

Tourism as a Catalyst of Economic Prosperity: A General Survey

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ABSTRACT

Islamic tourism is one of the tourism segments that has the potential to improve the country's economy to meet the demand from both domestic and international tourists. Based on 2019 statistics, Malaysia recorded 5.3 million Muslim tourist arrivals with an increase of at least 20 percent for the following year. The coverage of the Islamic tourism segment, which is holistic across the borders of race and religion, added to the wide scope of coverage, including the fields of education, da'wah, religion, art and entertainment, is able to boost the country's economic performance. Thus, this study aims to analyse the potential of Islamic tourism as one of the segments of the tourism industry that can improve the economy of the local community in particular and the country in general. This study uses a qualitative approach through research on primary and secondary sources. The findings are then analysed inductively to formulate the set objectives of the study. The results of the study found that Islamic tourism plays a role as one of the industrial platforms that can contribute to the improvement of the national economy through attraction resources and tourism policies implemented in Malaysia.

Keywords: Islamic Tourism, Catalyst, Economic Prosperity

INTRODUCTION

Islam is a holistic religion that complements all aspects of human life. It also conforms to the nature of human creation with the desire to experience pleasure, happiness and tranquillity. Travel activities are one of the mediums to fulfill these desires. Traveling helps ease people's minds, calm their thoughts and let them see and enjoy the beauty of nature created by Allah SWT, and ultimately, draw closer to Him.

The tourism sector is one of the world's largest sectors and is a major contributor to a country's income. In countries like Malaysia, the tourism sector is recognised as a thriving prospective economic source which contributes to higher national income, job opportunities and improving the country's image in the eyes of the world.

There is a high hope that the opening of borders in line with the country entering the post-COVID-19 endemic phase will boost the tourism sector again. It will even witness a different economic landscape than before. Therefore, to further boost the domestic tourism sector, MOTAC targets the arrival of 4.5 million tourists with a tourism income of RM11.1 billion for the year 2022. (Sinar Harian, 2022).

Adnan Jusoh (2022) stated that the tourism sector began to experience changes either in the form of fundamentals or approaches. In fact, the scope of the field of tourism has been diversified either in the form of collaboration with other fields or rebranded with a new form of tourism. Among them are sports tourism, educational tourism, border tourism, health tourism, sustainable tourism, heritage tourism, Islamic tourism, ecotourism and archaeology tourism. (Adnan Jusoh, 2022). However, this article will only focus on Islamic tourism. The diagram below explains the tourism subsectors in Malaysia.

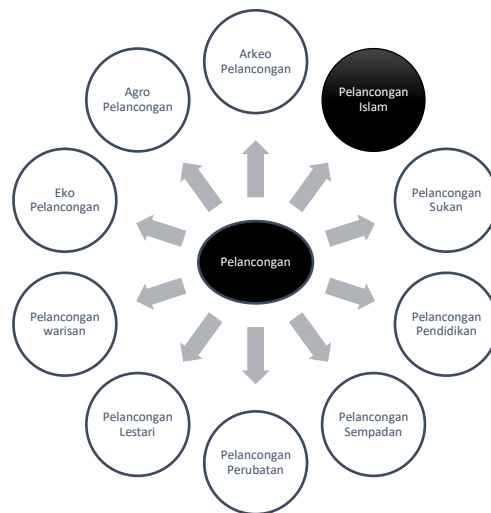


Figure 1: Tourism Sub-sectors in Malaysia

Source: Adnan Jusoh, 2022

Islamic tourism is one of the new tourism products introduced not only in Malaysia but also in some other Muslim countries. The tourism subsector has largely focused on Islamic countries in line with the growing tourism demand emphasising Islamic characteristics. Notably, Islamic tourism is not only limited to purely religious activities, but even includes all forms of tourism that do not conflict with Islamic values. (Adnan Jusoh, 2022).

