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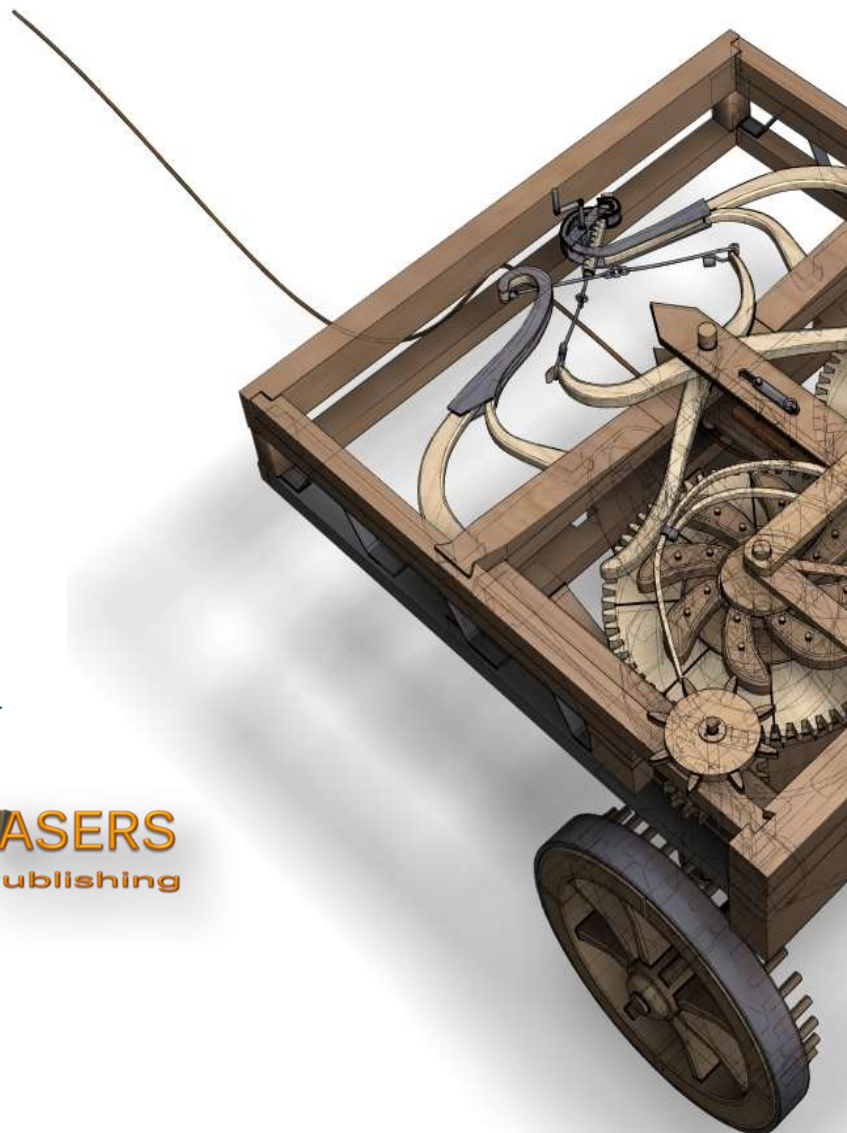
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Call for Papers Winter Issues 2021 Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism

Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism is an interdisciplinary research journal, aimed to publish articles and original research papers that should contribute to the development of both experimental and theoretical nature in the field of Environmental Management and Tourism Sciences.

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Halal Tourism - The Type of Tourism Required in Azerbaijan

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Abstract

Purpose - This number of tourists in Azerbaijan has been growing in recent years due to the increase in tourism revenues, visa convenience, fight against terrorism, and political stability. To further increase this growth, turning to Halal tourism may be the solution. One of the aims of this study is to raise awareness among the Azerbaijani tourism stakeholders about the basic needs of the growing Halal tourism market in the world and at the same time to share information about the sector. Azerbaijan is one of the most important actors in the Halal tourism market with its historical heritage and developing tourist infrastructure. This study includes examining the current potential of halal concept hotel establishments in Azerbaijan.

Design/methodology/approach - Descriptive statistics method was used in the study. For this purpose, the conceptual framework of Halal tourism has been identified by conducting a detailed literature review on the subject, and the in-depth literature studies have been reinforced with statistical data.

Findings - In this study, statistics of the number of Muslim and non-Muslim tourists entering the country between the years 2015-2020 are presented, and the GDP of Arab countries and tourism expenditures are shown.

Originality/value - As a result of the research, the most important points that halal concept hotels should pay attention are determined to be providing guests with adequate worship facilities, ensuring halal standards in food and beverage services and designing hotel activities in accordance with Islamic principles.

Keywords: halal tourism; Azerbaijan tourism; muslim tourist.

