



Does Community-Based Tourism Contribute to Halal Tourism from a Maqasid Al-Shariah Perspective? A Case Study of Maldives

Maqasid
Al-Shariah

Adakah Pelancongan Berasaskan Komuniti Menyumbang kepada Pelancongan Halal Menurut Perspektif Maqasid Al-Shariah? Kajian Kes di Maldives

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the presence of halal tourism in the Maldives through the lens of Maqasid Shariah. It seeks to link halal and community-based tourism for marketing, attracting more halal tourists through shared objectives and aspirations. Despite a Muslim-majority population, Maldives' tourism sometimes conflicts with Shariah law. The study employed a qualitative approach, specifically surveys were employed to evaluate the extent of adherence to the Maqasid Shariah objectives in tourist establishments, while interviews were conducted with experts in Islamic finance & tourism industry in Maldives. And literature review was used to investigate prior research conducted in other jurisdictions. The topic of halal tourism in the Maldives has elicited divergent perspectives. However, the implementation of community-based tourism (CBT) has the capacity to stimulate economic advancement and enhance the agency of Indigenous communities. The study revealed that CBT has a limited but some impact on the advancement of halal tourism.

Keywords: Halal Tourism, Community-Based Tourism, Maldives, Maqasid Shariah, Shariah Compliance

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan menyelidik kewujudan pelancongan halal di Maldives menurut perspektif Maqasid Syariah. Ia bertujuan menghubungkan pelancongan halal dan pelancongan berasaskan komuniti untuk pemasaran, menarik lebih ramai pelancong halal melalui objektif dan aspirasi yang sama. Walaupun penduduk Maldives secara majoritinya beragama Islam, pelancongan di Maldives kadangkala bercanggah dengan undang-undang Syariah. Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, khususnya tinjauan digunakan untuk





menilai sejauh mana pematuhan kepada objektif Maqasid Syariah di tempat penginapan pelancong, manakala temu bual dijalankan dengan pakar dalam industri kewangan & pelancongan Islam di Maldives. Manakala tinjauan literatur digunakan untuk mengkaji penyelidikan terdahulu yang dijalankan di negara lain. Topik pelancongan halal di Maldives telah menimbulkan perspektif yang berbeza. Walau bagaimanapun, pelaksanaan pelancongan berasaskan komuniti mempunyai keupayaan untuk merangsang kemajuan ekonomi dan meningkatkan komuniti masyarakat orang asli. Kajian itu mendedahkan bahawa pelancongan berasaskan komuniti mempunyai kesan terhad tetapi memberi sedikit impak kepada kemajuan pelancongan halal.

Kata Kunci: Pelancongan Halal, Pelancongan Berasaskan Komuniti, Maldives, Maqasid Syariah, Kepatuhan Syariah

INTRODUCTION

The concept of tourism is subject to varying interpretations, lacking a consensus on its definitive characterization. UNWTO defined Tourism as "Tourism comprises the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes" (Ugurlu, 2010). Tourism has emerged as a significant driver of economic growth, as evidenced by the substantial increase in the number of international travelers from 25 million in 1950 to 1.5 billion in 2019. This trend has led to a growing reliance on tourism in many economies. (Behsudi 2020) The Travel & Tourism sector contributed 7.6% to the worldwide Gross Domestic Product (GDP), indicating a 22% rise from the preceding year (World Travel & Tourism Council, n.d..)

The domain of halal tourism is experiencing a notable surge in growth within the worldwide tourism sector, representing a significant 13% of the total worth in the year 2019. In 2020, the global expenditure of tourists identifying as Muslim amounted to 192 billion dollars (Future Market Insights, 2022). According to Global Muslim Travel Index (2022), It is projected that the number of Muslim travelers will attain 140 million by the year 2023, and subsequently rebound to the 2019 level of 160 million by 2024.

Halal tourism refers to a specialized sector within the travel industry that caters to the specific religious needs and preferences of Muslim travelers. Various designations and categorizations have been employed to denote it, including "halal tourism," "Muslim Friendly Travel," and "halal travel" (CrescentRating, 2016). According to Akyol and Kilinc (2014), halal tourism, as a specialized business, encompasses halal hotels, halal transportation (halal airlines), halal food restaurants, halal tour packages, and halal financing.



Stretched across the Equator in the center of the Indian Ocean, lies the pristine tropical destination known as Republic of Maldives. In the eyes of visitors, Maldives is mostly known as "the tropical paradise" due to its exquisite natural beauty. The tourism industry holds a prominent position in the Maldives' economy, serving as the primary economic sector and making a substantial contribution to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). It is noteworthy that this industry alone accounts for more than one-third of the government's revenue. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a notable impact on the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Travel Trade Maldives , 2022)

The Maldives is a nation that adheres entirely to the Islamic faith, with its constitution mandating adherence to Islam as a prerequisite for citizenship and invalidating any legislation that contradicts Islamic law (Muneeza, Mustapha, Badeeu, & Nafiz, 2020). The Maldives is a nation where the populace adheres to Shariah principles in their daily routines. The customs and traditions of the people of Islamic faith exhibit discernible Islamic characteristics. Starting from the announcement of Adan to the provision of halal food and beverages throughout the country are indicative of the Islamic attributes of Maldives. The Maldives, with its Islamic orientation and abundance of halal offerings, is an ideal destination for accommodating the requirements of halal-oriented tourists.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Given that Maldives has a population that is entirely Muslim, and that the tourism sector holds great importance in the country, one may question why Maldives has yet to establish itself as a leading destination for halal tourism on a global scale. Despite being a nation with a 100% Muslim population, Maldives exhibits instances of non-Shariah compliant practices within its tourism sector, particularly in hotels and resorts. This includes the provision of non-halal consumables, such as alcohol and pork, to tourists and gender segregation not being observed.

However, understanding the infrastructure of tourism is crucial as the Maldives' tourism sector comprises diverse components that offer various products and services based on the component. Given that Maldives is a predominantly Muslim nation, it is imperative to establish halal tourism within its borders. The provision of Halal products is a crucial factor in maintaining the competitiveness of Maldives as a preferred destination for travelers seeking halal tourism. The continued usage of alcohol in hotels, restaurants, and other public venues can quickly taint the impression of halal tourism. If Maldives intends to establish a distinct identity in the global tourism industry, it is critical to comprehend how tourists perceive their destination and how this drives destination marketing (Sakib, 2019).

Therefore, it is fundamental to see whether halal tourism exist in Maldives. In order to gain a better understanding of Maldives tourism, it may be advantageous to examine it



through the lens of Maqasid Al Shariah as this may facilitate the comprehension of its presence, considering the industry's breadth and the diverse regulations imposed on tourist establishments. Furthermore, given that establishments such as guesthouses, hotels, and homestays fall under the purview of community-based tourism, it is imperative to ascertain the potential interplay between the objectives and goals of halal tourism and community-based tourism. Moreover, the existence of halal tourism in Maldives seems to be relatively unknown to both the local community and the tourism industry. Furthermore, with the increasing prevalence of halal tourism on a global scale, it is imperative for prospective travelers to the Maldives to ascertain the availability of halal tourism within the region. The implementation of Maqasid Al Shariah in the Maldives has the potential to attract a greater number of tourists who are interested in participating in halal tourism.

