The Needs for Understanding the Fundamentals of Islamic Tourism City from The Shariah Perspective

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Abstract

Strategic planning and management of the Islamic tourism activities in the city are significant owing to the adherence to any available regulations enforced by the city's local authority. Since the recognition of the Islamic tourism industry has grown considerably in recent years as part of a new niche segment of the tourism industry; thus, the concept of the Islamic tourism city is still new and vague. This paper purposely aims to explore the need for understanding the fundamentals of the Islamic tourism city and its features to differentiate it from the conventional tourism city. This study employs a qualitative research methodology in which the in-text document method was used for the data collection, and the data was subsequently analysed using content analysis until the study's objective was met. The study has found that the available discussions on the concept of the Islamic tourism city are exhausted, and this could influence the governing process of Islamic tourism city whether it is in line with the Islamic teaching since the previous study less explores the concept. It is suggested that related parties such as the Islamic tourism planner, the local authorities and the academicians actively establish the concept of an Islamic tourism city because it is a necessity today due to the availability of the Islamic tourism products in the cities. Likewise, mismanagement could happen if there is no proper management of the Islamic tourism city within the Shariah principles.

Keywords: City governance, destination, halal, Islamic tourism city, Shariah-compliant

Abstrak

Perancangan dan pengurusan strategik aktiviti bandar pelancongan Islam adalah penting bagi memastikan semua aktiviti berkaitan dengannya mematuhi segala peraturan yang telah ditetapkan oleh pihak berkuasa terutamanya pihak berkuasa tempatan. Industri pelancongan Islam telah diiktiraf sebagai satu segmen yang khusus di dalam industri pelancongan kerana pelancongan Islam telah berkembang secara pesat dalam beberapa tahun kebelakangan ini. Walaubagaimanapun, kajian yang memfokuskan konsep bandar pelancongan Islam secara khusus adalah terhad disebabkan penerokaan industri pelancongan Islam adalah masih di peringkat awal berbanding industri halal yang lain yang sudah lama bertapak. Oleh yang demikian, makalah ini bertujuan untuk meneroka keperluan memahami asas bandar pelancongan Islam bagi membezakan dengan bandar pelancongan konvensional yang sedia-ada. Kajian ini menggunakan metodologi penyelidikan kualitatif di mana kaedah analisis dokumen telah digunakan untuk pengumpulan data dan kemudiannya data tersebut dianalisis dengan menggunakan teknik analisis kandungan sehinggalah objektif kajian tercapai. Kajian ini mendapati bahawa perbincangan daripada kajian lepas berkenaan konsep bandar pelancongan Islam menurut perspektif syarak sangat kurang diterokai, dan ini menyebabkan proses pengurusan bandar pelancongan Islam tidak dapat dilaksanakan dengan sebaiknya. Oleh yang demikian, pihak pengkaji menyarankan agar pihak-pihak berkaitan seperti unit perancang bandar pelancongan Islam, pihak berkuasa tempatan dan ahli akademik dapat bergiat secara aktif bagi mewujudkan bandar pelancongan berkonsepkan Islam kerana sudah banyak produk-produk pelancongan Islam sudah mula ditawarkan kepada pelancong. Sesungguhnya, pengurusan yang lemah terutamanya dari segi tadbir urus boleh berlaku sekiranya tidak ada pengurusan bandar pelancongan Islam yang jelas berasaskan prinsip Syariah.