JEL Classification: R11; Z32.

Introduction

Tourism, which has gained an indispensable appearance for countries within an industry consisting of many different elements such as transportation, accommodation, catering, and recreational facilities has become an increasingly large industry in the world. Tourism implies an economic activity that creates employment, income, welfare, and indirect taxes within an industry consisting of many different sectors. Tourism also refers to an economic activity that generates foreign currency income and positively affects the balance of payments as international trade.

Religion is a crucial determinant in all kinds of social and cultural activities. Religion also plays an active role in tourism, which is a social and cultural activity. The framework in which religion ascertains its position, determination, and boundaries in tourism activities is significant. From this point of view, it becomes clear that we should investigate the relationship between tourism and religion. Regardless of what kind of touristic activity individuals participate in, they should live according to the orders and prohibitions of their beliefs and present a tourist behavior model according to these orders and beliefs. The significant fact in this form; "The influence of the religious beliefs of the individual participating in the tourist action on the tourist consumer behavior-When human mobility in the world is examined, the mobility of Muslims such as medical treatment, rest, and obtaining information is too much to underestimate."In this process, the concept of "Halal tourism" built around "the necessity of religiously permitted and acceptable products in tourism for a Muslim" should be highlighted as a

service supply and take its place in tourism. Researches show that; In recent years, the Muslim population in the world has entered a rapid increase trend. Tourism investors have analyzed this development well and have set out to produce different concepts that can appeal to Muslim tourists. The most common name of this concept in the world is Islamic tourism or Halal tourism, which is more commonly used. Halal Tourism practices have started to grab the attention of operators and marketers globally within the framework of changing tourist patterns and expectations. The same interest is also present for academicians who research on the subject. The increase in the population of Islamic countries, their welfare levels, and parallel to this, the development of communication tools together with globalization have increased the worldly expectations of Muslims. People with a disposable income level, with the effect of their curiosity, first enter into the thought of satisfying their desire to travel and rest, and then to have fun.

When Azerbaijan's natural beauties such as seas, mountains, plains, plateaus, waterfalls; historical monuments such as castles, inns, caravanserais, tombs, mosques, cultural elements enriched with Islamic belief; The civilization that has embraced nations for centuries; In the Caucasus, where the Islamic faith occurs, the belief, understanding, tradition, and tradition of the local people are combined with the tourism activities, it is expected that the people of the Caucasus, who have a reputation for their hospitality, foresight, and generosity, will benefit more from tourism, thus, Azerbaijan will be among the best countries in the Halal tourism sector (Sarkhanov, T; Tutar, H; 2021).

This study includes examining the current potential of halal concept hotel establishments in Azerbaijan. The study has been designed as qualitative research. This research examines the definition of halal concept related to halal tourism, its place in the sector and accessibility, researches on Halal tourism in databases of "WoS, SCOPUS, EBSCO, PROQUEST, SCIENCEDIRECT, EMERALD INSIGHT, DERGIPARK and et.al" in international fields under the headings of service products by using document analysis method. Besides, data were obtained through document analysis, one of the qualitative research methods. The subject was reinforced with the data of WDB, Azerbaijan Statistical Committee. Thus, in line with the purpose of the research, the number, and type of hotel establishments operating in Azerbaijan were examined, and official statistics were obtained. Data were analyzed with descriptive analysis. Descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage) were used to digitize and interpret the obtained findings. Thus, it is thought that the results of this study can help to decide whether future private or public tourism investments and activities should be towards Halal tourism.

1. Literature Review

Countries that pioneered Halal practices in the world, including Halal tourism are Malaysia, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Pakistan; besides, organizations such as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the World Halal Forum, the European Fatwa, and Research Council also direct halal practices (İzberk-Bilgin and Nakata 2016). Academically, the concept of halal food / Halal tourism has been studied in the world since the 1990s; however, there is no study carried on this subject in Azerbaijan.

In this study of Chigdem Gulmez, tourism motivations were examined from a positive psychology perspective within the scope of current studies in the literature and with this view, the motivations of Muslims in the tourism world and the possible effects of motivations on satisfaction were discussed (Gulmez 2020).

Zubaidi Wahyono and Mohd Abbas Abdul Razak In this present study on Islamic tourism, the researchers plan to investigate the concept, destination, purpose, and ethical issues regarding Islamic tourism. The study will concentrate on the situation especially in three Muslim countries in the Southeast Asian region, notably Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei. Powered by the enthusiasm to study Islamic tourism, the researchers are interested in understanding the guiding principles set down in these countries in comparison to other countries in the region. This analysis will also examine the subject of tourism from the Islamic ethical dimension, primarily relating to the Qur'an and Sunnah, in addition to the core of the investigation on the periphery (Wahyono və Abdul Razaka 2020).

