

IS MAURITIUS A PROMISING HALAL TOURISM DESTINATION?

Ambareen Beebeejaun ¹

¹(Department of Law, Faculty of Law and Management, University of Mauritius, Reduit, Mauritius)

Abstract: *The Muslim travel market is one of the most emerging lucrative sector across the globe and yet despite this huge potential, Halal tourism remains relatively untapped. It is expected by 2026 that the Halal travel sector's proportion to the global economy is made up of 35% representing around US\$ 300 Billion and 10% of tourists worldwide. While various studies suggest that countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Morocco, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates amongst others are portrayed as the top Halal tourist destinations, no research has been conducted on the potential of Mauritius for Halal tourism. Consequently, this research aims to assess the future of Halal tourism in Mauritius given that the tourism sector is among the five main economic pillars of the country. In particular, this study will assess the awareness level of Halal tourism and the offering of Shariah compliant tourism facilities in Mauritius. This paper adopts the descriptive analytical approach and data is collected from questionnaires distributed to the target population, books, newspapers articles, journal articles and official websites. This study intends to recommend an action plan to the stakeholders concerned with the view of encouraging Halal tourism in Mauritius.*

Keywords: Halal Tourism in Mauritius, Mauritius and Tourism, Shariah Tourism, Islamic Hotels, Halal Package

Research Area: Social Sciences

Paper Type: Research Paper

1. INTRODUCTION

Being among the most lucrative emerging sector, Halal tourism has great potential for destinations, businesses and travel related entities (Ahmed and Akbaba, 2018). Various countries offer Halal tourism packages with the view of attracting Muslim tourists who want to enjoy full holiday services while simultaneously acquit their religious obligations and fulfill Islamic customs, values and culture (Battour and Ismail, 2015). Forecast statistics illustrate that by 2026, the Halal travel sector's contribution to the global economy is expected to jump 35% equating to around US\$300 Billion from US\$220 billion in 2019 (Mastercard, 2019). By that time, Muslim visitors globally are forecast to grow to 230 million visitors which represents more than 10 percent of tourists worldwide (Ayni and Khullar, 2019).

The concept of Halal tourism emanates from the Middle East which comprises of Islamic tourism and the provision of Halal food. In other words, while many people look for beaches, pleasure without control or limitation and alcoholic drinks, Halal tourism requires tourism activities that are permissible under Islamic law in terms of behaviour, dress, conduct and diet. Essentially, there is a growing demand for this type of tourism which in turn attracts the attention of hotel operators and tourism agencies but the number of Shariah compliant hotels and Halal resorts are still limited. In this light, to position themselves in the Halal tourism market, some hotels provide Halal food, a copy of the Quran, a prayer mat, the Qibla direction in their rooms, shampoo and soap certified as Halal and segregation of

Is Mauritius a Promising Halal Tourism Destination?

entertainment spots for men and women (Ahmed and Akbaba, 2018). This sector is gaining so much popularity that it is moving into the mainstream tourism market and hence both Muslim and non-Muslim countries are striving to offer Halal tourism packages. Additionally, it is noted that Halal products and services are becoming common not only among Muslims but also among people of other faiths and philosophies as Halal products are known for their quality and the Halal industry creates an enabling environment for mutual respect and cooperation (Chandra, 2014). Furthermore, there is common consensus that Halal tourism development is imperative for any country since the benefits are not restricted to only Muslim travelers but these are shared with other stakeholders as well (Jaelani, 2017). Consequently, countries across the globe are working to offer Shariah compliant tourism products and facilities and improve their infrastructures to cater for the needs of Muslim travelers. Indeed, in 2018, a study conducted by Mastercard and Crescentrating has classified 130 countries as destinations of Halal tourism, out of which 46 were Muslim countries while 82 were non-Muslim destinations (Mastercard and Crescentrating, 2018).

Similarly, Ahmed and Akbaba (2018) argue that Halal tourism will continue booming as a lucrative business mainly because of the growing Muslim population worldwide. In support of this statement, a study conducted by Pew Research Center (2017) expects that the Muslim population will make up 26% of the world's population by 2030 and will grow even faster by the year 2050. The study also shows that Muslims are the youngest segment amongst all other religious groups with a median age of 23 years old and they are mostly concentrated in growing economies such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Turkey and countries in Gulf Cooperation Council. Hence, this millennial population is likely to increase the demand for the future travel industry in terms of their particular religious belief, culture and values.