In line with that, according to Nur Khalidah Dahlan et al. (2024), Islamic tourism offers a new way to develop the tourism industry in Malaysia while maintaining Islamic ethics, culture and values. Furthermore, Islamic tourism is not defined as just visiting religious sites like a mosque; but also nature, culture or creativity that integrates with Islamic values. (Nur Khalidah Dahlan, 2024). In addition, through this concept of Islamic tourism, one aspect that needs to be emphasised when travelling is aspects related to halal food, Muslim-friendly accommodation and activities that do not violate Shariah. Tourist destination management must fulfil the needs and wishes of Muslim tourists, adapt their needs to the destination and ensure the suitability of the destination.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Islamic tourism is not only specific to the Muslim community but includes non-Muslim communities who are encouraged to travel to Muslim countries. Furthermore, Islamic tourism is more economic, cultural and religious. Regarding the economic concept, Islamic tourism is a medium capable of establishing close cooperation between government institutions worldwide. In addition, Islamic tourism can increase tourism activities among Muslims and contribute to the existence of new tourism product destinations. From the concept of culture, Islamic tourism can help preserve and conserve Islamic heritage products that are increasingly being forgotten by creating new tourism products that are themed with Islamic characteristics (Ramli, 2016). In fact, according to Mukhtar (2014), Islamic tourism is not much different from conventional tourism activities. The difference that can be found is in terms of principles, especially in terms of adherence to the system and values set by the shariah. In this regard, in line with the difference observed in the process, Islamic tourism should be filled with tourism activities pleasing to Allah SWT.

Islamic Tourism Concept

Tourism in Islam has a broad perspective. It comprises activities such as rehlah, pilgrimage, siyahah, umrah and hajj. These terms have meanings that generally refer to Islamic tourism but have different concepts and approaches (Mukhtar, 2014). In addition, Hasan Bahrom et al. (2010) opined that these terms prompt and encourage humans as recorded in the Quran. The Islamic view on tourism has been highlighted in the al-Quran

and al-Sunnah. Among these verses are al-An'am verse 11, al-Naml verse 69, and Muhammad verse 10. These verses generally show that Allah SWT asks people to travel worldwide. The purpose is not limited to sightsee; people can reflect and learn from their experience. Tourism in Islam is also an act of worship if the travel activity is done with good intentions and avoids doing prohibited things. ITC (2012) also explained that Islamic tourism is a segment in the mainstream of the tourism industry with additional characteristics that consider the principles of Sharia as a guide. This means that every activity or plan must be carried out appropriately for Muslims based on Sharia law (Haliza Abdul Rahman & Abdul bin Roslan, 2018).

The history and development of Islamic Tourism in Malaysia

In Malaysia, the concept of Islamic Tourism was introduced in 2008, in line with the Islamic Hadhari slogan introduced by Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, the Prime Minister of Malaysia at that time. One of the approaches taken by the government is to develop a type of Islamic tourism industry by establishing an Islamic Tourism Center (ITC) to achieve its goals, especially to develop tourism in the Islamic world, develop new tourist destinations and strengthen cooperation between the government and institutions in Islamic countries. (Siti Anis Laderlah, 2015).

The establishment of ITC is the best platform to empower the country's Islamic tourism sector. ITC was launched in Melaka on 16 March 2009 by Dato' Seri Azalina Dato' Othma, the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Minister at the time (Siti Anis Laderlah, 2015). The ITC aims to expand tourism in the Islamic world, develop new tourist destinations and strengthen partnerships between governments and institutions in Islamic countries. ITC still functions as an important entity to promote and develop the Islamic and halal tourism concepts in Malaysia until now (Nur Khalidah Dahlan, 2024).

The Potential of Islamic Tourism as the Catalyst of The Country's Economic Development P

The recognition of Terengganu as a Muslim-friendly destination proves that Malaysia is the best platform for developing the Islamic economic sector through Islamic tourism products. In line with that, Malaysia has also been recognised as a popular destination for Islamic tourism because of the suitability of the destination and family holiday needs, facilities and services for Muslim tourists.

The tourism sector is also categorised as a contributor to the development of the halal industry (Setiawan Gunardi & Wan Roasmira Wan Abdul Wahab, 2021). According to Sarah (2012) a study conducted by a marketing agency, the tourism sector is classified as the third largest sector in the world with demand for halal products and services after the food and cosmetics industry (Sarah ElMeshad, 2012). This scenario coincides with data which states that by the year 2025, one-third of the world's population will belong to Muslims (Navid Akhtar, 2012). The Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) reports that Malaysia, Indonesia and the UAE are the top destinations for Muslim tourism in 2018 (Yadim, 2018). Malaysia exhibited excellent performance when it first took place in 2022 as the best Muslim-friendly holiday destination after Indonesia and Saudi Arabia (Pusat Komunikasi Strategik (StraComm), 2022). In 2023, Malaysia once again managed to maintain its performance as the top choice destination for Muslim tourists, alongside Indonesia, with an expectation of reaching 140 million international tourists (Isamudin, 2023). Based on records, the Islamic tourism market will continue its rapid growth to reach US\$220 billion in 2020. This market is expected to increase by US\$80 billion to reach US\$300 billion by 2026. (Yadim, 2018). Malaysia continues to record the arrival of international Muslim tourists, reaching 110 million in 2022 and is expected to reach 230 million by 2028 with a projected expenditure of US\$225 billion (Isamudin, 2023). Malaysia continues to record the arrival of international Muslim tourists reaching 110 million in 2022 and expected to reach 230 million by 2028 with a projected expenditure of US\$225 billion (Islamic Tourism Centre ITC, 2024). Menurut laporan Negara Ekonomi Islam Global (SGIE) 2022, Malaysia disenaraikan sebagai negara teratas di rantau ini dalam sektor Muslim-Friendly Tourism and Hospitality (MFTH) (Islamic Tourism Centre ITC, 2024).

