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# Validating the Significant Influence of Destination on Muslim Tourist Behaviour in Malaysia

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**Abstract**

This study aims at examining the relationship between destination factors and Muslim tourists' behavior. A total of 563 Muslim tourists from 35 countries took part in this study. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was an appropriate data analysis technique for this study. A self-administered questionnaire was developed. The 5-point likert scale was used in questionnaires. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to test the reliability of the scale. The findings as analysed by Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) revealed that the overall fit indices showed a satisfactory fit to the empirical data. The criterion of $p<0.001$ and critical value of $\chi 2 = 59.70$ were used. The ratio was less than 2 and the value .786 showed that the model is fit. The P-value with the ratio more than 0.05 and at the value 0.599, GFI being more than 0.9 at the value of 0.997, TLI with ratio more than 0.9 and value of 1.003, and finally RMSEA`s critical ratio less than 0.08 and the value of 0.000 confirm this model to be significant and fit. The parameters were free from offending estimates. Finally, the findings of this study have confirmed the significant relationship between destination factors and Muslim tourists' behaviour (MTB) in the Malaysian Islamic tourism.

**Keywords:** Destination Factors, Structural Equation Modelling, Muslim Tourist Behaviour.

## Introduction

A tourist destination region can be considered as a geographical concept that has been derived from that geographical tourist destination. According to Leiper (2004) tourist destinations are such "places where travelers choose to stay a while for leisure experiences, related to one or more features or characteristics of the place – a perceived attraction of some sort" (p. 128). *Transit Routes*

Lamont (2009) defines transit route as the traveller's channel connection between their origin/home and tourist destination region (TDR). According to Leiper (2004) transit routes are part of the entire tourism system. He defines transit routes are the place where "…the traveler has left home but has not yet reached a place he/she regards as a tourist destination for that trip. This is an intermediate

zone where the principal *travel* activity of tourism occurs, as distinct from *visiting* activity in destinations. Since travelers are in the transit route between the generating and destination regions so Leiper (2004) considers this transit route as the supporting role player at the primary stage of tourism.

**Dickman's (1997) Five A's of a Destination Model**

Dickman (1997) identifies five major or fundamental components for tourism that are familiar as five A's. These five A's are namely Accessibility, Attractions, Accommodation, Activities and Amenities. Details of these 5 A's have been illustrated in the following:

**Accessibility:** Here accessibility is introduced as the process of reaching the destination for a tourist. Dickman (1997) focuses on the road system in tourism. To him tourists can reach their target destination by air, sea, train, and using bus transportation system. He (1997) emphasizes on the easy accessibility for all types of tourists', regardless of Muslim or non-Muslim, to the tourist attraction region.

**Attractions:** Attraction refers to the attractiveness of tourism destination i.e.; tourists visit each destination after being attracted by the natural or environmental scenario or man-made park. Dickman (1997) focuses on the attractiveness of natural and man-made environment those attract tourists and make them enthusiastic to visit that destination. To him, sometimes museums become the main target of the tourist to visit any destination too.

**Accommodation:** Actually, in tourism, accommodation is the fundamental component and without this component tourism is totally incomplete. According to Dickman (1997) accommodation is the place where tourists become satisfied by sleeping, dining and entertainment needs. So, in tourism destinations, hotels, bars, restaurants, resorts and all categories of living places must be friendly for every tourist. If accommodation is enjoyable and satisfactory, tourists may decide to revisit the destination.

**Activities:** In tourism destination activities refer to such acts of tourists that satisfy them in their leisure period. Tourists may attend or be participant in various activities and after performance they become overwhelmed and pleased. For example, animation, several types of physical activities and some competitive acts are comfortable for the tourists to perform. So, in tourism destinations some attractive activities must be arranged.

**Amenities:** Here amenities focus on the supporting infrastructures that ensure or facilitate tourists' experience at the destination. Dickman (1997) emphasizes on the health centers and hospitals (tourist may get treatment in emergency), hiking and bicycle routes (tourist must have prior experience on walking routes and also the routes for riding bicycle), ICT facilities that refers to the availability of using free Wi-Fi network in the tourism destination, local public transportation system (tourist may move everywhere in the destination using cheap cost of public transportation) and finally, they must have experience on the availability of parking places in the tourism destination.

## Literature Review

### Muslim Tourist Behaviour (MTB)

Tourist behaviour has become an important and integral part of tourism industry. Before, during and after traveling (Vuuren & Slabbert, 2011) tourists behave in certain manner which "is conceptualized as travel behaviour" (Vuuren & Slabbert, 2011, P. 296). According to March & Woodside (2005) tourist behavior can be considered as the manner of tourist's activities according to their personal attitude towards the destination and the available product of their expected destination. Tourist behaviour can also be defined based on their enthusiastic attraction towards the natural scenario of the destination. Musa & Sim (2010) argue that actual tourist behaviour is possible to determine based on the social pressure, financial considerations, and time availability of the tourists.

Budeanu (2007) argues that during their holidays during traveling tourists displayed behavior has a good consequence for the local community of the destination. Likewise, it is also noticed that tourists' disruptive behavior has negative impact on the environment, entertainment, and biodiversity habitats of the destination. However, during travelling tourists always intend to remove their monotonous life and want to have refreshing mood by drinking alcohol, having sexual activities and categories of enjoyable things.

Nevertheless, in case of Islamic tourism, drinking alcohol, sexual intercourse and all types of forbidden foods and activities are strictly prohibited. Accordingly, researchers have found that tourist behaviour is always influenced by certain motivating factors to travel, tourists' attitudes, diverse situational factors, and environmental factors (Venkatesh, 2006). Budeanu (2007, p. 500) comments on tourist behaviour which is "A comprehensive view over the effects of tourist consumption is

possible by looking at the totality of thoughts and actions of tourists before, during and after the trip".

Sriprasert et al. (2014) conduct a study on Muslim tourist behaviour (MTB) and needs of *halal* tourism in Thailand. The result indicates that "among all the needs, tourists show the strongest needs on availability of Mosque, followed by presence of loud public pronouncement of *Azan* to indicate prayer time, availability of prayer facilities/rooms at tourism sites, airport and other public areas, available of first aids, Islamic financial services or banks, availability of security personnel or policemen, banning of gambling activities by the authority at public places, availability of family-appropriate beaches and availability of private cabin at the beach" (Sriprasert et al., 2014, p. 219). According to them the results in this study are able to shade light for policy makers of tourism industry and also business sectors related to tourism industry to frame the appropriate facilities and services to meet the demand of Muslim tourist of this new and promising market of Islamic tourism.

In addition, another study on halal tourism management in Andaman sea coast in Thailand is conducted by Chanin et al., (2015). The result indicates that in terms of attraction, Muslim tourists are interested to explore natural forms of attractions, beaches and islands, they want to get facilities of prayer room in tourism destination specially for female tourists, tourists from Muslim countries demand from the authorities to provide regular public buses or transportation to reach their expected destination with reasonable fares, Muslim tourists suggest to station security guards and officers on the beaches specially at night "so that they could take their wives and daughters for a walk safely" (Chanin et al., 2015, p. 793). In terms of food and beverages Muslim tourists want to have additional halal restaurants for getting halal food and there must be certified halal food logo. Korres (2008) states that animals like chicken and cow must be slaughtered according to *shariah* principles. In Islamic tourism Muslim tourists demand to get all *halal* food and it is fundamental to go through *shariah* compliant process.

**Upkeeps of Tourist Destinations**

In tourism, tourist destinations have a lack of support. For example, based on the survey result of Not-for-Profit Services, the Social Policy Unit of the Western Australian Government (2004) finds several lacks supports in tourist destinations. According to this Unit (2004) those lacks include knowledge, skills, limited funding, individuals' abilities, and groups to participate in and lack of skilled tourism development practitioners. Mishra & Panda (2009) conduct a study on support in tourist destinations and based on the result they find some fundamental supports in tourist

destinations. To them the lacks are poor facilities in tourist destinations, lack of security, shortage of experienced workforce, lack of private sector investment, lack of culture of accepting tourists, multiple policy-making bodies, lack of uniform marketing system and political risk.

A study on environmental policy implementation in rural China was conducted by Swanson, Kuhn & Xu (2001) from their study they identify several supports in tourist destination in the Asian context. The supports are (1) limitations of inadequate technology, (2) low finances, (3) limited human resources, (4) poor public environmental awareness, (5) lack of information, (6) lack of skills for data collection, (7) organizational conflict and (8) corruption (Swanson et al., 2001). Aref et al., (2009) find three levels of support in tourist destinations such as individual capacity support, organizational capacity support, and community capacity support. To them lack of capacity support includes the lack of expertise and knowledge and lack of capable leaders in tourism industry. Secondly, organizational capacity support has a lack of external support, lack of expertise, elite domination, lack of an appropriate legal system and lack of trained human resources. Similarly, community capacity supports cultural factors, and it includes limited cultural capacity of local people and lack of participation and their power in decision making in tourism development.

Based on the research study on implementing tourism policy in Malta and Mallorca, Dodds (2007) identifies six supports those are Economic priority, Lack of planning, Lack of stakeholder involvement, Lack of integration with regional and national frameworks and policies, Lack of accountability of politicians and Lack of coordination with other government parties (political clash) (Dodds, 2007). According to (Ayob & Masron, 2014) recently Malaysia has been blemished as an unsafe and insecure destination due to certain reasons and incidents those are "(1) Asian Financial Crisis; (2) Tension between Malaysia and Singapore; (3) Health scares; (4) Burning of forest in Indonesia; (5) Threat of terrorism; (6) Natural disasters; (7) Travel advisories issued by foreign government and (8) Media reports" (P. 5).

Nevertheless, in tourism sector some negative impacts are vividly noticeable. Fatemeh Allahdadi (2011) found two major types of problems namely socio-cultural and political in Iranian Islamic tourism industry. Moreover, she discovered various supports of tourism destinations which are really perceivable. So, a tourism destination without having suitable elements is bound to suffer from unmarketable tourist products (Allahdadi, 2011). Patel (2012) finds so many inadequacy in tourism destination those are namely underprivileged transportation, want of fundamental disinfected facilities at reserved points, rates and expenses are not standardized, deficiency of inclusive

advertising and advancement tactics, heritages pitiable preservation, safety and harassment issues, untrained professionals and guide, capacity insufficiency, overpriced travel – bad flight management, poor supportive arrangement – bad routes, inappropriate healthiness, cleanliness and communication, dissimilarities between demand and manpower supply, security and safety lapses – occurrences of tout and tourists annoyance in several areas, lack of information about visitor profile, non-application of Legislative Law, unsatisfactory supervision and management. To him (2012) politicians interrupt to develop tourism and a lot of agents and travel operators are mostly accountable for the excessive cost of tourism package. "Lack of entrepreneurship opportunities also restrict youth to follow a career in Tourism such as opening a hotel resort or retail outlet or handicraft business to serve Tourism Industry" (Patel, 2012). Further, particular challenging factors are identified by Tosun (2001) as he blames on the main concern on the policy of national economy, public administration configuration, and an emergence of ecological problems, over commercialization and the arrangement of transnational tourism scheme.

**Tourism in Malaysia**

The official religion of Malaysia is Islam, but different types of ethnic groups and religious people are living here serenely. Here people have priority to practice their own religions. After being independent Malaysian Government perceived over influences of the West in tourism sector. Therefore, the Government of Malaysia has taken some initiatives to make the tourism sector Islamic. Through this Islamic tourism, Malaysia wants to be "one of the developed countries in Asia" (Bhuiyan et al., 2013). According to Bhuiyan et al., (2013) less than 10% of global tourism revenues have been earned by the 57 Muslim tourism destinations among the world.

**Tourism in Islam**

Islam always encourages traveling through different destinations to observe the gratification of the creation of Allah (SWT). Regarding traveling, Allah (SWT) declares in thirteen verses in the Holy *Qur'an*. Through these Qur'anic verses Allah (SWT) calls us to travel different realms of this world with having strong intent to be acquainted with the consequent of former generations since some of them were immensely proud of having their worldly wealth and fame. They forgot divine laws and showed their haughtiness to their subordinate people. Therefore, Allah declares "And verily, We have sent among every *Ummah* (community, nation) a Messenger (proclaiming): 'Worship Allah (Alone), and (or keep away from) *Taghut* (all false deities i.e. do not worship *Taghut* besides Allah).' Then of them were some whom Allah guided and of them were some upon whom the straying was

justified. So, travel through the land and see what the end of those was who denied (the truth)" (Surah An-Nahl, verse-36).

***Muslim Tourists' Selection of Travel Destinations***

Muslim tourists are very much enthusiastic to select their travel destinations which have Islamic attributes because tourism destinations having Islamic characteristics let Muslim tourists to accomplish their religious activities and duties. Therefore, Muslim tourists expect to get such type of travel destination which could ensure them that there remain arrangements of performing salah, adzan, halal food, Islamic dress codes and values, safety and Islamic accommodation as well. Regarding Muslim tourists' behaviour Shafaei & Mohamed (2015, p. 56) cite, "The availability of Islamic attributes in a tourism destination seems to be very important to Muslim tourists, regardless of the destination visited". Again, they comment that behind the selection of Muslims' destination Islamic attributes act as the fundamental or key motivators those could be considered as pull and push factors. If any lacking Islamic attributes or facilities in tourism destinations is noticed; Muslim tourists are reluctant to travel those destinations. So, destinations must have attractive Islamic attributes to pull Muslim tourists (Battour et al., 2011).

In Islamic tourism all rules and activities must be appreciable and acceptable in the context of Islam. Islamic tourism is considered as 'ibadah' and 'dawah' whereby Muslim tourists travel from place to place for seeking the blessing of Allah (SWT) and for avoiding offenses while travelling (Aglamaz, 2009). For realizing the beautiful natural divinity and blessing of Allah (SWT), Muslim tourists are encouraged and inspired to travel different destinations in this world. Allah (SWT) Says:

*Travel through the earth and see how Allah did originate creation; so, will Allah produce a later creation: for Allah has power over all things (Surah Al-Ankabut, verse 20).*

Through the Holy *Qur'an* Allah (the Most Merciful) Tells the Muslim *Ummah* to travel throughout this world to know the different cultures and the ancient history of Islam. As Allah (SWT) declares, "Many similar ways (and mishaps of life) were faced by nations (believers and disbelievers) that have passed away before you (as you have faced in the battle of Uhud), so travel through the earth, and see what was the end of those who disbelieved Him and His Messengers" (Surah *Al-Imran*, Verse 137).

## Research Methodology

In this study, the survey was conducted in various places. The main focus of this study was to confirm the effect of Islamic approach for developing tourism and hospitality industry in Malaysia. A scale for Islamic approach was produced from this study.

Descriptive analysis was used in first stage of this research to determine the occurrence of various phenomena in this study. To minimize the errors and maximize reliability, the survey required a structured questionnaire and an appropriate number of respondents (Kinnear & Taylor, 1996). In this research, the 5-point likert scale was used in questionnaires. Many social scientists accept that likert scales are approximately interval in character (Aasker et al., 2001).

### Sampling

Data was collected through distributing structured questions to the international Muslim tourists of various backgrounds in three different states (Lankawi, Penang and Kuala Lumpur) of Malaysia. The respondents of the main study were selected by using disproportionate stratified random sampling procedure. Sekaran (2003) indicates that sample sizes between 30 and 500 could be effective depending on the type of sampling design used and the research question investigated. So, in this study 650 samples were used to complete the thesis.

