

Digital Engagement of Halal Tourism Providers in Malaysia: A Content Analysis Approach

Noradilah Abdul Hadi*, Nur Shuhada Kamarudin, Nurul Nazlia Jamil, Nurshamimitul Ezza Ramli

*Islamic Finance Research Cluster,
Islamic Finance and Wealth Management Institute (IFWMI),
Faculty of Economics and Muamalat,
Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia
Email: adilah@usim.edu.my*

Mohd Rizal Muwazir
*Department of Shariah and Management,
Academy of Islamic Studies, Universiti Malaya*

** Corresponding Author*

Abstract

Purpose: This research explores how halal tourism providers in Malaysia currently promote their services through digital channels, with particular attention to the use of online platforms in reaching and engaging Muslim travelers.

Design/methodology/approach: The study employs a qualitative content analysis approach, drawing on data from official websites and social media accounts of selected providers to identify dominant promotional strategies and assess the level of digital interaction.

Findings: The analysis indicates that the majority of halal tourism providers in Malaysia have a relatively modest digital presence, with Facebook and Instagram serving as the predominant platforms for promotion. While the promotion of halal food options is consistently emphasized, other key aspects such as information on prayer times and Muslim-friendly travel itineraries are also mentioned, but less frequently across their digital content.

Research limitations/implications: This study identifies gaps and opportunities to expand the range and depth of digital content in halal tourism promotion. However, the scope of the research is confined to online materials available within a defined period and does not account for other promotional formats, including print media or offline campaigns.

Practical implications: The findings offer practical value for tourism stakeholders aiming to improve digital marketing approaches targeted at Muslim travelers.

Originality/value: This study extends halal tourism research by analyzing digital engagement strategies of Malaysian providers through content analysis, offering insights into how digital content supports promotion and marketing of halal tourism industry.

Keywords: Halal Tourism, Digital Promotion, Islamic Marketing, Digital Marketing, Tourism Malaysia

Introduction

Digitalization has transformed the world of tourism at its core level, compelling providers to communicate with tourists through various digital media. Mobile apps, social media, and the web have become significant vehicles for crafting participative relationships, facilitating destination marketing, and value co-creation with tourists (Leung et al., 2013; Munar and Jacobsen, 2014). With future visitors relying more on web information for travel planning and booking, tourism operators need to adopt strategic web presence to remain competitive and visible in the evolving digital landscape (Chen and Wang, 2018).

Within this digitally driven landscape, halal tourism has emerged as a rapidly growing niche, catering to Muslim travelers who seek experiences compliant with Islamic principles. Malaysia stands out as a global leader, topping the Global Muslim Travel Index since 2019 by combining robust halal certification frameworks, government support, and diverse cultural offerings (Dinar Standard and CrescentRating, 2021). This success story, however, has been driven primarily by infrastructural and regulatory strengths, while the specific practices of digital engagement among Malaysian halal tourism providers have received limited scholarly attention.

Early work on digital applications in halal tourism indicates that immersive technologies such as virtual mosque tours and halal-food delivery apps can improve accessibility and cultural immersion, yet systematic assessments of content strategies are lacking (Azam et al., 2024). Analyses of social media engagement indicate that specific types of content on Facebook posts by Muslim-friendly tourism organisations significantly boost online interactions; however, the study only examined four such organisations, limiting generalisability (Mohd Janis and Ramli, 2022).

To address this gap, the present study employs a content analysis approach to examine how halal tourism providers in Malaysia communicate and interact with their audiences online. By systematically analysing official websites, Facebook pages, and Instagram profiles of halal tourism providers, this research identifies prevailing themes, messaging strategies, and levels of engagement designed to convey halal credentials and inspire trust among Muslim travelers. The insights from this study will help both researchers and industry professionals to see how digital channels can build brand credibility and support customer interaction, which can improve the halal tourism experience in Malaysia.