MOTIVATION OF THE STUDY

The slow growth and expansion of Islamic tourism in Maldives, despite tourism being the primary driver of economic growth, is a matter of concern given the country's status as a 100% Muslim nation. It is perplexing why Maldives has not emerged as a hub for halal tourism. In order to comprehensively address and gain insight into this matter, it is imperative to examine the current state of tourism in Maldives through the lens of Maqasid Al-Shariah. The primary objective of the paper is to analyze Maldivian Halal tourism through the lens of Maqasid Al-Shariah and assess the extent to which community-based tourism facilitates halal tourism. A comprehensive inquiry into this subject matter may facilitate our understanding of the practical implementation of Maqasid Al-Shariah in the travel and tourism sector. Furthermore, it may aid in the formulation of a proficient marketing strategy aimed at attracting a greater number of tourists to halal destinations.

The outcomes of this research are expected to exert a noteworthy influence on the existing halal tourism activities in Maldives. Limited research has been conducted on halal tourism in Maldives, and none of the existing studies have adopted a community-based tourism approach from the standpoint of Maqasid Al-Shariah. Thus, this research effectively addresses a significant gap in the existing literature. The collection of primary data for this study renders it potentially valuable as a source of background information for other researchers. The findings of this investigation may also be utilized by the tourism industry in the Maldives to enhance and fortify their market standing through the modification of their promotional strategies.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The following objectives have been developed for this study.

- a. Examine the existence of halal tourism in the Maldives when looked from a Maqasid Shariah perspective.
- b. Establish a connection between the objectives & goals of halal tourism and community-based tourism.



- c. Harnessing the connection between halal tourism and community-based tourism as a marketing technique to attract more tourists who engage in halal tourism.

RESEARCH QUESTION

The study attempts to answer the following questions.

- a. When looked from a Maqasid Al-Shariah perspective, does halal tourism exist in Maldives?
- b. Is there a connection between the objectives & goals of halal tourism and community-based tourism?
- c. If there is a connection between halal tourism and community-based tourism, can it be harnessed as a marketing technique to attract more tourists who engage in halal tourism?

This paper comprises a total of five sections. Section One provides an overview of the research study, including its background, significance, problem statement, research objectives, and research questions. Section two comprises a comprehensive literature review on halal tourism, Maqasid Shariah, and an overview of the tourism industry in Maldives. Section three delved into the research methodology, encompassing the research design, research approaches, and data collection techniques. The fourth section of the research presents an analysis of the findings and results obtained from the data gathered during the study. The final section provides a summary of the research's findings and recommendations, ultimately concluding the study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Halal Tourism

In the Quran, there are various surahs (chapters) that encourage mankind to take vacations. Allah says in Surah Al-Ankabut Chapter 29.

Translation (Sahih International): Say, [O Muhammad], Travel through the land and observe how He began creation. Then Allah will produce the final creation. Indeed Allah, over all things, is competent.

(Al-Ankabut, 29: 20)

(My Islam, n.d.) Muslims are encouraged to embark on journeys to various regions of the globe to witness and encounter the divine, augment their faith and understanding, and convey the teachings of Ibrah. Enhancing one's knowledge and scientific comprehension is imperative for the preservation and examination of the divine creations of God, as well as for the proficient communication of the principles of Islam (Supriadi, Rahadi, Tamrin, & Pauzi, 2022).



Teoman Duman (2012) described "Islamic tourism" as "the activities of Muslims traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for participation of those activities that originate from Islamic motivations which are not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited." According to Akyol and Kilinc (2014), there are 5 major components of Islamic Tourism.

Major Components of Islamic Tourism

Halal Hotels: Some of the main indicators of an Islamic hotel include: No alcohol, gambling etc.; Halal food only; Quran, prayer mats and arrows indicating the direction of Mecca in every room; Beds and toilets positioned so as not to face the direction of Mecca; Prayer rooms; Conservative staff dress; Islamic funding; Separate recreational facilities for men and women.

Halal Transport (Airlines): Major indicators for halal transport include: cleanliness; non-alcoholic drinks; and publications which are coherent with Islam.

Halal Food Premises: Foods that served in a restaurant have to be halal. All animals must be slaughtered according to Islamic principles. No alcoholic drinks should be served in the premise.

Halal Tour Packages: The content of the tour packages must be based on an Islamic themed. The Islamic tour packages include visits to the mosques, Islamic monuments and promote and event during the Ramadan.

Halal Finance: The financial resources of the hotel, restaurant, travel agency and the airlines have to be fit with Islamic principles. In general, Islamic finance requires participation in sharing the profit and loss among of all parties who involved in this finance enterprise. Islamic finance also prohibits interest.

Source: Adapted from Akyol and Kilinc, 2014.

(Source: Adapted from Akyol and Kilinc, 2014)

Maqasid Shariah and Halal Tourism

The significance of comprehending Maqasid Al-Shariah for mujtahids in interpreting and deducing Shariah and formulating resolutions to modern predicaments was underscored by Shaykh Muhammad Al-Tahir Ibn Ashur. The aforementioned statement outlines a systematic methodology and a set of fundamental guidelines that facilitate the application of ijihad in conflict resolution. This approach aims to prioritize human well-being while adhering to divine mandates (Kuwait Finance House, n.d.).

The Shariah aims to enhance the welfare of individuals, as is apparent from the teachings of the Quran and the Prophet Muhammad SAW (Zakiah & Fadilah, 2014). The Shari'ah seeks to establish a resilient community with a stable social structure, fostering well-being and deterring malevolent actions. By examining the Muslim community through the lens of an individual Muslim, one can get insight into the appropriate application of Islamic legislative standards to matters of public concern. Key attributes encompass the use of inhibitory measures, the consideration of uncontrolled interests, and the principle of licensure, which seldom pertains to people (Ashur, 2006). The



concepts of halal and haram pertain to both ethical and legal considerations, whereby the ethical dimension pertains to the conduct and customs of individuals and societies. It is recommended that suppliers, participants, and stakeholders in the market conduct themselves with integrity and prioritize the establishment of trust as a fundamental aspect of commercial activities. In accordance with Islamic principles, the act of acquiring wealth through indolent means, as well as the practices of hoarding and extortion, are strictly prohibited. Additionally, it is expected that vendors adhere to principles of transparency in their business dealings (Kamali, 2012).

The Shari'ah has implemented measures to safeguard and maintain the fundamental aspects of human existence, namely Daruriyyat, Hajjiyyat, and Tahsiniyyat (Zakiah & Fadilah, 2014). According to Azizah Musa (2021) Daruriyyat refer to the essential elements of an individual's religious and secular affairs that require protection. Hajjiyyat refer to essential needs that often pose challenges, whereas Tahsiniyyat denote desirable goals that contribute to personal growth and achievement. It is imperative that individuals or governing bodies undertake measures to safeguard them (Zakiah & Fadilah, 2014).