### Data Analysis

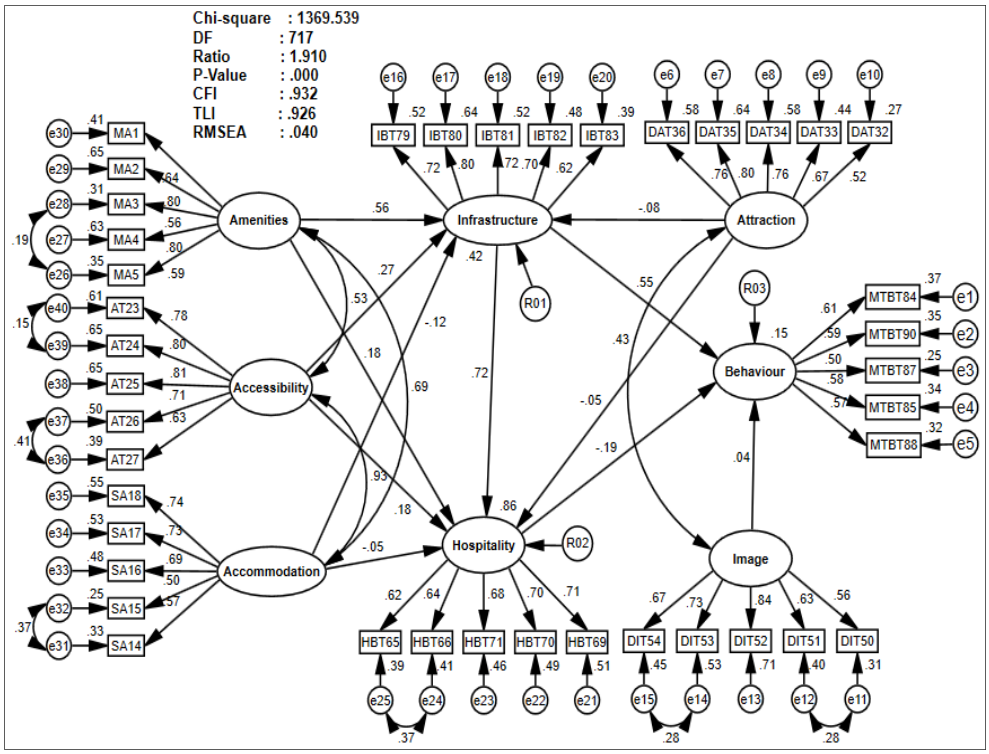
The data analysis of this study was organized into four stages such as Descriptive Analysis, Exploratory Factor Analysis, Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). Data was coded and analysed by using statistical packages for social sciences.

## Discussions of the Findings

This study attempts to examine the empirical relationships between destination factors and Muslim tourist behavior (MTB) in the Islamic tourism industry in Malaysia. The finding indicates that destination factors are significantly and positively related to Muslim tourist behavior (MTB) in Malaysia. Besides this Chanin et al., (2015) extensive research in the tourism, provides evidence of the significant effect of destination factors on Muslim tourist behavior (MTB). This implies that Muslim tourists have the intention to travel frequently for increasing their experience and enhancing knowledge on different destinations and improving the Islamic tourism industry. As can be

perceived, that tourist destination is a whole tourism system where tourists intend to visit and stay for a short period of time or temporarily.

**Figure 4** Full-fledged structural equation final model




## Indicators of Study Variables

### *Destination*

The following section presents the indicators (as generated from the survey of five categories respondents' responses) representing the four constructs (Muslim Amenities, Suitable Accommodation, Accessibility and Destination Attraction) in the study. In this regard, the indicators or the questionnaire items comprising the constructs and their corresponding loadings are also mentioned; these are as follows:

#### *(a) Muslim Amenities (MA)*

The study finds that there are eight indicators out of nine are validated that represent the construct of Muslim Amenities (MA) of tourist destination. The loadings of these indicators are above the threshold value of 0.50. Only one indicator is eliminated due to its below threshold value of 0.50.

This study has confirmed that Muslim Amenities (MA) is one of the most important strategies to be embarked (Wheeler, 1995; Henderson, 2008b; Battour et al., 2011; Zamani-Farahani, & Henderson, 2010). The results obtained from the SEM statistical analysis confirm that there is significant and positive relationship between Muslim Amenities (MA) to the Muslim tourists' behaviour (MTB) in Islamic tourism Malaysia.

***(b) Suitable Accommodation (SA)***

The study generates eight indicators (among nine indicators) relating to quality, process and cleanliness that represent the construct of Suitable Accommodation (SA) of tourist destinations. All of these eight indicators meet the cut-off point of 0.50. Only one indicator is disregarded since it does not meet the cut-off point of 0.50.

This finding is also compatible with other related findings (Din, 1989; Henderson, 2008b; Shaida, W., Rahman, S. Ab, Awang k., Man, Y. C., 2011; Ala al-Hamarneh, 2011) where the researchers have already argued that suitable accommodation is the most significant component in Islamic tourism.

***(c) Accessibility in Tourism (AT)***

The study finds that there are eight indicators (out of nine) regarding safety, security, parking, transportation, and easy way-finding information that correspond to the facets of Accessibility in Tourism (AT). The loadings of these indicators are above the cut-off score of 0.50. Only one indicator is ignored since it does not meet the cut-off point of 0.50.

This finding confirms that there has a significant influence of accessibility on Muslim tourists' behaviour (MTB). This is also identical with other related findings (Westcott, 2004; Morelli, Nocco, Petrillo, & Stolfi, 2004; Taleb Rifai, 2013). Regarding accessibility most of the researchers have argued that accessibility accumulate all those services in such a system that they can all be equally and easily utilized for the tourists.

***(d) Destination Attraction (DA)***

The study demonstrates five indicators (out of nine) that comprise the various aspects of Destination Attraction (DA). The loadings of the indicators are above the threshold point of 0.50. However, the loadings of the eliminated four indicators are below the cut-off score of 0.50.

Therefore, the finding confirms that there has a significant influence of Destination Attraction (DA) on Muslim tourists' behaviour (MTB). The finding is also identical with past findings (Veal, 1992; Bell, Tyrv¨ainen, Siev¨anen, Pr¨obstl, & Simpson, 2007; Bhuiyan, M. A. H., Siwar, C., & Ismail, S. M., 2013; Samori, Z. & Rahman, F. A., 2013) where the authors have already identified that destination attraction as a significant component to be considered for the Islamic tourism destination.

***Muslim Tourist Behaviour (MTB)***

The study finds that there are five indicators (out of fifteen) regarding Halal kitchen, gambling activities and segregated areas for women that correspond to the facets of Muslim Tourist Behavior (MTB) in tourism. The loadings of these five indicators are above the threshold point of 0.50. The remaining ten indicators are ignored since they do not meet the cut-off point of 0.50.

From the findings of this study, it is confirmed that Muslim Amenities, Accessibility in Tourism, Suitable Accommodation and Destination Attraction have significant relationship with Muslim tourist behavior (MTB). Destination factors are significantly and positively related to Muslim tourist behavior (MTB) in Malaysia. Besides this Chanin, Sriprasert, Rahman and Don (2015), extensive research in the tourism, provides evidence of the significant effect of destination factors on Muslim tourist behavior (MTB). This implies that Muslim tourists have the intention to travel frequently for increasing their experience and enhancing knowledge on different destinations and improving the Islamic tourism industry. As can be perceived, that tourist destination is a whole tourism system where tourists intend to visit and stay for a short period of time or temporarily.

## Implications of the Study

The potential implications of this study have been discussed below:

**Methodological Implications**

This study was conducted based on primary data collection. A total of 600 questionnaires were distributed, by the researchers himself, among Muslim tourists who came to visit Malaysia from different countries. Among 600 primary data 580 complete data were collected and finally 563 valid data were used for this study.

In this study most of the questionnaire items were developed depending on the previous related literature review. Using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) all items of questionnaire of this study

were validated. Finally, through using structural equation modeling (SEM) the goodness of fit indices (GFI), RAMSEA, CFI, TLI, Ratio, Chi-square and p-value were calculated. Therefore, in this study the structural equation modeling (SEM) established the concrete base for the measurement tool which was proposed was used.

**Experimental Implications**

At this stage, this study has tried to address various issues for introducing some remarkable indicators of Islamic tourism. Since the perspective of this research study is Malaysia so the recent perceptiveness of Islamic tourism has been experimental verified in this research study. For this reason, this study has noteworthy effort to uphold the Islamic tourism Malaysia. This significant involvement was achieved by the experimental testing of the structural relationship among tourism related components of this study (destination and tourist behaviour) in the setting of Malaysia. Moreover, this study confirms the equal relationship between Muslim tourist behavior (MTB) with destination factors.

## Study Limitations and Direction for Further Research

There are a number of limitations that need to be considered. These are presented below.

1. From the methodological perspective, this study is a quantitative one and is approached from a positivistic paradigm. However, there are many soft issues in both destination factors and Muslim tourist behavior (MTB) that might be better portrayed should a qualitative elucidation through interviews and focus-group discussions can be carried out as well. Therefore, any future research would be of much significance if a mixed-method approach is undertaken in this regard.
2. The study discovers that destination factors are not systematic enough to investigate Muslim tourist behavior (MTB). Thus, there arises a fundamental demand to achieve experience from abroad and this type of tourism related research study will be helpful to improve the existing Muslim tourist behavior (MTB) towards destinations.

## Practice Recommendations

Featuring religious aspects in Islamic tourism sectors is the responsibility of Malaysian government. It is observed that most of the tourist sites are introduced with Malaysian cultural activities. However, to enhance Muslim tourists' knowledge and experience Islamic aspects and Islamic

heritage can be utilized at most of the Islamic tourism sites in Malaysia. Likewise, to promote the tourism destination sites in Malaysia Islamic heritage site, art and religious principles play the significant role. The Ministry of tourism Malaysia must develop a proper plan to promote all potential Islamic heritage products that includes historic mosque, monuments, Islamic educational centres and so on.

Tourism destination sites should not serve non-halal food and activities for the Muslim tourists. Muslim toutists possess three faith based necessities those are halal food, prayer facilities and water friendly washroom. So, travel and tour perators must arrange these three fundamental aspects at the tourism destination for the Muslim tourists.

In Malaysia prayer facilities are available but there nust be consistency in cleanliness and maintenance service. However, in some destination it is noticed that there is availabilities of wudu facilities but these are located at the far away from the main prayer room. As a Muslim country, water friendly toilets are available but there is non consistency of maintenance. So there needs to be consistency of maintaince service in every water friendly toilets at tourism destinations in Malaysia.

## Conclusion

It can be concluded that this study is beneficial for other researchers since this is the rare research on Muslim tourist behavior (MTB) in Malaysian Islamic tourism. So other researchers of Malaysia would be inspired to investigate other features of Muslim or non-Muslim tourist behavior for the enhancement of Malaysian tourism industry. All categories of tourism authorities must experience the better way for the successful tourism in facilitating satisfactory Muslim tourist behavior (MTB) as well as other non-Muslim tourist behavior to Malaysia.

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# Food Waste Management in Halal-Concept Hotels: A Systematic Review and Qualitative Study in Alanya, Türkiye

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**Abstract**

The expansion of the halal tourism sector has brought sustainability and waste prevention practices in halal-concept hotels into scholarly focus. This study examines current food waste management practices in these hotels through a two-stage design. First, a systematic literature review was conducted in line with the PRISMA guidelines to synthesise existing knowledge. Second, qualitative interviews were conducted with eight participants (five executive chefs and three general managers) working in five halal-concept hotels operating in Alanya, Türkiye, through face-to-face and digital communication channels. The literature points to staff training, consumption forecasting, and effective inventory control as central strategies for waste reduction. Smart waste measurement systems and digital traceability technologies are also highlighted as emerging tools, although the field findings suggest that their adoption in the hotels examined remains at an early stage. The qualitative findings indicate that employees are aware of food waste as an operational and ethical concern and that prevention practices are integrated into hotel operations, while the adoption of monitoring technologies remains limited. By bringing together a systematic review and field evidence, this study offers an integrated perspective on food waste prevention in halal-concept hotels, where avoiding excessive consumption forms part of everyday operations and reflects the principles underlying the halal-concept service model. Building on these observations, the study recommends broadening staff training programmes, refining consumption forecasting in open-buffet systems, developing customer-oriented awareness efforts, and taking cautious steps towards digital monitoring within operational processes.

**Keywords:** *Halal tourism, halal-concept hotels, food waste management, sustainability, systematic review*

## Introduction

Tourism, one of the major economic activities for many countries, contributes to foreign exchange, employment, and national development, particularly in developing economies (Akış, 1999). Nevertheless, its development can bring not only economic benefits but also negative economic, social (socio-cultural), and environmental impacts; therefore, assessing the overall impact of tourism requires a balanced approach that encompasses economic, social, cultural, and environmental

dimensions (Frent, 2016). As tourism depends on the ongoing use of human-made, socio-cultural, and natural resources, the protection of these resources is regarded as necessary for its balanced development (Akış, 1999). In the accommodation sector, sustainability-related issues such as renewable energy use, efficient water consumption, environmental certifications, and waste management are among the main dimensions of sustainable applications in hotel businesses (Türkay, 2024). Among these, food waste stands out through its links with resource depletion and economic cost, and while its reduction is considered a critical strategy for mitigating climate change, strengthening food security, and easing global hunger (Delgado et al., 2023), the ethical responsibility emphasised in Islamic consumption ethics is understood to further reinforce this significance (Ibrahim et al., 2024). Food waste becomes especially consequential in economically developed contexts, where its reduction is linked to progress on the Sustainable Development Goals. Households account for the largest share of this waste, yet the contribution of hospitality and tourism operations remains considerable (Delgado et al., 2023).

Alongside sustainability concerns, tourists' cultural and religious preferences have become increasingly important in shaping tourism demand, leading to the development of niche tourism markets. As the Muslim population travelling for leisure continues to grow, halal tourism has taken shape as a distinct segment within the wider tourism market (Baltacı & Kodalak, 2022). As a cultural factor, religion is among the most widespread and prominent social structures, shaping the values, attitudes, and conduct of individuals and societies alike, while also informing significant life events, moral judgements, and consumption preferences (Mokhlis, 2009). Accordingly, the rising prosperity of the Muslim population, together with its growing tendency to travel in line with religious sensitivities, has increased the demand for holidays consistent with Islamic principles and contributed to the expansion of the halal tourism sector within the global tourism industry (Baysal, 2017; Yıldız & Yıldız, 2018).

Halal-concept hotels, which provide services in accordance with Islamic principles and values, are regarded as important with respect to concepts such as ethical perceptions, person-organisation fit, and organisational commitment. It has been noted, however, that the literature in this area has focused on the products, standards, and sectoral growth of halal tourism, as well as on customer perceptions, while the employee dimension has received little scholarly attention (Seçilmiş & Ceylanlar, 2019). In a related vein, Yılmaz and Ceyhun Sezgin (2022) compared food waste in halal

and non-halal hotels in Türkiye; however, studies combining a systematic review with qualitative field evidence in this context appear to remain limited.

Research on food waste management examines the issue from different perspectives, such as individual consumer behaviour, hospitality operations, and technological solutions. Within the framework of consumer-focused research, Principato et al. (2015) examined young people's knowledge, attitudes and behaviours towards food waste. The research results reveal that young consumers, while recognising food waste as a widespread problem, remain insufficiently informed about how to reduce it. In this context, the importance of "education" and "dissemination" activities is emphasised for the wider adoption of practices related to assessing food freshness, interpreting date labels correctly, and making better use of edible surplus food. Furthermore, it is stated that encouraging advance shopping planning and the habit of preparing shopping lists may contribute to reducing food waste. Such findings suggest that raising consumer awareness more broadly may contribute to waste-reduction behaviour. At the operational level, systematic waste monitoring, accurate demand forecasting supported by information technology systems, and effective stock rotation and inventory management have been identified as important practices for minimising food waste in hospitality settings (WRAP, 2013).

An and Galera-Zarco (2025) proposed a digital framework for managing food waste and loss, mapping how factors such as the actors, causes, timing, and location of waste interconnect, and simulating the ways in which digital technologies can intervene in this complex process. Kasavan et al. (2022) systematically reviewed 25 studies on food waste in the hotel sector in order to identify good practices for reducing it. They concluded that further work is needed on the kinds of hotel policies and rules that might help guests leave less on their plates and enable surplus food to be passed on to charitable organisations rather than discarded. According to Filimonau and De Coteau (2019), the effectiveness of food waste reduction in hospitality businesses is shaped by the internal capabilities already available to the organisation, the extent of staff training required, the scale of the funding needed at the outset, and the financial savings that may ultimately be achieved. The same authors point out that, although there is ample evidence of the successful methods hospitality businesses use to reduce food waste, these have not yet been brought together under a comprehensive management framework applicable on a universal scale. They note that this gap makes it more difficult to extend such practices across the hospitality sector worldwide.