Literature Review

Importance of Digital Engagement in Tourism

Digital engagement encompasses numerous ways tourists interact with online platforms before, during, and after their trips. As travelers increasingly rely on dynamic web content for trip planning and booking, interactive websites, chatbots, and personalized recommendations have reshaped destination marketing. These tools enable seamless two-way dialogue between providers and consumers, facilitating co-creation of travel experiences and strengthening trust in tourism brands (Leung et al., 2013; Xiang and Gretzel, 2010). Social media networks now play a key role in peer-to-peer sharing and electronic word-of-mouth, which strongly affect how people choose destinations, how satisfied they are, and whether they return. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube let travelers share their experiences, give immediate feedback, and encourage others to visit through photos, videos, and reviews. User-generated content helps destinations reach more people and makes them seem more authentic and trustworthy (Munar and Jacobsen, 2014).

New mobile and immersive technologies like augmented reality, virtual reality, and location-based apps are making travel more personal and interactive. For example, AR city guides and VR previews help travelers get to know destinations before they arrive, while location-based apps make it easier to navigate and request services on the go. These tools help connect online research with real-world experiences, making trips easier and more enjoyable (van Nuenen and Scarles, 2021). Research also shows that strong digital engagement leads to more repeat visits and greater loyalty among tourists (Zhou and Yu, 2022). Digital channels can strengthen the impact of traditional marketing by building emotional connections and trust. Destinations that use interactive digital campaigns, social media, and user-generated content often see more visitors returning (Wang and Azizurrohman, 2024).

Gaining a competitive edge and ensuring long-term growth requires policymakers and tourist providers to leverage digital engagement through data analytics, tailored content, and smart tourism frameworks. Businesses may improve market segmentation, customize products for specialized traveler segments, and encourage environmentally friendly behavior by examining online behavior and engagement indicators. According to Veseli et al. (2025), the strategic use of digital tools promotes long-term destination stewardship, increases economic resilience, and improves tourist pleasure.

Overview of Halal Tourism

The idea of halal tourism was created in response to the increasing need for travel experiences that respect Muslim values and lifestyles. It was presented as an alternative tourism model that was created to explicitly address the demands of Muslim tourists by making sure that all aspects of the trip, from accommodation to activities, complied with Islamic law (Kamarudin and Ismail, 2012; Bhuiyan et al., 2011). Fundamentally, halal tourism necessitates adherence to Shariah regulations, which include things like halal-certified cuisine, places for prayer, gender-segregated entertainment, and modest clothing standards. Together, these components guarantee that the travel experience adheres to Islamic moral and ethical standards, enabling Muslim travelers to visit places without compromising their religious commitments (Carboni et al., 2017).

While often conflated with Islamic tourism, halal tourism is broader in scope. Halal tourism covers leisure and recreational travel under halal standards, whereas Islamic tourism traditionally refers to journeys undertaken for religious obligations such as Hajj and Umrah. This distinction underscores halal tourism's role in integrating faith-based needs into mainstream tourism offerings (Battour and Ismail, 2014). The global halal tourism market has witnessed rapid expansion, with an estimated 140 million international Muslim travelers in 2018 projected to reach 260 million by 2026. Spending by this segment is expected to surge accordingly, highlighting its strategic value for destinations aiming to boost visitor numbers and economic returns (Rofiqo et al., 2022).

Despite strong growth, halal tourism faces challenges including limited standardization of halal certifications, inconsistent service quality, and a scarcity of empirical research on Muslim travelers' behaviour. Future studies should adopt multidisciplinary approaches, leverage digital platforms for seamless booking and feedback, and foster cross-sector collaborations to drive innovation and enhance destination competitiveness (Rofiqo et al., 2022).

Halal Tourism in the Malaysian Context

The halal tourism sector has become a key driver of Malaysia's economic development, contributing significantly to both domestic and international travel markets. Global spending by Muslim travelers, which stood at approximately US\$121 million in 2016, is projected to grow substantially, reaching US\$225 billion by 2028 (CrescentRating and Mastercard, 2022). At the same time, the worldwide halal food and beverage industry, valued at more than US\$2 trillion in the early 2020s, is expected to expand to between US\$3.3 trillion and US\$4.1 trillion by 2028 (Fortune Business Insights, 2022; Kerry Group, 2022). According to Malaysia's Halal Industry Master Plan (HIMP 2030), the domestic halal industry is projected to contribute approximately USD 113.2 billion to national GDP by 2030, equating to nearly 11% of total output, and to generate over 700,000 jobs across hospitality, food services, and related sectors (Halal Industry Master Plan 2030, HDC/MATRADE, 2023).

