

Implementation of Halal Tourism Through Thailand Muslim Friendly Application in Thailand

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Abstract

Based on data from the Department of Tourism, the number of Muslim tourists coming to Thailand in 2022 reach more than 3 million tourists. To make it easier for Muslim tourists to travel in Thailand, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) created an application that makes it easier for Muslim tourists to find halal facilities and services. The Thailand Muslim Friendly app is available to search for registered Muslim-friendly facilities and guidebooks for Muslim travelers. Various facilities are available in this application such as halal restaurants, nearby places for prayer, Qibla direction, shopping centers and other facilities. This application can be accessed with or without internet connection. Based on information from the Tourism and Sports Economy Division at the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, to date the arrival of Muslim tourists has contributed 689 billion baht in revenue to Thailand. To develop and encourage the growth of halal tourism in Thailand, the Ministry of Tourism and Sports in collaboration with Chulalongkorn University, this includes in-depth research on the characteristics and behavior of Muslim tourists. To analyze this paper, a library research method is used through a qualitative approach.

INTRODUCTION

Since pre-historic times humans have traveled or moved from place to place in search of their basic needs, namely clothing, food, and shelter or clothing, food, and also temporary and permanent housing. As time goes by humans travel not only because of their basic needs, but the human motivation for traveling has changed to become increasingly diverse such as trade, cultural dissemination, population movements, religious activities such as preaching, gaining knowledge, and traveling for fun to unwind. Traveling for recreation or to unwind is what we now call traveling or tourism. The word tourist itself was first used and recorded in history in the 1800s (Bunghez, 2015). Some experts argue that tourism is an activity that can be described as a circle because people who go traveling will return to their place of origin again after traveling. Historians argue that the beginning of the rise of human travel occurred in England during the industrial revolution where at that time many middle-class people began to emerge and the decline in transportation costs that were previously unaffordable to the wider community. The development of air transportation after World War 2 sparked a massive development of people traveling outside their home regions. This development gave birth to a new industry, namely the tourism industry (THEOBALD, 2005).

Over time, the tourism industry has also developed to keep up with market demand. With the increasing population of Muslims in the world, it is not surprising that there is a tourism sector that is focused on meeting the demands of the Muslim community. This is called halal tourism or halal tourism. The concept of halal itself in Islam is something that is allowed to be consumed or used, not only applies to food but also includes objects and service products such as cosmetics, savings accounts, medicines, and in this context is tourism. Although there is no specific definition of halal tourism, but usually what is meant by halal tourism is offering tourism specifically designed to accommodate Muslim tourists with adequate needs and facilities (Chandra, 2014). The topic of halal tourism in our opinion is an interesting topic to discuss, and the country that has successfully implemented halal tourism is Thailand in the Southeast Asian region. In this paper, the author will discuss the concept of halal tourism in more depth, then halal tourism in Thailand and its data, and Thailand's implementation of the concept of halal tourism.

The number of Muslim tourists is a major factor in realizing halal tourism. The concept of halal tourism is not to replace or compete with conventional tourism. Halal tourism is present to accompany conventional tourism and become a complement to meet the needs of a large segment of the world's Muslim tourists. The Muslim world has the potential to become a very large tourism market, in addition to the important role of tourism in improving the economy of a country. This has led a number of countries in the world to develop a model of tourism that is friendly to Muslim tourists called halal tourism. There are many countries that apply the concept of halal tourism, even countries with a majority non-Muslim population also apply the concept of halal tourism, for example in Thailand. Of the many countries that apply the concept of halal tourism, Thailand is the country that best applies the concept of halal tourism. Thailand even has a research center called The Halal Science Center at Chulalongkorn University. The research center works closely with the Thai Government and religious institutions to create halal certification and standardization for the tourism industry. The creation of certificates and standardization is carried out with transparent financing. This tourism concept is growing rapidly in Thailand, even though Thailand is not a country with a majority non-Muslim population. Thailand is predominantly Buddhist, but parts of its southern region are predominantly Muslim. Known for its laissez-faire attitude towards

