermetrics. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 61(1), 205–207. <https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.21181>
- Norzafir Md Salleh. (2014). *Establishing Shariah-compliance hotel characteristics from a Muslim needs perspective*. Unpublished.
<https://doi.org/10.13140/2.1.1868.7043>
- Osman, I., Junid, J., Ali, H., Buyong, S. Z., Syed Marzuki, S. Z., & Othman, N. (2024). Consumption values, image and loyalty of Malaysian travellers towards Muslim-friendly accommodation recognition (MFAR). *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 15(3), 682–719. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-09-2022-0245>
- Papastathopoulos, A. (2022). Which hotel services really matter to Muslim travelers? Developing and validating a multidimensional-continuum scale. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 102, 103145. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2022.103145>
- Rachmiatie, A., Rahmafitria, F., Suryadi, K., & Larasati, A. R. (2022). Classification of halal hotels based on industrial perceived value: A study of Indonesia and Thailand. *International Journal of Tourism Cities*, 8(1), 244–259. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJTC-04-2021-0063>
- Raof, N. M., Mukhtar, D., Setiawan, M. I., & Hao, T. C. (2023). Malaysian Hotel Strategy in Compliance with Local Authority. In B. Alareeni & A. Hamdan (Eds.), *Impact of Artificial Intelligence, and the Fourth Industrial Revolution on Business Success* (Vol. 485, pp. 913–919). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08093-7_60
- Rasmuddin, R., Umar, W., Sudirman, S., & Lambooy, T. (2024). Legal Clarity for Sharia Lodging Businesses through Sharia Certification. *Jurnal Media Hukum*, 31(2), 206–223. <https://doi.org/10.18196/jmh.v31i2.18635>
- Rusydiana Mr, A. S., Hasib, F. F., & Rahayu, S. S. (2021). Islamic Hotel Indicators: A Bibliometric Study. *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage*, 9(1), 145–164. <https://doi.org/10.21427/8AA4-QW88>
- Ryan, A. (2015). On the Muslim Question. *Journal of Church and State*, 57(4), 756–758. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcs/csv091>
- Sboros, M. (2014). Moscow hotel goes 'halal' in bid to attract global Muslim visitors. *Biz News*.
- Secinaro, S., Brescia, V., Calandra, D., & Biancone, P. (2020). Employing bibliometric analysis to identify suitable business models for electric cars. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 264, 121503. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2020.121503>
- Shnyrkova, A., & Predvoditeleva, M. (2022). The needs of Muslim hotel customers: Evidence from Russian guests. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 13(1), 133–160. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-09-2018-0172>

- Stephenson, M. L. (2014). Deciphering 'Islamic hospitality': Developments, challenges and opportunities. *Tourism Management*, 40, 155–164. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2013.05.002>
- Suci, A., Junaidi, Nanda, S. T., Kadaryanto, B., & Van Fc, L. L. (2021). Muslim-friendly assessment tool for hotel: How halal will you serve? *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 30(2), 201–241. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19368623.2020.1775746>
- Sucipto, S., Fadhila, R., & Astuti, R. (2021). Factors affecting the adoption of halal assurance system (HAS) at a restaurant in sharia concept hotel. *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, 924(1), 012053. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/924/1/012053>
- Sulaiman, Y., Rahman, M. A., Mat, N. K. N., & Musa, R. (2021). The sequential mediation in online repatronage intention model for syariah hotels among muslim customers in malaysia. *WSEAS Transactions on Business and Economics*, 17, 153–163.
- Tangvitoontham, N., & Sattayanuwat, W. (2022). Factors influencing Muslim tourists' decision making on choosing a destination: Case study of Muslim tourists from Organization of Islamic Cooperation. *Journal of Tourism & Development*, 227-240 Páginas. <https://doi.org/10.34624/RTD.V39I0.30348>
- Wook, T. K. T., Hamzah, N., & Amiruddin, R. (2021). Nilai Islam dalam Pengurusan Modal Intelek di Sektor Perhotelan. *Jurnal Ekonomi Malaysia*, 55(2), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.17576/JEM-2021-5502-1>
- Yahaya, M. Z., Samsudin, M. A., & Mohd Kashim, M. I. A. (2020). Analisis Standard Hotel Mesra Muslim di Malaysia Berdasarkan Perspektif Maqasid Syariah. *International Journal of Islamic Thought*, 12(1), 43–53. <https://doi.org/10.24035/ijit.18.2020.180>
- Yusof, N. A. M., Soelar, S. A., Wan Jusoh, W. J., & Hasyim, K. S. H.-Y. (2024). Linking Service Climate to Customer Satisfaction: A Multilevel Analysis of Muslim-friendly Hotels. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Innovation in Hospitality and Tourism*, 13, 69–84.
- Zulkharnain, A., & Jamal, S. A. (2012). Muslim guest perception of value towards Syariah concept hotel. In *Book: Current Issues in Hospitality and Tourism*. <https://doi.org/10.1201/b12752>