Kata kunci: Urus tadbir bandar, destinasi, halal, bandar pelancongan Islam, patuh Syariah

∎1.0 INTRODUCTION

City areas are becoming the most significant hot spot for tourism activities, and some management planning for the tourism industry focuses on these areas well. Recently, the Islamic tourism industry has been recognised as a novel segment of the tourism industry worldwide. It could gear up towards improving the country's economic growth and financial stability. Mastercard-Crescent Rating Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) (2019) has reported that Muslim tourists are the fast segment contributing to the travel industry, whereby

$300 billion are expected to be injected into the global economy. Moreover, Mastercard-Crescent Rating Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) (2019) also has a revised Muslim Traveler Faith-Based Service Needs model that was developed in 2009, where this model focuses on faith-based needs. It is vital for the hosting provider of the Muslim travel destination to know and prepare the determined needs to increase the Muslim consumers' satisfaction while they are experiencing the services. Three additional requirements have been validated based on the survey conducted by the GMTI team: local Muslim experiences, no Islamophobia and social causes. The needs are established together with the six current needs: halal food, prayer facilities, Ramadan services, water-friendly washrooms, no non-halal activities and recreational facilities and services with privacy. The differences between the first and later versions can be highlighted as per Figure 1

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Figure 1: Faith-Based Service Need Model (GMTI, 2019)

The proposed model shows that Islamic religious elements are significant when offering Islamic tourism products to Muslim travellers. The state administration has considered the Islamic tourism industry as a prominent landmark and attraction of the cities via offering Islamic tourism products and services in the city (Stephenson et al., 2010). With the hope that these strategies could invite more visitors to come and visit the cities frequently if all the needs are provided accordingly to the city (Rahman, 2018; Ibrahim, 2017). This inherently creates many Islamic tourism activities in the city that indulging more stakeholders with their roles to play in these activities. Suppose the tourism activities in the city are not overseen and managed accordingly based on the Shariah principles, in that case, it will affect the sustainability of the city such as non-satisfaction of the local people towards the organised event that is not in line with the societal values (Tan Mei Zi and Chris Mohan, 2018). Subsequently, it will also lead to an economic impact because the issues create negative perceptions towards the city (Afthanorhan et al., 2017).

This study is crucial to describe the need for a sustainable city within Islamic principles. However, none of the studies on the fundamentals of the Islamic tourism city has been introduced by the previous researcher even though there is significance to establish the Islamic tourism city based on the Shariah perspective since the area of the Islamic tourism study is newly ventured. So, this study aims to explore the need to understand the fundamentals of the Islamic tourism city based on available past literature. Verily this study is essential for the local authority and the other tourism stakeholders in managing the Islamic tourism city in line with Islamic teaching.

■2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourist destinations play significant roles in determining the success of the Islamic tourism industry. For this reason, the cities have become a catalyst for the development of the Islamic tourism industry, whereby many Islamic tourism agendas have been introduced to keep abreast with tourism development. Before further discussion, there is a need to understand several terminologies associated with the Islamic tourism city, such as Islamic tourism city, city tourism, urban tourism, and Islamic capital city.

There are several definitions of tourism have been highlighted in past literature. World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines "tourism as a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes" (UNWTO, 2020.-a). Moreover, tourism also can be defined as "a movement of people to places outside their usual place of residence, pleasure being the usual motivation" (Office for National Statistics, 2010). Whereas, for Islamic tourism, there is a specific exploration carried out on its meaning (Duman, 2011). The definitions of Islamic tourism are as follows in the Table 1.

Table 1: Definition of Islamic Tourism (Duman, 2011)