As these studies have focused on general hospitality operations, the religious and ethical dimensions specific to the halal concept have mostly remained outside their scope. This suggests that studies addressing the operational, ethical, and religious dimensions of food waste management in halal-concept hotels through a systematic review approach supported by qualitative field-based evidence are still limited. Building on this gap, the study has two connected aims. It first draws together what the academic literature reports about food waste management in hotel and restaurant businesses and about food waste behaviour at the consumer level, with particular attention to the halal-concept context, following the PRISMA guidelines to identify key themes such as causes of food waste, staff behaviour, customer preferences, operational practices, and technological solutions. Against this background, it then examines food waste management practices in halal-concept hotels in Alanya through qualitative interviews with executive chefs and managers. Bringing the two together, the study aims to contribute both to the academic literature on halal food waste and to the practical needs of hotels working under Islamic ethical principles and sustainability goals. The paper continues with the conceptual framework, methodology, and findings, followed by the discussion, conclusion, limitations, and recommendations.

## Conceptual Framework

### Halal Tourism

Religious beliefs play a decisive role in shaping consumer preferences for tourism products and services. A person's faith guides not only their daily life but also their choices about travel and accommodation, and this is reflected directly in purchasing behaviour within the tourism context. One of the contemporary forms of tourism to emerge in this way is halal tourism, which has become an important niche market within the modern tourism sector (Pamukçu & Sarıışık, 2017).

The Turkish Language Association defines halal as actions or practices that are not prohibited by religious rules and are permissible from a religious perspective (Türk Dil Kurumu [TDK], 2025). For Batman (2017), halal tourism represents an approach rather than a separate type of tourism, one in which religiously sensitive Muslims take part in any form of tourism as far as their faith permits. He notes that this market has, over time, moved beyond its niche origins and is steadily gaining ground within global tourism. Services within this form of tourism are expected to comply with Islamic principles, and all related components, including the products offered, the businesses providing these

services, and their personnel, are evaluated in line with the principles of halal tourism (İstanbullu Dinçer & Erkol Bayram, 2017). Hotels operating under the halal concept are reported to fulfil the same essential function as conventional hotels and, in addition, to deliver their food, beverage, and entertainment services in accordance with Islamic rules and beliefs. Accordingly, it is stated that products prohibited by Islam, such as pork and alcohol, are not served in these establishments, that guests are provided with facilities for worship, and that services such as swimming pools and spas are offered separately for men and women (Arpacı & Batman, 2015).

According to Batman (2017), tourism affects the economy, the natural environment, and the social environment in both favourable and unfavourable ways, and the sustainable tourism approach seeks to strengthen the former while containing the latter. It is further suggested that halal tourism practices in Muslim countries may contribute to reducing some of these adverse impacts. In this sense, the author anticipates that guests with high religious sensitivity who prefer halal tourism may generate economic benefits by preventing waste, social benefits by not conflicting with the religious and cultural values of the local population, and environmental benefits by not harming the natural environment.

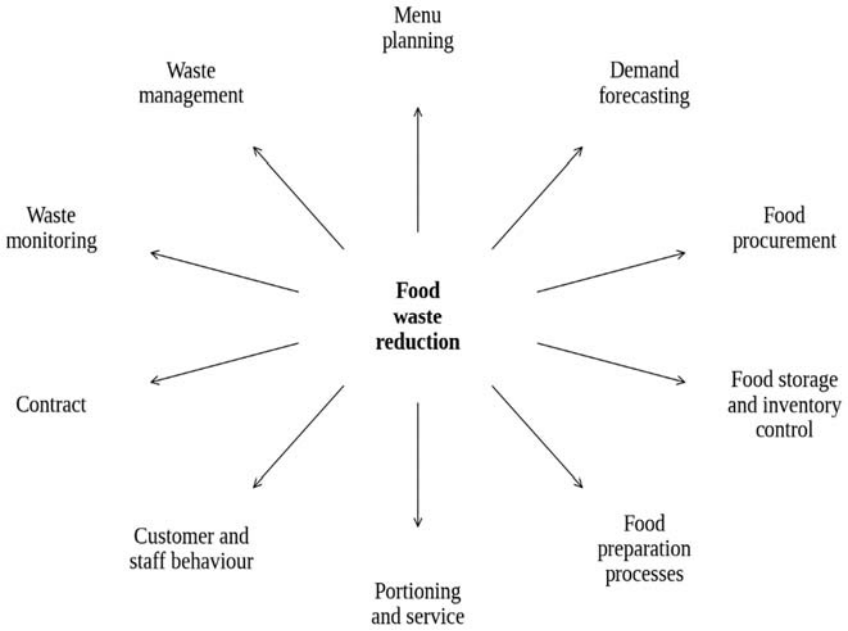
**Food Waste Management**

Food waste is defined as *"any food, and inedible parts of food, removed from the food supply chain to be recovered or disposed,"* with the routes covered by this definition including composting, anaerobic digestion, bioenergy production, cogeneration, incineration, disposal to the sewer, landfilling, discarding at sea, and crops that are ploughed back into the soil or left unharvested (Östergren et al., 2014, p. 6). Although food is among the most basic human needs, the ways in which individuals consume and waste it is reported to affect not only individual lives but also the environment, the economy, and society (Songür & Çakıroğlu, 2016). The central goal of waste legislation is reported to be stopping waste from arising in the first place (Arvanitoyannis & Kassaveti, 2008). In addition, waste minimisation is described as being achieved through waste prevention, reduction, reuse, recycling, and recovery practices (Arvanitoyannis & Kassaveti, 2008; Nayak & Bhushan, 2019).

The gastronomy sector is reported to draw heavily on natural resources, and the waste arising from this consumption is said to bring environmental problems with it (Çakır & Dülger Altıner, 2025). Within hotel establishments, food waste in gastronomy operations is reported to be influenced by several factors, including clients, suppliers, and kitchen staff, as well as the budget and the

consumers. Beyond these, the physical setting of the kitchen, its equipment, and the amount of working space available are also reported to play a part in how much food is wasted. Waste may emerge at any point in the process of preparing and serving meals, which is why tracking it is treated as essential: identifying the points at which waste occurs, and the reasons behind it, allows operators to set priorities and direct their efforts where reductions are most needed (WRAP, 2013). A set of activities adapted for waste reduction in accommodation and food service operations is presented in Figure 1.

**Figure 1.** Activities adapted to reduce waste in accommodation and food service operations.




**Source:** Hazarhun et al. (2020), based on WRAP (2013).

Preventing food waste in the accommodation and food service sector requires attention to several operational areas, from the design of menus through to consumer behaviour. When the findings for the UK hospitality and food service sector are examined, industry averages indicate that the largest proportion of food waste occurs during preparation (45%), followed by consumer plate waste (34%) and spoilage-related losses (21%). These proportions are, however, reported to differ from one establishment to another, depending on how each kitchen operates and how much food is brought in ready-made (WRAP, 2013).

How people manage food resources, and how much of them they allow to go to waste, is reported to be shaped by the consumption ethics of Islam. Such ethics are said to be rooted in religion and belief, which also set out what may lawfully be consumed (halal) in terms of food, drink, and ingredients

(Ibrahim et al., 2024). Halal-concept hotels, by their nature, operate within this framework, which implies that food waste in these settings carries both operational and religious weight. From this perspective, waste prevention practices in halal-concept hotels are not only a matter of resource efficiency but also an expression of the religious and moral values that shape the halal tourism concept itself.

## Methodology

This study aims to provide a situational assessment of current food waste management practices in halal-concept hotels. Within this scope, the following primary research questions were addressed:

- What does the existing literature report about food waste management in hotel and consumer contexts?
- Do managers and staff possess sufficient knowledge regarding waste management?
- What are the main causes of food waste in hotel operations?
- To what extent do staff influence food waste generation?
- To what extent do customers influence food waste generation?
- How are food waste control and disposal conducted in hotel establishments?

Guided by these research questions, a two-stage design consisting of a systematic literature review and qualitative research was employed.

### Systematic Literature Review

In the first stage of the research, a systematic literature review was performed in accordance with the PRISMA guidelines to examine existing academic knowledge on food waste management in hotel and restaurant businesses and on food waste behaviour at the consumer level, with particular attention to the halal-concept context. The literature search was conducted in both English and Turkish using a set of predefined keywords. English terms included *"food waste," "food waste management," "food loss," "halal hotel," "halal tourism," "halal-concept accommodation," and "hospitality;"* their Turkish equivalents were *"gıda israfı," "gıda atığı," "atık yönetimi," "helal otel", "helal turizm", and "helal konseptli konaklama"*. These keywords were combined with AND and OR operators, for example: (*"food waste"* OR *"food waste management"*) AND (*"halal hotel"*

OR *"halal tourism"*). Searches covered the title, abstract, and keyword fields of Google Scholar, TR Dizin, ScienceDirect (Elsevier), Hospitality & Tourism Complete (EBSCO), Emerald Insight, the Council of Higher Education (YÖK) Thesis Center, and DergiPark.

**Participants and Sampling**

In the second stage of the research, qualitative interview techniques were employed to complement the literature review and to examine food waste management practices in the halal-concept hotels. The research population consisted of five-star halal-concept hotels operating in Alanya. Because the number of hotels matching this profile in the area is limited, all were contacted for participation, and five agreed to take part. Although five hotels participated, the interpretive limitations typically associated with small qualitative samples still apply. Within these hotels, participants were selected through purposive sampling, targeting those with direct operational responsibility for food and beverage management in halal-concept hotel settings. Consequently, the sample comprised eight participants (five executive chefs and three general managers) employed in these five halal-concept hotels.

**Data Collection**

The interviews were conducted face-to-face as well as through telephone calls and WhatsApp, using both written and voice communication. Each interview lasted approximately 20-30 minutes. The mix of face-to-face, telephone, and WhatsApp interviews reflected participants' schedules and preferences, which helped sustain participation among hotel professionals with demanding schedules. Different communication modes can produce qualitatively different data; non-verbal cues are more visible in face-to-face settings, while written exchanges tend to be shorter and more focused. Coding and interpretation therefore stayed sensitive to the format of each interview. The interviews were conducted in Turkish, the native language of both the participants and the research team. Direct quotations reported in the findings section were translated into English by academic colleagues working in the field of tourism, and the translations were reviewed by the authors to ensure that the meaning and tone of the original statements were preserved. The emergence of new categories was monitored across successive interviews. As the later interviews repeated existing categories without adding substantially new content, sufficient depth appeared to have been reached for the exploratory purposes of this study.

**Interview Instrument**

The interview questions were developed by adapting, with the permission of the author, the data collection instrument used by Çirişoğlu (2019). This instrument was preferred because it offers a systematic question set for food waste in the Turkish academic literature, focuses on food and beverage operations whose kitchen processes overlap with hotel operations, and follows a structure suitable for qualitative research. As the source study was conducted in a restaurant setting, the items were adapted to the halal-concept hotel context; references to restaurants were rephrased in terms of hotel kitchens, while service-related questions were revised with open-buffet operations in mind. Before fieldwork, the adapted form was reviewed by three academics working in tourism-gastronomy and hospitality management, together with an executive chef who was not part of the sampled hotels, and minor wording revisions were made based on the feedback received.

**Data Analysis**

The interview data were analysed through content analysis. Two authors independently coded the data and then compared their coding on a case-by-case basis; rather than reporting a single numerical agreement score, discrepancies were discussed in detail until a shared interpretation was reached for each code, an approach that fits the exploratory and descriptive character of the study. Categories were derived directly from the interview data. The number of times each code appeared was not reported; instead, the findings were built on the participants' own statements, and the codes are illustrated with representative direct quotations. This process was followed by member checking, in which the identified categories and representative participant statements were shared with participants, who confirmed that their views had been accurately interpreted and represented. These categories were subsequently compared with the themes identified through the systematic review to assess areas of convergence and partial convergence.

**Ethical Considerations**

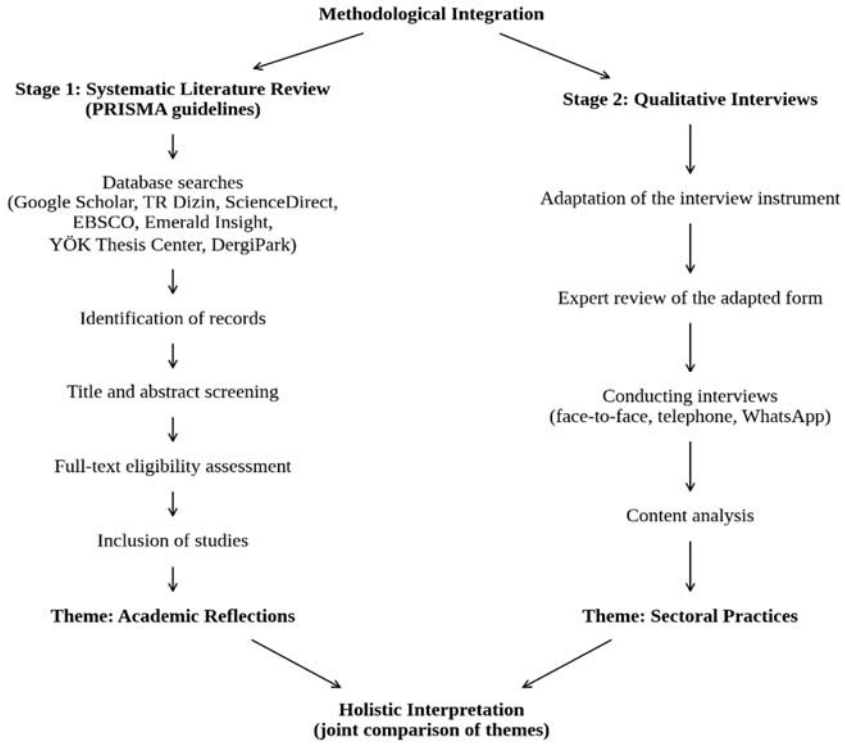
Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee of the Social and Human Sciences of Karamanoğlu Mehmetbey University. Prior to the interviews, the purpose of the study was explained to the participants, and their verbal or written informed consent was obtained. The necessary institutional permissions were also secured from the relevant hotel management. To minimise the risk of indirect identification, demographic information is reported in banded categories, and hotel-level characteristics are presented only in aggregate form.

The identities of the participants were kept confidential, and the data were used solely for research purposes.

**Methodological Integration**

The systematic literature review process was structured in accordance with the PRISMA guidelines, originally introduced by Moher et al. (2009) and subsequently updated as PRISMA 2020 (Page et al., 2021), to enhance the quality of reporting. Within this process, the findings of the review were organised into thematic categories reflecting the academic literature, brought together under the theme of *"Academic Reflections."* The qualitative interviews were then conducted to examine food waste management practices in the hotels, and the interview data were analysed independently of the review themes. The integration of these two methods transformed the study into a systematic review-supported field research design. The two-stage methodological design of the study is presented in Figure 2.

**Figure 2.** Two-stage methodological design of the study




## Findings

The findings of the study are drawn from two sources: literature data analysed in line with the PRISMA guidelines, and field data obtained through qualitative interviews and examined using

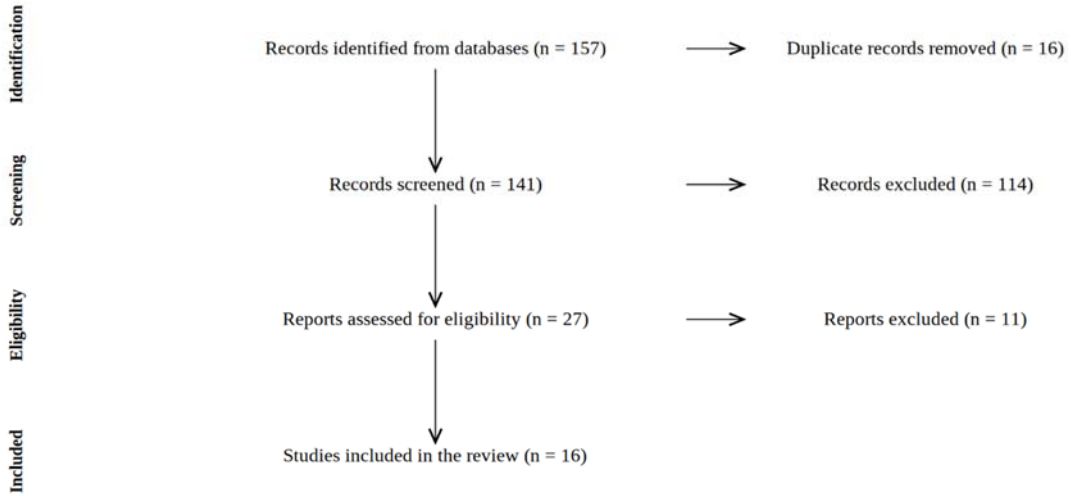
content analysis. Accordingly, the findings were categorised under two main themes: *"Academic Reflections,"* representing the literature dimension, and *"Sectoral Practices,"* representing the field dimension.