Malaysia's leadership in the halal tourism niche is underpinned by a robust institutional framework and strategic government support. In 2019, Malaysia together with Indonesia held the top position in the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI). The Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture and the Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC) have reinforced this leadership by introducing the Muslim-Friendly Accommodation Recognition (MFAR) programme, which mandates features like halal-certified kitchens, prayer facilities, and Muslim-friendly restaurant outlets, enhancing tourist confidence and reinforcing Malaysia's reputation as a shariah-compliant destination (Faridah et al., 2023; Johan and Abd Rahman, 2025). Beyond economics and policy, halal tourism plays a vital socio-cultural role by fostering inclusive travel experiences that respect Islamic values. The provision of prayer facilities, gender-segregated leisure spaces, and shariah-compliant service protocols enhances comfort and trust for Muslim visitors, while also appealing to non-Muslim tourists who associate halal standards with superior hygiene and ethical practices (Saffinee et al., 2024; Saiman, 2024).

In Malaysia, halal tourism has progressively evolved from a niche idea to an acknowledged part of the country's tourism strategy, especially since the Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC) was founded in 2009 to promote Islamic values in travel-related goods and services (Kamarudin and Ismail, 2012). Halal tourism is defined broadly as travel that is allowed under Shariah principles, including halal-certified food, prayer spaces, gender-sensitive amenities, and modest service protocols. It goes beyond religious duties like the Hajj and 'Umrah to include leisure, cultural, and business travel experiences for Muslim tourists (Battour and Ismail, 2016).

Economically, halal tourism represents a growing pillar of Malaysia's national development strategy. Global Muslim travel expenditure is projected to reach USD 225 billion by 2028, underscoring the market's expanding contribution to international tourism flows (CrescentRating and Mastercard, 2024). Within this context, Malaysia has consistently ranked as a leading destination in the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI), owing to its comprehensive halal ecosystem that integrates hospitality, food services, and cultural offerings. Although specific national projections vary, halal-related industries in Malaysia are widely recognized as drivers of GDP growth and employment creation, particularly through food services, hospitality, and retail. Furthermore, tourist arrivals from OIC countries continue to grow, driven by Malaysia's reputation for halal gastronomy and culturally immersive experiences that align with Shariah principles (GMTI, 2025).

Digital Engagement in the Tourism Industry

Digital engagement has emerged as a pivotal dimension in contemporary tourism, shaping how destinations interact with visitors before, during, and after travel. Digital engagement encompasses the strategic use of digital platforms such as social media, mobile applications, and immersive technologies to foster meaningful interactions, co-create experiences, and build long-term relationships with travelers (Bekele and Raj, 2024). By leveraging real-time data and personalized content, tourism stakeholders can influence travelers' perceptions, motivations, and behaviors, ultimately enhancing satisfaction and loyalty.

Theoretical perspectives on digital engagement often draw on the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) framework, positing that digital stimuli (e.g., social media posts, virtual tours) affect tourists' internal states (organism), leading to behavioral outcomes (response) such as revisit intentions (Wang and Azizurrohman, 2024). Empirical studies have demonstrated that digital engagement serves as a mediator between marketing mix elements like online promotions and interactive content and key outcomes such as destination image and loyalty (Wang and Azizurrohman, 2024). These findings underscore the critical role of immersive and interactive digital touchpoints in shaping the tourist journey.

Digital tourism engagement typologies are diverse. Social media website electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) and user-generated content (UGC) were shown to have significant destination choice and trust impact (Armutçu et al., 2023). Digital tour app customized recommendations, digital stories, and augmented reality (AR) exposure offer deeper sensory experience, thus more emotional attachment and memorable experiences (Ai et al., 2022). The impacts of digital interaction on tourism behavior are varied. Empirical research has revealed that high levels of digital engagement directly affect revisit intentions, word-of-mouth, and destination loyalty (Wang and Azizurrohman, 2024). For instance, inclusion of sensor-based digital content such as 360-degree videos and interactive apps has been empirically linked to higher destination attachment and related travel planning behaviors (Ai et al., 2022). Furthermore, online sites provide the capability for community-building among tourists, creating peer networks that provide social influence and sustained activity long after the trip is over.