Authors	Definitions
Henderson (2010)	*All product development and marketing efforts designed for and directed at Muslims.* Motivations are not always or entirely religious. Participants could be pursuing similar leisure experiences to non-Muslims, albeit within parameters set by Islam, and destinations are not necessarily locations where Shariah or full Islamic law is enacted.
Ala-Hamarrneh (2011)	*The economic concept* for Islamic tourism is an extension and expansion oriented concept which focuses on the importance of intra-Muslim and intra-Arab tourism in terms of inclusion of new tourist markets and tourist destinations. *The cultural concept* for Islamic tourism includes visions and ideas that outline the inclusion of Islamic religious-cultural sites in tourism programs with "pedagogical" and self-confidence-building elements. *The religious-conservative concept* for Islamic tourism has not yet been theoretically articulated. But various opinions and remarks in the discussions on the future of tourism in the Arab and Islam worlds as well as some practices of hotel's managements indicate that articulations and implementations are just a matter of time.
Henderson (2009)	*Tourism mainly by Muslims*, although it can extend to unbelievers motivated to travel by Islam, which takes place in the Muslim world.
Shakiry (2006)	The concept of Islamic tourism is not limited to religious tourism, but it extends to *all forms of tourism except those that go against Islamic values*.
Hassan (2007)	In its narrow sense, it may mean "Religious Tourism" (Visiting shrines all over the Islamic World). But in its wide sense, it is *the type of tourism that adheres to the values of Islam*. Most of these values are shared with other religious and non-religious beliefs (for example the ethical code promoted by World Tourism Organization). It calls for respect for local communities and the local environment, benefiting the locals, decency and learning about other cultures.
Hassan (2004)	Islamic tourism means *a new ethical dimension in tourism*. It stands for values generally accepted as high standards of morality and decency. It also stands for the respect of local beliefs and traditions, as well as care for the environment. It represents a new outlook on life and society. It brings back values to the central stage in an age where consumerism is rife and everything is available for use and abuse in the most selfish way. It also encourages understanding and dialogue between different nations and civilizations and attempts to find out about the background of different societies and heritages.
Dogan (2010)	Islamic tourism covers *tourism activities by Muslims* in seaside destinations for the purposes of relaxation and entertainment in hospitality enterprises that apply Islamic principles.

In addition to the highlighted definitions, Islamic tourism could be conceptually understood from different perspectives, which entails the same objective, namely religion (Suid, Nor & Omar, 2017). Thus, thus the researchers in opinion that any activities related to Islamic tourism shall be associated with the Islamic values governed under the Islamic principles. This is in line with the expression made by Tourism Malaysia (2020), which sounds like "experience worry-free vacations with facilities adhering to Islamic principles". Apparently, many Islamic tourism products are introduced and promoted to align with the principles like Shariah-compliant hotels, '*Sekolah Pondok*', medical tourism, and Islamic tourism city.

Furthermore, an Islamic tourism city can be described as a city that promotes and implements an Islamic tourism concept and requirements for the products and services available in the city. When discussing the Islamic tourism city, there are several terms associated with the city when talking about the tourism like municipal (Battour et al., 2011; Mohd Nasir & Salleh, 2014), town (Battour et al., 2011) and city (Jaelani, 2016; Khan & Callanan, 2017; Zakiah, Nor Zafir, & Mahyuddin, 2016; Bilim, 2017). Based on the previous studies, this has denoted that city has good potential for Islamic tourism development. But, limited studies focused on the Islamic tourism city mentioned previously, even though the study on Islamic tourism could gain the interest of the researchers to embark in this area. As a result, the issue of how the governance of the tourism activities in the cities is implemented will trigger if there is no clear concept of the Islamic tourism city introduced for the stakeholders' guidance.

Based on an exploration of the conventional tourism city concept, many studies have been conducted in this area. The most popular term that has been used is urban tourism. According to UNWTO (2020.-b), urban tourism is "a type of tourism activity which takes place in an urban space with its inherent attributes characterised by non-agricultural based economy such as administration, manufacturing, trade and services and by being nodal points of transport". Meanwhile, Postma, Buda, & Gugerell (2017) have discussed that city tourism is related to the urban area where tourism is a catalyst for the city development. This is because a contemporary trend emerges today where people tend to travel outside of their place to stay overnight in the city. As a result, tourism contributes more to the city socially, economically, and technologically.