Tourism is categorized as a pilgrimage need for individual tourists and is considered a secondary need that can be fulfilled to achieve both mental and physical well-being. In addition, engaging in travel-related pursuits has the potential to reduce fatigue, anxiety, and psychological disorders stemming from demanding occupational responsibilities. The expansion of halal tourism is deemed a crucial necessity (dharuriyah) for the national economy, given its potential to enhance foreign currency earnings, which are of significant importance. The proficient elevation and management of a nation's foreign exchange reserves can ultimately lead to the enhancement of the populace's welfare (Ismanto, Ghofur, & Fakir, 2020).

Understanding the moral, cultural, and social dimensions of tourism in Muslim-majority countries requires a thorough examination of the connection between Islamic law and halal tourism. The significance of respecting and following the customs, traditions, and faiths of a certain region is given priority in Islamic law, which therefore impacts the evolution of halal tourism activities. This promotes culturally sensitive tourism which upholds Islamic principles and strives for social responsibility and fair treatment of individuals (Khoiri, 2024).

Ismanto, Ghofur, and Fatima (2020) assert in their work titled "Developing Halal Tourism from Maqasid Shariah Perspective" that Jaser Auda's paradigm shift aims to preserve religion (hifz al-din) by respecting the freedom of religion or belief, rather than solely protecting Muslims from apostasy (murtad). The concept of hifz al-nasl, which pertains



to the care of one's progeny, has been expanded to encompass the provision of care to one's extended family. The concept of "keeping mind" or *hifz al-aql* is characterized by the cultivation of a sound and robust mentality, the pursuit of knowledge through scientific inquiry, and the prioritization of a healthy mindset. The concept of honor, also known as *hifz al-irdh*, pertains to the safeguarding of human dignity and entitlements. *Hifz al-mal*, also known as property preservation, places emphasis on the enhancement of social welfare, economic development, social care, and development.

Objectives of Maqasid Shariah & Halal Tourism

The fulfilment of fundamental human needs is comprised of five distinct components, which are the objectives of Maqasid Shariah.

Protection & Preservation of Religion (Al-Din)

The most essential factor that a Muslim must protect is his or her religion. Every Muslim is obligated to defend their religion at all times. It is critical to have access to religious facilities or physical qualities such as prayer rooms, segregated tourism leisure facilities for men and women, and halal food services. (Fisol, Suid, Saufi, & Bahari, 2019) Marking the Qibla direction at tourist establishments, announcing Adan during prayer times, and supplying tourists with a prayer mat and Quran serve to protect religion. Additionally, having bidets in the toilet and flooring specifically made for ladies would contribute to religious freedom (Musa, 2021).

All Muslims have a religious responsibility to consume things that are permitted by Allah (God) and come under the jurisdiction of Shariah. Meanwhile, Shariah-compliant tourist goods are those that adhere to the directives of Almighty Allah (God) and Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) (Fisol, Suid, Saufi, & Bahari, 2019).

Protection & Preservation of Life (Al-Nafs)

It must be protected in all circumstances, and in this instance, there is no distinction between the life of rich and poor, leaders and followers, Muslims and non-Muslims. Life protection is equally vital and required for every human being and their community. (Musa 2021) The preservation of life ought to be considered for Muslim tourists traveling, which provides a safe journey encompassing transportation and lodging. As a result, offering takaful safety for Muslim travelers adds value as a life-saving measure (Fisol, et al. 2019).

Life protection is also highly significant in terms of hygiene, which affects human life duration. Tourist enterprises must be clean and orderly, and the hotel kitchen or cooking area has to be granted accreditation or grade A by the Health Department. Aspects of hygiene should be prioritized; premises operators must maintain cleanliness in the lodging, the environment, recreation spaces, and restrooms (Syahirah, Nor and Othman 2021).



Protection & Preservation of Intellect (Al-Aql)

In the Maqasid Shariah, intellect protection involves nurturing the mind by learning information and safeguarding it from anything detrimental. A Muslim is urged to implement the notion of intellectual preservation or common sense throughout their daily life; so, every tourist experience should allow a tourist to verify that this notion is applied (Syahirah, Nor, & Othman, 2021).

Allah SWT has commanded that everyone keep their minds away from any form of wrongdoing or object that might create devastation. Islam provides adherents with the room and freedom to express their thoughts, and it tolerates differing viewpoints and perspectives as instructed by the Qur'an and Sunnah. The mind requires security protection from everything that might impair intelligence and brain function. This includes the use of alcohol or other comparable chemicals that might impair brain function (Musa, 2021).

Traveling without limitations and regulations would also have an impact on the mental and physical well-being of an individual, such as tourism that offers alcoholic beverages to Muslim tourists. Thus, having Shariah-compliant hotels that serve or consume non-alcohol on the grounds, including Islamic dress requirements, prohibition of alcohol and gambling, and provision of Islamic entertainments, is necessary to maintain intellect (Fisol, Suid, Saufi, & Bahari, 2019).

Protection & Preservation of Lineage (Al-Nasl)

Islam places a great value on a person's dignity and emphasizes the need of preserving their dignity. Protecting dignity includes the right of persons to confidentiality as well as the right not to reveal or accuse others of poor or unethical actions that may harm one's dignity and lineage (Musa, 2021). Adultery may result in the conception of offspring out of wedlock. As a result, it is apparent that the preservation of progeny is a key factor to consider, such as the availability of hotels with separate leisure facilities for men and women, having swimming pool facilities for women exclusively, and others (Fisol, Suid, Saufi, & Bahari, 2019).

Providing a marriage certificate or proof of marriage is a necessary need in the check-in process that would guarantee that non-halal activities such as fornication and adultery are restricted within the facility (Musa, 2021). Countries such as Israel, Pakistan, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, and Turkey have a distinct, more respectful attitude towards the institution of the family than the rest of the world. As a result, the moral or religious grounds of such governments forbid couples that lack a document proving their marriage from settling in hotels or inns (SMAPSE Education, 2021).



Protection & Preservation of Wealth (Al-Mal)

While building their safety and security systems, tourist facilities are typically required to adhere to particular municipal requirements. The presence of well-equipped fire protection measures as well as an emergency procedure in compliance with local legislation is critical. Establishments are required to conduct in-house training on fire, as well as emergency management and planning to train their personnel concerning how to resolve accidents, catastrophes, or crimes in this respect. Some establishments implement a security and safety system that includes an emergency lighting system, a 24-hour security personnel, regular screening of the tourist facility's safety and security system, closed-circuit television systems (CCTVs), and the use of a guest key to access elevators to guest floors. These general safety and security precautions implemented by tourism facilities are in conformity with the Maqasid al-Shari'ah, which recognizes the importance of property protection and the idea of private property. According to Muslim jurists, wealth may be protected through securing ownership, acquiring and developing it, protecting it from destruction, circulating it, and protecting its values (Zakiah & Fadilah, 2014). It is critical to safeguard employees and tourists from all sorts of tyranny, extortion, scams, corruption, monopolistic dominance, illicit activity, counterfeit intellectual property, manipulation of markets, and any other form of wrongdoing or harm done to others (Syahirah, Nor, & Othman, 2021).