Based on the above, to tap the potential of Halal tourism, it becomes vital to assess the positioning of Mauritius in the Halal tourism market especially since the tourism sector forms part of the five main economic pillars of the country (Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2018). Mauritius is a developing country that is located in the Indian Ocean and the Gross Domestic Product of Mauritius is USD 14 billion as at 31st December 2018 (Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2018). Since the country's independence in 1968, Mauritius has transitioned from a poor sugar economy into one of the most remarkable flourishing economies in Africa. This economic development is attributed mainly to a long history of political stability and good governance in addition to the growing corporate, information and telecommunication technology and tourism sectors in Mauritius. As of 31st December 2018, the tertiary economic sector comprises of 63.9% of the entire Mauritian economy as compared to the secondary sector being 19.1% and the primary sector being 17% of the Mauritian economy (Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2018). Accordingly, this research paper aims at investigating on the level of awareness of hotel operators and travel agents about the concept of Halal tourism in Mauritius. Also, the offering of Shariah compliant tourist services by hotels and travel agencies will be assessed and any challenges facing the Halal tourism sector will be discussed. Thereafter, some recommendations will be suggested as to how Mauritius can attract Muslim travelers and portray itself as a Halal tourist destination.

Is Mauritius a Promising Halal Tourism Destination?

For the purpose of collecting data for this study, the descriptive analytical approach is used whereby a questionnaire is sent out to some selected airline companies, tour operators and licensed hotels in Mauritius to gather primary data and secondary data is taken from newspaper articles, journal articles, and official websites amongst others. While the first part of the research paper has introduced the subject matter of the study and the research aims and objectives, the other parts of this paper are structured as follows: the second part elaborates on the concept of Halal tourism and literature reviews on this topic will be discussed, the third part will discuss on the research methodology adopted, the fourth section will illustrate the research findings and a critical analysis will be conducted on the current positioning of Mauritius concerning Halal tourism and the final part of the paper suggests some recommendations and the conclusion.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

(a) *The Emergence of Halal Tourism*

Prior to delving into the definition of Halal tourism, it is noteworthy to describe the word “Halal”. While the most common equivalent English term of the Arabic word “Halal” relates to permissible or allowable things (Battour and Ismail, 2015), many people restrict this terminology to only food. However Islamic scholars such as Al-Qaradawi (2013) defines “Halal” as any permitted act with respect to which no restriction exists and the performance of which is allowed by the law-giver, Allah. Consequently, the opposite of this term is something which is prohibited or unlawful, the Arabic term being “Haram”. In this respect, the concept of Halal goes beyond dietary restrictions and extends to all facets of life such as allowable behaviour, speech, conduct and manner (Ahmed and Akbaba, 2018). Therefore, Halal tourism is the implementation of tourism based on Shariah or Islamic provisions which implies that tourism must be based on Islamic legal principles both in terms of providing tourist destinations, food and other facilities (Sandela, Bintang and Mansu, 2019).

Several scholars have researched on the opportunities of exploring Halal tourism in different countries and each of them have concluded that it is both financially and socially worthwhile to work towards the expansion of this sector. For instance, Qaddahat, Attaalla and Hussein (2016) evaluated the opportunities and challenges underlying Halal tourism in Jordan and Egypt. The authors in turn portrayed studies conducted by other scholars such as Mohsin et al. (2015), Kamali (2016) and Wingett and Turnbull (2016) to support the argument that Halal tourism is an emerging sector which needs attention. Thereafter, a survey was carried out on some travel agents and airline operators to assess the extent to which these respondents are acquainted with the Halal tourism sector. Surprisingly, the findings demonstrate that the majority of airline staff have not heard about Halal tourism and they confirm that all passengers do not ask about Halal tourism. Additionally, travel agencies in both Jordan and Egypt rarely ask about Halal tourism packages or about places and time for praying. These results show that Jordan and Egypt have to confront challenges underlying the emergence of Halal tourism and the authors recommend that the government of the respective countries implement a pilot project and an action plan for airlines and travel agencies to apply the standards of Halal tourism.

Is Mauritius a Promising Halal Tourism Destination?