tourists, its snow-white beaches, and as an aviation hub, Thailand attracts millions of tourists every year.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In "Prospect of Halal Green Tourism in Brunei Darussalam" by Nor Surilawana Sulaiman and Norkhairiah Hashim explained about Halal Green Tourism as one of the strategies in halal tourism because it involves sustainable and environmentally friendly elements. Halal green tourism offers tour packages that not only pay attention to sharia or halal compliance in facility and service activities, but also care for the environment by reducing the negative impact of tourism on nature. Thus, halal green tourism provides a tourism experience that is not only economically beneficial but also has a positive impact on social, cultural and environmental sustainability. (Sulaiman & Hashim, 2023). The method used in the study used a qualitative approach by collecting secondary data. The concepts used include green tourism and halal tourism. The method used in the study used a qualitative approach by collecting secondary data. The concepts used include green tourism and halal tourism. Sulaiman and Hashim also presented a SWOT analysis of Brunei's tourism industry, concluding that Brunei offers an ideal balance between environmentally-friendly and halal-friendly services, making it an attractive destination. The difference between "Prospect of Halal Green Tourism in Brunei Darussalam" by Nor Surilawana Sulaiman and Norkhairiah Hashim with this paper is that although both discuss halal tourism strategies, the difference lies in the use of application technology and the promotion of environmental sustainability.

"New Product for Halal Tourism: Halal Honeymoon" by Cengiz Gok and Pinar Celik discusses how Halal Honeymoon is one of the strategies in halal tourism by creating innovative products that meet the needs of newlywed Muslim travelers. This product offers services that comply with Islamic requirements, such as halal-friendly accommodation, halal food, and leisure activities that are in accordance with their religious beliefs and values. Through travel packages specially designed for Muslim newlywed couples, halal honeymoon becomes one of the ways to increase the competitiveness and sustainability of the Muslim tourism market (Gok & Celik, n.d.) The method used by Gok & Celik is descriptive analysis, where the research focuses on new product development in terms of halal tourism, especially "halal honeymoon" products to meet the needs of Muslim tourists, such as religious travel, leisure travel, honeymoon travel and cultural experiences. In addition, this study also explores the key elements in halal tourism product development, and highlights the potential for economic growth and tourism development in meeting the needs of the Muslim travel market through innovative products such as halal honeymoon packages. The difference of "New Product for Halal Tourism: Halal Honeymoon" by Cengiz Gok and Pinar Celik with this research is that Gok & Celik focus on destination product development while this research focuses on tools to increase tourist accessibility to halal tourism.

"Halal Tourism: World Cup Qatar 2022" by Muhammad Agus Futuhul Ma'wa, Syarifah Salsabila Babud, Alimatul Listiyah discusses the world cup which is a halal tourism strategy by considering Islamic values and principles in organizing the event. Qatar, as the host of the 2022 World Cup, has adopted the concept of halal tourism by prohibiting activities that are contrary to Islamic teachings, such as the prohibition of alcohol consumption and the prohibition for couples who are not husband and wife to stay in the same hotel room. In addition, the provision of shariah-compliant services, such

as halal food and certified worship facilities, are also part of the halal tourism strategy implemented during the world cup. The world cup thus becomes a platform to promote halal tourism and attract Muslim tourists who value religious values in their travel experience. This strengthens Qatar's position as a Muslim-friendly tourist destination and contributes to the economic growth of the host country (Ma'wa et al., n.d.). The research method used by Ma'wa et al. Uses a qualitative approach with secondary data, while the concept used is halal tourism. Differences in "Halal Tourism: World Cup Qatar 2022" by Muhammad Agus Futuhul Ma'wa, Syarifah Salsabila Babud, Alimatul Listiyah with this research lies in the focus of the discussion, the world cup as an attraction and promotion while on the other hand application technology is used to facilitate access to halal tourism information.

METHOD

This research is a descriptive study through a qualitative approach by applying the library research method. Literature-based research uses literature as the object of study. This approach is in accordance with the research conditions that are required to deal with the limited data used in the research. The data used in this research is secondary data, namely books, previous journal articles, and other appropriate sources such as websites, the internet, and others. The analysis technique used in this research is content analysis technique. The analysis technique is used to analyze the content of text or available media, such as documents, books, articles, and so on.