Method

This research adopts a qualitative content analysis approach by examining data available on the official websites and social media platforms of halal tourism providers in Malaysia. This approach was also utilised in previous studies, for instance the study by Akyol and Kilinc (2014) in which main indicators of an Islamic hotel and halal hotel were analysed based on some visual and textual components which obtained from Islamic and halal hotels through online. The analysis focuses on identifying and interpreting the main indicators of Islamic practices as presented through digital platforms. Specifically, the study investigates how these providers communicate their adherence to Islamic principles, including halal food offerings, prayer facilities, gender segregation, and Shariah-compliant accommodations. Both textual and visual elements are examined to assess the extent to which Islamic values are integrated and promoted in their digital marketing content.

To ensure a comprehensive understanding, each company's official website, as well as their associated social media accounts (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter), are scrutinized to collect relevant data reflecting their digital marketing strategies. This dual focus on website content and social media presence provides a broader perspective on how halal tourism providers engage with their audience and build brand awareness in a competitive digital environment.

The content analysis also considers the use of keywords, images, videos, and promotional messages to determine how effectively these platforms convey the halal attributes of their tourism products and services.

A total number of 15 websites that specifically promote halal tourism were selected as part of the sample for this study. These halal tourism providers were selected as they were the only companies that registered and were available online on the search platforms during the data collection period. These include platforms such as CrescentRating, a globally recognized authority on halal travel, and the Islamic Tourism Centre of Malaysia, which operates under the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia to promote and develop halal tourism in the country. These websites serve as key resources in the analysis, offering insights into both government-led and private sector initiatives in the halal tourism space. Through this content analysis, the study aims to uncover patterns, strategies, and best practices in the digital marketing of halal tourism in Malaysia.

Data were collected through systematic browsing and documentation of relevant content from the selected websites and their associated social media accounts (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, X [formerly Twitter]). Both textual (e.g., descriptions of services, mission statements, promotional messages) and visual (e.g., photos, icons, videos) elements were gathered to capture how Islamic values and principles are communicated.

Findings

In this section, we analysed the information available on the company's websites and social media related to their marketing efforts. The study's sample consisted of fifteen halal tourism providers in Malaysia, as shown in Table 1. These providers were chosen as they represented registered halal tourism providers in Malaysia. Majority of the companies have their own websites with email addresses to provide related information for their customers. Nonetheless, there are companies that do not provide their email address to the customers. There is also one company that does not have a proper website (World Travel Ambassador Sdn Bhd). Businesses in the modern digital era must have a website and a dedicated email account in order to interact with clients in an efficient manner. The majority of businesses engage in developing user-friendly websites that act as a central repository for information about their products and services after realizing this necessity. Customers may readily contact these websites for questions or help because they usually contain contact details, frequently asked questions, and customer care choices. However, there are still some companies that do not provide an email address for customer communication. This can be due to various reasons, such as a lack of resources, a focus on in-person or phone interactions, or a belief that email communication may not be necessary for their business model. This can lead to frustration for customers who prefer the convenience of email for inquiries, as it allows them to communicate at their own pace and keep a record of their correspondence.

One notable example is World Travel Ambassador Sdn Bhd, which reportedly lacks a proper website. This absence can significantly hinder the company's ability to attract and retain customers. In an era where consumers often research companies online before making a decision, not having a website can limit visibility and credibility. Potential customers may find it challenging to access information about the company's offerings, services, or even basic contact details. Moreover, without a website, World Travel Ambassador Sdn Bhd may miss out on opportunities for online marketing and engagement. A well-designed website can serve as a platform for showcasing travel packages, sharing customer testimonials, and providing valuable travel tips, which can enhance customer trust and interest.