The preservation of wealth is necessary for sustaining profit with halal services and obtain Allah SWT's blessings. With the creation of wealth and earnings from halal tourism, the value of paid zakat will rise, and the proceeds will be utilized to distribute to the needy and impoverished society to close the gap between rich and poor, for the public interest (*maslahah*). One of the primary goals (*maqasid*) is public welfare (*maslahah*). As a result, the preservation of wealth is to guarantee that it is distributed evenly among members of society (Fisol, Suid, Saufi, & Bahari, 2019).

Community-Based Tourism

The impact of tourism on communities is multifaceted, encompassing both favorable and unfavorable outcomes. To optimize the economic benefits of tourism, it is imperative to foster community involvement and participation. Indigenous communities, who are predominantly low-income, have endeavored to establish a means of communication with governing bodies, yet frequently experience exclusion. The concept of Community-Based Tourism (CBT) emerged during the 1970s with the aim of facilitating communication between marginalized community members and the governing bodies (Giampiccoli, Mtapuri, & Muhsin, 2020). CBT is a form of tourism that places significant emphasis on local service providers and suppliers and is bolstered by the support of communities and local government agencies (Ahmed, 2018).

CBT offers an immersive encounter with Indigenous customs and practices, enabling rural, financially disadvantaged, or socioeconomically challenged populations to take complete ownership of the localized tourism sector. Additionally, it guarantees that the financial profits accrue to the local populace and are retained within the vicinity. The



primary goal of CBT is long-term local development, with benefits flowing to a wide range of community members not only entrepreneurs (Giampiccoli, Mtapuri, & Muhsin, 2020). Scheyvens (1999), posits that the primary objective of Community Tourism is to enhance the destination community's well-being across four dimensions, namely economic, psychological, social, and political. The concept of economic empowerment is associated with the attainment of long-term economic benefits, psychological empowerment, enhancement of self-esteem, social empowerment is viewed as a mechanism for maintaining societal equilibrium. Political empowerment, on the other hand, is concerned with the consideration of community opinions and concerns.

Tourism in Maldives

The Maldives is comprised of 1190 islands, which are distributed across 26 geographical atolls, spanning an expanse of 500 miles by 75 miles (South Pacific Island Travel, n.d.). The nation encompasses a maritime expanse spanning 754 kilometers in length and 118 kilometers in width, featuring a total of 1192 islands, with a relatively minor fraction of them being inhabited (Henderson, 2008). Merely 200 of the islands are inhabited, with a limited number of resorts situated on specific atolls, while certain islands are allocated for industrial and agricultural purposes (Maldives The Sunny Side of Life, n.d.).

With the beginning of tourism industry in Maldives in 1970's, it now serves as the primary source of inflow of foreign currency into the nation and the economic growth of Maldives is primarily driven by the tourism sector (Ministry of Tourism, n.d.). With the growth of tourism over the years, tourists now have more options than ever, from club-like resorts to stylish boutique resorts, from those that cater to families to those that are adults-only, Liveaboards that provide visitors the chance to see more of the Maldives by providing specialized surf and dive cruises or leisurely cruises to different atolls and a selection of hotels of varied sizes and qualities are available for visitors to Male, the capital city of the Maldives. In addition, staying at a guesthouse in the Maldives gives a unique experience. The visitor will be staying in a nearby town, giving you the opportunity to interact with locals and learn about their culture. (Maldives The Sunny Side of Life, n.d.) Yatch Marina, Bareboat and Homestay are other tourist facilities available in Maldives (Ministry of Tourism, n.d.).

Maldives is renowned for its one-island one-resort approach, which is attributed to its distinctive geographical configuration. As a result, the tourism sector in Maldives can be categorized into two distinct categories: resort-based tourism, which is characterized by luxurious amenities and services, and local tourism, also referred to as community-based tourism. The trademark of tourist resorts in the Maldives is the presence of a hotel situated on a separate island, which is exclusively occupied by tourists and staff members, with no local residents or dwellings. Apart from resorts, tourist facilities such as Live-Aboard, Yacht Marina, and Bareboat are not considered as part of local tourism. With respect to regulations and guidelines, disparities exist between the two categories of tourism.



The local tourism sector is commonly known as the "Guesthouse Industry," despite the fact that it is essentially a community-based industry. The Maldives' tourist guest house industry, which is based on community-based tourism (CBT), has experienced significant growth over the past decade (Franklin n.d.). Under this category encompasses guesthouses, hotels, and homestays. As per the Maldives Tourism Act, a Tourist Guesthouse or Hotel is a facility, distinct from a tourist resort or hotel, that has been constructed in adherence to the standards established by the Ministry of Tourism. Its primary function is to offer tourists either board and lodging or solely lodging, for which a predetermined rate per day of stay is charged. (Maldives Tourism Act) Homestay is a prevalent form of tourism wherein travelers reside in the same dwelling as the locals at their place of residence. Currently, the Maldives boasts a total of 838 guesthouses, 13 hotels, and 5 homestays located throughout its 20 atolls. Approximately 38% of the guesthouses and hotels are situated in the Kaafu atolls (Ministry of Tourism, 2023).

As per the regulations outlined in the Maldivian Law No: 4/1975, specifically the Import Prohibition Act, the importation of liquor and alcoholic products, as well as pork and its by-products, is strictly prohibited without prior approval. Therefore, it is recommended by Maldives Customs Services to refrain from procuring liquor and alcoholic commodities during the flight or at duty-free shops whilst enroute to the Maldives, as these items will be seized upon arrival at the airport. Nonetheless, alcoholic beverages such as liquor and beer are readily accessible at all tourist resorts. The importation of said items is subject to a special license that must be obtained from the Ministry of Economic Development prior to their importation. Items that are strictly prohibited include narcotics and psychotropic substances, pornographic material, and idols intended for worship. (Maldives Customs Service) In addition, it is advisable for tourists to dress modestly and refrain from engaging in public displays of affection as a sign of deference to the customary practices, regulations, and religious beliefs of the host community during their stay on the nearby isles.

The Green Tax is a tax that is levied on tourists who choose to stay in various types of accommodations in the Maldives, including tourist resorts, integrated tourist resorts, tourist hotels, resort hotels, hotels, tourist vessels, and tourist guesthouses. Integrated tourist resorts, resort hotels, and other tourist destinations will be required to pay green tax at a cost of \$6 USD each day of stay. A green tax of \$6 USD per day of stay is levied on visitors who stay in tourist guesthouses and hotels that are open on inhabited islands and have more than 50 registered rooms. Green tax is 3 USD per day of stay for visitors who stay in hotels & guesthouses catering to tourists on inhabited islands that have 50 or fewer registered rooms.