The concept used to analyze in this study is the concept of halal tourism. Halal tourism is a concept applied in the tourism industry that follows Islamic principles. This concept involves various aspects, such as worship facilities, transportation access, communication, environment, and services that comply with Islamic sharia.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Concept of Halal Tourism

Halal tourism has been introduced since 2000 from the discussion of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) meeting as a forum for increasing Islamic solidarity between countries. During the OIC meeting, it has proposed tourist activities in Muslim-majority countries to generate income and increase the development of these countries. Halal tourism is a demand based on the lifestyle of Muslim tourists during vacation, besides that halal tourism is flexible, rational, simple and balanced tourism. Halal tourism or halal tourism is a model or package of additional services or extended services amenity that is shown and given to meet the experiences and desires of Muslim tourists (Kemenparekraf, 2022). Halal tourism focuses more on additional services provided by tourism and creative economy businesses in order to comply with the halal category. For example, a hotel provides whatever Muslim tourists need, then the hotel has run halal tourism. Muslim-friendly tourism means when tourist destinations can provide routes or places that make Muslim tourists feel safe and comfortable, such as when praying or eating, while on vacation.

The Characteristics of Halal Tourism. Conventional tourism and halal tourism, of course, there are differences between the two, both in terms of services and management systems. There are eight standard factors or benchmarks of halal tourism in terms of

administration and management for all halal tourists which can be a characteristic in itself, namely:

1. Providing services to tourists must match the overall Muslim principle.
2. Guides and staff must have discipline and respect for Islamic principles.
3. Organize all activities so as not to conflict with Islamic principles.
4. Buildings must conform to Islamic principles. For example, the hotel must have a Qibla pointer. Also, cleaning hoses must be present in every room.
5. Restaurants must follow international standards of halal service.
6. Transportation services must have a security protection system.
7. There are places provided for all Muslim travelers to perform religious activities, and
8. Traveling to places that are not against Islamic principles.

In addition, the supporting aspects of halal tourism from the various characteristics above, there are several important aspects as supporting halal tourism to be better known and seen by tourists, namely:

1. The location of tourist attractions must be a place that is allowed to apply Islamic rules and can increase the spiritual values of tourists.
2. Transportation means that in sharia tourism this is focused on the regulatory system, for example the separation between women's seats and men's seats, so that the Islamic law will continue to run and the comfort of tourists.
3. Consumption, many studies have shown that this food factor is one of the benchmarks for tourists to choose a tourist destination.
4. Sharia hotels are defined as hotels whose overall standardization, be it facilities, food, spa services, guest room swimming pools or gyms, must all use sharia principles. The sharia principle referred to here is the principle of Islamic law related to various tourism activities based on fatwas issued by the authorized institution in Indonesia itself (in this case MUI). And the main point of reference in this principle that all forms of halal tourism operations must avoid polytheism, disobedience, mischief, tabzir / israf, and obscenity. As well as being able to increase benefits and benefits, both materially and spiritually.

Thailand Muslim Friendly Application as Halal Tourism Implementation

The number of Muslim tourists is a major factor in realizing halal tourism. The concept of halal tourism is not to replace or compete with conventional tourism. Halal tourism is present to accompany conventional tourism and become a complement to meet the needs of a large segment of the world's Muslim tourists. The Muslim world has the potential to become a very large tourism market, in addition to the important role of tourism in improving the economy of a country. This has led a number of countries in the world to develop a model of tourism that is friendly to Muslim tourists called halal tourism. There are many countries that apply the concept of halal tourism, even countries with a majority non-Muslim population also apply the concept of halal tourism, for example in Thailand. Of the many countries that apply the concept of halal tourism, Thailand is the country that best applies the concept of halal tourism. Thailand even has a research center called The Halal Science Center at Chulalongkorn University. The research center works with the Thai Government and religious institutions to create halal certification and standardization for the tourism industry. The creation of certificates and standardization is carried out with transparent financing. This tourism concept is growing rapidly in Thailand, even though Thailand is not a country with a majority non-Muslim population.