**Theme of Academic Reflections**

The identification and selection of studies included within the scope of the research were conducted in line with the PRISMA 2020 flow structure, covering the identification of records, screening at the title and abstract level, assessment of full-text reports for eligibility, and final inclusion. Studies were included if they were published between 2015 and 2025, addressed food waste management in hotel or restaurant businesses or food waste behaviour and practices at the consumer level, were scientific publications such as journal articles or theses, were available in full text, and were written in English or Turkish. Studies were excluded if they fell outside the research topic, lacked full-text access, were written in languages other than English or Turkish, or presented incomplete data.

During the eligibility analysis stage, publications obtained in the initial search were first examined at the title and abstract level. Subsequently, studies that passed the initial screening were examined in relation to the scope of the review and the findings they reported, and those found suitable were included in the analysis. The search returned 157 records in total. Google Scholar, TR Dizin, and DergiPark overlapped, so records were kept in a single pool instead of being counted per database; duplicates were then removed in the next stage, leaving 141 studies for title and abstract screening. Of these, 27 studies were considered for full-text assessment. After the predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied, 16 studies were included in the final review. The study selection process is presented in the PRISMA flow diagram (Figure 3). The remaining 11 studies were excluded because they fell outside the thematic scope of the study, could not be adequately assessed for inclusion on the basis of the information reported, or lacked accessible full texts. The included studies were not evaluated with a standardised quality appraisal tool; instead, the findings reported in each study were examined and grouped according to recurring and conceptually related issues. This process resulted in five broad themes: causes of food waste, staff behaviour, customer preferences, operational practices, and technological solutions. While most of the included studies centred on hotel and restaurant operations, a smaller number examined food waste behaviour and practices at the consumer level.

**Figure 3.** PRISMA flow diagram of the study selection process




**Source:** Adapted from the PRISMA 2020 statement (Page et al., 2021).

Following the selection process summarised in the PRISMA flow diagram, the included studies and their main findings are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Studies included in the systematic literature review

| Study Title | Findings | Reference |
|---|---|---|
| Determination of Food Wasting in Accommodation Businesses Operating in Turkey: A Research in the Framework of Halal Concept Hotels | The study indicated that halal-concept hotels showed no difference from non-halal hotels in their food waste policies or in their efforts to recycle the waste generated. It was emphasised that, because these establishments prioritise customer satisfaction, food waste can be pushed into the background. Among the causes identified were staff shortages in hotel kitchens, a lack of experience among existing staff, unplanned workloads, outdated kitchen technology, unconscious consumption at the service stage, presentation on large serving plates, and unbalanced portioning. | Yılmaz & Ceyhun Sezgin, 2022 |
| Excess in Halal Concept Hotels: A Case Study | The study aimed to establish whether waste occurred in the consumption of accommodation and food and beverage services at a halal-concept hotel operating in line with Islamic principles. The findings showed that hotel guests consumed excessive amounts of food and beverages. Plate waste alone could reach 20% to 50% of the food served. Beverage waste was found to be comparatively lower. In hot weather, however, it could reach 20-30%, as drinks that had warmed in the glass were poured away and replaced with fresh ones. | Aydoğdu & Koçoğlu, 2017 |
| A Research about Orange Flag to Avoid Hotels from Wasting Food | The study aimed to examine how effective the Orange Flag scheme is in addressing food waste and what benefits it brings to the hotels holding it. It was concluded that food waste declined at certified hotels, that these establishments came to be regarded as preferable by customers, and that their staff behaved with greater sensitivity towards food waste. Among the measures reported were reducing plate sizes so that guests would take only as much food as they could eat, along with surveys and awareness-raising efforts directed at guests under the scheme. | Çetinoğlu & Ünlüönen, 2020 |
| The Impact of Religiosity and Food Consumption Culture on Food Waste Intention in Saudi Arabia | The study examined the direct effects of religiosity and food consumption culture on food waste intention, as well as their indirect effects through the constructs of the Theory of Planned Behaviour. The findings indicated that religiosity exerted only a very weak negative effect on food waste intention, whereas food consumption culture strengthened this intention significantly. Furthermore, | Elshaer et al., 2021 |

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| | attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control were found to fully mediate the link between religiosity and food waste intention, while only partially mediating the link between food consumption culture and this intention. | |
| Approaches to waste of hotel employees: The case of Konya | The study examined how food and beverage staff working in three-, four-, and five-star hotels in Konya approach the issue of waste. The findings revealed that employees were highly aware of waste prevention efforts and that the dimension concerning hotels' responsibility for preventing waste stood out above the others. The participants also stated that the all-inclusive system caused waste, and pointed to energy-saving lamps, sensor-based lighting, and automatic soap and paper towel dispensers as the leading measures against energy waste in their establishments. | Pekerşen et al., 2022 |
| Reducing the plate waste of families at hotel buffets - A quasi-experimental field study. | The study aimed to develop a game-based intervention for reducing the plate waste generated by families at hotel buffets and to test its effectiveness through a quasi-experimental field study in two hotels. Plate waste was described as an easily avoidable form of food waste which, while adding nothing to the enjoyment of the meal, imposes financial costs on hotels and harms the environment. The intervention was found to reduce plate waste by 34%. Awareness-raising flyers also lowered average plate waste significantly and at a much smaller cost, making them a practical low-cost option for tackling plate waste. | Dolnicar et al., 2020 |
| Reduction of food waste generation in the hospitality industry | The study examined food waste management practices in the hospitality sector and demonstrated that the breakfast buffet was the most sustainable service type in terms of food waste, followed by à la carte services. Serving style and timing, the type of food served, and the accuracy with which guest numbers were predicted emerged as the most important contributors to food waste generation, while leftovers in serving dishes proved a significant source of waste. It was emphasised that strategies to curb this waste require action from hotel staff and guests alike, and a performance indicator termed the FRESH number was proposed for rating the sustainability of food services. | Pirani & Arafat, 2016 |
| Estimation of the Scale of Food Waste in Hotel Food Services—A Case Study | The study revealed that the majority of food waste in hotels occurred at the service stage, with an average of 72.55% of total food waste being generated during this phase. In addition, it was determined that an average of 0.046 kg of food per portion was wasted as plate waste, corresponding to 5.8% of the portion weight. To reduce food waste, the authors called for the education of both staff and consumers: staff training was to focus on handling food correctly, while consumer education was to build awareness of the harm that wasted food causes, particularly to the natural environment. | Tomaszewska et al., 2021 |
| Stimulating food waste reduction behaviour among hotel guests through context manipulation | The study examined the effectiveness of communication-based interventions aimed at reducing food waste. The findings showed that the communication tools reduced edible plate waste by 14.4%. When the contact points at the restaurant entrance, buffet, and guest table were compared, the guest table was identified as the strongest communication point. It was concluded that, where such tools are positioned well, guests can be prompted to consume more responsibly even in pleasure-oriented settings that place no limits on consumption, giving hotels a way of drawing their guests into efforts to protect the environment. | Antonschmidt & Lund-Durlacher, 2021 |
| Evaluation of Wastes in Halal Concept Hotels in Turkey | The study examined waste prevention practices in halal-concept hotels in Türkiye. Employees strongly agreed that waste prevention serves to protect scarce resources on a global scale and to keep products in efficient and effective use. Most participants reported that their establishments displayed prominent warnings against food waste on menu cards. The majority also agreed that the all-inclusive system, offering food and drinks at all meals, increased the extent of waste. | Yıldırım, 2019 |
| Food Wastes in Restaurants and their Management: The Case of Istanbul Province | The study examined the causes of food waste and waste management practices in restaurants in Istanbul. The findings indicated that more than half of the establishments monitored their waste; all participants, however, lacked detailed knowledge of food waste. It was determined that food waste occurred most frequently in the service department and that vegetables constituted the food group generating the greatest amount of waste. Furthermore, it was stated that waste oils were collected for biodiesel production and that food waste was reused in food preparation. It was also stated that the main causes of kitchen food waste were customer expectations and staff carelessness, whereas plate waste primarily resulted from customers ordering more food than they needed. | Çirişoğlu & Akoğlu, 2021 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Conversion of Kitchen Food Waste to Halal Organic Fertilizers | The study aimed to identify the most environmentally sound ways of dealing with kitchen food waste, presenting composting as a source of natural, halal, and eco-friendly fertiliser. It noted that up to a third of the food grown for human consumption goes to waste, with economic, social, and environmental costs. The findings showed that composting food waste at home supports waste reduction, allows nutrients to be recycled, and contributes to a cleaner and more sustainable environment. | Sulaiman et al., 2023 |
| Waste Food Management in Hotels: Case of Trabzon | The study demonstrates that food waste occurred mostly at the post-service stage, as customers filled their plates beyond what they could eat and ordered more than they needed. According to the authors, waste was managed through practices such as donating it to animal shelters, sharing it with staff, or direct disposal. Vegetable waste generated during production was reported to be reused in soups or condiment products. Preventive measures were noted to include interdepartmental cooperation, minimum stock practices, and the regular collection of waste oils for delivery to municipalities. Storage areas were also said to be inspected regularly to prevent food spoilage. | Turan & Türkay, 2024 |
| The Perspectives of Cuisine Chefs Who Work in the All-Inclusive System on Zero Waste Applications: An Antalya Five-Star All-Inclusive System Hotel Example | The study demonstrated that food waste was concentrated in the hot kitchen, cold kitchen, breakfast, and vegetable preparation sections. According to the authors, the all-inclusive system increased waste levels further and made prevention more difficult. In response, the hotels were reported to adopt several practices, including waste separation, the storage of used oils in barrels for later sorting, and temperature control of refrigerators. Leftover food was reused in staff cafeterias or sent to animal shelters, and kitchen staff received relevant training. | Hazarhun et al., 2020 |
| Religion, Culture and Food Waste Behaviour among Muslim Consumers in Selangor | The study examined what drives food waste among Muslim consumers in Selangor, Malaysia. Religion was found to be only weakly related to food waste behaviour, while culture showed a strong positive association with it. The authors suggested that understanding how Muslim consumers handle food, and what lies behind their wastefulness, could help spread awareness of the problem. They also called for further research to clarify the determinants of food waste and to design and test strategies for reducing it. | Abdul Wahab et al., 2023 |
| Saving the Earth from the Dinner Table: Efforts to Reduce Food Waste Production in the Perspective of Sufism Ethics | The study reports a relationship between Islamic consumption ethics and the ways in which individuals manage food resources and generate food waste. Sufism, as a spiritual tradition within Islam, is described as supporting the reduction of food waste by bringing values such as ethical conduct, obedience, and wisdom into everyday life. Accordingly, it is emphasised that raising awareness of Islamic consumption ethics, together with embracing Sufi principles in daily life, may encourage more responsible and sustainable consumption. | Ibrahim et al., 2024 |

Figure 4 presents the general trends and thematic classifications identified in the literature review on food waste management.

**Figure 4.** General trends and thematic categories of the reviewed studies



### Theme of Sectoral Practices

To identify sectoral practices, interviews were conducted with executive chefs and managers working in halal-concept hotels operating in Alanya. In line with the confidentiality principles set out in Section 3.6, participants were coded as P1 through P8, and the confidentiality of their identities was maintained. Information regarding the executive chefs and managers of halal-concept hotels is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Information on executive chefs and managers of halal-concept hotels

| Participant | Age | Education Level | Position in the Organisation | Length of Employment in the Organisation | Industry Experience |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| P1 | 45-54 | Secondary School | Executive Chef | 5-9 years | 30 years or more |
| P2 | 35-44 | University | General Manager | 5-9 years | 10-19 years |
| P3 | 45-54 | High School | Executive Chef | 5-9 years | 20-29 years |
| P4 | 45-54 | High School | General Manager | 5-9 years | 30 years or more |
| P5 | 45-54 | Primary School | Executive Chef | 1-4 years | 30 years or more |
| P6 | 35-44 | University | General Manager | 10 years or more | 10-19 years |
| P7 | 35-44 | University | Executive Chef | 5-9 years | 20-29 years |
| P8 | 45-54 | High School | Executive Chef | 1-4 years | 20-29 years |

Table 2 presents the demographic information of five executive chefs and three general managers working in halal-concept hotels. To protect participant confidentiality, given the limited number of hotels matching the study profile in the area, demographic characteristics are reported in banded categories and hotel-level details are not disclosed. The participants were aged between 35 and 54, with industry experience ranging from ten to more than thirty years, and their educational backgrounds ranged from primary education to university level. The participating hotels were large-scale, five-star establishments.

Based on the interviews conducted within the scope of the Sectoral Practices theme, the following categories were identified: *Waste Management Knowledge and Training, Causes of Food Waste, Staff Effects on Food Waste, Customer Effects on Food Waste, and Food Waste Control and Disposal.*

In food waste management, alongside technological infrastructure and managerial decisions, the knowledge level and training of staff responsible for implementing these processes are also critically important. In this regard, Montesdeoca-Calderón et al. (2024) reported that restaurants with higher levels of staff training tend to generate less food waste, whereas food waste levels are higher in establishments with lower training levels. Accordingly, the category titled *"Waste Management*

*Knowledge and Training,"* including its subcategories and codes derived from the interviews, is presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Waste management knowledge and training category, subcategories, and codes

| Category | Subcategory | Codes |
|---|---|---|
| Waste Management Knowledge and Training | Knowledge about Food Waste and Waste Management | Yes<br>Sustainable consumption awareness<br>Religious and ethical awareness |
| | Training on Waste Management | Yes, I received training |

Table 3 shows that the participants working in halal-concept hotels have received training on waste management and possess knowledge on this subject. Some participants also associated the avoidance of food waste with religious and ethical principles. Participant remarks on these points include the following:

> **P1:** *"Yes, I have knowledge and received training, and we also trained our staff. We take measures such as waste separation bins and grease traps. Wastefulness is forbidden in our religion and is regarded as an ethical and moral concern, so as a halal-concept hotel we pay attention to avoiding food waste."*
>
> **P4:** *"Wastefulness is forbidden in our religion and is a moral duty for both our guests and ourselves; it is also an economic loss for our hotel and our country."*
>
> **P7:** *"I have knowledge about waste management. I know that food waste causes environmental pollution and leads to economic losses."*
>
> **P5:** *"We should contribute to sustainability by reducing waste, separating waste, recycling, proper planning, and conscious consumption."*

In hotel operations, food waste is reported to emerge from multiple interconnected processes, including operational procedures, procurement, storage, preparation, service, staff behaviours, and customer preferences. It entails not only the direct costs associated with waste disposal but also the indirect costs incurred throughout hotel food operations, including food storage, preparation, purchasing, transportation, and the subsequent removal of food waste (Kasavan et al., 2022). Against this background, the category titled *"Causes of Food Waste,"* including its subcategories and codes derived from the interviews, is presented in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Causes of food waste category, subcategories, and codes

| Category | Subcategory | Codes |
|---|---|---|
| Causes of Food Waste | Plate Waste | Customer preferences<br>Customer consumption habits<br>Portion control practices<br>Service based on customer demands<br>Staff awareness initiatives<br>Use of large plates<br>Customers taking too much food<br>Impact of the open buffet system<br>Families with children<br>Lack of customer awareness/information |
| | Food Groups Generating the Highest Waste | Vegetables and fruits<br>Milk-based and syrup-based desserts<br>Food returned from the open buffet<br>High waste levels in hot and cold sections<br>Bakery products<br>Pasta and rice |
| | Factors Causing Food Waste | Staff negligence<br>Insufficient staff knowledge<br>Non-compliance with hygiene rules<br>Improper storage practices<br>Workload intensity<br>Failure to follow recipes/standards<br>Inventory control issues<br>Errors during the production process<br>Overproduction<br>Customer expectations<br>Customers taking excessive portions |

Table 4 shows that the causes of food waste stem from plate waste, waste generated during the preparation stage, waste resulting from errors in storage processes, staff negligence, and customer preferences. Additionally, vegetables and fruits appear to be the food groups that generate the highest amount of food waste. The following remarks illustrate how participants described these causes:

> **P3:** *"Plate waste results from our customers taking more food than they can consume. We provide warnings to prevent this."*
>
> **P7:** *"The food groups generating the highest amount of waste in our operation are vegetables and fruits. The reasons include improper storage, errors during sorting and preparation processes, overproduction, and the open buffet system."*

Training provided to kitchen staff on food waste management may influence not only individual awareness but also daily operational practices. Reflecting this, the category titled *"Staff Effects on Food Waste,"* including its subcategories and codes derived from the interviews, is presented in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Staff effects on food waste category, subcategories, and codes

| Category | Subcategory | Codes |
|---|---|---|
| Staff Effects on Food Waste | Staff Training on Waste Management | Yes, staff received training |
| | Changes Observed After Training | Increased awareness |

Table 5 indicates that staff working in halal-concept hotels have received training on waste management and that, as a result of these trainings, their awareness has increased, leading them to work more carefully and demonstrate positive behavioural changes. Some direct statements from participants regarding this issue are presented below:

> **P7:** *"Our staff received training on waste management. After these trainings, I observed increased awareness among staff and more careful behaviour, particularly aimed at reducing waste."*
>
> **P8:** *"Yes, we provide training to our staff at the beginning of each season. Our staff say the training is beneficial, and I observe the same."*

How hotels communicate with their guests about food waste can shape consumption behaviour at the point where much of this waste arises. Reflecting this, the category entitled *"Customer Effects on Food Waste,"* together with its associated subcategories and codes derived from the interviews, is presented in Table 6.