Table 1: Halal tourism providers in Malaysia

Name of company	Website	Email
Wiya Travel and Tours Sdn Bhd	https://wiyatravel.com	info@wiyatravel.com
Kowamas Holidays Sdn Bhd	https://kowamasholidays.com	info@kowamasholidays.com
World Travel Ambassador Sdn Bhd	-	bookingwta@gmail.com
Wan Vacation Sdn Bhd	https://selamatbercuti.com	info@selamatbercuti.com
Tripfez Travel and Tours Sdn Bhd	https://www.tripfez.com	hello@tripfez.com
Al-Quds Umrah And Tours (M) Sdn Bhd	https://www.alqudsttravel.com	inquiry@alqudsttravel.com
Shahmie Travel And Tours Sdn Bhd	https://www.shahmietravel.com.my	sales@shahmietravel.com.my
IBC Tours Corporation (M) Sdn Bhd	https://www.ibctours.com	info@ibctours.com
TH Travel and Services Sdn Bhd	https://www.thts.com.my/	-
Via Vacation And Travel Sdn Bhd	https://viavacation.my/	info@viavacation.my
Kembara Salam Travel and Tours Sdn Bhd	https://www.kembarasalam.com	sales@kembarasalam.com
Al Masyhur International Travel and Tours Sdn Bhd (AMI Travel)	https://www.amitravel.my	kul@amitravel.my
Corporation Information Travel Sdn Bhd	https://cit.travel/	web@cit.travel
Arba Travel and Tours Sdn Bhd	https://arbatravel.com/	-
TM Tours and Travel Sdn Bhd	http://tmtours.com.my	info@tmtours.com.my

In the realm of digital marketing, social media platforms play a pivotal role in how businesses engage with their customers and promote their services. Table 2 highlights the digital marketing strategies employed by halal tourism providers, showcasing the platforms they utilize to reach their target audience. Facebook stands out as the primary digital marketing platform for all halal tourism providers included in the study. This is not surprising, given Facebook's vast user base and its ability to facilitate direct interaction with customers. Providers can share updates, promotions, and engaging content, while also leveraging Facebook's advertising tools to target specific demographics. The platform allows for

community building, where potential travelers can ask questions, share experiences, and receive immediate feedback, fostering a sense of trust and connection.

In addition to Facebook, a significant number of these providers have also embraced Instagram as a complementary marketing channel. Instagram's visually driven nature is particularly advantageous for the tourism industry, where stunning imagery can capture the essence of travel experiences. By showcasing beautiful destinations, halal restaurants available and unique cultural experiences, providers can attract potential customers and inspire them to book their next adventure. Instagram Stories and Reels further enhance engagement, allowing travel companies to share real-time updates and behind-the-scenes content that resonates with their audience.

However, the use of Twitter among halal tourism providers is relatively limited, with only five companies (Kowamas Holidays Sdn. Bhd, Wan Vacation Sdn. Bhd, TH Travel and Tours Sdn. Bhd, Via Vacation and Travel Sdn. Bhd, and Corporation Information Travel Sdn. Bhd) actively utilizing this platform. Twitter's fast-paced environment can be beneficial for sharing quick updates, promotions, and engaging in conversations with customers. Yet, its character limit and the nature of its audience may not align as well with the storytelling aspect of travel marketing compared to platforms like Facebook and Instagram.

Moreover, six companies have recognized the potential of YouTube as a marketing channel. Video content is increasingly popular among consumers, and YouTube serves as an effective platform for showcasing travel experiences through vlogs, destination guides, and customer testimonials. By creating engaging video content, these halal tourism providers can enhance their brand visibility and provide potential customers with a more immersive understanding of their offerings.