The aim of this article is to address the advantages of being a tourist destination that is competent and Muslim-friendly. Therefore, an experimental analysis, made up of a bibliographical examination of over one hundred secondary sources, was performed. The Muslim-friendly online services offered by nine destinations are examined, and one of our key findings is that these online services are of the utmost importance for a genuinely Muslim-friendly destination. We also reach the conclusion that such services allow businesses to design and promote tailored proposals across digital platforms intended to Muslims (Cuesta-Valiño, Bolifa and Núñez-Barriopedro 2020).

The US-based company, Dinar Standard Crescent Rating, conducted a study in 2012 called "Global Muslim Lifestyle Travel Market 2012: Consumer Needs Study for Airlines, Destinations and Hotels & Resorts" that

examines religious tourists on a global scale. According to the results of the research: "Food production in halal standards" with a rate of 67% is of primary importance in the travel decisions of religious tourists. In the second place, "economic convenience" comes to the fore with a rate of 53%, and Muslim-friendly applications are important with a rate of 49% (Dinar standart 2012).

In Johan C. Henderson's "Islamic Tourism Reviewed" research, it was mentioned that international tourism activity in the Muslim world and the promotional activities in this market are increasing day by day due to the development of Islamic tourism. The purpose of this research is to address issues that point to the nature and importance of Islamic tourism as a humanitarian and commercial activity. It also aimed to raise awareness about some issues still waiting to be discovered about Islamic tourism for the future. As a result of the research, it was emphasized that very large masses started to be included in the halal tourism market, and therefore more research should be carried out on this subject (J. Henderson 2009).

Y.Kamarulzaman, F. Abdul Ghani, A. Madun "The Acceptance of Islamic Hotel Concept in Malaysia" - The research aims to examine the true potential of Islamic tourism by understanding the demand for halal hotels as one of the components of the tourism sector and the acceptability of the customer. This research also aimed to find the perspectives of hoteliers in the context of the sustainability, profitability, and identification of the Halal hotel market. In this study, the customer profile of the Halal hotel was defined, and finally, it was identified whether Halal tourism was an advertisement rather than a sustainable desire. As a result, this research has provided the stakeholders of Halal tourism and tourism centers with the necessary information about the concept of halal tourism (Kamarulzaman, Abdul Ghani and Madun 2012).

G. R. Chandra "Halal Tourism; A New Goldmine For Tourism" - The aim of the research is to generalize Halal tourism, which is highlighted as a new gold mine for tourism, from a halal perspective and thus to reveal the general view. It has been stated that there are great opportunities in the implementation of the Halal tourism concept and likewise, this market will expand further with the increase of Muslim tourists. As a result, it was concluded that the bonds between Islamic hotels and customers should be well established in order to make use of this opportunity (CHANDRA 2014).

S. Razzaq, C. Michael Hall, G Prayag "The capacity of New Zealand to accommodate the halal tourism market or not" - The research aims to excel in the accommodation sector in New Zealand by supporting the qualities that strengthen the concept of Halal tourism. As a result of the research, he emphasizes that Halal tourism and hospitality are not only related to the provision of halal food but also to Muslim customers and Various product qualities promoted and offered by accommodation operators in New Zealand (Razzaq, Hall and Prayag 2016).

M. Shakona, K. Backman, S. Backman, W. Norman, Ye Luo, and L. Duffy "Understanding the traveling behavior of Muslims in the United States" - The research aims to reveal the effect of Islamic beliefs and practices on the leisure and travel behaviors of Muslims in the southern city of Carolina Clemson. The results of the research show that Islamic beliefs and behavioral practices have an effect on the travel behavior of Muslims in America (Shakona, *et al.* 2015).

Daphne Halkias, Emanuele Pizzurno, Alfredo De Massis, Mirka Fragoudakis "Halal Products And Services In The Italian Tourism And Hospitality Industry: Brief Case Studies Of Entrepreneurship And Innovation" - In the study, it was aimed to present halal products in the Italian example and an accommodation system covering the main teachings of the Muslim faith. In the study, where it is stated that Halal tourism is less attractive in Europe due to the shortcomings of tourists who want to benefit from Halal tourism in Europe, it was emphasized that the needs of Muslim tourists are being tried to be met, although this market is in the beginning period for Europe, there is cooperation with international hotels related to this and local administrators and businesses should participate in these collaborations. Halal Products and Services in the Italian and Hospitality Industry: Case Studies on Entrepreneurship and Innovation (Halkias, *et al.* 2014).

1.1 Halal Tourism Concept

With the changes in the lifestyles of individuals, their consumption habits and behaviors also change. This change also affects the touristic demands of the people and brings out new types of tourism (Eryilmaz 2011).