Apart from the regulatory framework that governs guesthouses and hotels, the Ministry of Tourism mandates that these entities furnish an emergency plan. Furthermore, the ministry has developed guidelines and standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the tourism industry in the post-Covid-19 era, as well as regulations pertaining to the preservation and safeguarding of the environment within the tourism sector. The source cited is from the Ministry of Tourism, with no specified date (Ministry of Tourism, n.d.).



As per the Strategic Action Plan 2019-2023 of the Maldivian government, the objective is to provide two halal tourism-oriented products and/or amenities by the year 2023. The strategy involves devising policies, regulations, and rules that align with Islamic principles to capitalize on the halal tourism sector by the same year. Additionally, the plan entails the identification of a particular island for halal tourism and the allocation of at least one island for this purpose during the tourism island bidding process (The Presidents Office).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This research employs a qualitative methodology, relying on a combination of past literature, surveys and interviews to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. Qualitative research is a methodology employed to comprehend individuals' beliefs, experiences, attitudes, behavior, and interactions. This approach is progressively being incorporated into intervention studies (Pathak, Jena, & Vibha Pathak, 2013).

The survey focused on the community-based tourism sector and was conducted by using questionnaires. During the questionnaire design process, the primary objective was to formulate questions that are precise and targeted to draw out pertinent responses, while avoiding the collection of outside the scope information that is not relevant to the research. The majority of questionnaires relied on Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs) with intuitive terminology to ensure that all participants comprehended the questions with ease.

The questionnaire was designed based on secondary source data to ensure that it aligns with the research's scope and objectives. Therefore, the questions facilitate to ascertain the existence of halal tourism in the Maldives and to evaluate the societal benefits that arise from the local tourism or Community-Based tourism. The evaluation of the existence of halal tourism in the Maldives was conducted through reviewing the adherence of the products and services offered by tourist establishments to Shariah principles. The questionnaire was divided into three sections based on the preceding parameters: Overview of the Establishment, Shariah Compliance of the Establishment and Benefits to the community.

To examine the presence of halal tourism through the lens of Maqasid Shariah, questionnaire was utilized to assess the extent to which establishments fulfilled the five objectives of Maqasid Shariah: Preservation and Protection of Religion, Preservation and Protection of Life, Preservation and Protection of Wealth, Preservation and Protection of Intellect, and Preservation and Protection of Lineage. Henceforth, the subsequent criteria are employed to assess the degree to which the establishments meet each of the objectives of Maqasid Shariah.

0 - 25%: Low Level of Compliance from Maqasid Shariah Perspective



- 26 - 50%: Moderate Level of Compliance from Maqasid Shariah Perspective
- 51 - 75%: High Level of Compliance from Maqasid Shariah Perspective
- 76 - 100%: Excellent Level of Compliance from Maqasid Shariah Perspective

Furthermore, comprehensive internet-based interviews were carried out with individuals maintaining specialized knowledge in the fields of Islamic finance and the tourism industry in the Maldives. During the interview process, the participants were presented with a combination of structured and semi-structured open-ended questions to facilitate a more comprehensive and intricate response. The questions were designed to emphasize the Community-based tourism of Maldives and its advantages to the community, Maqasid Shariah & halal tourism, and the governance & compliance of the tourism industry of Maldives.

Due to the diverse backgrounds of the participants, there was a variance in their level of familiarity with the topic of the research. Therefore, the questions were unstructured open-ended and different respondents were presented with varying sets of questions tailored to their respective expertise and experience. The questions have been categorized according to the research question and common themes for the purpose of conducting the analysis.

a. Existence of halal tourism in Maldives from a Maqasid Shariah perspective:

- Concept of Maqasid Shariah
- Halal tourism from your perspective
- How Maqasid Shariah can be applied to halal tourism?
- Existence of halal tourism in Maldives?
- While Maldives is 100% Muslim country, why the growth & expansion of halal tourism is slow in Maldives and how to tackle the issues.
- Thoughts on having a resort to promote halal tourism.
- Governance of halal tourism

b. Connection between objectives & goals of halal tourism and community-based tourism

- What is community-based tourism (CBT)?
- Do objectives of CBT align with objectives of Maqasid Shariah?
- Do you believe that CBT in Maldives is an economic driver and help to improve wellbeing of society?
- What is Green Tax?

c. Existence of halal tourism from a Maqasid Shariah perspective, used as a marketing technique.

- Do you believe that if we market Maldives as a halal destination, it will increase tourist arrivals?



Sampling Population

The survey was disseminated via an online platform to tourist establishments, using contact information publicly available from the Ministry of Tourism. Obtained a sample size of 60 participants, exceeding the intended target of 50 responses by 120%. It is noteworthy that the survey targeted the local tourism segment, which comprises Guesthouses, Hotels, and Homestays, rather than encompassing the entirety of the industry.

At the outset, my aim was to conduct a total of five interviews with professionals holding expertise in Islamic finance and the tourism industry of Maldives. However, I was only able to successfully conduct three interviews. The participants of the study comprise of the subsequent individuals.

- a. Dr. Aishath Muneeza - Expert of Islamic Finance
- b. Mr. Ali Shinan – Deputy Director General of Ministry of Tourism of Maldives
- c. Dr. Hussein Sunny Umar – Founder of Maldives Halal Travel (MHT)

REPORT AND RESULT ANALYSIS

Findings and Analysis for Survey

The study centered on the local tourism sector in the Maldives, Guesthouses, Hotels & Homestay, where guesthouses constituted the majority of the responses, comprising 92% of the total responses. Conversely, no response was received from homestays. The quantity of rooms per establishment exhibited considerable variation, ranging from a minimum of one to a maximum of forty-one. The observed variability can be ascribed to geographical factors, whereby certain inhabited islands exhibit relatively diminutive sizes, thereby obviating the necessity for extensive tourist facilities.

Figure 2: Geographical Location of Tourist Establishments as Reported by Respondents

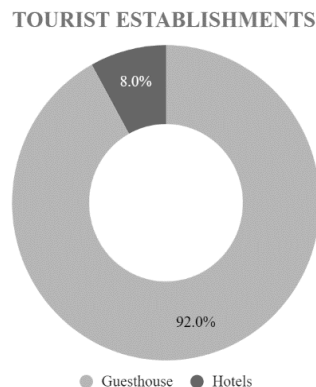
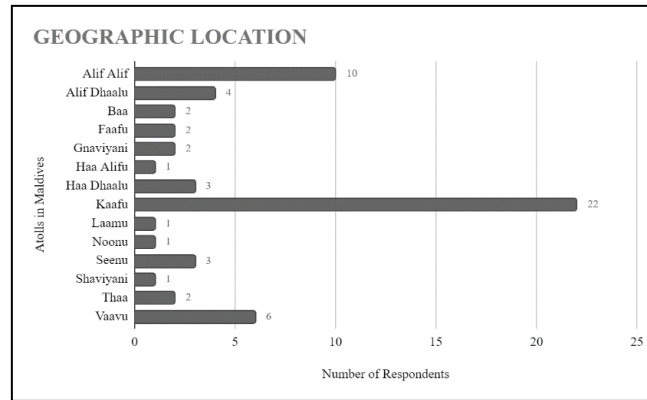


Figure 3: Distribution of Respondents by Tourist Establishment Type



For further analysis, the survey data has been categorized according to the five objectives of Maqasid Shariah, and the degree of adherence has been computed this to ascertain the existence and degree of prevalence of halal tourism within the Maldives.