**Table 6.** Customer effects on food waste category, subcategories, and codes

| Category | Subcategory | Codes |
|---|---|---|
| Customer Effects on Food Waste | Informing Customers about Waste | Customer relations staff provide information<br>Visual warnings are used<br>Attention-grabbing messages are shared |
| | Customer Feedback | Positive feedback is received<br>Feedback varies among individuals, but positive responses are more common |

Table 6 shows that businesses operating under the halal concept inform their customers about food waste and receive positive feedback in return. Participants described this as follows:

> **P5:** *"Yes, we occasionally conduct visually informative activities to raise customer awareness about waste."*
>
> **P8:** *"Feedback from our customers may vary between individuals, but positive feedback is more common."*
>
> **P6:** *"Most of the feedback we receive from our guests is positive, although individual responses can sometimes differ."*
>
> **P3:** *"Customer-related communication on this issue is carried out by the customer relations department."*

In hotel operations, most food waste is reported to arise once service has ended, a pattern attributed to guests overfilling their plates and ordering beyond their needs (Turan & Türkay, 2024). The effective implementation of zero-waste management, which aims to prevent and reduce waste generation, promote the reuse of products, and ensure that any waste that does arise is separated at source and recycled, is expected to contribute to lowering the amount of waste and returning it to the economy (Atmiş & Dilek, 2024). In this context, bringing the food supply chain under control and keeping the amount of waste to a minimum are reported to be essential, with waste collected in groups, in line with food waste regulations, and moved without delay to the sites where it is to be processed (Bayramoğlu & Subaşı, 2023). The category titled *"Food Waste Control and Disposal,"* including its subcategories and codes derived from the interviews, is presented in Table 7.

**Table 7.** Food waste control and disposal category, subcategories, and codes

| Category | Subcategory | Codes |
|---|---|---|
| Food Waste Control and Disposal | Monitoring Food Waste Generated in the Kitchen | Food waste is monitored<br>Utilised leftover meals are sent to animal shelters |
| | Stage Where Waste Mostly Occurs | During kitchen preparation, storage, and service stages<br>Failure to monitor storage and follow the first-in, first-out rule<br>Reasons include overproduction, incorrect portioning, and customer behaviour<br>Customer-related waste<br>Waste returned from customer tables |
| | Waste Utilisation Practices | Food waste is not sufficiently utilised<br>Waste oils are collected and delivered to licensed companies or local authorities<br>Environmental damage from waste oils is prevented<br>Waste is separated by type (paper, metal, etc.) |
| | Procedures Applied for Waste Management | Managed by the quality manager<br>Staff training<br>Zero-waste project<br>Waste separation practices<br>Limited procedures applied by local authorities and the business<br>Municipal waste collection system is used |
| | Negative Aspects of High Waste Amounts | Increased costs<br>Decreased efficiency<br>Increased workload<br>Weaknesses in control mechanisms<br>Environmental pollution<br>Waste of natural resources<br>Negative impacts on sustainability |
| | Planned Projects to Minimise Waste Impacts | Zero-waste project<br>Waste separation projects implemented by businesses<br>Awareness-raising messages against waste<br>Transition to à la carte or plated service |

As Table 7 shows, food waste generated in the kitchens of the relevant hotels is monitored, and some participants reported that suitable unserved surplus food or appropriate food materials are sent to

animal shelters where hygienically and legally appropriate. It was identified that waste occurs during the preparation and storage stages in the kitchen, while plate waste emerges during the service stage. In this regard, some participants suggested that moving from open buffet service to à la carte or plated service could reduce food waste. In kitchens, waste oils are collected and delivered to licensed companies or local authorities; however, food waste itself is not sufficiently utilised. It was also found that zero-waste projects are commonly implemented in hotels, with solid waste recycled as part of these projects. Participants further associated high levels of waste with negative outcomes such as increased costs, reduced efficiency, and environmental pollution. Several participants elaborated on these points:

> **P3:** *"Plated or à la carte service may generate less food waste than open buffet service."*
>
> **P5:** *"Within the scope of the zero-waste project, solid waste is separated whenever possible in our operation; however, food waste is not sufficiently utilised. Waste oils, in particular, are collected to prevent environmental harm and delivered to licensed companies or local authorities."*
>
> **P7:** *"Food waste is not sufficiently utilised in our operation. The reasons include the labour and time required from staff, storage problems, and customer expectations. Especially during peak service periods, staff cannot allocate time for this process, and the risk of contamination also creates difficulties."*
>
> **P8:** *"High levels of waste in the operation lead to negative outcomes such as additional costs, environmental pollution, and reduced efficiency."*
>
> **P2:** *"We believe that reducing food waste lowers costs, protects the environment, and improves efficiency. We try to develop solutions to this end."*

## Discussion

The findings indicate that the practices reported by the participants align with the themes identified in the existing literature. In this respect, the interviews also identified operational processes, staff awareness, and customer behaviours as important contributors to food waste, consistent with the key drivers highlighted in the systematic review. In particular, the participants described practices such as portion control and waste monitoring, which correspond, to varying degrees, to the interventions emphasised in the literature.

Accordingly, a comparative analysis of the findings from the systematic review and the qualitative interviews is presented in Table 8. This comparison identifies areas of convergence and partial convergence between academic knowledge and sectoral practice in food waste management at halal-concept hotels.

**Table 8.** Joint comparison of the systematic review and qualitative interview findings

| Theme from the systematic review | Corresponding interview category | Assessment |
|---|---|---|
| Causes of food waste | Causes of food waste | Convergence |
| Staff behaviour | Staff effects on food waste; waste management knowledge and training | Convergence |
| Customer preferences | Customer effects on food waste | Convergence |
| Operational practices | Food waste control and disposal | Partial convergence |
| Technological solutions | Food waste control and disposal (monitoring practices) | Partial convergence |

**Note.** *The authors jointly assessed convergence and partial convergence. Convergence indicates substantive overlap between the review theme and the corresponding interview category; partial convergence indicates overlap limited to selected practices.*

The partial convergence observed for operational practices indicates that only selected practices identified in the systematic review were also present in the interview findings, while the partial convergence for technological solutions suggests that the adoption of advanced technological monitoring tools remains at an early stage.

In the present study, the participants stated that waste management training increased employees' awareness and contributed to the development of more careful working behaviours. This finding supports the practical recommendations proposed by Pearson et al. (2025). The authors called for open communication and feedback channels through which employees can share their ideas on food waste prevention, and for embedding prevention explicitly in employee training, covering every stage from ordering and menu design through storage, preparation, cooking, and service to disposal. They further recommended carrying such content into customer service training through practical scenarios in which staff guide customers towards suitable portion sizes or offer a box for leftovers and stressed that training should convey not only what is to be done but also why and how management decisions on food waste prevention are made. The same training-related finding is also broadly in line with Montesdeoca-Calderón et al. (2024), who identified a relationship between employee training and food waste levels: restaurants investing more in training generated less waste, particularly in premium categories such as fish and seafood, making such investment an economic necessity in a sector with narrow profit margins. The authors add that training broadens staff awareness of resource conservation and social responsibility, can inspire fresh culinary directions, and reshapes how consumers view the service, leaving well-trained establishments better placed to meet the growing demand for sustainability. They also stress the need for public policies supporting training and waste reduction, with particular relevance to developing economies.

The present study revealed that customer information activities, visual warnings, and attention-grabbing messages were used to raise awareness of food waste. This finding is consistent with Stöckli et al. (2018), who found that informational interventions are the type practitioners turn to most often when seeking to reduce consumer food waste. Nevertheless, the authors also noted that evidence points to the relative ineffectiveness of information provision on its own and argued that attention should therefore extend to other forms of intervention, including prompts, social norms, and rewards.

The findings of this study indicate that food waste in hotels is associated with the practices and processes conducted at various stages of hotel operations. These findings are consistent with the conceptual framework proposed by Filimonau and De Coteau (2019), who organise food waste mitigation in hospitality operations around three distinct phases: the pre-kitchen, kitchen, and post-kitchen stages. In their framework, the pre-kitchen stage centres on forecasting demand and managing stock; the kitchen stage covers how food is handled, cooked, and served; and the post-kitchen stage calls for working closely with customers, finding ways to redirect surplus food, and adopting more effective means of dealing with the waste that remains.

This study determined that various food waste management practices were implemented in hotels; however, food waste could not be adequately valorised due to operational constraints. This finding is consistent with those of Hazarhun et al. (2020) regarding practices aimed at reducing food waste in hotels and restaurants, such as waste separation, the separate collection of waste oil, and the utilisation of surplus food. The broader value of such environmental practices is supported by Schubert et al. (2010), who found that restaurant customers care about restaurants playing their part in protecting the environment and that most of those surveyed were willing to pay more at restaurants engaging in environmentally friendly practices. Kassinis and Soteriou (2003) demonstrated that greater use of environmental practices in the hotel industry is positively associated with market performance, with this effect operating through improved customer satisfaction and loyalty. In contrast, Kasim and Ismail (2012) reported that although restaurant managers claimed to be informed and concerned about environmental issues, they remained reluctant to change their practices. The authors noted that this hesitancy was largely tied to weakly enforced environmental legislation and unfavourable sectoral conditions, such as a limited green supply chain and little demand from trade, customers, or the community.

In the halal-concept hotels examined, waste prevention was reflected in practices such as staff training, careful portioning, and customer information, and these practices were integrated into daily operations as part of a shared management approach. When considered together, these practices indicate that food waste prevention extends beyond an operational concern and can also be interpreted within the religious and ethical principles underlying the halal-concept service model. In relation to the religious dimension of food waste behaviour, Elshaer et al. (2021) reported that religiosity exerted a very weak negative effect on food waste intention, whereas food consumption culture increased this intention strongly and significantly. The authors further reported that attitudes towards the behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control fully mediated the effect of religiosity on food waste intention, while only partially mediating the effect of food consumption culture. Similarly, Abdul Wahab et al. (2023) reported that religion was only weakly related to food waste behaviour among Muslim consumers, whereas culture was strongly and positively associated with it. The authors emphasised the importance of gaining a better understanding of the factors behind individuals' food waste and of raising awareness in order to reduce it. They also pointed out that future studies could adopt a qualitative approach to shed further light on the determinants of food waste. The qualitative design of the present study is consistent with this suggestion.

The findings revealed that food waste leads not only to economic losses but also to environmental pollution, the waste of natural resources, and negative impacts on sustainability. Furthermore, reducing food waste was found to require waste separation, proper planning, and the adoption of a conscious consumption approach. The wider significance of these findings is underlined by Ibrahim et al. (2024), who stated that the growth of the world's population is expected to raise food demand in the future and that this may create significant difficulties for food security, particularly for people with middle to lower economies. The authors reported that food loss affects food security unfavourably and that the causes of this problem can differ according to local conditions and circumstances. They further emphasised that food waste remains a fundamental problem across the world. Similarly, Çirişoğlu and Akoğlu (2021) stated that when food produced for human consumption ends up as waste, what is lost extends well beyond the food itself to the time, energy, labour, money, and natural resources spent across the production and consumption cycle. The authors noted that bringing this waste under control is a precondition for both preventing it and embedding sustainable patterns of production and consumption. They further emphasised that sustainable waste management is essential for lowering costs, keeping the environment cleaner,

reducing the loss of resources, preserving the future balance between food supply and demand, and coping with hunger.

## Conclusion

Bringing together the systematic review and the field interviews, this study indicates that food waste management in the halal-concept hotels examined centres on staff training, consumption forecasting, and inventory control. The adoption of digital monitoring technologies, however, remains at an early stage despite growing attention in the literature. The convergence observed between the systematic review themes and the field interviews suggests that sectoral practice is broadly consistent with the strategies emphasised in academic research, although convergence remained partial for operational practices and technological solutions. In these hotels, waste prevention can also be read in the light of the ethical and religious principles on which the halal-concept service model rests, particularly the avoidance of excess. For practitioners, the findings point to attainable steps: extending seasonal training beyond kitchen teams, refining consumption forecasts for open-buffet service, and introducing simple waste measurement routines before committing to advanced monitoring systems. By considering a systematic review and qualitative field research together, this study may contribute to this developing area of research in the context of halal accommodation establishments.

## Limitations and Future Research

This study has certain limitations. The qualitative findings reflect the perspectives of eight participants working in five halal-concept hotels in Alanya; the results are therefore best understood as indicative observations specific to this setting. The systematic review, for its part, was restricted to studies published in English and Turkish, so relevant work in other languages of the halal tourism literature, such as Arabic, Malay, or Indonesian, may have been missed. Since the databases used overlap in coverage, the records were pooled rather than reported database by database, and the included studies were assessed for relevance through author consensus rather than a standardised quality appraisal tool. The comparison between the review themes and the interview categories reported in Table 8, including the convergence assessments, likewise rests on the authors' interpretive judgement rather than a formal scoring procedure.

The interview procedure also involves choices that should be kept in mind when interpreting the findings. Conducting interviews through a mix of face-to-face, telephone, and WhatsApp formats provided flexibility yet may have introduced some variation in data richness, as non-verbal cues were less accessible in remote formats; similarly, translations of participant statements were reviewed by the authors without a formal back-translation procedure, and coding reliability rested on consensus rather than a numerical inter-coder agreement score. Future studies are recommended to examine larger samples across different regions and countries, to support the findings with quantitative methods, and to further investigate the impact of technological solutions, such as smart waste measurement systems, on food waste reduction.

## Recommendations

Based on the systematic review and the field findings of this study, a number of recommendations may be identified that could contribute to both theoretical development and practical applications in the field. Education emerges as a key component of food waste prevention; accordingly, informative activities should be conducted to raise awareness among both customers and staff. In this process, public institutions, the private sector, and non-governmental organisations should develop collaborative projects and initiatives addressing food waste. At the operational level, systems such as inventory control and technological innovations should be implemented to support more effective waste management. Open buffet systems and similar service models should be designed and managed more carefully to minimise unnecessary waste generation. Critical control points in waste generation, including procurement, preparation, service, and collection stages, should be identified, recorded, and analysed in detail. Careful attention should also be paid to kitchen preparation and portioning practices, and regulations related to waste disposal should be strictly followed. Finally, waste storage and separation practices should be organised systematically to facilitate more efficient processing and disposal.