The lifestyles of Muslims are generally shaped by the orders and prohibitions of the Quran, the holy book of Islam, and the Sunnah practices taken from the lifestyle and discourses of the Prophet of Islam, Prophet Muhammad. Muslims participating in tourism activities try to shape all their lifestyles, entertainment perception, touristic motivation, and consumption understanding according to the principles of Islam. Because of these features, these people's touristic profiles, product-service expectations, holiday-travel understanding may differ

from other individuals, and they pay attention to the fact that these differences are halal in a word that translates into Islamic rules.

The word halal corresponds to the meanings of "acceptable, permitted/permissible" in Arabic. The word halal can be evaluated by some people only on food and drinks, but the concept of halal reveals the necessity for any Muslim to consume religiously permitted or permissible products (El-Gohary 2016). Although the concepts of halal and haram are not included in all languages, some languages are used in similar meanings. e.g; The words "lawful" in English, "tahur" in Hebrew, "licit" in French corresponds to the concept of halal; The words "prohibition, forbidden, unlawful" in English, "illicit" in French, and "tame" in Hebrew correspond to the concept of haram. The concept of haram includes all situations, attitudes, and behaviors that are religiously prohibited to believe, do, use, eat, and drink. The concept of halal, on the other hand, includes all situations, attitudes, and behaviors that are considered appropriate in terms of religion, that is, the opposite of the concept of haram (Erdem 1997). The concept of halal is an important concept that has an impact on all living spaces of Muslims. In this context, the concept of halal starts with food and drink and also manifests itself in areas such as banking, finance, cosmetics, tourism, employment, travel, and transportation (El-Gohary 2016).

Due to our subject, we will focus on Halal tourism among the concepts. The concept of Halal Tourism was first used in 1989; however, has become a more frequently used concept in recent years. Halal Tourism is referred to as "Islamic Tourism" (J. Henderson, Islamic Tourism Reviewed 2009), Henderson used the concept of Islamic tourism and expressed it as a tourism activity carried out by Muslims, but in his next study, he stated that non-Muslims could benefit from these activities provided that they adapt to the current environment. He stated that services and products in the tourism business should be produced in accordance with the concepts of halal and haram and in line with the religious rules (J. Henderson 2009)

Mansouri defined Halal tourism as a way of collecting areas such as halal airline, halal food and beverage, halal activities within the scope of halal package tours, and presenting them in halal accommodation facilities (Mansouri 2014). According to Dogan, it is defined as engaging in touristic activities by choosing accommodation establishments that provide services in accordance with Islamic rules and beliefs for the purpose of recreation and entertainment (Dogan 2011). In a different definition, Halal tourism is defined as tourism and holiday packages for Muslim families and tourists who abide by Islamic rules, or those who want to have their holidays in accordance with Islamic rules in accommodation facilities designed according to the rules ordered by Islam (Arpacı and Batman 2015). In short, Halal tourism is the activities related to meeting the needs arising from accommodation in accordance with Islamic rules (Sharia rules) and beliefs (Arpacı and Batman 2015). For Muslim tourists, it should include not only some of the standards but also all activities and facilities such as halal food, soft drinks, separate pool and SPA activities for women and men, family sections in restaurants, rooms and washbasins not facing the qibla (Battour and İsmail, 2016). Because, in the tourism market today, investments are made in Halal tourism in non-Muslim countries such as Australia, Singapore, New Zealand, Russia, and Japan, and these countries are trying to get a share of the Halal tourism market (J. Henderson 2009).

1.2 Features of Halal Accommodation Businesses

Many hotels, including chain hotels around the world, are beginning to cater to the accommodation needs of Muslim vacationers. However, the fact that each hotel puts forward its own halal standards and provides services in this direction caused a certain period of turmoil until international organizations stepped into service standards.

The standard examples that these hotels have applied to them are as follows.

- Dorchester Hotel in London arranges meal times for its Muslim guests during Ramadan. Sofyan Hotels in Indonesia read Azan in rooms during prayer times and provide the opportunity to pray in the congregation.
- Some private beach resorts of the ladies in the south of Turkey, providing beach and spa facilities do not serve alcohol but serves halal food.
- Aerostar Hotel in Moscow arranges some of its rooms for Muslim holidaymakers and offers halal food with its halal certificated cuisine in addition to the Quran, prayer rug, and signs indicating the qibla in these rooms. In addition to these, the hotel has 2 separate prayer places.
- Established in Bangkok, Thailand, Al Meroz Hotel has been certified as a Muslim friend by Gulf Halal in the United Arab Emirates. The hotel offers halal food service, prayer rooms, separate room floors for ladies, as well as pool service for men and women at separate times.
- Condor Hotel, located in Granada, Spain, informs its Muslim guests about the surrounding halal restaurants, mosques, direction of the qibla, and prayer times.
- Reality Investments, a company operating in Florida, the USA, leases half of its rental locations close to Orlando Disney World by furnishing them in a way that is comfortable for Muslims. For example, by covering

the pool with high curtains, they provide the privacy of their customers and make them comfortable (comcec 2016).