Table 2: Digital marketing platforms

Name of company	Instagram	Facebook	Twitter	Youtube	Others
Wiya Travel and Tours Sdn Bhd	@wiyatravel	@Wiya Travel and Tours	-	-	-
Kowamas Holidays Sdn Bhd	@kowamasholidays	@Kowamas Holidays	@Kowamas Holidays	Kowamas Holidays	-
World Travel Ambassador Sdn Bhd	@wta_travel	@World Travel Ambassador Sdn Bhd	-	wtatravel	-
Wan Vacation Sdn Bhd	@selamatbercuti	@selamatbercuti	@selamatbercuti	selamatbercuti	-
Tripfez Travel and Tours Sdn Bhd	@tripfez	@tripfez	-	Tripfez Travel	LinkedIn : Tripfez Travel
Al-Quds Umrah And Tours (M) Sdn Bhd	@alqudsurahtoursofficial	@Al Quds Umrah and Tours Sdn Bhd	-	-	-
Shahmie Travel And Tours Sdn Bhd	@shahmietravelfofficial	@UmrahZiara hByShahmieTr	-	Shahmie Travel	-

			avel / @ShahmieTravel			
IBC Tours Corporation (M) Sdn Bhd	@official_ibctours	@ibctours	-	IBC TOURS CORPORATION M SDN BHD	-	
TH Travel and Services Sdn Bhd	@TabungHajiTravel	@TabungHajiTravel	@THTStweet	-	-	
Via Vacation And Travel Sdn Bhd	@viavacationmy	@Via Vacation and Travel Sdn Bhd	@ViaVacation MY	-	-	
Kembara Salam Travel and Tours Sdn Bhd	-	@kembarasalam	-	-	-	
Al Masyhur International Travel and Tours Sdn Bhd (AMI Travel)	@amitravel.my	@ALMASYHURTRAVEL	-	-	Flickr: AMI Travel	
Corporation Information Travel Sdn Bhd	-	@cit.travel	@corpinfotravel	-	-	
Arba Travel and Tours Sdn Bhd	@arbatravel	@arbatravel	-	-	-	
TM Tours and Travel Sdn Bhd	@tm_tours	@tmtourstravel	-	-	-	

Next, the information provided by halal tourism providers on their social media platforms, as highlighted in Table 3, reflects their commitment to catering to the specific needs and preferences of Muslim travelers. The emphasis on halal meals is particularly significant, as it addresses one of the primary concerns for Muslim tourists seeking assurance that their dietary requirements are met during their travels. By prominently featuring halal meal options, these providers not only attract potential customers but also build trust and credibility within the Muslim community. In addition to halal meals, the mention of "no hidden charges" by four providers is an important aspect of transparency in the travel industry. This assurance can alleviate concerns about unexpected costs, which is a common apprehension among travelers. By clearly communicating their pricing structure, these companies enhance customer confidence and encourage bookings, as travelers feel more secure knowing that they will not encounter surprise fees.

The inclusion of prayer times in itineraries by only two companies, Tripfez Travel and Tours Sdn. Bhd. and Wan Vacation Sdn. Bhd., indicates a thoughtful approach to the spiritual needs of Muslim travelers. Providing this information allows travelers to plan their activities around prayer times, ensuring that they can maintain their religious practices while enjoying their trips. This consideration can significantly enhance the travel experience for Muslim tourists, making it more comfortable and fulfilling. Furthermore, Via Vacation and Travel Sdn. Bhd.'s commitment to ensuring access to mosques and prayer rooms demonstrates an understanding of the importance of religious observance in the lives of Muslim travelers. By highlighting this

aspect, the company not only caters to the spiritual needs of its customers but also positions itself as a provider that genuinely cares about the well-being and comfort of its clients.