Thailand is predominantly Buddhist, but parts of its southern region are predominantly Muslim. Known for its laissez-faire attitude towards tourists, its snow-white beaches, and as an aviation hub, Thailand attracts millions of tourists every year.

Under the concept of halal tourism, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) launched also created an application that makes it easier for tourists to find halal facilities and services. The Thailand Muslim Friendly app is available to search for registered Muslim-friendly facilities and guidebooks for Muslim travelers. Various facilities are available in this application such as halal restaurants, nearby places of worship, Qibla direction, shopping centers and other facilities. This app can be accessed with or without internet connection. If the user does not have internet access, there is also an offline ebook that contains the full address of mosques and halal restaurants in Thailand. The app is available in Thai and English, but is in the process of adding other languages, including Arabic and Indonesian. The Thai government's efforts to develop the halal tourism sector are actually also part of a policy to address the disparity between the North and South of Thailand. The Southern region is inhabited by poor Muslim communities. To empower the poor and underdeveloped Muslim community, the government launched three policies. First, it runs Islamic banks such as Government Savings Bank, Bank of Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives, and Islamic Bank of Thailand. Second, the government financed a program to strengthen the halal industry (including tourism) to create jobs for Thai Muslims, even by developing Arabic in their communities to serve Middle Eastern tourists. Third, the government has implemented zakat services for the Thai Muslim community. This means that the Thai government is running a dual approach tourism with a division of regional focus, namely the Southern region is more directed towards halal tourism and the Northern region is more towards conventional tourism while still paying attention to the needs of Muslim tourists. Thailand's tourism board hopes the new app will help boost Thailand's tourism sector, which contributes around 10 percent to the country's economy.

The success of Thailand's tourism sector is inseparable from the efforts of the Thai government which continues to promote tourism in Thailand such as its natural beauty, culinary, religious tourism, cultural and historical diversity, and the hospitality of its people even the Thai government also makes typical food from Thailand as their subject in strengthening relations between countries and showing identity as a white elephant country with its cultural diversity. In the seriousness of the government to promote Thai tourism, here the government also wants to introduce the long cultural and historical diversity owned by Thailand to the international world because as we know that Thailand which is a white elephant country is famous for its cultural diversity both from dances, temples, traditional sports and here the government continues to strive to show the entire culture owned by Thailand.

Increasing Number of Muslim Travelers to Thailand

As a country with a majority Buddhist community, Thailand has a strong desire to encourage and make itself a halal tourism destination. The high desire to develop halal tourism in Thailand can be seen in GMTI 2023. The Global Muslim Travel Index or GMTI is a comprehensive report that analyzes and ranks global destinations in their ability to meet the needs of Muslim travelers. In 2023 Thailand scored 52 out of 100 in the GMTI score and placed 28th in the GMTI Rank out of nearly 140 countries. GMTI assesses tourist destinations through four main criteria namely access, communication, environment, and services. When compared to other countries in the Southeast Asia

region, Thailand still loses to Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore in GMTI Score where the two countries get a score of 73 and Singapore gets 64 GMTI Score. If we put aside the rank and score obtained by Thailand, then what is the attraction of Thailand in the eyes of world Muslim tourists? According to Puwarest Ahmadthirakul as managing director of Royal Thai Travel and Trading Co Ltd. What attracts Muslim tourists to Thailand is Thai hospitality, lifestyles, and facilities. Some of these aspects are what make Muslim tourists interested in visiting Thailand. In 2022, 110 million international Muslim travelers were recorded in the Global Muslim Travel Index 2023. The number of Muslim travelers in 2022 represents 12% of all international arrivals. When compared to the number of Muslim travelers before the Covid-19 pandemic, there was an increase of 68% in 2022. GMTI predicts that there will be an increase in the number of Muslim tourists in 2023 to 140 million tourists, in 2024 to 160 million tourists, and in 2028 with predictions reaching 230 million global Muslim tourists. Seeing the massive growth in Muslim tourists, the spokesperson of the Thai government, Rachada Dhnadirek stated that Thailand wants to make itself the main destination for Muslim tourists in 2027. This is not without reason, based on data from the Department of Tourism, the number of Muslim tourists coming to Thailand in 2022 will reach more than 3 million tourists. The number of Muslim tourists vacationing in Thailand in 2022 has increased significantly when compared to 2017 which was only 875,043 Muslim tourists. The majority or many Muslim tourists in Thailand come from countries in the Middle East and Asian region. In addition, the increasing number and high purchasing power of Muslim tourists make them the main focus of Thailand's tourism sector. Making Muslim tourists the main focus in Thai tourism is also reinforced through the statement of Athuek Phrasenmoon who is the Director of the DoT's Tourist Attractions Development Division, he stated that Muslim tourists are now the main targeted tourist group in the global tourism industry. This is due to their fast growth and high purchasing power. To achieve Thailand's goal of becoming a premier destination for Muslim tourists, the Department of Tourism or DoT has prepared a 5-year plan with the aim of improving service quality to meet global standards. Thailand's five-year plan covers several aspects such as providing various products to halal activities.