However, according to Postma et al. (2017), the study on the tourism associated with the city is new in the urban study, where it just started in 1980. The authors further asserted that there are limited academic papers available in this area; if there are, the studies are in a different approach and fragmented. Most of the reason is because of a neglected function of tourism as a stand-alone during urban planning. In other words, tourism is a stand-alone plan and makes it challenging to comprehend the city. For this reason, there is a continuous initiative made by UNWTO to ensure the sustainability of the tourism activities in cities by conducting several series of Global Summit of City Tourism. It was reported that in 2015, 54% of the world's population lived in urban areas; by 2030, this share is expected to reach 60% (UNWTO, 2020.-b). It is significant to uphold tourism as an effective critical plan for the city's development since residents,

locals, and tourism make the city as a centre for tourism activities. Indeed, tourism is a catalyst for social, economic and cultural development where it will determine how the government shapes the city.

Since tourism is part of the city's development, proper planning is essential to sustain the city tourism and make it more resilient. This is because the practice will help to increase the number of travellers visiting the city. At this notion, branding the city as city tourism is the best way to remain attractive. Martins (2015) has asserted that the branding of the city tour will make the visitor closer to the city because it could construct the city's image in the tourists' minds. Subsequently, this could force the tourist to visit and experience the available tourism products at the city tourism (Lee et al., 2020). In support of this, there are a lot of studies have been conducted to focus on branding the city tourism like tourists' perception (Albuz, 2019; Martins, 2015), destination marketing (Coban & Yildiz, 2019), tangible and intangible destinations (Ageeva & Foroudi, 2019) and many more related to the area of studies. In a nutshell, the sustainability of city tourism relies on government planning in the city where it becomes part of the tourist attractions.

Based on the above discussion, the concept of conventional city tourism is limited compared to the other studies in the realm of tourism like ecotourism, medical tourism, and destination management. So, short-term and long-term planning is necessary to maintain the sustainability of the tourism city products. This could benefit tourist attractions if the local authorities could establish a good image of tourism in the city. In addition, since the study of the Islamic tourism is new as well, thus the specific area of the Islamic city tourism remains neglected as well although the Islamic tourism industry has been recognised as the niche segment of the tourism industry locally and globally. Thus, proper planning for the city's development will assist along with other key pillars, and tourism constitutes a central component in many cities' economy, social life, and geography. Thus, it is a critical element of urban development policies.

■ **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

This study employs a qualitative research methodology using the in-text document method for the data collection. The sources of the documents were sought from the authoritative online databases subscribed by the Universiti Teknologi MARA and International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). The most often used databases are Scopus, Taylor and Francis, Emerald, Web of Science, Sage, EbscoHost and ScienceDirect, Google Scholar and other established websites like UNWTO and Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC), and Tourism Malaysia. Furthermore, the documents involved in this study consist of the reports and articles where the researchers used several keywords alternatively like tourism city or city tourism, Islamic tourism, sustainable destination management, Muslim friendly, strategic management, and state administration to find out relevant articles related to this discussion on the needs of establishing the Islamic tourism city in line with the Shariah law.

Since this study is qualitative, the data collection and analysis will be based on the narrative review style to discuss the selected literature. Unlike the systematic literature review style that is well known with the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines as best practice, this style has no proper acknowledged procedures to follow. However, Ferrari (2015) has opined that the data quality for the narrative review could be improved by using certain methodologies in the systematic literature review. Therefore, this study employed and selected keyword searching strategies to get the valued data based on a similar approach in the systematic literature review. The content analysis technique was used manually for the data analysis, whereby the findings were categorised into three themes based on the study's objective.

■ **4.0 RESULTS**

4.1 Islamic Branding As A Catalyst For Economic Growth

Islamic tourism city is a new tourism product introduced because there are not so many previous studies that have explored and explicated the thought. However, indeed, the emergence of this concept is due to the changing circumstances in the tourism industry. Previously, Islamic tourism was understood as religious tourism involving only the journey to sacred places, such as Mecca and Medina. However, nowadays, the concept of Islamic tourism extensively leverages broader dimensions encompassing many areas and has been branded for economic gain. Indeed, tourist destinations have started to promote and brand the place as an Islamic tourism destination, particularly in the city, to attract travellers since the city is a common preference due to the availability of the services and facilities. Therefore, the efforts from the relevant stakeholders of the Islamic tourism city to make the services and facilities available are crucial to increase the satisfaction of the travellers. Kherbouche & Djedid (2019), for instance, have emphasised that the image of the tourist city relies on the inhabitants' and tourists' perspectives, which tend to evolve from time to time. The evolution will dynamically change due to several factors such as the city's awareness, technological development, and reality. Since the awareness of the Shariah-compliant positively increases among the travellers, proper Islamic city establishment is needed to increase the traveller's loyalty to revisit the city. Consequently, the new image of the destinations could be promoted and established by encapsulating the Islamic attributes in the tourism activities offered in the city.