1.3. The Relationship between Tourism and Islam Religion

Various definitions of the concept of tourism can be made. Tourism comes from the word "tornus", which expresses "return movement" in Latin. In English, the word "tour" is used to mean "traveling, touring, traveling to a different country or city for satisfaction and happiness" (Hornby 2000). The Azerbaijani language uses the French equivalent, which means walking, relaxing and having fun.

The word tourism, which means travel for the purpose of rest, entertainment, sight, is accepted as all economic, cultural, and technical measures taken to attract tourists to a region or country in the economic sense. As a multi-faceted field of activity in the form of continuous communication with the economic, religious, social, cultural, and natural environment, it includes all services such as tourism, access, accommodation, food and drink, entertainment, shopping, and travel organization (Cheken 2016).

Europe, which changed its face with Renaissance and geographical discoveries and grew richer and richer, became more and more interested in the East, which it found exotic and mysterious. Especially with the work of orientalists, the East has become a world better known to Europe. As a result, travel, which is the main argument on which tourism stands, has become increasingly common. Proof of this is the travelogues written by very famous European and Muslim travelers in the Middle Ages.

It is an unforgettable fact that religion, and therefore faith is a very important function and determinant in the formation of individual and social life and in the formation of the internal dynamics of life. The findings of sociologists regarding the determination of religious practice in all spheres of life also show this. Religion, as it feels in every sphere of life, has an important role in determining the world of thought and behavior of society in particular. In addition, its role in the formation of an understanding of economic, social, and cultural life is obvious. However, the role of society in shaping the concept of religion cannot be denied Religion has been an influential concept in the travel of individuals throughout human history. The practice of tourism has been influenced by many religions from the past to the present, especially Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, and Hinduism.

In Islamic philosophy, it is estimated that understanding the greatness of God is also possible by seeing the richness and beauty of the things He has created. In Islam, it is recommended that Muslims participate in all kinds of activities that will develop them. Thus, Islam is a religion that encourages Muslims to be individuals who have developed in useful ways and to live in peace. Even if the hadith of Muhammad's expressed as you should follow science even if it is in China, can be considered as a referral to educational tourism at this time. At the same time, traveling allows people to feel better, to avoid stress, and in this way to serve God better (Farahani and Henderson 2010). The Holy Qur'an, the holy book of Islam, contains many different verses that encourage believers to travel, to learn by traveling, and to learn from past nations: Mulk/15, Al-i Imran/137, En'am/11, Yusuf/109, Nahl/36, Neml/69, Ankebut/20, Rum/42, Hac/46, Fatır/44, Mu'min/82, Sebe/18, Zuhruf/12, Muhammed/10. (Quran - Kerim, act: Feyizli, 2010). Islam is a religion that encourages Muslims to travel, and this encouragement is important for the development of Islamic tourism. According to Kirca's (1986) research, the concept of travel is included in the Qur'an. The opposite of this concept in the Qur'an is Ibn Sabil, a traveler. From this concept, it is understood who is on the road or traveling. The equivalent in the hadiths is a journey. Since the journey has a religious aspect, it is seen in the literature of Islamic law this event is called a journey that a person who travels is called a guest (Kirca 1986).

In general, the purpose of travel in Islam is as follows:

- To believe,
- To worship (hajj-umre),
- To learn and teach science,
- To experience,
- To trade,
- To learn from past nations and
- To emigrate.

However, these purposes do not mean that illegitimate things will be permissible for a holiday or duties can be neglected (Arpacı and Batman 2015). According to Abdul Judge Abdul Latif Al-Saeedy, the general rules of travel in Islam are as follows:

- God's consent should be sought,
- Good Muslim ethics should be demonstrated,
- Help should be given to those in need,

- Should be sincere,
- The power of attorney should be left,
- Help should be asked from Allah,
- Guide should be hired,
- There should be no disobedience,
- Should be calm and discreet,
- Charity should be given and
- Will should be written.

One of the biggest divine religions in the world is Islam. The members of the religion of Islam are named as Muslim. Since Muslims believe that the Holy Book of Islam, the Quran, is a revelation sent by Allah, they continue their lives by obeying the orders and prohibitions of the Quran (Razzaq, Hall and Prayag 2016). In other words, Muslims determine the steps to be taken or decisions about their lives, in short, their way of life according to the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad.

