

Increasing Halal Tourism Potential at Andaman Gulf in Thailand for Muslim Country

Sureerat Chookaew, Oraphan chanin, Jirapa Charatarawat, Pingpis Sriprasert, and Sudarat Nimpaya

Abstract—The main aim of this research is to develop the potential of Halal tourism on the Andaman Gulf in Thailand for a group of the tourists from Muslim countries. There shall be five research objectives, which are; to propose the method of making the marketing plans of the Halal tourism for all tourists from Muslim countries; to offer either the entrepreneurs or tourism businessmen many choices in Halal tourism management for tourists from Muslim countries; to study about the way to develop the potential of Halal tourism management in order to support the tourists from Muslim countries; to be a model of setting administration standard, and Halal tourism management for tourists from Muslim countries; and to offer tourists from Muslim countries alternative choices of consuming Halal products and services.

Index Terms—Model of Halal tourism, Halal tourism business, Andaman Sea Coast of Thailand.

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the most important sectors of the Thai economy with highest earning of foreign currencies [1]. Thailand has diversity in tourism resources; especially in geography, climates, biology and flora & fauna. These enable an increasing number of both Thai and international tourists to be able choose travel many provinces of Thailand. Also, Thailand is reputed in cultural tourism. Thus, Thai government had continually promoted the development of tourism in various tourist destinations throughout the country [1].

Halal Tourism is a market segment that is fast growing not only in Muslim countries but globally. Non-Muslim countries like Australia, Taiwan, Korea, Japan, countries in Europe, are specifically catering to do this tourism segment, the Islamic tourism [2]. There are close to 1.7 Muslims worldwide who are becoming more affluent and traveling with their families and friends. It used to be that Muslims travelled overseas for either Hajj and Umrah. Now they have learned to take time to travel [3].

Now it's easier to find Halal food in non-Muslim countries; hotels are also trying to meet Muslim travelers' demands by showing the Qa'aba direction for prayer [3]. My event, the world Islamic Tourism Mart, is the ideal platform for tourism industry sectors to take part, meet, network, and create new opportunities to increase the capture of the Muslim tourism

market segment [2].

This paper focuses on the Halal tourism. Halal tourism, as permissible under Halal Restaurants, Halal/Shariah-compliant hotels and Halal Spa.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Definition of Tourism

Tourism is one of the most important and fast expanding sectors of the world economy [4]. It is also a major source of foreign exchange earnings for many developing countries. Tourism, because it has become such a large industry, has numerous impacts which can be felt and seen worldwide and that affect all forms of life. The effects of these impacts can be advantageous but they can also cause many disadvantages and bring many problems with them [2]. If tourism is managed properly (sustainable tourism), it can increase the benefits for or have positive impacts on the social and natural environment in the host area and reduce the negative effects significantly [4]. Tourism is defined by as follows:

“Tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited [4]. Tourism is different from travel. In order for tourism to happen, there must be a displacement: an individual has to travel, using any type of means of transportation he might even travel on foot: nowadays, it is often the case for poorer societies, and happens even in more developed ones, and concerns pilgrims, hikers. But all travel is not tourism” [2].

B. Halal Tourism

Halal tourism is a new concept in the tourism industry. Thus, there a need to develop more Halal tourism products and services to cater to this dynamic and emerging market [5]. The concept of Halal, meaning permissible in Arabic, is not just being applied to food, but it includes any Shari'ah compliant products ranging from bank dealings to cosmetics, vaccines and in this case, tourism [5]. This means offering tour packages and destinations that are particularly designed to cater for Muslim considerations and address Muslim needs [6].

Halal Tourism integrates more religious conservative motivations, trying to valorize a conservative Islamic lifestyle and underline its incompatibility with Western type of tourism practices currently dominating the modern tourism industry [6].

The demand for Halal resorts, hotels or transportation reveal's the reluctance of religious conservative families and

Manuscript received November 15, 2013; revised January 21, 2014.

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Individuals to travel in liberal or western style locations and the condemnation of travel behaviors regarded as un-Islamic [3]. The hotels in such destinations do not serve alcohol and have separate swimming pools and spa facilities for men and women. Malaysia, Turkey and many more countries are trying to attract Muslim tourists from all over the world offering facilities in accordance with the religious beliefs of Muslim tourists. Also, the Halal tourism approach covers flights where no alcohol or pork products are served, prayer timings are announced, and religious programs are broadcast as part of entertainment offered on board [5].

C. Opportunities

The Halal economy, which is rapidly expanding, offers opportunities to other Muslim countries worldwide. There is nearly 1.57 billion Muslims, in over 100 countries, making up over 23% of the total global population [3]. This will ensure that the Halal concept can be applied to more than just the food sector. In addition, the manufacture, processing and distribution of products, additives and food ingredients, Halal economy also applies to cosmetics, medicines and personal care products, clothes and services that include finance, hotels, restaurants and logistics. This statistics of the significant population of Muslims stress the enormous potential waiting to be tapped in the Halal economy [7].

Regarding to the tourism sector, in Thailand, it is recognized as a major economic and social significance that contributes to the creation of wealth. As reported of Tourism Authority of Thailand, the tourism sector has been identified as a driver of economic activity that will contribute towards the growth and development of the economy [1]. The Thai Government has granted many incentives to tourism agencies to develop other promising areas in the tourism industry [1].

D. Halal Tourism Business

The fundamental of Halal tourism includes the components such as Halal hotel, Halal transportation, Halal food premises, Halal logistics, Islamic finance, Islamic travel packages, and Halal spa [8].