Table 3: Information provided from social media

Name of company	Halal food	No hidden charge	Prayer times	Islamic historical site visit
Wiya Travel and Tours Sdn Bhd	provide halal food	all prices included in the package and no hidden charge	-	-
Kowamas Holidays Sdn Bhd	all food mentioned are suitable for muslim except for breakfast	-	-	-
World Travel Ambassador Sdn Bhd	-	-	-	-
Wan Vacation Sdn Bhd	halal and quality food	-	care of musafir prayer time	-
Tripfez Travel and Tours Sdn Bhd	halal or muslim-friendly dishes with local flavors	no hidden charges, tips or charges	muslim-friendly itinerary	-
Al-Quds Umrah And Tours (M) Sdn Bhd	-	-	-	-
Shahmie Travel And Tours Sdn Bhd	muslim friendly package	no hidden charge	-	-
IBC Tours Corporation (M) Sdn Bhd	halal meals	no hidden charge	-	-
TH Travel and Services Sdn Bhd	halal meals	-	-	-
Via Vacation And Travel Sdn Bhd	halal breakfast, lunch and dinner included	-	-	ensure to have access to locations such as mosques, prayer rooms
Kembara Salam Travel and Tours Sdn Bhd	halal meal, halal restaurant	-	-	-
Al Masyhur International Travel and Tours Sdn Bhd (AMI Travel)	halal meal – certain destination	-	-	-
Corporation Information Travel Sdn Bhd	halal cuisine and snacks, halal meal overseas	-	carefully designed travel itineraries- not interfere with daily prayer times	visiting prominent islamic historical sites

Arba Travel and Tours Sdn Bhd	100% food	halal	-	itinerary visits are arranged to keep the prayer time	-
TM Tours and Travel Sdn Bhd	-	-	-	muslim operator	tour

Discussion

It is widely accepted that the internet is a crucial medium for information sharing between consumers and industry players such as halal travel agencies. From the analysis above, almost all halal tourism providers in this study are utilizing Facebook and Instagram as their marketing platforms. However, the usage of YouTube and Twitter are lacking between them. The above analysis reveals that Facebook and Instagram are favoured possibly due to their wide reach, user-friendly interfaces, and ability to engage visually through photos, videos, and stories, which are highly effective in showcasing travel destinations and experiences. However, there is a noticeable underutilization of YouTube and Twitter among these providers. YouTube, with its vast potential for longer, more immersive video content, could be a powerful tool for storytelling and offering in-depth insights into halal travel experiences. Twitter, though more concise, offers opportunities for real-time engagement, customer service, and trend tracking. By not leveraging these platforms, halal tourism providers may be missing out on reaching broader audiences, tapping into different content formats, and engaging with diverse customer segments who prefer video-based content or quick, up-to-date information. Expanding into these platforms could enhance their marketing reach and effectiveness.

Next, the findings indicate that a significant number of halal tourism providers prioritize promoting halal meals in their online marketing efforts. It could be understood since halal food is one of the most significant halal elements that people are aware, although the concept of halal covers more than that. This focus on halal cuisine likely stems from its central importance in attracting Muslim travelers, who seek assurance that the food offered during their travels adheres to Islamic dietary laws. By highlighting halal meals, these providers cater to one of the most crucial aspects of a Muslim traveler's experience, addressing dietary concerns and building trust with potential customers. Emphasising halal meals in their online promotions also allows providers to differentiate themselves in a competitive market, where food quality and authenticity are key selling points. Additionally, by featuring halal dining options in social media posts, websites, and digital ads, they can showcase the variety, cultural richness, and local specialties that align with Islamic principles, further enhancing the appeal of their destinations. This strategy not only attracts a core Muslim audience but also educates non-Muslim travelers about halal food, potentially broadening their market reach. However, while focusing on halal meals is essential, a well-rounded promotion strategy that also highlights other halal-friendly services such as prayer facilities, modest accommodations, and activities aligned with Islamic values could provide a more comprehensive appeal to travelers seeking a fully immersive halal tourism experience.

Additionally, the findings emphasise the importance of honesty in the marketing practices of halal tourism providers, particularly through the mention of "no hidden charges" in their online information. This transparency is crucial for building trust with customers, especially within the context of halal tourism, where ethical practices are highly valued. By clearly stating that there are no hidden fees, these providers not only create a sense of security for travelers but also reinforce the ethical standards that are expected within halal tourism. This approach aligns with Islamic principles, where honesty and fairness in business transactions are fundamental.