Similarly, Ahmed and Akbaba (2018) assessed the potential of Ethiopia as a destination for Halal tourism. For this purpose, the authors have conducted a SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats) analysis to evaluate the feasibility for Halal tourism in Ethiopia. Also, some previous literature reviews on Halal tourism are set out in the study to explain the concept of Halal tourism. It is noted that while the country has a strong Islamic history and culture and is comprised of a high number of Muslim inhabitants, Ethiopia lacks institutions, experience and infrastructure to deal with this sector. Additionally, issues such as prostitution, gambling, the consumption of alcoholic beverages, the growing of Islamophobia amongst others are identified as challenges against Halal tourism (Elaziz and Kurt, 2017). Yet, the authors rely on the strategic geopolitical location of Ethiopia and the rise of Muslim communities interests' to travel and the presence of businessmen from Islamic world as opportunities to develop the Halal tourism sector in the country.

Essentially, in order to promote Halal tourism, it is vital to enhance the framework which is conducive to a Halal-friendly destination. In this respect, Faiza (2017) conducted a study on the "Halalification" of tourism to investigate on the factors which attract Muslim customers. These factors originate from the underlying basis of Islam that is, the Muslim's commitment to follow the path of Allah derived from the Quran and Hadith. Basically, Muslims have to mandatorily observe the five pillars of Islam being the belief in the oneness of God, the five daily times prayer, charity, fasting and Hajj. Beyond that, there also exists some other principles such as family, community, modesty and morality (Hassan, 2015). Linked to these values, existing literature have portrayed the following factors as pull factors for Halal tourism:

(b) Factors Influencing Tourist Choices for Halal Tourism

Various researches have been conducted on the determinants for encouraging the traditional tourism sector and one particular most commonly referred study relates to the Maslow's motives model (1943). This theory implies that people choose five main factors when deciding the choice of their holiday destination being, physiological needs (relaxation), safety (security), belonging (love), esteem (achievement) and self-actualisation (be true to oneself). In fact, these five determinants may be classified into two key variables which are personality and habits. Moreover, some other scholars such as Mill and Morisson (1998) highlight that tourists consider their own motivations, perceptions, learning and attitudes when choosing a particular destination and these factors are in turn influenced by personality, culture and society.

Regarding Halal tourism, Muslims usually value destinations that are in line with Islamic values which are derived from the Quran and Hadith. Consequently, on the basis of existing literature on the subject, it is witnessed that the main determinants of Halal tourism concern the availability of Halal food, prayer facilities, Halal compliant hotels, Muslim friendly holiday package, religious affiliates sites and religious devotedness (Hassan, 2015). With respect to dietary restrictions placed on Muslims by the Quran, the preparation of Halal food in line with Islamic teachings as well as hygienic conditions are advantageous to hotels in attracting Muslim tourists (Samori and Rahman, 2013). Basically, there are seven

Is Mauritius a Promising Halal Tourism Destination?

standards required for the preparation of Halal food (Qaddahat, Attaalla and Hussein, 2016) which are as follows:

- Halal food and drinks should be plant based sources or halal animal, without any component of “Najis” which means impurity,
- food and drinks should not contain any human parts or its derivatives,
- slaughtering of animals should be carried out in accordance with Shariah,
- product handling, processing and distribution should be done in accordance with Shariah,
- product storage, display and serving for example equipment, machinery and other materials should not be made from non-Halal materials,
- hygiene, sanitation and food safety should comply with the concept of Halal, and
- packing and labelling should be in line with the standards of the Halal certification authority in the respective country.

In addition, since the five daily prayers form part of the main pillars of Islam, it follows that Muslim tourists search for destinations that would enable them perform their prayers freely and on time. This argument is supported by the findings of Battour and Ismail (2015) who conducted a study on the push and pull motivators for Halal tourism and the results demonstrate that the following facilities are likely to attract Muslim tourists:

- easy access to Mosque or prayer facilities at tourism sites,
- the presence of loud public announcement of Azan (call for prayer),
- placement of Qibla (direction in which Muslims perform prayers) stickers,
- provision of a copy of the Quran in hotel room,
- the requirement to abide by Islamic dress code in the country, and
- restrictions on prostitutions and public display of affection between sexes.

Another major determinant for encouraging Halal tourism is the availability of Muslim friendly package in the respective countries. In other words, the content of the Islamic tour packages must be based on Islamic principles. For instance, the packages should include visits to Islamic monuments, places of worship Islamic heritage or religious events that are usually organised during the Ramadan (Akyol and Kilinc, 2014). Coupled with these attractions, a Halal package needs to offer transportation through Halal airlines (Hassan, 2015). This implies that airlines who offer cleanliness in addition to non-alcoholic drinks and principles that are conform with Islamic values are preferred. Additionally, some airlines nowadays provide for special separate places of worship and Qibla direction.