2. Method

This study includes examining the current potential of halal concept hotel establishments in Azerbaijan. The study has been designed as qualitative research. This research examines the definition of halal concept related to halal tourism, its place in the sector and accessibility, researches on Halal tourism in databases of "WoS, SCOPUS, EBSCO, PROQUEST, SCIENCEDIRECT, EMERALD INSIGHT, DERGIPARK et al." in international fields under the headings of service products by using document analysis method. The literature review technique, which is frequently used in scientific research, was preferred in the collection of data. The subject was reinforced with the data of WDB, Azerbaijan Statistical Committee. Thus, in line with the purpose of the research, the number, and type of hotel establishments operating in Azerbaijan were examined, and official statistics were obtained. Descriptive statistics technique was used in the analysis of the data. Descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage) were used to digitize and interpret the obtained findings. Thus, it is thought that the results of this study can help to decide whether future private or public tourism investments and activities should be towards Halal tourism.

3. Results

3.1. Halal Tourism Needs of Azerbaijan

Despite the above-mentioned potential, less than 20,000 tourists visited Azerbaijan in 2014 from the Gulf region, the CIS member states of Central Asia, and other sources of mass tourism (Azerbaijan National Statistics Committee 2020). According to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, starting from 2015, the "Rules for accreditation of tourism companies operating in the Republic of Azerbaijan to get the right to obtain electronic tourist visas" have been approved. It should be noted that e-tourist visas were issued no later than 10 days after application. Following a change in the visa issuance procedure by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the visa issuance period was reduced from 10 to 5 days. Starting from 2017, foreigners and stateless persons began to receive e-visas within 3 hours through the "ASAN Visa" system, regardless of non-working days and holidays ([Republic of Azerbaijan Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#) 2020; (Bayramlı and sarkhanov 2021).

When the tourism income of Azerbaijan as of 2015 is analyzed, it is observed that there has been a continuous increase between 2015-2017. However, although there was a decrease in 2018, the number of tourists in 2019 experienced a new recovery. Especially the year 2018 seems to be the year of the highest loss as a result of the decrease in tourism income and the number of tourists who preferred Azerbaijan. The number of visitors has continued to increase every year. 2020 tourist arrival banned due to covid 19 pandemic.

Table 1. Expenses and number of tourists visiting Azerbaijan in 2015-2019

Year	Tourism Income (\$) Million	%	The number of tourists	%	Average Expenditure (\$)	%
2015	1673	-	1 921 90	-	870,493	-
2016	2713	62,1638	2044700	6,39	1326,85	52,4246
2017	3012	11,021	2454700	20,05	1227,03	-7,5224
2018	2634	-12,55	2605315	6,136	1011,01	-17,605
2019	2971	12,8322	2863531	9,911	1037,88	2,65767
2020	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Azerbaijan National Statistics Committee, 2020

In a global sense, with the increase in the Muslim population, it will be possible to say that Halal tourism has become a valuable market for the tourism sector. Citizens of Qatar, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Kuwait have been provided with simplified visas at all international airports in Azerbaijan since February 1, 2016. These rules have been applied to the citizens of the United Arab Emirates since 2015 and have been implemented at all international airports of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the spot of visa issuance to the citizens of these countries. On average, the issuance of a visa began to be provided within 2 minutes. After this application, the number of visitors from the United Arab Emirates increased from 8,219 in 2014 to 3,893,110 in the first nine months of 2016. The statistics of the Islamic countries in which the Muslim population is the most densely populated in the world during the last 5 years, and have the opportunity to obtain a visa at the airport of Azerbaijan, are also seen in the table. From the countries where Muslims make up the vast majority of its population, the tourist mobility that prefers Azerbaijan has taken place, as shown in the table. Immediately after 2015, the increase is seen to be valid in all countries.

Table 2. Number of citizens of Arab countries visiting Azerbaijan for tourism in the period 2016-2020

Countries	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020 (January and February)
UAE	52 276	102 360	92 432	66 706	7 291
Iraq	60 023	62 454	64 341	47 325	4 343
Saudi Arabia	7463	33 273	74100	103 691	10 619
Bahrain	-	-	11 228	7 958	1 586
Kuwait	-	-	29 296	29 485	6 718
Oman	-	-	24 046	17 659	2 230
Qatar	-	-	12 249	10 221	1 455
Total	119762	198087	307692	283045	34242

Source: Azerbaijan National Statistics Committee, 2020

In order to demonstrate that Azerbaijan can increase its share in the Halal tourism market, annual tourism expenditures of the citizens of the countries with a dense Muslim population who have the convenience of coming to Azerbaijan have been shown.