Accordingly, the trend of foreign Muslim tourist arrivals in Malaysia has increased since 2011 after the occurrence of the bombing in September 2011 in the United States. According to Mapjabil (2015), as a result of the issue of Islamophobia, Muslim tourists from the Middle East experience difficulty travelling to European and American countries, then change direction to Islamic countries, including Malaysia. This

development has opened up opportunities for local entrepreneurs to improve quality and diversify products and services in the tourism industry, including the hospitality sector. (Jabil Mapjabil, 2015). According to MOTAC (2019), The world tourism industry has expected the arrival of 69 million tourists a year from the Middle East (Tengku Kasmini Tengku Wook, 2021). This phenomenon also increases the universal demand for Muslim-friendly services while opening opportunities for tourism operators to provide products and services that meet Islamic values. (Mohsin Asad, 2016).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study applies a qualitative approach to the process of data collection and data analysis. Qualitative research focuses on obtaining non-numerical information (Cresswell, 2013), which can provide in-depth information about the background of a matter. Qualitative research uses a natural approach to understand the true state of a phenomenon in a specific context without manipulating any real situation (Patton, 2002). Qualitative research has three important processes: data collection, analysis, and validity and reliability. Data collection is a process of planning and implementing data collection using certain research methods to obtain information related to the issues and problems being studied. A bibliographic study based on the documentation method was carried out to get the spotlight on literary materials such as scientific books, journals, seminar articles and reports. The sources found can be used as a guide to conduct action research and further prepare research reports to be published as articles and journals.

This literature review is important because through this method the researchers get a clear picture of the principles, concepts, methods, processing and analysis of data that are compatible with the study's design. (Roth, 2006). In this study, this method is used to collect all information or information from the writings of classical and contemporary scholars related to the concept of Islamic tourism and its potential as an economic catalyst. The data obtained was then analysed inductively to formulate themes related to the study's objectives. Neuman (2006) opined that inductive research begins with detailed observations in general situations and then moves towards formulating more specific insights and theories. Inductive research involves an in-depth process of the research situation and examines the formation of explanations to form conclusions when the research is completed. (Bennard, 2011). This approach is used to describe the problems or phenomena that are being studied and then the findings of the study will be used towards the formation of themes related to Islamic tourism and catalysts for economic prosperity.

Islam Tourism As A Catalyst Of The Nation's Economic Prosperity

Tourism trends characterised by Islamic values are beginning to gain a place among tourists and can then create opportunities to offer tourism products to meet their demands. (Lina Munirah Kamarudin & Hairul Nizam Ismail, 2012). Among the important principles distinguishing Islamic tourism from other commercial tourism is the focus on the pleasure of Allah SWT rather than profit and customer satisfaction (Nelson H. H. Graburn, 1977). Therefore, given that Islamic tourism has great potential for the growth of the country's economy. Then several aspects need to be paid attention to, including the convenience of performing prayers such as the place, Qibla and equipment, access to food and drink facilities that are halal and required by Shariah, care for the cleanliness and tidiness of the area visited, care for appearance and clothing that covers the aurat, the use of halal resources for all travel expenses and ensure that the activities carried out do not conflict with Islamic Shari'a (Jabil Mapjabil, 2015). Therefore, the two-pronged goal, which is to create the value of worship while enjoying the tourist journey, can be realised. The culture and teachings of the Muslim community can be highlighted more prudently and effectively through Islamic tourism (Al-Hamarneh, 2004).