Halal hotel is one of the hotels which provide the Halal services to the Muslim tourists. This type of hotel is not limited to serve Halal food and beverages but the operation throughout the hotel would also be managed based on Islamic principles [7].

Halal food premises: Food and beverage products served in a restaurant have to be Halal. Animals such as chicken and cow must be slaughtered according to Shariah principles. All food must be Halal and go through Halal compliant process [5].

III. METHODOLOGY

Applied research was used in this study to “find solutions to problems which arise in particular management situations” [9]. The sample group were 10 Muslim tourist from Jordan, Malaysia, Libea, and Oman, tour guides, officers of the provincial offices of the Islamic Council in the Andaman Sea coast, and officers of the Central Islamic Council of Thailand. The research instruments included a questionnaire, observation and focus group discussion. The research

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IV. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The result of this research is divided into five main points as the following;

- 1) The methodology of making a marketing plan of the Halal Tourism are;
 - It is useful to provide the travelers all information associated with the tourist attractions on the Andaman side in Thailand via the Internet.
 - The impression to the tourists is one of the factors, which can bring about the word of mouth strategy.
 - It is necessary to provide the measure of the beach conservation for the purpose of keeping the beaches clean and beautiful.
 - Supporting all restaurants to get Halal certification standard should have executed, and also to increase the number of the Halal restaurants.
 - Hotel rooms should have the direction signs for praying, as it is indispensable for tourists from Muslim countries.
 - Spa service business should separate the service rooms between man and woman.
 - There should be direction signs to the mosques in both English and Arabic.
- 2) The choices of enterprises in business management in order to support all travelers from Muslim countries found that the form of Halal tourism management is classified into many elements as shown below;

A. Halal Restaurant Business

Halal restaurant business is divided into 11 elements including location and materials/ products, procedures, staffs, and containers/ implement, refuse disposal, safety, service, social responsibility, environmental management and community relations. All those elements are in line with the standard of Halal food service issued by the Central Islamic Council of Thailand.

B. Halal Hotel Business

Additionally, the form of the Halal hotel business consists of eight elements comprising location, staffs or personnel, refuse disposal, safety, corporate social responsibility, environmental service and community relation.

C. Halal Spa

In addition, the business of Halal spa is composed of nine elements including location, material/ products staffs, refuse disposal, safety, service, social responsibility, environmental management, and community relation.

The method of increasing the potential of management of Halal tourism in order to handle all tourists from a group of Muslim countries found that natural resources from the tourist attractions should be conserved so as to keep it beautiful naturally. Moreover, there shall also be many activities, which are not against with the Muslim principles.

Even more, there are a lot of direction signs showing the

way to the mosques written in both English and Arabic. All washrooms should be separated between man and woman. The rooms should be hygienic condition, cleanliness with the cleaning hose built in its room. What is more, there are many Halal restaurants along the way to places of interest, together with the direction signs should be written in English setting up all the way around in the tourist attraction territory.

Furthermore, there is measure of security each tourist attractions. Guides and staffs should have discipline, and respect the Muslim principles in doing services. The boat drivers should drive it carefully. If the technical problem happens, the drivers have to be sure that there are enough of the aid equipment for all tourists.

Besides, at the airport or the tourist places should have the greeting signs regarding welcoming them to our country which is written in Arabic. Public relations to the tourists from Muslim countries should be promoted via the Internet. Apart from that, a good service can make tourists feel impressive, and that can lead to the word of mouth strategy. Last but not least, the form of restaurant business management, hotel business, and Spa business should be in line with the standard of Halal tourism management.

The ways to measure the standard of Halal tourism administration and Halal tourism management for all travelers from Muslim countries are divided into eight factors.

- 1) The service to the tourists should match up with the Muslim principles the whole journey.
- 2) Guides and staffs should have discipline and respect to the Muslim principles.
- 3) Setting all activities should not against with the Muslim principles.
- 4) Building accommodations should conform to the principles of Muslim. For instance, inside the accommodation should have the direction signs turning to Mekka (West if praying from Thailand). Aside from that, cleaning hose should also be set up in its room.
- 5) Restaurants should follow the International standard service of Halal.
- 6) The transportation service should have security protection system.
- 7) There are places provided to all Muslim tourists to perform religious activity.
- 8) Traveling to the places where against the religious principles is prohibited.

It is necessary to offer choices to the tourists from Muslim countries. What if the organizations either government sectors or private sectors bring this research to develop their institutes or their own businesses. It leads to the increasing of the potential of tourism in Thailand. This can easily make all travelers from Muslim countries come to travel in Thailand more and more. Meanwhile, there will then be an influx of the large amount of money flowing into Thailand as well.

V. CONCLUSION

The initiative of developing Halal tourism in Thailand which will be focus Halal Hotel, Halal food and Halal spa service when the Muslim tourists are traveling. Because of the demand from the Muslim market towards Halal services therefore, there is essential for Thailand to develop a concept for Halal tourism Business. Furthermore, Halal tourism will directly fulfill the Muslim needs thus, it will become one of the niche product for the tourism industry in Thailand.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to thank the National Research Council of Thailand and Thailand Research Fund for supporting the study. In addition, the authors grateful for Asst. Prof. Supawadee Photiyarat, Director of Tourism and Hospitality Management Program for suggestions and all her help. Finally, I most gratefully acknowledge my parents and my friends for all their support throughout the period of this research.

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