Table 3.(million \$)

Countries	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
UAE	16637	17127	17645	17999	18649	-
Iraq	7934	7647	8093	7855	8531	-
Saudi Arabia	20366	17671	19065	17932	18506	-
Bahrain	4939	1921	4896	4023	4447	-
Kuwait	13148	13232	13722	14318	14839	-
Oman	2208	2643	2915	321	3297	-
Qatar	11641	13152	12284	11754	12294	-

Source: The World Bank. World Development Indicators,2020

3.2. Gross Domestic Product

The think-tank organization named "Pew Research Center" located in Washington, the USA, made a projection study called "The Future of Global Muslim Population, Projections for 2010-2030" (TFGMP) on the Muslim population in the world and the future of this population. According to the results of the research of Pew Research Center, as of 2010, the Muslim population in the world is 1.6 billion people. It is estimated that this number will grow by 35% by 2030 and reach 2.2 billion people.

Table 4. GDP of some Islamic Countries (billion, \$)

Countries	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
UAE	35814	357,05	385,61	422,22	421,14	-
Iraq	17750	174,87	195,47	224,23	234,09	167,22
Saudia Arabia	654,27	644,94	688,59	786,52	792,97	700,12
Bahrain	31,13	32,25	35,42	37,65	38,57	-
Kuwait	114,57	109,42	120,71	140,65	134,76	-
Oman	68,40	65,48	70,60	79,28	76,98	-
Qatar	161,74	151,73	166,93	191,36	183,47	146,37

Source: The World Bank, 2020

However, in 2030, the Muslim population in 79 countries around the world is expected to reach the level of at least one million. In the research report published by the World Bank in 2015-2020 (<https://databank.worldbank.org/home.aspx>, 2020) GDP statistics of countries which has the highest Muslim population and participated in an easy visa issuance process for the last five years are shown in order to demonstrate that Azerbaijan can get a share from the Halal tourism market. It is worth noting that these countries have reached a total value of x trillion USD in 2019 GDP.

3.3. Number of Hotels in Baku and the Regions

There is an increase in the number of hotels that can serve tourists as a reflection of the developing tourism demand in the last five years, in Azerbaijan, which has a democratic management approach and 96% Muslim population. Since the subject of our research is Arab tourists, we have shown the hotels and destinations in the chart by their preferences. There are thirty-six five-star hotels and one hundred and seventeen four-star hotels in Baku, one five-star hotel and four four-star hotels in Guba, three five-star hotels in Shahdag, one four-star hotel, and two five-star hotels in Shamakhi, five five-star hotels, four four-star hotels in Gabala, two five-star hotels and seven four-star hotels in Sheki, two five-star hotels and five four-star hotels in Ganja. Unfortunately, there are no halal concept hotels neither in regions nor in Baku. In the analysis conducted to determine the number and qualifications of religious accommodation facilities serving Muslim tourists in Azerbaijan, no official statistics could be found.

Table 5. Number of four, five and halal hotels in Azerbaijan

Regions	5 star	4 star	Halal
Baku	36	117	-
Guba	1	4	-
Shahdagh	3	1	-
Shamakhy	2	1	-
Gabala	5	4	-
Sheki	2	7	-
Ganja	2	5	-

Source: Azerbaijan National Statistics Committee, 2020

Although the market formed by tourists who fulfill the duties required by the religion of Islam are the most important for halal hotels, unfortunately the hotel, which has the concept required by the religion of Islam, is still not available in the shown regions of Azerbaijan.

Conclusion and Suggestion

One of the fastest-growing types of tourism in the world today is Halal tourism. Aiming to meet the demands and expectations of Muslim tourists, this type of tourism is welcomed by both academics and practitioners. Since it is a new approach to tourism, studies have been carried out frequently for the last few years on the context of Halal tourism in the literature, how to name the accommodation businesses operating in this concept, and the minimum standards that these businesses should have. Although Azerbaijan gives great importance to the halal tourism market, unfortunately, no serious investments have been made in this regard so far. Considering the current situation of our country's tourism sector, it is inevitable that this market will hold an important place for the tourism sector of our country. Taking into account the increase in tourism expenditures and GDP of Muslims in the world every year, also, if we consider the number of Muslim tourists who prefer Azerbaijan and the tourism income obtained, it becomes necessary to give importance to this market. To get the share, first of all, it is significant to define the concept of halal hotels in the facilities regulation. In this way, standardization can be achieved before the state. In line with the increasing demand for Halal tourism around the world, it is important to increase conservative hotel businesses in Azerbaijan to meet this demand. Thanks to this increase, great contributions can be made to the national economy. In the promotional posters and films to be used in the target countries, halal concept hotel businesses can be emphasized. At the same time, various investment facilities that encourage this type of tourism can be provided to entrepreneurs.

When looking at the answers given to halal concept hotel preference criteria in the literature review, it reveals the importance level of the expectations of the consumers and the features that halal concept hotels should have. For example, "Having a sign showing the direction of Qibla in the rooms", "Having halal-certified food and beverage service", "Having a mosque in the hotel", "The toilet and bed directions not facing the qibla", "Alafranga toilets having a bidet faucet" and "Halal hotel certification".