Furthermore, there is common consensus among the scholars that the availability of hotels which comply with Islamic principles are imperative factors that attract Muslim tourists. Indeed, Sabtub (2019), Razalli et al. (2012), Samori and Rahman (2013), Battour et al. (2014) and El-Gohary (2018) have put forward a series of indicators for a Shariah compliant hotel and the aggregated list is as follows:

Is Mauritius a Promising Halal Tourism Destination?

- food and drinks should be Halal-based and non-alcoholic,
- the respective hotel must provide facilities and amenities for prayers,
- there need to be a proper code of dressing in line with Islamic principles,
- segregation of facilities including spa, sauna and swimming pool for men and women,
- the presence of Quran, Qibla direction and prayer mat in hotel rooms,
- beds and toilet positioned in a manner that do not face the direction of Mecca,
- bidets in bathrooms, and
- hotel funding is based on Islamic principles.

Based on the above literature, it is witnessed that the Halal tourism sector is growing in intensity across the globe and thus, countries, tour and airline operators as well as hotels have to emphasise on the provision of Halal friendly packages in order to attract Muslim tourist. In this respect, it is imperative to conduct a feasibility study in the context of Mauritius to investigate whether the country is a promising Halal tourism destination. For this purpose, the following part of the research paper will describe the research methodology adopted for the study.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study aims at responding to the following research questions:

1. what is the level of awareness of hotels and travel operators on the concept of Halal tourism in Mauritius?
2. what is the prevalence of the provision of Halal friendly packages and services in Mauritius?
3. what are the challenges and obstacles being encountered by the Halal tourism sector in Mauritius?
4. how stakeholders may improve the existing tourism framework in order to attract more Muslim tourists?

(a) Data Collection

Consequently, to address to these research questions, this study adopts the descriptive analytical approach by collecting primary data by sending out questionnaires to the stakeholders concerned. Moreover, secondary sources of information are obtained from books, journal articles, newspapers, online reports and surveys conducted by previous studies. This descriptive research approach is best suited for the study under this paper because it helps in collecting data that are useful to assess the current practices concerning Halal tourism in Mauritius and the findings of which will in turn be used to suggest recommendations to improve the framework on Halal tourism. It is noteworthy to highlight that the questionnaire method has been applied by existing researches on the subject matter such as Sabtub (2019), (Hassan, 2015), (Akyol and Kilinc, 2014), Razalli et al. (2012) amongst others.

Is Mauritius a Promising Halal Tourism Destination?

As such, a questionnaire is forwarded to the target population addressed to the Chief Executive Officers, Marketing Officers or Sales Managers since these persons are deemed to be well-versed with various aspects of tourism packages and services being offered by their organisations. Additionally, to facilitate the collection of data in a quick and more convenient manner, the questionnaire is updated via Google Forms and the online link is sent to the operators by email. The aims and purposes of data collection and the study is set out in an accompanying email and a confidential statement is also mentioned to the effect that the information given and the identity of participants will not be disclosed in any manner save for the purpose of this research study. The distribution and collection of questionnaires takes around 3 months.

(b) The Target Population

In order to figure out the level of awareness of the Halal tourism concept in Mauritius, this study has approached the licenced hotels and travel agencies in Mauritius. The list of the target population is publicly available from the Mauritius Tourism Authority's website and in total, a separate set of questionnaires was sent to 109 hotels and 63 travel agencies respectively.

(c) Design of Questionnaire

The questionnaire sent out to licensed hotels in Mauritius comprises of an introductory section which explains the purpose of the research and some key definitions are set out in the same section. Thereafter, the second part relates to a series of indicators for a Shariah compliant hotel all of which have been taken from existing literature ((Sabtub (2019), Razalli et al. (2012), Samori and Rahman (2013), Battour et al. (2014) and El-Gohary (2018)).

Similarly, the questionnaire sent out to licensed travel agencies in Mauritius includes a descriptive section regarding the aims of the survey and some abbreviations are explained in this section. The second part of the questionnaire refers to a series of variables which are borrowed from existing researches on the offering of Shariah compliant services by travel agencies and which are most largely inspired from the survey conducted by Qaddahat, Attaalla and Hussein (2016).