In Malaysia, Islamic tourism is seen as one of the tourism products that has the potential to grow and is increasingly in demand, including from domestic and international tourists. The main contributor to the increase in the number and influx of tourists is the Muslim-friendly tourism environment in Malaysia. Malaysia is the focus of Muslim tourists from all over the world and is known as a popular holiday destination because of its image as a rapidly developing, peaceful Islamic country. Furthermore, as noted by Nur Khalidah Dahlan et al (2024), Malaysia has tourism infrastructure and products that can meet the needs of Muslim tourists, such as halal hotels, halal airports & transportation (Airlines), halal food premises and products, as well as halal travel packages (Nur Khalidah Dahlan, 2024). In line with that, to attract more Muslim tourists to

travel to this country, it is seen that a variety of Sharia-compliant tourism products can be offered in addition to highlighting programs with a religious element to boost Islamic tourism more widely among the tourism products and programs with a religious element are :

Shariah Compliance Hotel

A Shariah-compliant hotel is a hotel that provides services that coincide with the principles of Shariah. This is because the Islamic Shari'a has explained what is allowed and forbidden to be taken by its people. The Shariah-compliant hotel industry promotes Islamic values and preserves Muslims' interests, as Shariah law outlines. (Muhammad Iqbal Zahin Ismail, 2021). Sharia-compliant hotels are not only specific to the provision of food but also include all aspects of hotel operations that should be managed based on Islamic principles. Mohd Khairuddin Aman Razali (2019) view that the basic factor in operating a Shariah-compliant hotel is the provision of halal food and Muslim-friendly hospitality services (Razali, 2019).

In addition, sharia-compliant hotels do not offer alcohol and gambling activities. These hotels only serve halal food. Each room is equipped with an al-Quran, prayer mats and arrows showing the direction of the Qibla while the beds and toilets are not placed facing the direction of the Qibla. Other features of these hotels are prayer rooms, conservative staff clothing, bidets in toilets and separate recreation areas for men and women. The hotels also do not allow inappropriate entertainment, gambling, drinking alcohol and storing prohibited food and drinks in the hotel refrigerator (Zakiah Samori & Noorsalwati Sabtu, 2014).

Muslim-friendly hospitality, especially Sharia-compliant hotels, is in high demand, aligned with the increase in the number of tourists arriving from Southeast Asia and the Middle East in Malaysia. The demand for shariah-compliant hotels has also attracted the attention of relevant parties such as the State Islamic Religious Council, Tabung Haji and Permodalan Nasional Berhad (PNB). (Nor 'Azzah Kamri, 2020). In general, most accommodation facilities in Malaysia are Muslim-friendly. For example, you can look at several hotels in Malaysia, including the Perdana Hotel in Kota Bharu, Kelantan, which is owned by PNB. This hotel received halal certification from JAKIM in 2016 and is the first Shariah-compliant hotel in Kelantan. The hotel also has prayer room facilities such as a surau that is provided separately for male and female visitors, including prayer mats and telekung. Visitors are also provided with al-Quran and prayer rugs in the room, including Qibla directions and prayer time calendars. In fact, this hotel also has a halal-certified kitchen and restaurant. Alcohol is not served at the hotel. The hotel offers separate gender recreational facilities, such as swimming pools and saunas, taking into account the needs of Muslim visitors (Travelers, 2017).

Likewise, the Mardhiyyah Hotel & Suites which is the latest 5-star Sharia-compliant hotel in Malaysia to be recognised as Muslim-friendly Hotel of the Year in 2022, by Crescent Rating in conjunction with the Halal in Travel Global Summit 2022 in Singapore. In addition, Mardhiyyah Hotel & Suites also won the Muslim Friendly Accommodation Recognition (MFAR) with Sharia-compliant equipment and facilities. In addition to meeting the Muslim-friendly tourism criteria, it also has a halal restaurant certified by the Malaysian Islamic Development Department (JAKIM), Platinum Category by the Malaysian Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture (MOTAC) through the Islamic Tourism Center (ITC). In addition to the identity based on Islamic operations, the hotel also has a Muslim Chef to ensure halal toyyiban knowledge in food preparation, Shariah Advisors and Shariah Committees. In fact, it also has a very large prayer room for the convenience of visitors to hold congregational prayers and religious ceremonies (Route, 2022).

Halal Food Products and Restaurants

Restaurants and food at hotels are very popular among visitors or tourists who stay at a hotel. Therefore, the hotel needs to ensure that the food provided complies with the halal standard procedures set by the Malaysian Islamic Development Department (JAKIM) whether from the source, preparation and serving of food and drinks. In fact, haram food or drinks such as alcohol cannot be served to all customers, regardless of their religion. A restaurant or food premise with halal recognition from the Islamic Development Department of Malaysia (JAKIM) can display the halal logo and make it identifiable to customers.