However, the findings also reveal that only a small number of providers specifically, three companies that highlighted prayer times or showed concern for facilitating prayer in their promotional efforts. This is a surprising oversight, considering that providing spaces and resources for prayer is a key component of halal tourism. Muslim travelers often prioritize destinations and services that accommodate their religious practices, including access to prayer facilities and knowledge of local prayer times. By not emphasising these aspects in their promotions, many halal tourism providers may be missing an opportunity to attract a more devout customer base that seeks not just halal food, but a more holistic, faith-aligned travel experience. Promoting prayer-related amenities, such as prayer rooms, reminders for prayer times, and nearby mosques, could significantly enhance their appeal to Muslim travelers, who may view these elements as essential for a comfortable and spiritually fulfilling trip. Therefore, incorporating both financial transparency and attention to religious needs in their marketing could strengthen the overall customer experience and build stronger loyalty among Muslim tourists.

According to previous research, halal travel agencies ought to incorporate Islamic Destination Features into their advertising efforts (Suradin, 2018). Nonetheless, this could cause a concern among the non-Muslim visitors (Battour and Ismail, 2016). As a result, there is a lack of standardized methods for conducting digital promotion. The term "digital promotion" describes the use of the internet and web-enabled technology to contact and interact with consumers through a variety of promotional activities. Examples of digital marketing include wearable or virtual reality marketing, blogs, social media, email, mobile, and search engine optimization. As a result, the findings show that nearly all of the halal travel companies in this research are using social media, email, and websites as their primary digital marketing tool plan. The most widely used platforms are Facebook and Instagram, while the least used ones are Flickr, LinkedIn, and Twitter. As evidenced by the fact that digital advertising accounted for 29.9 percent of global media ad spending in 2015 and is predicted to rise to 39.3 percent in 2019 (Comcec Coordination Office, 2016), digital promotion exhibits the strongest market growth sector. Since it offers all the information prospective travelers require, digital marketing content is essential to the promotion of halal travel. Future developments related to halal tourism have been described as a market opportunity that is expected to expand in the years ahead. However, it is important to be more aware of the consequences of greater Shariah observance by Muslims for people and organisations involved in the tourism and hospitality industries (Battour et al., 2010).

Conclusion

This study analyses current digital marketing practices of halal tourism providers in Malaysia. The advertising strategy will indicate the understanding and application of business communication among halal tourism providers in delivering their messages and information to the public. Online research plays an important role in determining travellers' decisions nowadays, signifying the important effect of new technologies in the communication area for the tourism industry (Akyol and Kilinc, 2014). Therefore, these halal tourism providers must have knowledge as well as guidelines on how to promote their business and activities. While many companies understand the importance of a digital presence, those that do not provide email communication or lack a proper website may face challenges in customer engagement and satisfaction. Hence, investing in a website and establishing clear communication channels could be crucial steps toward improving customer relations and expanding their market reach.

In this research, the digital marketing landscape for halal tourism providers is predominantly shaped by the use of Facebook and Instagram, which allow for rich visual storytelling and community engagement. While Twitter and YouTube are utilized by a smaller number of companies, they still offer unique opportunities for communication and content sharing. As the digital marketing landscape continues to evolve, these halal tourism providers must adapt their strategies to leverage the strengths of each platform, ensuring they effectively reach and engage their target audience. Notably, the information shared by halal tourism providers on social media plays a crucial role in addressing the unique needs of Muslim travellers. By focusing on halal meals, transparent pricing, prayer times, and access to religious facilities, these companies are effectively enhancing their appeal to the Muslim market. As the halal tourism sector continues to grow, such considerations will be vital in attracting and retaining customers who seek travel experiences that align with their values and beliefs.

Saeed et al. (2001) asserted that "the principles of justice, magnanimity, cooperation, encouraging goodness and forbidding wrong, and above all, seeking Allah's pleasure by serving consumers and society at large, should guide people's behavior, whether as consumers or marketers." Advertising messages should therefore present pleasant pictures and have a favorable impact on prospective tourists. Given the nature of digital marketing today, it is recommended that halal tourist services be heavily promoted through the use of digital advertising strategies. This will be one of the business opportunities to reach a wider audience, especially Muslims worldwide. Nonetheless, this study has few limitations. Firstly, the sample for this study may not be large enough for the purpose of generalisation. Secondly, the analysis was done only through information available online within a defined period, and does not represent latest practice. Therefore, marketing practices through other media such as advertisements in magazines, newspapers or television were not included.

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