For each of the indicators in the questionnaires circulated, the respondents concerned had to mention their level of understanding on a 1-5 Likert Scale, whereby 1 is Strongly Disagree and 5 represents Strongly Agree. Higher score of this scale implies a high level of awareness of Halal tourism.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Out of the 109 hotel operators approached for this study, only 78 participants responded positively. However, 4 of the questionnaires were incomplete and was disregarded for the analysis. Therefore, 74 responses were considered and this makes up of 67.8% of the target population. Additionally, a questionnaire was sent to 63 travel agencies but unfortunately only 25 respondents replied to the questions set, representing around 40% of the target population. These response rates are received after thorough follow-up by phone

Is Mauritius a Promising Halal Tourism Destination?

calls, emails and personal interactions with the personnel concerned. The findings of this survey are assessed by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences Software Version 21 (SPSS Software) and descriptive statistical tests are performed on the data collected. In essence, the means and standard deviations for each statements are illustrated below.

(a) *Mauritius Hotels*

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
Hearing about Halal tourism	2.78	0.78
Tourists asking about Halal tourism	2.36	0.69
Provision of breakfast and lunch during Ramadhan	4.54	0.58
Serving of pork meals	3.68	1.04
Gambling in hotel	3.78	0.76
Night club and disco in hotel	3.66	1.21
Separated pools for men and women	1.47	0.50
Separated spas for men and women	1.31	0.47
Qibla direction indicated in hotel rooms	1.50	0.53
Prayer Rug in hotel rooms	1.64	0.48
Quran in hotel rooms	1.34	0.47
Beds position compatible with Qibla direction	1.46	0.50
Toilets position compatible with Qibla direction	2.42	0.68
Halal food and drinks	2.79	0.72
Bidets in bathrooms	2.08	1.13
Hotel's funding in line with Shariah	1.32	0.40
Adoption of Zakat system	1.33	0.47

Table 1: SPSS Results for Hotels Survey

Table 1 illustrates the results derived from the survey conducted on some 74 hotels that are licensed in Mauritius. The results are interpreted in the same manner as Ester (2017) has applied in his research using the 1-5 Likert Scale, whereby the mean scores are interpreted as follows:

- “*Strongly Disagree*” or “*Disagree*” are represented by mean scores equivalent to 1.0 and up to 2.5 ($1 \leq \text{Disagree} \leq 2.5$);
- “*Neutral*” is equivalent to mean scores of 2.6 to 3.5 ($2.6 \leq \text{Neutral} \leq 3.5$); and
- “*Agree*” and “*Strongly Agree*” are represented by mean scores equivalent to 3.6 and up to 5.0 ($3.6 \leq \text{Agree} \leq 5.0$).

It is therefore deduced that the concept of Halal tourism is still unknown and is left unexploited in Mauritius due to the following findings:

- Hotel operators in Mauritius are mostly neutral upon being asked whether they are aware of the concept of Halal tourism,
- Mauritius hotels disagree that tourists ask them about Halal tourism,

Is Mauritius a Promising Halal Tourism Destination?

- Hotels provide breakfast and lunch during Ramadhan,
- The respondent hotels agree that they serve pork meals, allow gambling, provide night club and disco facilities which is contrary to the opinion of Sabtub (2019) who states that these are important restrictions to attract Muslim tourists,
- There is no separated pools, spas, no indication of Qibla direction, no prayer rugs in hotels all of which are vital indicators for boosting the Halal tourism sector as mentioned by Battour et al. (2014) and El-Gohary (2018),
- Most hotels do not have toilets and beds positioned compatible with Qibla direction which is not in line with the features of Halal tourism according to Razalli et al. (2012),
- The respondent hotels do not have toilet bidets, and neither are their funding in line with Shariah nor do they adopt the Zakat system of giving charities, and
- Hotels are mostly neutral upon being asked whether they serve Halal foods and drinks which are imperative for Muslim tourists (Hassan, 2015).