In addition, restaurants or food spaces such as corridors in seminar rooms or halls are also recommended to have adequate chairs for customers to prevent them from eating and drinking while standing. (Muhammad Iqbal Zahin Ismail, 2021), as the prohibition stated in the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w, which means, "None of us should drink standing up." (HR Muslim). Even the kitchen space also needs to always be in a condition that achieves optimal hygiene quality. The food served must be of good quality, halal and from a halal source. Kitchen cleanliness, halal and food quality also need to be emphasised.

Halal Tourism Package

The tourism package offered must be Islamic. Many Muslim tour operators provide Muslim-friendly holidays to Malaysia. According to Nur Khalidah Dahlan et al. (2024), Developing tourism packages that meet the needs of Muslims will increase tourism activities entering the country. In addition, tour guides in Malaysia also need to take the initiative in understanding the needs of Muslim tourists. Not only subject to the provision of qibla direction markers in the room only. In fact, provide tourism activities that are suitable for the places you want to visit. In fact, Malaysia has many Muslim-friendly tourism facilities from various aspects, such as flights, hotels, halal food, and even the provision of prayer facilities (Nur Khalidah Dahlan, 2024).

According to the '*Strategic Roadmap for Development of Islamic Tourism in OIC Member Countries*' (2017), Malaysia has the highest number of Islamic hotels. The quality of infrastructure and facilities available in Malaysia is definitely capable of bringing Malaysia to the international level in terms of service quality in the Islamic tourism industry.

In addition to meeting the needs of tourists, Muslim-friendly transport packages should also be provided such as the provision of separate gender seating areas and prayer stops. The entertainment, leisure and adventure packages provided also need to take into account Muslim-friendly needs. Thus, risqué activities should be avoided, instead increasing activities of a family nature. In addition to conventional tourism activities such as shopping, recreation and so on, packages should offer activities exploring the history of Islam in Malaysia. This includes visiting places of worship such as mosques, tombs, and Islamic historical places (Yusrizal Sufardi Mohd Yunan & Mohd Helmi Ali, 2023).

Accordingly, offering Muslim-friendly tourism packages requires the existence of a competitive and highly skilled human capital pool. The existence of appropriate human capital is very important in ensuring that the Muslim-friendly tourism industry can be moved to the desired quality. Offering high-quality Muslim-friendly tourism services will ensure that the country's tourism industry remains the top choice for tourists, especially Muslims, thus driving the country's economy.

Religion-Related Programmes

In addition to offering Sharia-compliant tourism products, religious programs can also be highlighted, such as:

World #QuranConvention (WQC)

The World #QuranConvention (WQC) is organised by the Islamic Tourism Center (ITC) in collaboration with Yayasan Warisan Ummah Ikhlas (WUIF). The organisation of this kind of program can boost Islamic tourism activities in this country. A religious program like this not only succeeded in attracting the interest of Muslims in Malaysia but also around the world. It involved 1,800 participants from more than 69 countries and also garnered the interest of every layer of society with various backgrounds from within and outside the country. In addition to taking advantage of the knowledge and information received, this program can also indirectly empower the hospitality industry, further improving the country's economic sector. In fact, this kind of Islamic scientific program is also an ideal platform to promote Malaysia as a Muslim-friendly tourist destination and is a good strategy in preparation for the Year of Visiting Malaysia 2026. (Nurul Huda Husain, 2023).

Program Perkampungan Sunnah

The Sunnah Village Program is a program and platform aimed at discussing current topics by panels and experts in the field to provide understanding, explanation, and exposure, as well as the importance of real arguments and methods in religion. This program has been organised every year since 2015 which is an initiative of the Perlis State Mufti Department in collaboration with the Perlis Islamic Religious and Malay Customs Council (MAIPs) and related agencies under the Perlis State Government. (Bibi Noraini Mohd Yusuf & Muhammad Fathullah Al Haq Muhamad Asni, 2023). Until 2023, this program has been implemented in as many as 9 series and received a favourable response from residents in Malaysia and from abroad.