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# Navigating Faith in Hospitality: Muslim Travelers and Hotel Services in China and Malaysia

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**Abstract**

This page examines Muslim hotel services in China and Malaysia. A comprehensive comparison of Muslim hotel services in the two countries is conducted utilising approaches including literature review, case study, and comparative analysis. The report focusses on the tourist industry's recovery post-globalization and the growth of the Muslim tourism market, emphasising the significant potential for the advancement of Muslim hotel services in China and Malaysia. The research starts by examining the essential elements of Muslim hotel services, including dietary limitations, prayer accommodations, scheduling, and staff assistance. The historical development and service characteristics of Muslim hotels in China and Malaysia were analysed. Chinese Muslim hotels emphasise local halal cuisine, fundamental prayer amenities, Islamic etiquette instruction for staff, and tailored services. The Muslim hotel in Malaysia has diverse halal cuisine, is designed with Islamic motifs, employs predominantly Muslim staff that provide professional services, and prioritises religious observance and cultural exchange. The comparison indicates that both nations prioritise halal food and prayer facilities for service content, however discrepancies exist in dietary characteristics, the religious nature of facilities, and services provided on religious holidays. Regarding service concepts, China prioritises individualised demands, whereas Malaysia promotes religious devotion. China's management styles are shaped by market and industry norms, but Malaysia's are affected by religious culture and governmental regulation. Religious and cultural roots, business influences, and regulatory frameworks all contribute to the discrepancies. The article ultimately suggests enhancing cultural exchanges and collaboration, prioritising market research, expanding personnel training, and refining rules and regulations to foster the sustainable growth of the Muslim hotel service sector in both

nations.

**Key words:** *Muslim hotel services, China, Malaysia, Comparative analysis, Service philosophy, Management mode*

## Introduction

### Research Background

In a world that is becoming more connected, the tourism industry has become a key part of economic growth for many countries. The most recent information from the United Nations World Tourism Organisation shows that the global tourism industry is slowly getting back on its feet after the pandemic. By 2024, the number of international tourists will have risen to 14 billion, which is almost back to the level it was before the pandemic (United Nations World Tourism Organisation, 2024). This pattern of expansion is likely to continue in the next several years because of things like higher disposable income, better transportation, and the advent of digital platforms for booking trips.

The Muslim tourist group has gotten a lot of attention since it is so big and has such unique demands. By 2060, there will be 3 billion Muslims in the world, which is a large number of people (Bowen, Pędziwiatr, Stonawski & Skirbekk, 2026). More and more Muslims are going on trips as their financial situations get better. The Muslim travel sector is getting bigger and also has some unusual ways of spending money. For instance, they need certain types of housing, food, and religious facilities when they are travelling. These needs have led to the growth of hotels that are welcoming to Muslims all around the world.

China is a country with many ethnic groups and religions. It has a large Muslim population, mostly in Xinjiang, Ningxia, and Gansu. The Muslim hotel service sector in China has been changing all the time because of the growing number of international Muslim tourists coming to the country and the soaring growth of domestic tourism. According to the China’s Ministry of Culture and Tourism, China had a total of 5.615 billion domestic tourist trips in 2024(Cai, & Xia, 2026). About 2% of all tourists were Muslim, which means that about 100 million Muslims travelled within the country. These tourists make it easier and harder for China's Muslim hotel businesses to grow. These travellers provide fresh chances and problems to the growth of China's Muslim hotel services.

Islam is the state religion in Malaysia, and most of the people who live there are Muslims. The rich Islamic culture of Malaysia has a big effect on all parts of social life, including the hotel service industry. Islamic beliefs and local cultural traditions have a big impact on the hotel services in Malaysia, which makes them unique. In light of this, it is very important to compare the Muslim hotel services in China and Malaysia. It can help us understand how hotel services are affected by diverse religious and cultural backgrounds. It can also give us useful information for improving the hotel sector in both countries.

The rapid development of Muslim tourism has led to an increase in demand for hotel services that meet consistent religious, cultural and quality-of-service criteria. The importance of this research is the rapid development of Muslim tourism. In order to improve the level of satisfaction of tourists, the quality of services provided, and the long-term growth of hotels in both Muslim and non-Muslim nations, it is essential to have an awareness of the implementation of Muslim hotel services in a variety of countries (Abd Rahman, 2026). This study adds to the literature by comparing Muslim hospitality services in China and Malaysia, two countries with substantial differences in religion, culture, and legal systems. Some previous studies have discussed halal tourism and Muslim-friendly accommodation in a location. This paper adds to the body of knowledge by showing the parallels and contrasts between the service offers, service philosophies and management practices of the two countries.

The findings of this study can be used by hotel managers, tourism professionals and policy makers to enhance hospitality services to Muslims. The industry players should utilize the results to enhance the halal service standards, the employee training programs, the prayer and dietary facilities and formulate better management strategies that meet the needs of the Muslim travelers (Bukhari, 2025). Moreover, the results could facilitate cross-cultural knowledge transfer between China and Malaysia, resulting in enhanced competitiveness and inclusivity in hospitality services within the global Muslim tourist sector.

The primary objective of this study is to perform a thorough and detailed comparative investigation of Muslim hotel services in China and Malaysia. This paper compares the two countries to understand the factors contributing to differences in service content, service concepts, and management structures. This involves examining the effects of religious and cultural origins, market demands, and regulatory regulations.

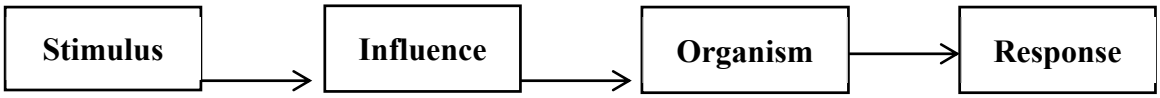
China can learn a lot from the service features of Muslim hotels in Malaysia that can help it improve

the quality and religious aspects of its own Muslim hotel services. China wants to bring in more Muslim visitors from other countries. By learning from Malaysia's experience with how to mix religious culture into hotel services, China's Muslim-friendly hotels may be more competitive in the worldwide market. Malaysia may learn from how China meets the individual needs of Muslim tourists and use that knowledge to improve its hotel services. As tourists' needs become more varied, Malaysia's hotel business can learn from China's traditions to offer more varied services while still following religious rules. This research can enhance cross-cultural exchange and collaboration within the global hotel sector. It gives hotel managers, legislators, and other important people in both countries useful advice on how to help the Muslim hotel service market grow in a healthy way in China and Malaysia.

## Literature Review

Dashiell (1927) proposed the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) hypothesis, a psychological framework that elucidates how individuals respond to external stimuli. In this concept, external stimuli, such as the service quality at a halal hotel, are the initial factors influencing the individual's internal state (Organism), encompassing their thoughts, emotions, and attitudes. This internal state subsequently leads to a certain conduct or response (Response) (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). Mehrabian and Russell (1974) contend that the core tenet of SOR theory is the recognition that individual behaviour arises from the interaction between external stimuli and internal organisms. This contact changes how the person sees and thinks about the stimuli, which then changes how they act. For instance, when people find a halal hotel, the room amenities, dining options, and staff attitudes are all stimuli. The organism, which is made up of their own preferences, emotions, and past experiences, decides how they will react, such as whether they will book a room or how they will feel about the hotel.

**Figure1:** SOR theory




Source: Mehrabian & Russell (1974)

The SOR hypothesis has been widely employed in psychology, as well as in consumer behaviour and marketing research (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982). This concept suggests that marketers can alter external stimuli, such as packaging design or advertising, to influence customers' internal processes, hence promoting the formation of preferences and purchasing decisions. Moreover, the SOR theory has been applied in several fields, such as the service industry and studies of organisational behaviour (Bitner, 1992). In the service industry, service quality functions as an external stimulant that influences consumers' views and satisfaction, hence impacting their intentions to repurchase and their likelihood of engaging in word-of-mouth communication. In conclusion, the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) hypothesis provides a significant framework for understanding individual responses to external stimuli, relevant in psychology, consumer behaviour, marketing, and the service industry. In the context of "The Impact of Halal Hotel Service Quality on Hotel Prices," we may apply the SOR theory to analyse the correlation between service quality in halal hotels and consumer reactions to hotel prices.

Religious tourism, characterised as excursions to local, regional, national, and global religious sites (Rinschede, 1992), has garnered increasing scholarly interest over the past four decades (Collins-Kreiner, 2020; Kim et al., 2021). Halal tourism, often termed Muslim-friendly or halal-friendly tourism, represents a swiftly evolving segment within religious tourism (Collins-Kreiner, 2020). Ryan (2016) believes that halal tourism is when Muslims do pleasurable, relaxing, and social things. The Arabic term "halal" implies "permissible," "acceptable," and "allowable." Islamic tourism and halal tourism are terms used in the tourism industry to describe tourism that is geared towards Muslims. Islamic tourism is largely about religious and pilgrimage goals, while halal tourism is mostly about leisure and recreational activities that are governed by Islamic beliefs (Battour and Ismail, 2016; Ryan, 2016). Halal tourism caters to visitors from diverse backgrounds who adhere to Shariah law according to their religious convictions. Halal tourism has received significant academic scrutiny in recent years (Hall and Prayag, 2019; Rasul, 2019; Vargas-Sánchez and Moral-Moral, 2019).

A substantial body of halal tourism research has focused on assessing the impact of various halal-related attributes, at both macro and micro levels (i.e., destinations and hotels), on the attitudinal outcomes of Muslim tourists, including satisfaction, destination image, purchase intentions, revisit intentions, and word-of-mouth (Vargas-Sánchez and Moral-Moral, 2019). For instance, Battour et al. (2011) conducted one of the pioneering studies on halal tourism, identifying halal attributes that are

important to Muslim participants in Malaysia. These characteristics were categorised into tangible components, such as halal food and prayer facilities (e.g., convenient access to a mosque/prayer room, Quran and Qiblah direction indicators, Muslim toilets), and intangible components, including Islamic entertainment and morality (e.g., segregated swimming pools, prohibition of public displays of affection, Islamic call to prayer). Han et al. (2019) observed that a wide range of halal elements related to various parts of a tourism destination have a big effect on the image of the place and on Muslim visitors' plans to come back and recommend it, even in places where Muslims don't live, like Korea. These halal attributes form an important component of the overall service experience offered by halal hotels, making service quality a critical factor in influencing customer perceptions and behavioural outcomes.

Service quality, which is giving high-quality service, is very important in the hospitality industry (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Being responsive, dependable, sure, understanding, and having actual goods are all part of it. When it comes to halal tourism, service quality is even more crucial. This is especially true for Muslim visitors who desire hotels and services that are in line with their Islamic beliefs and practices. Halal tourism serves the needs of Muslim visitors by offering services and amenities that reflect Islamic norms and dietary guidelines. These include places of worship, halal-certified food, and areas that are segregated for men and women. Studies show that Muslim travellers look for hotels and other venues that provide halal-friendly amenities and services when they travel for work or fun (Battour and Ismail, 2016; Ryan, 2016). Because of this, hotels and other places that offer high-quality halal services are likely to do well in the halal tourist industry and have happier, more loyal clients.

As more and more Muslim tourists seek halal tourism, many countries have adjusted what they provide to tourists to fulfil this need. Hotels that wish to attract Muslim guests now have amenities that follow Islamic norms. These features include showing guests the direction of the Qibla in their hotel rooms, providing them prayer mats and copies of the Quran, selling halal-certified food and drinks, and even having separate prayer rooms with calls for prayer (Stephenson, 2014; Battour et al., 2010; Henderson, 2010). Some hotels also have separate spaces for women and families to make sure they are safe and have their own space. This has been seen in places with a lot of Muslims, including the Georgian Court Hotel in Vancouver, Canada (Stephenson, 2014), and in Western countries too. Rental firms in places like Orlando, Florida, USA, also provide halal vacation packages that come with separate pools, prayer mats, and copies of the Quran (Battour et al., 2018;

Batrawy, 2015). Five primary things affect how people feel about halal tourist products and services: how the public sees them, gender segregation, the availability of halal food, following Islamic dress codes, and moral difficulties. These traits are important because they show that Muslim travellers follow Islamic rules and values in their daily lives (Jafari and Scott, 2014).

Service quality is how well the service meets the customers' expectations (Zeithaml et al., 1985). It means that purchasers have a full opinion about how good the product is (Zeithaml, 1988; Aaker and Jacobson, 1994). In the hospitality sector, perceived service quality is commonly assessed by the extent to which hotel services fulfil guest requirements (Akbaba, 2006; Ye et al., 2014). A lot of marketing research has looked at this component of hotel service quality. Most of it breaks it down into incident-based assessment (García-Barriocanal et al., 2010) and attribute-based evaluation (Parasuraman et al., 2002). Most of the time, people decide how good a hotel's services are based on what their friends or relatives say about it (Rauch et al., 2015). Textual feedback serves as a vehicle for valuable information in online hotel reviews, aiding potential guests in making informed decisions and mitigating the risks associated with online bookings (Gretzel and Yoo, 2008). People who are contemplating about staying at a hotel can get an idea of how good the service is from the reviews, even if they haven't stayed there themselves (Miguéis and Novoa, 2016).

There are many various things that hotels offer, but the room is the most significant aspect (Dolnicar and Otter, 2003). There are also other hotel goods, such enabling, supporting, and enhancing aspects, that are needed to get to the core product and many more value-added products and services (Qu et al., 2000). Some of the hotel's intangible parts are its services, price/value, brand, and marketing. User-Generated Photos (UGPs) depict both physical things (such rooms, linens, and lobbies) and abstract things (like social interactions) about hotels in a way that works well with written reviews. Textual reviews, on the other hand, are personal opinions about hotel products (Ma et al., 2018). So, UGPs in online hotel reviews give guests a lot of information about why they think a hotel is good or terrible. It seems sense to expect that online hotel reviews with UGPs would make customers feel better about the quality of service than reviews without UGPs, based on what we talked about.

People stay at halal hotels because of the good service they get. It includes everything, like the room's amenities, the dining services, and the staff's attitudes, all of which affect how guests see and rate the hotel (Noor, Zainol, Tong Hui Hui & Thirumaran, 2026). The organism is made up of two parts: online hotel reviews with pictures taken by users and the way people think about those reviews. These things show how customers feel and think, which is highly significant for how they act. The

explanation has to do with hotel prices. Customers' opinions and evaluations of the quality of service in halal hotels ultimately influence their acceptance of hotel pricing, which then impacts their conduct, including the decision to reserve a stay. This method lets us look at how the quality of service in halal hotels affects how customers react to hotel prices. It also gives us a theoretical base and a methodological orientation for research on commerce platforms.

Based on the SOR theory, information sources such as hotel amenities, customer reviews, and user-generated images influence customers' perception of service quality and value. These perceptions then influence behavioral responses including booking intentions and willingness to pay for hotel prices. Previous studies have examined the features of halal tourism, service quality, hotel pricing, and online reviews individually, but few studies have integrated these features into one theoretical framework. Therefore, this study addresses this gap by adopting the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory to examine the impact of halal hotel service quality on hotel prices.

**The Core Elements of Muslim Hotel Services**

***Dietary Taboos***

Dietary restrictions are quite important for Muslim hotel services. According to Islamic beliefs, Muslim hotels must follow the halal principle in all areas of food service. The Quran (5:3) makes it plain that eating pork and its by-products, as well as self-dead animals, blood, and animals killed without saying the name of Allah, is not allowed. Rahman (2020) discovered that in areas where Muslims make up most of the population, nearly no one eats pork, and food providers are very careful to avoid any products that come from pigs. The first important step is to get the ingredients. Hotels need to make sure that all of their ingredients come from halal-certified vendors who are trusted. This means that suppliers must go through thorough screening and regular inspections to make sure that their production and handling methods meet halal requirements. For example, a case study of a well-known Muslim-friendly hotel in Malaysia found that the hotel has a crew that is just responsible for checking out suppliers. They go to the farms and food processing plants to make sure that the animals are grown in a halal-compliant way and killed according to Islamic customs (Mohammad et al., 2021).