(b) Mauritius Travel Agencies

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
Hearing about Halal tourism	3.16	0.69
Knowledge of countries offering Halal tourism	4.24	0.66
Tourists asking about Halal tourism	2.00	0.65
Organising of tours in line with Halal tourism	2.32	0.54
Offering of places that provide for breakfast and lunch during Ramadhan	3.72	0.51
Pursuing places that offer pork meals	3.56	0.71
Pursuing places that offer alcoholic drinks	3.80	0.65
Offering places that provide for prayer facilities	2.44	0.51
Indicate preference for Islamic dressing	1.52	0.80
Indicate prohibition of public display of affection between sexes	2.20	0.74
Offering of Halal foods and drinks	4.32	0.37
Offer of Shariah compliant hotels	2.04	0.75
Travel agency's funding in line with Shariah	1.16	0.34
Adoption of Zakat system	1.48	0.65

Table 2: SPSS Results for Travel Agencies Survey

Table 2 provides us with details of the existing situation concerning some 25 travel agencies that are based in Mauritius. Again, the results are interpreted in the same manner as

Is Mauritius a Promising Halal Tourism Destination?

Ester (2017) as elaborated above and it is found that travel agencies in Mauritius do not give much importance to the Halal tourism sector. In particular, the survey reveals that:

- Most travel agencies have heard about Halal tourism and they are aware of the countries that offer Halal tourism but they aver that only a small number of tourists ask about this sector in Mauritius,
- The majority of travel agencies do not organise tours as per Muslim preferences and they offer pork meals, alcoholic drinks, breakfast and lunch during Ramadhan, all these features are in contraction with Shariah principles that are conducive to a favourable Muslim attraction (Samori and Rahman, 2013),
- The target travel agencies disagree that they indicate their preferences for Islamic dressing in Mauritius and they prohibit public display of affection between sexes which are not in line with indicators of Halal tourism (Qaddahat, Attaalla and Hussein, 2016),
- Most travel agencies do not offer Shariah compliant hotels and they have neither adopted the shariah-based lending nor the Zakat system, and
- Surprisingly, the majority of travel agencies mention that they cater for the provision of Halal foods and drinks to their clients.

The above findings conclude that there is a lack of institutional framework to create an environment that is conducive to Halal tourism. In other words, Mauritius is lacking the required infrastructure and facilities to attract tourists who would like to combine their desire to relax and visit countries with their religious obligations. Additionally, at the level of the Mauritius government and the Mauritius Tourism Authority, not much effort is being done to exploit the Halal tourism sector. Following an online search on the relevant governmental authorities' websites, no information is available on the endeavour of the authorities concerned to boost this sector in Mauritius. Given the existing as well as the forecasted increasing number of Muslim tourists across the globe (Ahmed and Akbaba, 2018), this sector is a lucrative field and if the appropriate pull factors are put in place, Mauritius will experience an increase in its income from tourist arrivals. Hence, it is high time that the country starts considering investing in the Halal tourism sector and train travel agencies and hotel operators to this effect.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

(a) Recommendations

This research paper suggests the following ideas for developing the Halal tourism sector in Mauritius:

- A committee needs to be established at the level of the Ministry of Tourism in Mauritius to establish, set up and coordinate policies and effort to apply the principles and practices of Halal tourism in the country,
- A pilot project and an action plan needs to be devised with the view of offering training to the stakeholders concerned on Halal tourism such as hotels, tour operators, travel agencies, airlines amongst others as well as a proper framework for monitoring Halal standards,

Is Mauritius a Promising Halal Tourism Destination?

- A certification process needs to be put in place to issue accreditation and approval for tourism enterprises that offer Halal tourism services,
- The Tourism Authority in Mauritius is entitled to issue guidelines relating to the tourism sector and as such, it is recommended that it provides internal regulations on the best practices to formalise Halal tourism in Mauritius.

(b) Conclusion

The study under this paper seeks to assess the awareness level on Halal tourism in Mauritius. To this effect, some hotels and travel agencies in Mauritius have been surveyed and the results show that there is a lack of prevalence of the provision of Halal friendly packages and services in the country. Given the high potential of this particular industry to have an unprecedented growth, this research paper has put forward some ideas which may be relevant and of use to Mauritius stakeholders which may help in enhancing the framework to attract Muslim tourists in Mauritius. It is only by addressing the shortcomings inherent in the tourism system in Mauritius that the country will be in a position to be termed as a promising Halal tourist destination.