In fact, this program also brings together Islamic scholars from various countries in Southeast Asia who are used as a destination for sharing and discussing Islamic knowledge. Thus, it is seen that this Sunnah Village Program is one of the attractions of tourism and an added value that can be developed to attract tourists to the State of Perlis in particular and Malaysia in general (Sharif, 2023). In fact, this Sunnah Village Program should be highlighted as an Islamic tourism product. This is because, based on statistics, Malaysia is the second country after Turkey out of 10 Muslim countries (Turkey, Malaysia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Egypt, Morocco, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Tunisia and Syria) involved in the development of the tourism sector seriously among Islamic countries that are active in this field (Abdul Rahman dan Roslan, 2019). Through this religious tourism activity, visitors are not only able to gain religious knowledge but also strengthen friendships and exchange ideas between them. In addition, it can help expand the business of traders in terms of the amount of sales and marketing of goods that can be developed not only in the country but also at the international level because foreign tourists will receive this program. This is because, in addition to programs related to religion, there are also entrepreneurial activities involving various halal products, such as the sale of prayer mats, health products, books, publications, booths for institutions of higher learning promoting study programs, sales of hijabs and stalls selling food and drinks that can help improve the economy of the local community.

Ulama Pilgrimage Programme and Involvement of Religious Figures

The Ulama Pilgrimage Program is a pilot project proposed by the State of Kedah to empower Islamic tourism and several districts have been identified to implement it. The concept of the scholar's pilgrimage will open up space for tourists to Kedah, in particular and to Malaysia, in general, to study the book and learn from great scholars. (Noor, 2021). This idea is seen to have an impact on Islamic tourism because tourists visit organised religious programs to listen to lectures and meet respected religious figures. This is because icons or figures in the field of religion are factors that attract visitors to visit a religious program. According to Khairul Azhar Meerangani (2019), the uniqueness of preaching delivered by religious figures has attracted the interest of residents to learn and then follow the teachings of Islam (Meerangani, 2019). The appearance of religious figures who have their followers and fans, especially in terms of the content and method of imparting knowledge to visitors, will produce satisfaction for tourists when they can meet face-to-face with religious figures they respect and admire in this religious program (Bibi Noraini Mohd Yusuf & Muhammad Fathullah Al Haq Muhamad Asni, 2023). In addition, meetings between authoritative religious preachers and local communities and tourists through the Scholars' Pilgrimage Program can not only promote Islamic tourism but can also resolve religious questions and problems faced by the community, especially involving current issues that are increasingly difficult.

Furthermore, according to Jabil Mapjabil et al. (2015), nowadays, Islamic tourism is beginning to move to a different dimension with the organisation of festivals, forums and international conferences, which are a platform to bring together not only Muslims but also non-Muslims to share ideas, professionalism, intellectual, expertise and knowledge of Islamic teachings and principles. For example, the organisation of the Asian Hajj, Umrah and Islamic Tourism Conference and Exhibition (AITEK) 2023, which took place from 13 to 15 September to introduce the concept of Islamic tourism in Malaysia as well as internationally organised by the Malaysian Association of Travel Agencies (MATA). The conference also provides a platform for tour operators to establish business relationships with partners from all over Asia, and visitors have the opportunity to purchase Islamic and Umrah travel packages offered by local travel agencies. AITEK 2023 also discussed the topics of Hajj, Umrah and Islamic Tourism in depth, especially in Malaysia and Internationally (Bernama,

2023). In fact, the existence of the AITEX 2023 Conference and Exhibition can help travel agencies establish their respective marketing chains, indirectly helping Malaysia to promote Islamic tourism products available in Malaysia.

CONCLUSION

Malaysia has great potential to continue to lead Islamic tourism. This is because, Malaysia recorded a proud performance when it managed to attract 2.12 million Muslim tourists to this country with a total expenditure of Muslim tourists of RM5.37 billion. This development shows the desire and ability of Muslim tourists to fuel the country's international tourism sector (YB Dato Sri Tiong King Sing, 2023).

Therefore, in an effort to improve the country's opinion through Islamic tourism products and to continue to lead the world's main Muslim-friendly tourist destination that is successful, Malaysia should continue to innovate in improving facilities and services that suit the needs of Muslim tourists. Malaysia's success in attracting Muslim tourists not only provides economic benefits to the country but can also enrich cultural diversity and foster understanding and tolerance between various religions and cultures. However, it is important to acknowledge that apart from Malaysia, there are several other competing countries promoting Muslim-friendly tourism products, such as the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia and Egypt.

Correspondingly, there are still great opportunities in the Islamic Tourism market that have yet to be fully explored. Therefore, in order to increase the country's income through Islamic tourism, Malaysia needs to continue to empower Muslim-friendly tourism to attract tourists from all over the world. This study is very significant and able to contribute to the government and local industry operators also need to offer Muslim-friendly tourism products and infrastructure as an added value in empowering the Islamic tourism industry in this country.

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