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The editorial board would like to express their heartfelt appreciation for the contributions made by the authors, co-authors and all who were involved in the publication of this bulletin.

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## RECTOR'S MESSAGE



I would like to extend my gratitude for your visit to FBM Insights Volume 8, a publication brought forth by the esteemed Faculty of Business and Management, UiTM Kedah Branch. This bulletin endeavours to present a concise and beneficial collection of important insights and research findings derived from the domain of social sciences.

FBM Insights aims to simplify complex social science concepts into easily digestible bullet points, making valuable knowledge more accessible to a wider audience. In this bulletin, each article provides a glimpse into the diverse and dynamic world of social sciences, including psychology, sociology, economics, finance, and other pertinent fields. Through concise and informative summaries, the intention is to promote a deeper understanding of human behaviour, societal trends and the multifarious factors that shape our world.

My heartfelt appreciation is proffered to the dedicated researchers and scholars whose works form the foundation of this bulletin, contributing significantly to the ever-changing landscape of knowledge in social sciences. In navigating the modern era's challenges and opportunities, the intrinsic value of social science research in guiding policy decisions and fostering social cohesion cannot be overstated.

I sincerely hope that this bulletin will spark readers' curiosity and inspire them to delve deeper into the myriad facets of human society and behaviour. Irrespective of whether you are a student, educator, or policymaker, I firmly believe that this publication will serve as an invaluable resource in your quest for knowledge.

Once again, thank you for embarking on this journey of discovery with us. Together, let us explore the captivating world of social sciences and its profound impact on our lives.

Thank you.

*Prof. Dr. Roshima Haji Said*

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# FACTORS INFLUENCING MALAYSIAN MUSLIM TRAVELERS' DESTINATION CHOICE IN HALAL TOURISM

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## INTRODUCTION

The worldwide tourist sector has seen a substantial increase in the popularity of halal tourism, a specialized area catering to the interests and requirements of Muslim travelers, in recent years. Malaysian Muslims are a notable demographic within the varied variety of Muslim visitors, with specific preferences in their halal tourism destination selections. This paper looks into the multifaceted factors that influence Malaysian Muslim travelers' decisions when choosing halal-friendly destinations, shedding light on the interplay between religious considerations, cultural affinity, services and amenities, and a destination's overall appeal. Understanding these characteristics is critical not only for places hoping to attract this rising demographic, but also for the larger conversation about current travel trends and preferences.

## INFLUENCING FACTORS

According to Hanif et al. (2020), halal tourism is a specialty industry that meets the unique requirements and tastes of Muslim tourists. Due to the rising Muslim population and growing recognition of the significance of Islamic principles and practices in daily life, this market has recently attracted a lot of attention (Akram & Ilyas, 2021). Due to the continuously expanding number of Muslim tourists worldwide and their travel requirements and preferences, Halal tourism has emerged as a separate industry (Che-Ani & Hashim, 2015).

Due to its sizable Muslim population and halal-friendly atmosphere, Malaysia is a popular location for halal tourism. However, more study is required into the variables affecting Malaysian Muslim travelers' preferences for travel destinations and their conducts while on the road. Numerous studies have discovered several variables that affect Muslim tourists' choices for Halal travel.

### 1. Halal Food Availability and Quality:

Malaysian Muslim travelers look for venues that offer a varied selection of halal cuisine alternatives that fit their dietary requirements. A crucial aspect is high-quality halal cuisine that meets both taste preferences and religious standards. Not only is the availability of halal-certified restaurants important, but so is the diversity and authenticity of local halal meals (Othman et al. 2016).

### 2. Islamic Culture and Heritage:

Malaysian Muslim travelers are drawn to destinations that promote Islamic culture and tradition because they allow them to connect with their faith and past. Cultural attractions, museums, historical landmarks, and events relating to Islamic heritage enrich these travelers' trip experiences (Abdul Aziz & Marzuki, 2019).

### **3. Prayer Facilities and Accessibility to Mosques:**

Access to clean and well-maintained prayer facilities, including mosques, prayer rooms at airports, and public spaces, is crucial. Proximity to mosques is also essential for the convenience of performing daily prayers and Friday congregational prayers (Jamaludin & Hall, 2015).

### **4. Accommodation Options:**

Muslim-friendly accommodations are those that cater to Islamic principles and practices. Separate facilities for men and women, halal food options, and an alcohol-free environment meet the needs of Malaysian Muslim visitors. Hotels that give prayer mats, Mecca direction markers, and the Quran in their rooms contribute to their comfort (Kamarulzaman & Mohd Salleh, 2020).

### **5. Safety and Security:**

Feeling safe and secure is a primary concern for all tourists, including Malaysian Muslim vacationers. Tourists are more willing to visit destinations known for their political stability, low crime rates, and strong emergency response systems (Reisinger & Turner, 2019). Muslim tourists may be more hesitant to visit regions considered hazardous or where they may experience prejudice or hostility (Hanif et al., 2020). As a result, venues that provide a safe and welcoming environment for Muslim tourists may be more desirable to this market niche.

### **6. Friendly and Welcoming Environment:**

A pleasant and welcoming environment in which local inhabitants and businesses respect and appreciate Islamic beliefs promotes a great tourist experience. Malaysian Muslim tourists are more likely to visit places where they feel welcomed and respected (Aziz & Ch'ng, 2014).

### **7. Accessibility and Connectivity:**

It is critical to have easy access to the location and strong transit connectivity. Direct flights, fast public transit, and well-connected road networks make Malaysian Muslim travelers' travel more convenient and enjoyable (Omar & Zainal, 2018).

### **8. Cultural Sensitivity and Respect:**

Cultural awareness and respect for Islamic beliefs and practices are important considerations. Destinations that recognize and fulfill Muslim travelers' religious demands, such as dress code, dietary options, and prayer facilities, are more likely to attract and keep these visitors (Musa & Thurasamy, 2019).

Muslim tourists may prefer destinations with a comparable culture to their own or where there is a substantial Muslim community (Alserhan, 2010). This desire may be motivated by a desire to feel more at ease and at home in a foreign environment, or by a desire to interact with local Muslims.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the destination choices of Malaysian Muslim travelers in the context of halal tourism are influenced by a multifaceted set of factors that encompass religious, cultural, practical, and experiential considerations. These factors collectively shape the preferences and decisions of travelers seeking halal-friendly experiences. By addressing these factors, destinations can better cater to the needs and desires of this growing market segment, enhancing their appeal and competitiveness.

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