REFERENCES

- Ahmed, M. J. and Akbaba, A. 2018. The potential of halal tourism in Ethiopia: Opportunities, challenges and prospects. *International Journal of Contemporary Tourism Research*. Vol. 1, Issue 13.
- Akyol, M. and Kilinc, O. 2014. Internet and Halal tourism marketing. *International Periodical for the Languages*. Vol 9, Issue 8, 88-95.
- Al-Qaradawi, Y. 2013. *The lawful and the prohibited in Islam*. Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Shoruuk International.
- Avni, S. and Khullar, I. 2019. Potential of Halal tourism. *International Journal of Law, Humanities and Social Sciences*. Vol. 8, Issue 2.
- Battour, M. and Ismail, I. 2015. Halal tourism: Concepts, practices, challenges and future. *Tourism Management Perspectives*. Vol. 19 (Part B), 150-154.
- Chandra, A. 2014. Halal tourism as the mainstream sector. *International Journal of Law, Humanities and Social Sciences*. Vol. 33, Issue 2.
- Elaziz, M. and Kurt, A. 2017. Religiousity, consumerism and halal tourism: A study of seaside tourism organisations in Turkey. *Tourism Scientific Paper*. Vol 65, Issue 1.
- El-Gohary, H. 2018. Halal tourism: Is it really Halal? *Tourism Management*. Vol. 9, Issue 3.
- Ester, A. 2017. Interpreting Research Findings. *Clute Journals*. Vol. 8, Issue 2.
- Faiza, K. 2017. The Halalification of tourism. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*. Vol. 8, Issue 4.
- Hassan, Z. 2015. Factors affecting Muslim tourists choice of Halal concept hotels and satisfaction in Malaysia. *International Journal of Accounting and Business Management*. Vol. 3, Issue 2.
- Jaelani, A, 2017. Halal tourism industry in Indonesia: Potential and prospects. *International Journal of Social Sciences*. Vol. 4, Issue 2.

Is Mauritius a Promising Halal Tourism Destination?

- Kamali, M. 2016. Tourism and the Halal industry. *Islam and Civilisation Renewal Journal*. Vol. 3, No. 3.
- Maslow, A. H. 1943. A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*. Vol. 50(4), 370-396.
- Mastercard and Crescentrating. 2018. Global Muslim Travel Index. Available at <https://www.crescentrating.com/reports/global-muslim-travel-index-2019.html> [Accessed on 19 November 2019].
- Mastercard. 2019. Indonesia and Malaysia take the top positions in the fast growing Muslim travel market. Available at <https://newsroom.mastercard.com/asia-pacific/press-releases/mastercard-crescentrating-global-muslim-travel-index-gmti-2019-indonesia-and-malaysia-take-the-top-positions-in-the-fast-growing-muslim-travel-market/> [Accessed on 19 November 2019].
- Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry. 2018. Economic Outlook. Available at <https://www.mcci.org/media/165395/mcci-economic-outlook-2018.pdf> [Accessed on 19 November 2019].
- Mill, C. and Morrison, M. 1998. *The tourism system: An introductory text*. UK: Prentice-Hall International.
- Mohsin, A. Noriah, R. and Bader, C. 2015. Halal tourism: Emerging opportunities. *Tourism Management Perspectives*. Vol. 2, Issue 3.
- Pew Research Centre. 2017. Muslim and Islam: Key findings in the US and around the world. Available at <http://www.pewresearch.org/facttank/2017/02/27/muslims-and-islam-key-findingsin-the-u-s-and-around-the-world> [Accessed on 19 November 2019].
- Qaddahat, R., Attaalla, F. and Hussein, M. 2016. Halal tourism: Evaluating opportunities and challenges in the Middle East Jordan and Egypt. *Journal of Faculty of Tourism and Hotels*. Vol. 10, No. 2.
- Razalli, M., Suzzani, A. and Ghozali, H. 2012. Developing a model for Islamic hotels. *Universiti Utara Journal*. Vol. 5, Issue 8.
- Sabtub, J. 2019. Halal culinary opportunities and challenges in Indonesia. *International Journal of Law, Humanities and Social Science*. Vol. 5, Issue 2.
- Samori, Z. and Rahman, F. 2013. Establishing Shariah compliant hotels in Malaysia. *West East Journal of Social Sciences*. Vol. 2, No. 2, 95-101.
- Sandela, I., Bintang, S. and Mansur, T. 2019. The standards to implement Halal tourism in Indonesia. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*. Vol. 24, Issue 7, No. 2.
- Wingett, F. and Turnbull, S. 2016. Halal holidays: Exploring expectations of Muslim-friendly holidays. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*. Vol. 17, Issue 5.