Besides, the increasing demands for the Shariah-compliant services in the international market from the Muslim and non-Muslim countries have elucidated the inspiration for introducing the Islamic tourism concept in the tourism industry. A study conducted by Battour et al. (2018) have emphasised that the acceptance of the Shariah-compliant services in the Islamic tourism destinations is not only from the Muslims, but the non-Muslims are also interested in benefiting from this industry because of the different experience that could be obtained. However, Bilim (2017) has reported that the Islamic tourism industry globally established after the halal food industry. The Islamic tourism industry gained recognition later than the halal food industry because social researchers tend to neglect the importance of religion in tourism studies (Battour et al., 2011). As a result, the integration process between establishing the Islamic tourism city by embedding the Shariah elements might be a gap if the Shariah observance is not the main agenda. Since the present studies on the Islamic

attributes that focus on the available tourism products are less synchronised with the Shariah observance, it could lead to the study on the establishment and the management of the Islamic tourism city getting affected and is less explored by the researchers.
On this occasion, it is essential to note that the Islamic tourism city's establishment by making the Islamic tourism products available cannot be stand-alone for branding to increase the economic drive only. However, the Shariah observance of the Islamic attributes needs to be focused on ensuring the tourism products align with the Shariah requirements.

4.2 Proper Governance In Managing The Islamic Tourism City

Several studies on sustainable Islamic tourism destination management have become a trend among researchers today, particularly on its attributes in diverse purviews of tourism study. In 2013, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) took a good step in organising a conference where the members of the OIC have established a new transformation agenda. This event was the first step for the Islamic countries to incorporate Islamic tourism in the economic planning for the development of the countries which focuses on the city of tourism (Organization of Islamic Cooperation, 2013). This initiative has denoted that proper strategic planning and management of the Islamic tourism city is a focal point to run the Islamic tourism city accordingly. Since the city is a hub for Islamic tourism development, thus the need to embark on Islamic tourism destination studies is urgently needed.

About this matter, good governance for managing the Islamic tourism city shall be an essential consideration in implementing the Islamic tourism city as a product to promote sustainable destination management. This could not be realised if the local authorities disregard or are not well prepared on the establishment and the enforcement policies that align with the Shariah requirements. On this occasion, Martins (2015) has advocated that the procedure and the government's interest will determine the destination's future. Hence, the local authorities shall ensure that when the city is going to be recognised as an Islamic tourism city, the establishment of the comprehensive Shariah-compliant policies are made available to ensure this could equip and protect the stakeholders of the Islamic tourism city. And, of course, this could protect the inhabitants and the potential tourists in experiencing Islamic tourism activities in the city.

Based on the above premise, this stakeholders' arrangement is in line with the Islamic legal maxim, "*taṣarruf al-imam 'alá al- ra'īyah manūṭ bi al-maṣlaḥah*" (ruler's actions towards the public are based on public interest) where the local authorities are accountable to make the presence of the shariah-compliant policies and make it available to all dedicated stakeholders. The efforts could protect and safeguard the city's stakeholders in the best manner since the authorities know the city's situation more. On this occasion, the best practice to govern the Islamic tourism city is by considering the *maslahah* (public interest) of the city as the utmost. Verily, Kuala Terengganu city (Noraini Jusoh, 2018) and the Kota Bharu city (Mohd Nasir & Salleh, 2014), for instance, have gradually implemented Shariah-compliant policies whereby both cities have already made a declaration on the adoption of the Islamic tourism and enforcing the Islamic laws as well in managing the city. Based on this matter, it is crucial to confirm the policies and tourism activities within the Shariah principles. This is to avoid the capitalist people misusing the term the Islamic tourism city concept just for the economic gains.