To keep them from getting mixed up, halal and non-halal foods must be kept fully separate while they are being stored. Halal goods are kept in special storage spaces, refrigerators, and containers. Strict inventory management systems are used to keep track of where ingredients came from and when they will go bad. Halal food is prepared in distinct places, with separate tools, equipment, and

work areas for each step of the procedure. To make sure that the final goods match the rigorous standards of halal criteria, chefs and kitchen workers must also learn how to handle and cook halal food.

***Prayer Facilities***

Muslims pray five times a day, therefore prayer is an important component of their everyday lives. So, Muslim hotels must have the right places for prayer. These kinds of hotels need to have a separate place for prayer. Guests should be able to pray in peace in a clean, quiet, and well-ventilated prayer area. A clean carpet is set down in the prayer room to make it pleasant for people to kneel down and pray. A qibla is a distinct direction marker that shows the way to Mecca, which is where Muslims must face while they pray. There should also be clean water in the prayer chamber for ablution, which is a rite that must be done before prayer. Some high-end Muslim hotels even have separate ablution stations in the prayer area for guests' comfort. Al-Shammari (2022) looked into Muslim-friendly hotels in the Middle East. They found that hotels in Saudi Arabia typically make their prayer rooms big enough to hold a lot of people, especially during busy travel times. These prayer rooms have more than just the basics. They also have Islamic calligraphy and art on the walls, which makes the space feel serious and sacred. Also, the hotel staff put a lot of thought into where the prayer room is located. It is normally in a central and easy-to-reach location, close to the guest rooms, so that guests may readily get to it whenever they want to pray. Some hotels also have prayer times and other religious information in the guest rooms, as well as copies of the Quran and prayer mats, so that guests can meet their religious demands even when they are in their rooms.

***Rest and Work Arrangements***

Muslims' religious activities have a big impact on their work and relaxation schedules, so Muslim hotels need to keep this in mind. Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, is one of the most important times. During Ramadan, Muslims don't eat, drink, or do anything else that requires physical activity from sunrise to sunset. Hotels need to change the times they offer services. For instance, the breakfast time is generally moved forward so that fasting visitors can have suhoor, a meal before sunrise. The iftar, or supper service, which breaks the fast, is likewise carefully planned to start right after sunset. Along with meal times, other services like housekeeping and room service may need to be changed so that visitors aren't bothered when they are fasting or praying.

A study by Khan (2021) on the effects of Ramadan on the hotel sector in Muslim-majority nations found that hotels often see a change in how guests act and what services they want during this month. Some hotels have unique iftar buffets with a range of traditional Ramadan cuisine, while others include quiet rooms where guests can rest and think during the day. The hotel staff also needs to know if customers are fasting and be cognisant of their needs. For example, they should not provide food or drinks to guests who are fasting throughout the day.
The five daily prayers also affect how the hotel runs, even when it isn't Ramadan. For instance, the hotel may need to make sure that the lobby and other public spaces remain calm during prayer times and not plan big events or activities that could disturb guests' prayers.

***Services for Staff***

In Muslim hotels, the quality of the staff's services is very important. To give good and polite service, hotel workers must know a lot about Muslim religious practices and etiquette. First and foremost, workers should know the core beliefs of Islam, such as how important prayer, fasting, and religious holidays are. Staff should use the right words and greetings when talking to Muslim guests. For instance, saying "*Assalamualaikum*" (May peace be upon you) as a greeting is a polite and common approach to greet Muslim guests. They should also know about cultural taboos, including not touching someone of the opposite sex in a way that is seen as unacceptable in Islamic culture.

Also, it is important for workers to be trained on how to handle unique requirements from Muslim guests. For example, if a guest asks for a certain sort of halal food that isn't on the standard menu, the staff should be ready to manage the request in a professional way, either by working with the kitchen to provide it or by suggesting other options. Ibrahim et al. (2020) conducted a study on customer satisfaction in Muslim-friendly hotels, revealing that visitors really appreciate the hotel staff's capacity to comprehend and honour their religious and cultural requirements. Staff who are good at these things can greatly improve the entire experience and happiness of guests.

Hotels often have regular training sessions for their workers to reach this goal. These seminars teach things like Islamic theological knowledge, how to be sensitive to other cultures, and how to help Muslim guests in practical ways. Hotels may better satisfy the demands of Muslim customers and minimise cultural misunderstandings and disputes by making sure that their personnel knows more about religion and culture. This will make the service environment more peaceful and enjoyable.

## Research Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach to assess and contrast hotel services for Muslims in Malaysia and China. The qualitative research methodology is particularly adapted to the investigation of stakeholder experiences, management practices and service strategies in their contexts. The comparative analysis and case study technique was used in this study to have a better grasp of Muslim-friendly hotel services and to find out the similarities and differences between the two nations. The data is obtained through interviews, client comments and important hotel documents to give a complete insight of the service delivery, facilities and management practices.

Case Study Method: Choose a few Muslim-friendly hotels in both China and Malaysia that are good examples. In China, hotels in the Xinjiang and Ningxia regions that have done a great job of accommodating Muslim tourists will be chosen. There will be well-known hotels in Malaysia that offer high-quality services for Muslims. The case study technique is an appropriate method for exploring current phenomena within its real-life context and provides the researchers with an in-depth comprehension of the instances (Schoch, K., 2020). The purposive sampling technique will be employed in this study to pick hotels that are proactively offering Muslim-friendly services and facilities. The data were acquired through semi-structured interviews with hotel managers, operational staff and when feasible, Muslim guests. Qualitative research often uses semi-structured interviews due to its flexibility and ability to get rich and thorough information from participants. Interviews will discuss hotel facilities, halal food services, prayer facilities, staff training, service quality, and obstacles in accommodating Muslim travelers. We can get first-hand information by doing in-depth research, talking to hotel managers and staff, and gathering feedback from customers (Yachin, 2018). This will help us learn more about how Muslim hotels work and what the service is like in both nations. It will also give us real-world evidence for the comparative analysis.

Comparative Analysis Method: Methodically juxtapose the service offerings, service philosophies, and management frameworks of Muslim hotels in China and Malaysia. Examine the similarities and variations in areas including catering services, building layouts, employee training, and service attitude. Comparative analysis is a useful method for discovering similarities and differences between cases, and for understanding how certain phenomena are influenced by contextual circumstances (Goodrick, D., 2019). This study will analyze chosen hotels in terms of halal food availability, prayer facilities, staff services, service concepts and management methods. Special attention will be paid to the impact of religious culture, market demand and government laws on

hotel operations. This comparison intends to find best practices and to explain the variables that lead to the differences in Muslim-friendly hotel services between China and Malaysia. By comparing and contrasting, we can clearly show how Muslim hotel services are different in each country and look at why these discrepancies exist from the points of view of religious culture, market demand, and policy regulations.

## Analysis of Muslim Hotel Services in China

### Development Background

China has a long and rich cultural history and is home to people from many different ethnic groups. There are between 20 million and 30 million Muslims in China, and most of them live in the northwestern parts of the country, like Xinjiang, Ningxia, Gansu, and Qinghai. In these places, ethnic groups like the Uyghur, Hui, and Kazakh, who mostly follow Islam, have built strong Muslim communities. For instance, a large part of the population of Xinjiang is Muslim, and unique cultural and religious traditions are a big part of everyday life there (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2023).

The growth of the tourism industry in China has been a big reason why Muslim hotel services have grown. China's domestic tourism business has grown a lot in the last few years. There were 6.5 billion domestic tourist trips in 2024, which was a 12% increase from the year before (China Tourism Research Institute, 2024). As more people travel throughout the country, there is a greater need for specialised lodging services, such as those that cater to the religious and cultural demands of Muslim travellers.

The number of Muslim visitors from other countries coming to China has also been going up. Many Muslim tourists from other countries come to China because of its rich history and culture, such the Silk Road. The Silk Road, which has been linked to Islamic culture for a long time, goes through various places of China where Muslims live. These tourists not only help the economy, but they also make it hard for Chinese hotels to accommodate their religious and cultural needs. Because of this, Muslim hotel services in China have been getting better and better all the time to meet the needs of this market.

**Service Features**

***Food Service***

Chinese Muslim hotels follow halal rules quite closely when it comes to food service. Every step, from getting the supplies to cooking the food, is closely watched to make sure it follows the rules. For example, a hotel in Ningxia that is hospitable to Muslims gets all of its meat from suppliers that have halal certifications. To keep halal food from becoming mixed up with other kinds of food, the kitchen crew is taught to use different utensils and cooking tools. These hotels also serve a wide range of halal foods with local flavours to please the many different tastes of Muslim tourists. Hotels in Xinjiang often provide traditional halal foods like roasted lamb kebabs, which are marinated with special spices and grilled to perfection, and hand-pulled noodles in lamb soup, which are noted for their rich flavour and chewy texture. These foods not only taste good to tourists, but they also show off the region's unique eating culture. Also, hotels put halal emblems in the restaurant area so that Muslim travellers can easily find them. This obvious sign gives guests peace of mind, so they can eat their meals with confidence, knowing that the food satisfies their religious dietary needs.

***Facility Provision***

Some Chinese Muslim hotels have special prayer rooms for guests who need them. These prayer rooms were made with the comfort and ease of Muslim tourists in mind. They have clean carpets, which make it easy to kneel down and pray on a comfortable, clean surface. A clear qibla signal is put in place to guide people the right way to Mecca so they can pray in the right direction. For instance, a hotel in Lanzhou has a nicely decorated prayer room with big windows that allow in natural light, making it a bright and serene place to pray.

Some hotels include prayer rooms that also have clean water for washing, which is an important part of getting ready for prayer. The hotel is dedicated to addressing the religious needs of Muslim visitors, which is clear in their attention to detail. Some hotels put religious books like the Quran in the guest rooms, along with the prayer room. This lets visitors study and think about their religion at any moment throughout their stay, which makes the hotel even more welcoming to people of faith.

***Staff Training***

Chinese Muslim hotels give their staff a lot of training to improve the service they offer to Muslim tourists. The course mostly covers Muslim religious conventions, rules of politeness, and foods that

are forbidden. Employees can learn more about the religious and cultural demands of Muslim travellers through in-depth training. This will help them give better, more professional service. For instance, personnel learn about the importance of the five daily prayers in Islam and how to respect guests' prayer times. They also learn how to talk to others in a polite way, like how to greet Muslim guests with "*Assalamualaikum*." Employees know a lot about the kinds of food that are not allowed in Islam and are taught to take and serve meal orders in a way that follows these rules. This training helps create a service environment that is peaceful and respectful, which lowers the chances of cultural misunderstandings and fights.

***Service Concept***

Chinese Muslim hotels put a lot of attention on satisfying the unique demands of each guest. They try to offer a wide range of services to meet the needs of all of their guests while strictly following halal rules and respecting religious practices. For instance, hotels can change the taste and diversity of their food if some clients want them to. They might have additional vegetarian alternatives or let you choose how spicy the dish is to fit your tastes. Hotels also often help you plan your trip by making arrangements for you. They think about what Muslim travellers like and how much time they have, and then they suggest tourist destinations and routes that are right for them. For example, hotels can propose that guests who are interested in Islamic culture visit local mosques, Islamic cultural museums, and historical locations associated to the Silk Road. Not only does this idea of personalised treatment make Muslim travellers happier, it also makes the hotel more competitive in the market.

## Analysis of Muslim Hotel Services in Malaysia

### Development Background

Islam is the official religion of Malaysia, and this has a big effect on the country's social, cultural, and economic life, including the hospitality business. The Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM) says that the country's total population in 2025 will be 34.2 million. This is a small increase from 34.1 million in 2024, which means that the population is growing at a rate of about 0.5 percent per year (Department of Statistics Malaysia [DOSM], 2025a). About 30.9 million people, or 90.1 percent of the total, are citizens. About 3.38 million people, or 9.9 percent, are not citizens (DOSM, 2025a). The 2020 Population and Housing Census said that Muslims made up about 63.5 percent of

Malaysia's population (DOSM, 2020; Wikipedia, 2024). There are no updated data on religious affiliation yet. This majority group continues to mould Malaysia's national culture, social behaviour, and consumer tastes, which have a direct effect on how the country's hotel services are set up and run.

Islamic ideals also guide Malaysia's laws and social institutions. Shariah law governs family and personal matters for Muslims in several jurisdictions. This has an effect on how hotels that serve Muslim visitors run and manage their businesses. Hotels should make sure that their facilities and services follow religious rules in order to stay in line with Islamic principles. Some examples are providing halal-certified food, prayer areas, and entertainment that is moral. These steps show that the country is trying to make sure that its hospitality businesses meet the spiritual and cultural needs of its Muslim customers.

The demographic makeup of Malaysia makes Muslim-friendly hospitality services even more important. In 2025, 70.4% of the population will be between the ages of 15 and 64, and 8.0% will be 65 or older. This shows that Malaysia is slowly becoming an ageing society (DOSM, 2025a). The median age has gone up from 30.9 years in 2024 to 31.3 years now. This means that the population is getting older and more economically engaged. This group usually looks for travel experiences that are both culturally significant and in line with Islamic ideals. This shows that the population is changing, which could affect tourist patterns and service demand in the next several years (DOSM, 2025a).

Malaysia's status as a Muslim-friendly tourist destination around the world makes it even easier to grow Islamic hospitality services. Muslim travellers still come to the country because of its rich Islamic legacy, which includes huge mosques, unique architectural styles, and lively religious events. These guests want hotels that follow Islamic morals, which include cleanliness, modesty, and polite treatment. In response, the Malaysian hotel business keeps improving its goods and services to stay one of the best places in the world for Muslim travellers to go.

**Service Features**

***Food Service***

Malaysian Muslim hotels rigorously follow halal rules when it comes to serving meals. The whole process, from getting the ingredients to cooking and presenting the dish, is closely watched to make sure it follows the rules. For instance, the procurement department of a hotel in Kuala Lumpur only works with vendors that have genuine halal certifications. We check these providers' production and processing techniques on a regular basis to make sure they match Islamic standards (Mohammad et al., 2021). Malaysian hotels offer a wide range of halal food that combines the cooking styles of many different ethnic groups, such as the Malay, Chinese, and Indian groups. For example, nasi lemak, a classic Malay meal made of rice cooked in coconut milk and topped with fried anchovies, peanuts, a hard-boiled egg, and sambal sauce, is a frequent breakfast buffet item at hotels. Biryani, a fragrant rice dish made with meat or vegetables and a mix of spices, is also popular. It comes from India. There are also Chinese-style halal noodles and dumplings, which are great for guests with different tastes.

All of the hotels' restaurants have halal certification logos on display so that guests may be sure that the food is real. Hotels in Malaysia serve unique iftar dishes throughout Ramadan. These meals normally have a lot of traditional Ramadan items, such dates, which Muslims eat first to break their fast. Then there are hot and cold dishes, soups, and sweets. Rahman (2020) discovered that hotels typically go above and above during Ramadan by setting up iftar buffets with live cooking stations and a wide range of regional dishes to make the dining experience better for tourists.

***Facility Provision***

The architecture of Malaysian Muslim hotels generally includes Islamic themes, which gives them a unique religious and cultural feel. The One&Only Desaru Coast in Malaysia, built by Kerry Hill, is an example of this. It is based on Malay culture and traditional kampung architecture. There are a lot of Islamic-style domes and arches, and the structures are placed in a way that is symmetrical, which stands for harmony and a feeling of ceremonial. Not only do the white walls make the space look bigger, but they also produce a wonderful play of light and shadow that adds to the hotel's serious and exquisite aura (One&Only official website, 2024).

Prayer rooms are a common and necessary part of Malaysian Muslim hotels. Most of the time, these prayer rooms are very big and well designed. They often have religious murals and fancy chandeliers in addition to basic amenities like rugs, qibla indications, and clean water for ablution. The prayer

room of a five-star hotel in Penang, for instance, has magnificent Islamic calligraphy murals on the walls and enormous crystal chandeliers on the ceiling. This makes it a serious and holy place to pray. Many of the outfits used by hotel staff in Malaysia also include religious elements. Women who work at the hotel frequently wear headscarves, which not only follow Islamic dress standards but also provide the service a particular cultural touch. These headscarves are frequently constructed of high-quality materials and come in a variety of colours and patterns that go with the hotel's overall look.