Protection & Preservation of Life

Table 1: Summarized Survey Data for Protection & Preservation of Life

Questions	No. of 'Yes' Responses	Pct
If there a pool, is a lifeguard placed near the pool?	3	100%
Encourage tourists to have Takaful coverage for their travel	21	35%
Have a procedure for Emergency Management & Planning?	57	95%
Are the staff trained for emergency cases (e.g., Fire or Accidents)	54	90%
Are there emergency fire exits in the establishment?	57	95%
Encourages to preserve the environment?	41	68%
AVERAGE	39	81%

The survey found that only 5% of establishments had a pool within their premises, and all these establishments have a lifeguard stationed in proximity. A mere 35% of tourist establishments actively promote Takaful coverage to their guests. According to the data, a significant proportion of establishments, ranging from 90% to 95%, have implemented the requisite measures to address emergency situations. A majority of 68% of the establishments exhibit an advocacy towards promoting preservation of the environment.



Despite the excellent compliance level achieved for this objective, 81%, there exists a prospect for these establishments to give precedence to the safety & welfare of their patrons by implementing measures to enhance awareness and adoption of the coverage. Preserving the sanctity of life is a crucial imperative that warrants utmost protection, encompassing the environment. The Ministry of Tourism has implemented regulatory measures & directives, which encompass the safety of the tourist as well as the environment, however, the evaluation of its implementation within a pragmatic framework holds significant importance.

Protection & Preservation of Intellect

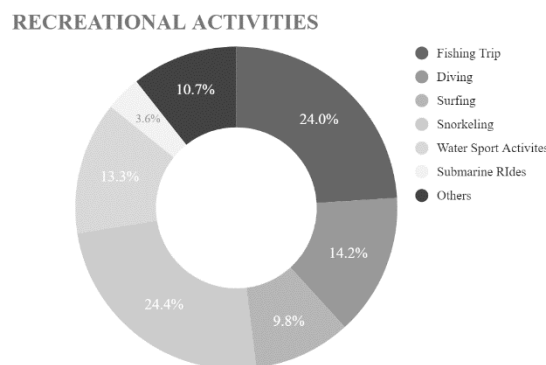
Table 2: Summarized Survey Data for Protection & Preservation of Intellect

Questions	No. of 'No' Responses	Pct
Provide non-halal beverages (eg: alcohol)	58	97%
Have a casino?	59	98%
Have a Night Club?	60	100%
Other non-halal recreational activities	60	100%
AVERAGE	30	99%

The data suggests that 98% of the establishments do not offer gambling services, while 97% refrain from serving non-halal beverages. The Maldivian constitution prohibits activities that are deemed non-compliant with Sharia law, including but not limited to gambling, drug use, and alcohol consumption on inhabited islands.

The Maldives boasts a variety of recreational activities that are both refreshing and intellectually stimulating, credits to its unique geographical features. Figure 2 shows some of the activities that can be enjoyed at the establishments.

Figure 4: Recreational Activities Offered by Tourist Establishments





While it is theoretically expected that the level of adherence to Shariah principles for Objective 2 should be optimal at 100%, it is currently at 99%. One possible explanation may be attributed to insufficient regulatory enforcement by governing bodies, leading to ineffective governance of establishments.

Protection & Preservation of Lineage

Table 3: Summarized Survey Data for Protection & Preservation of Lineage

Question	No. of 'Yes' Responses	Pct
A designated beach for tourists separately from locals	45	75%
Separated pool facilities for men & women	3	5%
Segregated floors for men & women	2	3%
Proof of Marriage required for tourists?	16	27%
Are the tourists encouraged to dress conservatively when mingling with locals?	34	57%
Are the staff encouraged to dress conservatively?	41	68%
Are the tourists encouraged to avoid public display of affection when visiting local islands?	9	52%
<u>AVERAGE</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>41%</u>

According to the survey results, a notable proportion of hospitality establishments, specifically 27%, require tourists to provide proof of their marital status during the check-in process. The results of the survey revealed that a significant proportion of respondents, specifically 75%, reported the existence of a designated beach area for tourists. However, a relatively small percentage, namely 5%, indicated the presence of segregated pool facilities for males and females. Moreover, a majority of 57% of the participants exhibited a proclivity towards advocating conservative clothing among tourists, while 68% of the respondents manifested a preference for promoting conservative attire among staff members. Furthermore, 52% of the participants expressed their inclination towards discouraging public displays of affection among tourists.

Protection & preservation of one's ancestral line encompasses not only the avoidance of extramarital affairs but also refraining from circumstances that may potentially result in such illicit sexual behavior. The data shows the least compliance, 41%, among all for this object. The observed low percentage may be attributed to the industry's hesitancy to enforce the aforementioned rule, given the Maldives' reliance on the western market for tourism and enforcement of said rule could potentially have adverse effects on the influx of tourists. However, to enforce Shariah compliance in the tourism industry, this is an important aspect to consider. Another reason for this may be due to the scale of the establishments and the financial challenges the operators will face in the provision of segregated facilities within the premises. It is noteworthy that individuals pursuing halal



tourism may encounter a moderate level of compliance as a potential concern. Thus, it is necessitated for the tourism sector of Maldives to explore alternative options to cater to the needs of travelers who desire segregation.

Protection & Preservation of Wealth

Table 4: Summarized Survey Data for Protection & Preservation of Wealth

Question	No. of 'Yes' Responses	Pct
Is there a safe/vault in place of accommodation?	54	90%
Are there security cameras placed within the establishment?	48	80%
Are there security cameras placed outside of the establishment?	47	78%
Is there a 24-hours security guard placed at the establishment?	28	47%
Do you provide key cards to access their accommodation?	40	67%
Have created more job opportunities for the locals on the island?	37	62%
Helps to improve the local's standard of life?	41	68%
Is an economical driver? (e.g., Generate income for the local economic growth)	40	67%
Does the establishment pay Zakat or Sadaqat?	51	85%
AVERAGE	43	71%

The data indicates that a majority of establishments, 90%, have implemented a safe or vault for the protection of guests' belongings. And, a substantial proportion of these facilities, approximately 67%, offer key cards as a means of access control. Further, a percentage, ranging from 78% to 80%, have installed security cameras to monitor the premises. Nearly half of the establishments surveyed have employed a security guard to provide an additional layer of protection for guests. Furthermore, a majority of 67% of participants hold the belief that their establishment functions as a driver for economic growth and 62% of respondents have created employment opportunities, while 68% have contributed to an improvement in the quality of life for the residents. Also, a significant majority of 85% have reported their voluntary contributions towards Zakat or Sadaqah.