Since the most important place of the halal tourism concept is a hotel holder, suggestions for the services that halal concept hotels can develop are given below:

- Putting the Quran, prayer rug, prayer cover, and rosary in every room,
- Ensuring that sports activities carried out within the enterprise are offered to male and female customers in separate venues,
- Ensuring that female and male holidaymakers receive services by the same gender,
- Providing Azan in the hotel,
- Ensuring attention to veiling in men and women pools,
- Accommodation businesses should pay attention to the selection of music suitable for their concepts and the sound level should not disturb the customers,
- Following the halal tourism concept, care should be taken that women beach is not visible to men,
- In order to prevent waste, meals should be prepared according to the number of customers and international tastes should be offered,
- Not providing drinks inside the hotel,
- Not including animal products that are considered haram by Muslims in the content of foods,
- Accommodation establishment personnel are required to dress according to Islamic norms.

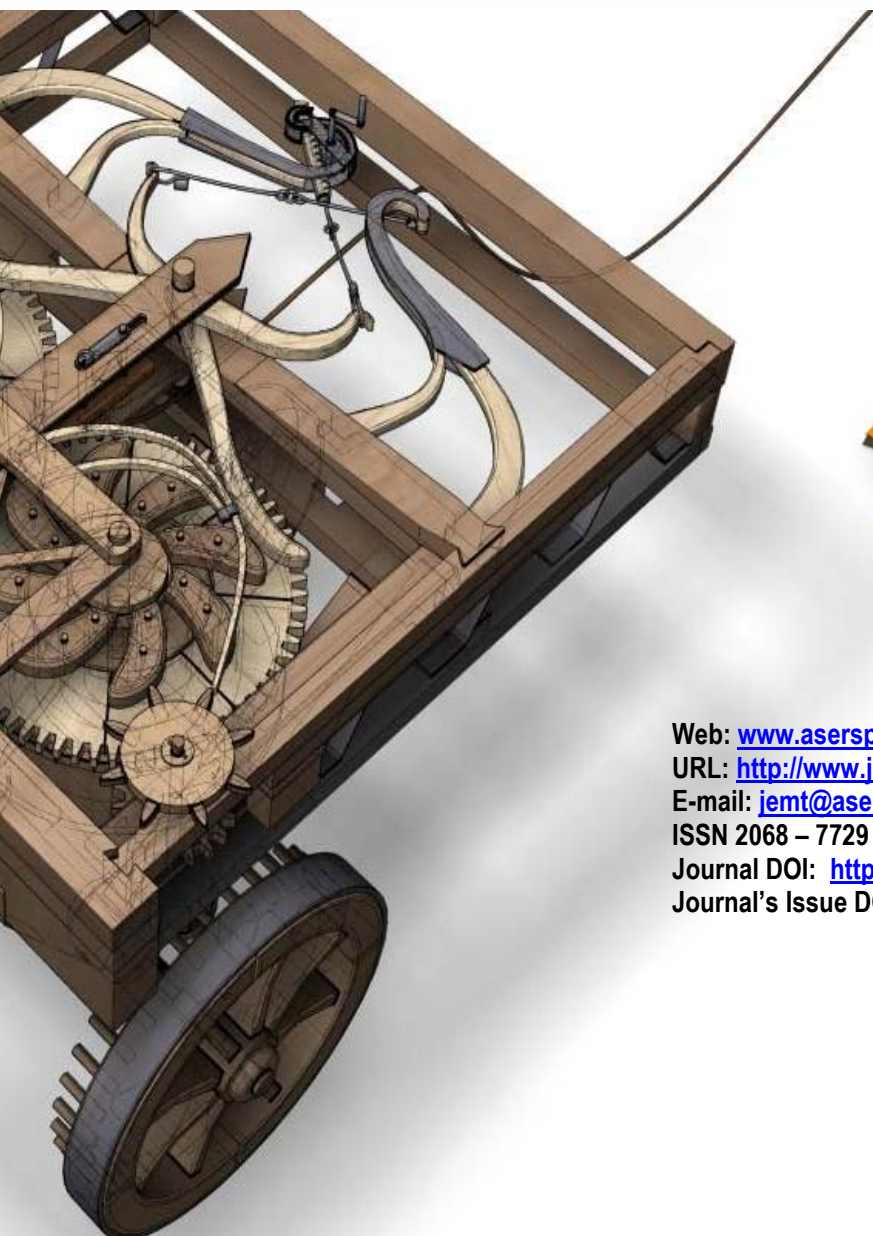
Generally speaking, it is seen that the hotels operating in Azerbaijan do not fully meet the needs and expectations of Muslim tourists. It is necessary to increase the efforts towards this market and Azerbaijan should enter the Halal tourism market.

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