Collaboration with Related Parties in the Thai Tourism Industry

One of the important factors for Muslim travelers in traveling is the availability and ease of accessing halal food. Faizal Bahardeen who is the CEO and Founder of CrescentRating said "While by no means a monolith, Muslim travelers are often looking for their travel plans to align with certain faith-oriented criteria, such as availability of Halal foods, rooms for prayer, and encouraging communications and messaging from destinations". To meet the needs of Muslim tourists, halal facilities are needed to attract Muslim tourists. One of the halal facilities is halal certification, certification is needed to ensure the quality of raw and processed food supplies and restaurants and others in accordance with religious rules. To prove the halal certification of products or restaurants, what is done is to print the halal logo on the packaging and restaurants can prove the certification by displaying it clearly. As of 2015, there are more than 3000 companies in Thailand that have obtained halal certification and cover 120,000 products. The Halal Industry in Thailand is controlled by the Central Islamic Committee of Thailand (CICOT) and supported by several institutions, such as the Halal Science Center (HSC) of Chulalongkorn University. On the other hand, the government also launched an e-

guidebook in two versions, namely Thai and English. The guidebook launched by the Thai government contains Muslim-Friendly and Gastronomy Tourism Routes.

In addition to certification facilities to provide halal food and restaurants, there are also halal hotels. The increase of Muslim tourists and halal tourism in Thailand encourages the government to meet the needs of Muslim tourists by providing halal hotels and services. To encourage the progress of halal tourism, Thailand ensures that their hospitality industry meets halal requirements for Muslim travelers. Thailand's hospitality industry is growing and becoming more Muslim friendly for Muslim travelers when the opening of Al Meroz Hotel in 2015 which is the first halal hotel in Thailand. The hotel received halal certification from Dubai-based Gulf Halal organization. When looking for areas in Thailand to entertain Muslim travelers, there are some recommended areas of Thailand that can be said to be Muslim friendly areas, namely:

1. Bangkok: the Bangkok area is recommended because it has several mosques. One of the mosques located in the Muslim residential area of Bangkok is the Jamek Mosque and is one of the largest mosques in Thailand. For halal food, Bangkok has many options. Usman Thai Muslim Food, Yana Restaurant, Ibu Restaurant, Beyond Food, and Sophia Restaurant are some examples of restaurants that provide halal food in Bangkok with various types of cuisine from several regions such as Thailand, Middle East, to Malaysia.
2. Phuket: Phuket area is famous for its natural beauty such as Green Elephant Sanctuary Park and Banana Beach. Although it is not an area where the majority of people are Muslim, Phuket is a Muslim Friendly area because there are several mosques such as the Nurul Islam Mosque. To fulfill the food needs of Muslim tourists, Phuket also has several halal restaurants and shops.
3. Yala: Yala area is located in the south of Thailand and is an area with a large Muslim population. Yala is famous for its natural beauty, to accommodate Muslim tourists there are several mosques such as Yala Central Mosque. Just like Phuket, Yala also has several halal restaurants and markets.