***Staff Services***

Most of the people who work in Malaysian hotels are Muslims, therefore they know a lot about Islamic beliefs and practices. This knowledge helps them give Muslim guests better and more professional service. For instance, if guests have concerns about religion while they are staying, employees can provide them precise and extensive responses based on what they know about Islam. Employees practice the right religious etiquette when talking to guests. "*Assalamualaikum*" is a frequent greeting that is not only a simple way to say hello, but it also shows respect and goodwill in Islamic culture. Employees know all the food rules and service standards in Islam when they serve visitors during meals, so they make sure that the service process follows all Islamic rules. Ibrahim et al. (2020) found that guests at Malaysian Muslim hotels really like the professional and polite service they get from staff who are conversant with Islamic culture. This makes guests much happier and more loyal.

***Service Concept***

Malaysian Muslim hotels put a lot of focus on respecting their Islamic rules. Every part of the hotel's services is planned and carried out in full compliance with Islamic rules. For instance, the hotel will use public address systems to encourage visitors to pray at certain times, and prayer rooms and other amenities will be kept in top shape. These hotels also work hard to promote Islamic culture. They might hold Islamic cultural talks and exhibits while guests are there to teach them about Islam's history, beliefs, and cultural practices. Some hotels have gift stores that sell Islamic-themed goods, which help tourists learn more about and remember Malaysian Islamic culture. This manner, tourists may not only enjoy high-quality lodging services, but they can also learn more about Islamic culture while they are there, which will make their cultural experience even better.

## Comparison of Muslim Hotel Services between China and Malaysia

### Comparison of Service Content

#### *Similarities*

Muslim hotels in both China and Malaysia place a high value on offering catering services that fulfil halal requirements. Muslim hotels in China make sure that halal meal rules are followed strictly from the source of the materials. For instance, hotels in Xinjiang choose suppliers with halal certifications very carefully to make sure that the ingredients are real (Li, 2022). The halal food supply chain is considerably more tightly controlled in Malaysia. A research by Mohammad et al. (2021) found that Malaysian hotels regularly check their suppliers to make sure that all of their food products meet halal standards and that the whole process of making the food is strictly watched.

Prayer rooms are also frequent in Muslim hotels in both countries. Chinese Muslim hotels, like the ones in Ningxia, provide prayer rooms with minimal amenities like carpets and qibla markers. These places make it easy for Muslim guests to do their religious duties. Prayer rooms are common in hotels in Malaysia, and they are generally decorated with high-end items and have a lot of space for additional people. For example, the prayer room in a five-star hotel in Kuala Lumpur is decorated with magnificent Islamic art, which makes the room feel serious and devout (Al-Shammari, 2022).

#### *Differences*

Chinese Muslim hotels serve halal foods that taste like the area. Beef noodle soup is a common halal dish in Muslim hotels in Gansu, for example. These foods show how the region's eating culture is different from others. Malaysian Muslim hotels, on the other hand, combine the food styles of many different ethnic communities. In Malaysian hotels, customers can enjoy a wider range of flavours with dishes like nasi lemak, a classic Malay dish, and biryani, which is influenced by Indian cuisine (Rahman, 2020). The religious aspects of Malaysian hotel facilities are more noticeable. Many Malaysian hotels, like the One & Only Desaru Coast, have Islamic features like domes and arches in their architecture. The attire for employees also include religious elements, like how women commonly wear headscarves. Chinese Muslim hotels, on the other hand, are simpler in terms of how they are built and how their employees dress. Their main goal is to address the basic religious needs of their guests, like giving them clean, peaceful prayer spaces.

Malaysian hotels offer extra unique services on religious holidays. During Ramadan, hotels in Malaysia serve big iftar feasts, which are a big part of the Ramadan custom. These dinners usually

include a mix of traditional Ramadan foods and are served in a fun setting. In China, some Muslim hotels do offer similar services during Ramadan, but they are not as big or as varied. They might change the time of the meal and serve some small Ramadan-related dishes based on what the guests want.

***Comparison of Service Concepts***

Chinese Muslim hotels focus on satisfying the unique demands of each guest. They work hard to offer a wide range of services to fulfil the needs of all their guests. For instance, they might tailor trip plans to the interests of Muslim tourists, suggest local Islamic cultural attractions, and change the flavour of dishes to suit each person's tastes. This idea for a service is founded on the idea that various visitors have distinct demands. By addressing these needs, the hotel may make customers happier and more loyal (Zhang, 2023). On the other hand, Malaysian Muslim hotels emphasis on obeying Islamic rules. Islamic rules are followed to the letter in every part of the hotel's services. The hotel will urge guests to pray at certain periods using things like public speech systems. The hotel also actively promotes Islamic culture by putting on cultural talks and exhibitions to teach guests about the history, beliefs, and cultural traditions of Islam. The goal of this service idea is to make the guests' stay more religiously compliant and assist them practise their faith better (Ibrahim et al., 2020).

***Comparison of Management Modes***

The way Chinese Muslim hotels are run is mostly based on what customers want and what is normal in the sector. Chinese hotels need to keep changing their business plans and service offerings to be competitive in a market that is quite competitive. For instance, as more Muslim visitors from other countries come to China, some Chinese Muslim hotels are starting to use international service standards and management experience to fulfil the expectations of high-end clientele. They also work on controlling costs and improving service quality to find a balance between making money and providing good service (Wang, 2022).

Religious culture and governmental regulations have a big impact on Malaysian Muslim hotels. The Malaysian government has tight rules about Muslim hotel services. For example, hotels must get halal certificates in order to serve halal cuisine and other related services. The hotel administration must also follow Islamic rules in every way, from how the facilities are set up to how the staff works. The government also checks hotel facilities, trains employees, and makes sure that services are up to

standard on a regular basis to make sure that hotels follow religious and legal rules (Department of Islamic Development Malaysia, 2021).

## Reasons for the Differences in Muslim Hotel Services between China and Malaysia

### Different Religious and Cultural Backgrounds

China has a long and rich cultural history and is home to many religions. There are a certain number of Muslims in the country, but Islam is not the state religion, and religion doesn't have a big impact on social life. In China, the growth of Muslim hotel services is mostly due to what people want. For instance, the rapid increase of domestic tourism has led to the rise and growth of Muslim-friendly hotels. This is because more and more Muslim visitors are coming from both inside and outside the country. These hotels want to address the demands of this unique set of guests in a way that is more focused on the market than on religious tradition.
Malaysia, on the other hand, is mostly Muslim, and Islam is the official religion of the country. Islamic culture is a part of every part of social life, and the hotel service sector is no exception. The religious culture has a big effect on how hotels are designed, run, and what services they offer. For example, many Muslim hotels in Malaysia have Islamic features like domes and arches in their construction. This is not just a reflection of religious aesthetics, but also a method to demonstrate respect for the prevailing religious culture. To accommodate the religious needs of most Muslim clients, the hotel staff must adhere observe Islamic rules and beliefs.

### Different Market Demands

Muslim travellers from both China and other countries make up the market for Muslim hotel services in China. There are many different needs among Muslim travellers from China. They have religious needs, but they also care a lot about how comfortable and personalised their travel is. They want to enjoy a one-of-a-kind trip that combines religious aspects with modern travel services. Muslim tourists from other countries and areas come to the US with distinct cultural backgrounds and requirements. Some people may want to travel to China to learn about its unique history and culture, while others may want to travel for business. So, Chinese Muslim hotels need to offer a lot of various services to fulfil the needs of all the different kinds of tourists.
In Malaysia, most of the people who stay in Muslim hotels are Muslims from Malaysia or from

nearby countries. Most of these vacationers have similar religious beliefs and cultural origins. Their requests for hotel services are mainly focused on religious needs. They want hotels to follow Islamic rules when it comes to things like stringent halal meals, full prayer facilities, and service methods that are in keeping with their faith. Because of this, Malaysian hotels can focus more on offering services that follow religious rules to better satisfy this group of customers who are mostly the same.

**Different Policies and Regulations**

The Chinese government follows the policy of freedom of religion belief, which protects the religious liberties of its citizens while also keeping an eye on and controlling religious activity. The government has made rules for halal food management in the hotel service business to make sure that halal cuisine is safe and of good quality. For instance, the government in Xinjiang has made rules about how halal food can be made, processed, and sold to protect the rights and interests of Muslim consumers. But there are no rules that hotels have to follow when it comes to things like prayer rooms and uniforms for employees. Hotels mostly make choices based on what customers want and how they run their own businesses. Malaysia, on the other hand, has tight rules and policies about how Muslim hotels can operate. To serve halal cuisine and other services, hotels must get halal certifications. The government also keeps a close eye on hotels' religious facilities, personnel training, and service quality. For instance, the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia makes rules and standards that hotels must follow and checks them often to make sure they are following Islamic principles and the law. This regulatory strategy makes sure that Muslim hotel services in Malaysia grow in a high-quality way and shows how significant Islam is in the country's social and economic life.

## Limitations

There are some limitations of present study that should be mentioned. First, the research is limited to Muslim hotel services in China and Malaysia, thus findings may not be fully generalizable to other countries with different cultural, religious and regulatory environments. Secondly, the research is comparative in nature and makes use of secondary data sources which can restrict the depth of insights into operational practices and customer experiences for individual hotels. Third, service features, service concepts and management approaches were examined. Other factors that may influence the development of Muslim-friendly hospitality services such as customer perceptions,

technological adoption, and destination marketing strategies were not examined in detail. Future research could expand the geographical scope of the analysis, incorporate primary data collection methods such as interviews or surveys, and investigate additional factors affecting the growth and competitiveness of Muslim-friendly hotel services.

## Conclusions and Revelations

### Conclusions

This study concludes that Muslim hotels in Malaysia and China share the same objectives in providing halal food, prayer facilities and services for Muslims. But their service standards, operational philosophies and management approaches are quite different. Chinese Muslim hotels are generally characterized by personalized services, flexible hospitality and a variety of hospitality products to adapt to market trends. In contrast, Malaysian Muslim hotels are motivated by adherence to religious tenets and the integration of Islamic values into their practices.

The findings are consistent with the extant literature that identifies halal cuisine, prayer facilities, Islamic values and Muslim-friendly services as key determinants of Muslim travelers satisfaction and hospitality experiences. The comparative study indicates that the establishment and execution of Muslim hotel services are significantly shaped by the cultural, religious, and regulatory contexts of individual nations.

From a practical point of view, the findings offer useful insights for hotel operators, tourism stakeholders and policymakers aiming to improve Muslim-friendly hospitality services. Chinese Muslim hotels could learn from the complete religious facilities and service practices of Malaysia. Malaysian hotels could improve customer experience with more personalised and flexible service offerings. These complementary strengths provide useful industry examples for improving service quality, increasing destination competitiveness, and supporting the continued growth of the global halal tourism market.

Therefore, the research reveals that the variations of Muslim hotel services in China and Malaysia result from the cultural practices, religious effects, commercial needs, and government regulations. Hospitality operators can create more successful Muslim-friendly service methods that better satisfy the needs of varied Muslim travelers by being aware of these differences.

## Revelations

### *Strengthening Cultural Exchange and Cooperation*

There is a lot of room for cultural exchange and cooperation between China and Malaysia in the area of Muslim hotel services. China may learn a lot from Malaysia's long history of combining religious culture with hotel services. For instance, China may learn from Malaysia's architecture and add more Islamic features to hotels in places with a lot of Muslims. This can not only make the hotel more welcoming to Muslims, but it can also give Muslim travellers a more authentic religious and cultural experience. China should also learn from Malaysia's ways of promoting Islamic culture in hotels, like putting on religious lectures and cultural events, to make guests' religious and cultural experiences better.

China's way of satisfying the individual demands of tourists is something that Malaysia should learn from. Malaysia may learn a lot from how China personalises travel plans and changes the substance of services based on what individual tourists want. Malaysian hotels may get more tourists and make their customers happier by offering more personalised services. For example, Malaysian hotels may offer more dining options to suit the varying tastes of their guests, or they could create unique trip packages based on what their customers are interested in, such cultural exploration tours, adventure tours, or tours that focus on relaxation.
The two countries can also work together to make tourism products that combine the best parts of both sides. For instance, a collaborative tourism product could be made that mixes Malaysia's unique Islamic and tropical island cultures with China's historical and cultural legacy, such the Silk Road culture. This kind of product can bring in more foreign travellers, which will help the hotel and tourism businesses grow in both countries.

### *Paying Attention to Market Research and Analysis*

Both Chinese and Malaysian hotel businesses should pay close attention to market research and analysis. As the worldwide Muslim tourist industry grows in China, hotels need to keep a close eye on how it is changing. They should know that the needs and wants of international Muslim tourists change over time, such as what kind of hotel amenities, service quality, and cultural experiences they want. For instance, hotels can learn a lot about what overseas Muslim guests need by doing online surveys, talking to them, and looking at data from travel agencies. With this knowledge, hotels can change the way they do business and the services they offer to meet international standards. This could mean teaching hotel workers how to communicate better with people from other countries,

making services more language-friendly, and putting in place management systems and service processes that meet international standards.
Hotels in Malaysia need to pay attention to the changing needs of tourists from Malaysia and nearby countries because the domestic and regional tourist markets are always changing. They should do market research on a regular basis to keep up with the changing religious and cultural needs of these tourists and their growing need for personalised services. As an example, tourists may have higher expectations for hotel digital services now that we live in the digital age. These services could include high-speed Wi-Fi, booking systems that work on mobile devices, and digital ways to share information about hotel amenities and nearby attractions. Malaysian hotels can also look at the different groups of Muslim tourists, like business travellers and leisure travellers, and come up with service plans that are specific to each group.
Hotel businesses may better satisfy the needs of different market segments, increase service quality, and make themselves more competitive in the market by doing in-depth market research and analysis.

***Strengthening Staff Training***

Training employees is one of the most important things you can do to make hotel services better. Both Chinese and Malaysian hotel companies should improve their staff' religious and cultural knowledge and service skills by giving them more training. The course should include a lot of information about Islamic beliefs and practices. Employees should know a lot about the five daily prayers, fasting during Ramadan, and other key religious ceremonies. They should also know about Islamic cultural taboos, like how to act on religious holidays and how men and women should interact with each other. In China, for instance, hotel workers can take Islamic cultural classes sponsored by local religious groups or professional training groups. In Malaysia, hotels can hold regular internal training courses given by Islamic experts or experienced personnel to help their staff learn more about religion.

Employees should learn about halal food management standards in addition to religious understanding. This means knowing how to buy, store, process, and cook halal food, as well as how important it is to keep things from getting contaminated. Employees need to know how to professionally handle and deal with halal food difficulties. For instance, they should know how to find halal-certified ingredients, how to store them correctly to keep them halal, and how to deal with client questions and demands about halal meals. You should also learn how to behave when serving others. When talking to customers, employees should learn how to use polite language, make good

eye contact, and be patient. They should also learn how to deal with different kinds of consumer requests and complaints in a good way. For instance, employees can practise how to handle tough customer situations in a professional and polite way by doing role-playing exercises. Hotel workers may give better, more professional, and more polite service by improving their training. This will improve the hotel's overall image and reputation.

***Improving Policies and Regulations***

The government offices in both China and Malaysia should work hard to make the rules and policies for Muslim hotel services better and to keep an eye on the market more closely. The Chinese government needs to make the certification and management of halal food more uniform. There are certain rules about how to handle halal food right now, but the certification process could be better in terms of being more consistent and open. The government can set up a strict and consistent system for halal food certification, make the rules and procedures for certification clearer, and make sure that certification bodies are closely watched. This can make sure that the halal food that hotels serve is of excellent quality and that Muslim tourists can eat it safely. For instance, the government can check halal food production and processing businesses on a regular basis and take away the certifications of those that don't match the standards. The Malaysian government maintains stringent rules around Muslim hotel services, but it can also make things easier for hotels to come up with new ideas and improve their services. For instance, the government can push hotels to use innovative technologies and service ideas as long as they follow religious rules. It can help hotels that want to become digital, build a more sustainable future, or come up with innovative service models by giving them policy assistance and incentives. This can help the hotel service sector in Malaysia keep getting better and come up with new ideas.

Also, both countries can work together more on developing policies and sharing their knowledge of rules and regulations. To work together to make the Muslim hotel service market grow in a healthy way, they can learn from each other's best practices in creating policies and keeping an eye on the market.

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