4.3 Locality Consideration To Sustain The Islamic Tourism City

According to Stephenson et al. (2010), the triumph of the destination brand could be sustainable if the local authorities were concerned about the life of society and their culture. Hence, such good initiatives in developing the Islamic tourism city adhere to Islamic principles. This portrays respecting the nature of the social life and their cultural background setting. In Islam, the locality is closely associated with the elements of *al-'urf* (customary practice), where *al-'urf* is a secondary source of Islamic law (Nyazee, 2003). Apart from *al-'urf*, "*al-'adah al-muhakkamah*" (custom is an arbitrator) becomes a general maxim that assists the scholars in understanding the Shariah-related issues in detail because the locality contains the elements of the *maslahah* that need the protection as long as the practice does not against the Islamic law (Majid, 2011).

Considering the local condition, consisting of the Muslim populations' needs, is a must. Therefore, there is significant to ensure the salient features of the tourism products available in the city are Shariah compliant. This could include products like food and beverages, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, consumer goods, and services such as hospitality, tour package, entertainment, banking, and finance. Obviously, if these products and services are not made available based on the Shariah requirements, in that case, there is a tendency to the controversial issues arise in the society since the problems of the religious observance are quite sensitive among them. Recently, there was an issue related to the entertainment event that holds in one of the hotels in Kuala Terengganu city has led to the debate and anger among the society because the event was not in line with the social values of the Muslim community there (Rosalinda Md. Said, 2022). Since the Terengganu state brings the Islamic image to its plan, the state government has to provide clarification to the public to clear the issue. If not, this issue will also affect the existing government's political mileage. The triggering case has shown the extent to which the need to establish the Islamic tourism city is not just for the marketing or partially implemented. Still, the establishment needs to be done comprehensively to safeguard all the relevant stakeholders. In a nutshell, modest approaches within the Islamic law are required to ensure the degree of participatory willingness of the stakeholders in tourism activities increases (Zawawi, Ramli & Zaki, 2017) due to the efficient management of the Islamic tourism city within the Islamic law and its requirements are also influenced by the stakeholders' interests.

Verily, there is good potential for the researchers to embark on studying the Islamic tourism city because of its scarcity and less exploration. The study has found that the city's Islamic tourism activities shall conform to the Shariah-compliant related policies. By considering this all together, thus the process of branding the Islamic tourism city could be sustainable since the stakeholders are more apparent of the direction and the management of the Islamic tourism city. This certainly could prevent the people take for granted the booming of the Islamic tourism industry for their economic gains, and this eventually will lead to the disruptions of the *maslahah* of the society.

■**5.0 CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, there is a need to conceptually discuss first the need to understand the fundamentals of the Islamic tourism city to establish an appropriate model for the Islamic tourism city. Since the tourism city is a central focus of the Islamic tourism activities, the authoritative bodies such as the local authorities, tourism planners and the remaining stakeholders need to ensure the basic concept of Islamic tourism is in place. This is to ensure that the implementation of the Islamic tourism city does not work merely for tourists' attraction to gain the economic growth by branding the city as the Islamic tourism city, but it extends towards more than that. In this case, the local and federal governments have to ensure the policies and the city's strategic management align with Islamic teaching. Therefore, once these criteria become the main consideration, it is easier to observe the tourism activities conform to the Shariah principles and requirements. Besides, this study suggested that policymakers and the local authority to establish proper guidelines on Islamic tourism city because it is a part of tourism destinations and products. This is because the laws and regulations will guide the stakeholders in the Islamic tourism activities that are intimately bound with the policies.

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