The safeguarding and preservation of wealth is a crucial aspect of halal tourism, which can be accomplished through measures such as protecting the financial assets of tourists, as well as engaging in activities related to acquisition, cultivation, and circulation. The allocation of wealth generated should be distributed equitably towards the improvement of underprivileged individuals within society or communal advantages. One of the objectives of Green Tax is to use it for development initiatives aimed at improving the conditions of inhabited islands. In comparison to the overarching goal of CBT is community improvement, the observed compliance rate of 71% can be considered relatively low.



Protection & Preservation of Wealth

Table 5: Summarized Survey Data for Protection & Preservation of Religion

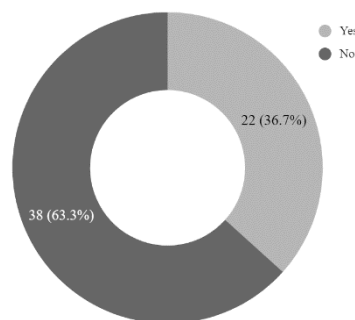
Question	No. of 'Yes' Responses	Pct
Do you have applied for any funding? If yes, was the financial institution a Shariah compliant institution	4	18%
Qibla marked in the place of accommodation (Rooms)	24	40%
Announce Adan during prayer times	28	47%
Bidet/Muslim Showers in the bathroom	59	98%
Provide Quran for your tourists	21	35%
Provide Praying Mats for your tourists	30	50%
Halal food available from the establishment/island	58	97%
Ramadan Services during the month of Ramadan	57	95%
Non-Halal beverages & non-Halal food	88	98%
Do the tourists respect local tradition, customs, laws, and faiths at all times when visiting local islands?	36	60%
AVERAGE	40	64%

This particular objective encompasses a multitude of components that have been integrated within the objectives mentioned earlier. Thus, I have attempted to restrict the components to those that have not been relied upon in other sections.

According to the data, a mere 37% of the entire 60 establishments have completed the submission of their funding applications, while a modest 18% have made efforts to secure financing from a Shariah-compliant financial institution.

Figure 5: Respondents Application for Funding

FUNDING APPLICATION FOR ESTABLISHMENTS



Ninety-five percent of the features offered by the surveyed facilities include Bidet or Muslim showers, while 47% of them announce Adan. Additionally, 40% of the facilities



have Qibla marked, 35% provide Quran, and 50% offer prayer mats. Additional research is required to ascertain the underlying reason for the decreased proportion. Nevertheless, it is plausible that digitalization may be a contributing factor, as it enables individuals to orient themselves towards the Qibla and utilize software that streamlines the recitation of Adan at designated prayer intervals. Nevertheless, the announcing of Adan during prayer times continues to be a noteworthy aspect of the daily regimen of Maldivian citizens.

The data demonstrated that a significant majority of the participants, specifically 97%, reported the presence of halal food options in various establishments or islands. Conversely, a slightly higher percentage of 98% of the respondents reported the absence of non-halal food and beverages. Furthermore, a significant majority of 95% of respondents reported the availability of Ramadan services during the month of Ramadan. The provision of non-halal food and beverages necessitates the acquisition of a specialized license and is restricted to resort establishments. A majority of establishments, specifically 60%, provided a positive response when queried about the level of adherence exhibited by tourists towards local customs, traditions, laws, and religious beliefs.

As adherents of Islam, it is entrusted upon us to safeguard our faith at all times, including within the context of the tourism industry. The protection of religion encompasses not only the operational and financial considerations of the institution, but also extends to the interior design of the establishment. The compliance rate associated with this objective is 64% suggesting a significant degree of adherence to the established standards. Given that the survey included basic factors, it can be inferred that the industry should exhibit a higher level of compliance.

Table 6: Compliance Level of the Tourism Industry

No.	Objectives of Maqasid Shariah	Pct	Level of Compliance
1	Protection & Preservation of Life (Al-Nafs)	81%	Excellent
2	Protection & Preservation of Intellect (Al-Aql)	99%	Excellent
3	Protection & Preservation of Lineage (Al-Nasl)	41%	Moderate
4	Protection & Preservation of Wealth (Al-Mal)	71%	High
5	Protection & Preservation of Religion (Al-Din)	64%	High
AVERAGE		71%	High

As per the results of the survey, the degree of adherence to Maqasid Shariah within the community-based tourism sector of Maldives stands at 71%. Given that Maldives is a nation with a predominantly Muslim population, it is noteworthy that Community-Based Tourism (CBT) initiatives do not engage in activities that are non-compliant with Shariah law, in contrast to resort tourism. Consequently, it is anticipated that the Islamic banking system in Maldives adheres entirely to the principles of Shariah. The analysis of the data



and the evaluation of the Shariah compliance criteria reveal the presence of halal tourism in Maldives. However, it is noteworthy that only 71% of the community-based tourism sector aligns with the Maqasid Shariah objectives.

Findings and Analysis for Interviews

Due to the diverse backgrounds of the participants, there was a variance in their level of familiarity with the topic of the research. Therefore, the questions were unstructured open-ended and different respondents were presented with varying sets of questions tailored to their respective expertise and experience. The questions have been categorized according to the research question and common themes for the purpose of conducting the analysis.

Existence of Halal tourism in Maldives from a Maqasid Shariah perspective

To ascertain the presence of halal tourism in Maldives, it was imperative to comprehend the level of familiarity that the respondents retained with respect to halal tourism and Maqasid Shariah. One opponent claims that the ultimate goal of Islamic law is Maqasid Shariah, which states that any deed or practice that benefits humanity is a Maqasid and any deed or practice that is harmful is forbidden. By evaluating their influence and deciding if they accord with the halal or haram perspective, things are evaluated for permissibility.

Another respondent clarified that halal tourism is a type of travel that abides by the rules of Shariah, such as partaking in allowed activities and avoiding those that are regarded as Haram. Cohabitation is an undesirable activity that goes against the larger Maqasid notion of adultery; hence accommodations must forbid it. She said that compared to earlier decades, the application of Maqasid Shariah to Islamic tourism now has a wider reach and is of higher significance.

Regarding the existence of halal tourism in Maldives, participants reached a consensus that tourism activities within local communities are deemed halal in theory, given that Maldives is a nation with a Muslim population of 100% and its legal system prohibits any activities that are non-compliant with Shariah law, including the importation and consumption of non-halal food and beverage. And all participants agreed that certain aspects of Maldives' tourism industry are not fully compliant with Shariah principles. The majority of respondents claimed that while it is theoretically expected for tourism in Maldives to adhere to halal principles, this is not necessarily reflected in practice. One of the respondents emphasized that despite the requirement of obtaining a special license and adhering to specific criteria for handling non-halal food and beverage, the majority of resorts do not comply with halal food regulations due to the limited number of Muslim visitors. Another participant has indicated that the degree of adherence to Shariah principles within the tourism sector is contingent upon the criteria employed to assess compliance. The individual observed that the tourism sector would be deemed shariah compliant if the criterion is restricted to halal food and beverages. However, if the criteria extend beyond this, such as engaging in social interactions with individuals



of the same or opposite gender outside of the context of marriage, it would be considered Shariah non-compliant. The individual expressed a dissenting viewpoint regarding the permissibility of serving alcoholic beverages in safaris, even for non-Muslim tourists, who are residing in the inhabited islands. Because once an individual consumes alcohol, it becomes difficult to prevent any subsequent criminal behavior or negative consequences that may arise. She further argued that the absence of adequate enforcement measures, it becomes challenging to ascertain whether guesthouses are promoting guest house tourism in line with the intended objectives.

With respect to the governance of the tourism industry in Maldives, it was disclosed that the Ministry of Tourism attempts to uphold the quality assurance of establishments through annual routine inspections to the best of their ability. However, this process is constrained by a shortage of staff. And that the mandate of the police encompasses the governance and regulation of upholding Islamic principles within the community. An additional participant observed that the Ministry of Tourism or the Tourism Promotion Board lacks adequate personnel, data, and infrastructure to effectively oversee and govern the tourism sector.

Connection between objectives & goals of halal tourism and community-based tourism (CBT)

According to a participant's account, community-based tourism is an emerging practice in Maldives that entails the creation of tourism ventures within local communities. In Maldives, community-based tourism presents two distinct options for lodging establishments, namely guesthouses and hotels. Community-based tourism is a type of tourism that involves the active involvement of local communities in the provision of hospitality and tourism services to visitors, both domestic and international. The introduction of Community-based Tourism in the Maldives has resulted in the flourishing of livelihoods within local communities. Observing the islands where community-based tourism, guest houses, or hotels are being established provides insight into the level of development achieved in comparison to other local islands. Certainly. The aforementioned initiative has facilitated the attainment of financial autonomy and prosperity among the indigenous populace residing in the Maldives. It is noteworthy that this undertaking is in consonance with the Maqasid Shariah, particularly in terms of the objective of safeguarding and preserving wealth.

Conversely, an alternative participant holds a divergent viewpoint. The speaker outlined that while offering economic and financial prospects to the community may be beneficial, the adverse consequences of such opportunities may surpass our comprehension. The respondent elaborated that additional investigation is required to thoroughly comprehend the effects of tourism. However, from her vantage point, one of the outcomes is the gradual loss of Islamic cultural values. The author observed that the issue at hand does not pertain to the nature of tourism itself, but rather to the inadequate enforcement of relevant legislation.



When queried about their perceptions regarding the potential of community-based tourism to serve as an economic driver and enhance societal welfare, a respondent remarked that recent research indicates that 70% of guesthouse enterprises are experiencing limited commercial success, potentially attributable to inadequate knowledge of fundamental business, marketing, or sales principles. A dissenting viewpoint was expressed by a participant who argued that the guesthouse sector serves as a significant catalyst for the economy due to its possession of the second highest number of beds in the country. This sector also contributes to the green tax and enhances the value of land real estate. Notwithstanding the potential benefits of guest house tourism, certain concerns must be taken into account, including the carrying capacity of the islands and associated infrastructure.

Existence of Halal tourism from a Maqasid Shariah perspective, used as a marketing technique

During the discourse on halal tourism, one of the respondents emphasized that in the year 2019, the quantity of visitors to Maldives was documented to be below 50,000. And the Maldives has experienced a gradual increase in tourist arrivals, with the figure reaching 90,000, due to the collaborative efforts of the Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation (MMPC) and the Promotion Board of Maldives. A notable portion of these arrivals originated from the countries of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. One of the respondents noted that the halal market catering to Muslim tourists is a significant market segment with great potential. The proper promotion of Maldives as a destination for halal tourism could lead to an increase in tourist arrivals.

A different participant noted that a considerable number of tourists identify as Muslims, and they exhibit a preference for visiting locations that offer halal cuisine and entertainment options. The Maldives is a nation where halal food and beverage and recreational options are readily accessible in all inhabited areas. Despite the presence of non-Shariah compliant elements within the industry, travelers seeking to engage in halal activities are afforded the opportunity to do so. Thus, it can be asserted that the Maldives is a popular destination among Muslim travelers. The Shariah compliance of tourism is contingent upon the rubric utilized to substantiate its compliance with Islamic law. If the rubric specifies that it pertains to an individual's autonomy to partake in food and beverages in a halal manner, as well as to have lodging and sightseeing options that align with halal principles, and if such opportunities are available, we can market Maldives as a halal-friendly destination.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Despite exceeding the target sample for the survey by 120%, it is my belief that the credibility and quality of responses could have been improved had a prior connection been established with the tourist establishments and the surveys and interviews been conducted in person. Regrettably, the feasibility of conducting research in the Maldives was impeded by the unavailability of an opportunity to visit the region. The primary limitation of this study pertains to the time-bound constraints, leading to a survey with a



limited sample size. If a greater amount of time had been at our disposal, the results would have exhibited a higher degree of accuracy.

It is imperative that the government and pertinent authorities focus on enhancing the governance framework of the tourism industry. In order to enhance adherence to the objectives of Maqasid Shariah, it is recommended that establishments consider investing in sustainable halal tourism practices. It is imperative for the Ministry of Tourism, tourist establishments, and all stakeholders in the industry to develop products and services that meet the demands of tourists who are interested in halal tourism. Moreover, it is my contention that by utilizing a broader criterion to evaluate the presence of halal tourism, the accuracy and exactitude of the inquiry may be enhanced. Additional investigation is warranted through on-site visits to tourist establishments to conduct surveys. The surveys should be designed to target both tourists who frequent the Maldives and community members residing in the inhabited islands where the tourist establishments are situated.

Based on the findings obtained from the analysis of the interviews, it can be inferred that the presence of halal tourism in the Maldives is a topic that is subject to varying viewpoints. The findings from the interviews indicate that although it is theoretically expected that tourism in Maldives conforms to halal principles, this is not always the case in practice. The lack of effective enforcement measures and governance structures poses a significant obstacle in ensuring adherence to Shariah principles. Moreover, it is evident that the interconnection between the aims and targets of halal tourism and CBT is intricate and diverse. The implementation of CBT has the capacity to foster economic growth and empower local communities through financial independence. However, it is crucial to ensure that such endeavors do not result in the degradation of Islamic cultural norms. Furthermore, it is imperative to thoroughly evaluate the islands' carrying capacity and related infrastructure, and to provide sufficient assistance to guesthouse businesses to guarantee their profitability.

As previously stated, the extant Strategic Action Plan has devised effective strategies for progress, and the Ministry of Tourism is actively endeavoring to enhance the sustainability and community benefits of Community-Based Tourism (CBT). While exploring alternative options is crucial, there remains room for further improvement. It is evident that while CBT may adhere to Shariah principles, its compliance does not necessarily render it as halal tourism. Hence, it is imperative for the Maldives to establish specific guidelines or a framework that would guarantee the adherence of establishments to Shariah principles. It is recommended that the Maldives establish a mechanism for granting halal certification to guesthouses and hotels in order to guarantee Shariah compliance for tourists seeking halal tourism. Anticipated growth and expansion of the halal tourism industry in Maldives is attributed to strategic promotional and advertising efforts, with a specific emphasis on the halal market segment.



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