To further encourage Thailand in providing halal tourism needs, the Thai Ministry of Tourism and Sports created a project to develop halal tourism and services with the aim of increasing the potential of the halal tourism market in Thailand. In order to launch the halal tourism development project, the Ministry of Tourism and Sports cooperates with several parties, one of which is to establish cooperation with Chulalongkorn University. The cooperation between the Ministry and the University includes in-depth research on the characteristics and behavior of Muslim tourists.

Economic Impact of Increased Muslim Tourist Visits

According to the 2019 Global Muslim Travel Index, Thailand is ranked second out of 10 non-OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation) countries most frequently visited by Muslim travelers. Singapore tops the ranking, followed by Thailand. Following Thailand are the United Kingdom, South Africa, Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan, France, Spain, and the United States. Thailand as a non-OIC country has an average score of 61.2 and 67.3 in Muslim tourist visits. This evaluation includes services, environment, accessibility, and communication, which are important to provide a comfortable experience for visiting Muslim tourists. Although the Muslim community in Thailand is a minority, it does not cover the fact that many Muslim tourists visit Thailand (Purnama et al, 2021). One of the

economic focuses in Thailand is on the tourism sector. Thailand's popularity as a tourist destination can be seen from the many cities that are the main destinations for tourists, such as Bangkok, Pattaya, Phuket, Yala, Narathiwat and others. Muslim tourists visiting Thailand can easily find halal restaurants and products through Thailand Muslim Friendly app. Muslim travelers play an important role in the growth of Thailand's tourism industry as they constitute a large market segment. Thailand is a desirable destination for Muslim travelers because the country provides various facilities that are friendly to their needs, such as halal restaurants, places of worship for Muslims, and accommodations with special facilities, such as bathrooms facing the qibla. In addition, Thailand also has an interesting history and culture for Muslim tourists, such as traces of past Islamic kingdoms and preserved Islamic cultural heritage. The presence of Muslim tourists contributes positively to the Thai economy through revenue from the tourism sector and also enriches the tourist experience for those from the Muslim community (Euis Amalia, 2024).

Utilization of the Thailand Muslim Friendly application encourages Thailand's economic growth. The convenience of Muslim tourists visiting Thailand in using the Thailand Muslim Friendly application to find food, hotels, and places of worship has increased Thailand's economic sector. Thailand Muslim Friendly application services in providing recommendations to Muslim tourists provide an increase in the country's economic sector and local businesses. Based on information from the Tourism and Sports Economy Division at the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, to date Muslim tourist arrivals have contributed 689 billion baht in revenue to Thailand (Khazanah, 2022). Halal tourism is the driving force of the Thai economy, especially in areas with large Muslim populations. The Thai people, especially in the Southern Thailand region, have an economy that is still lagging behind other regions, but with the Muslim Thailand Friendly application, the economy in the Southern Thailand region is starting to improve. The Southern Thailand region has a predominantly Muslim local community, so Muslim travelers come to Thailand and Southern Thailand in search of Muslim Friendly facilities and infrastructure. As for halal tourism, there are some recommended locations in Thailand, such as the halal district in the southern part of Phuket Island. Also, in Charoen Krung, Bangkok, which is adjacent to the famous shopping center, Asiatique. Various halal dishes are available in this place, ranging from Biryani Rice, Tom Yum, Mango Sticky Rice, and authentic Thai Ice Tea (CNN Indonesia, 2023). The immediate impacts of increased tourist numbers include increased revenue for local businesses, job growth in the tourism sector, and overall economic development in the region.

Local Community Empowerment and Thai Government Efforts in Halal Tourism Development and Promotion

Implementing halal tourism has a significant difference with conventional tourism because it requires the development of tourism in accordance with Islamic principles and values based on Islamic sharia and law. Thailand has a commitment in developing and promoting halal tourism. In developing halal tourism, Thai people must see the basic needs of Muslim tourists when traveling, such as providing places of worship for Muslim tourists to perform mandatory worship, as well as ensuring the availability of food and drinks that meet halal standards (Purnama et al, 2021). The Thailand Muslim Friendly application itself is one of the ways the Thai government develops and promotes halal tourism. The development of the Thailand Muslim Friendly App in the context of halal tourism requires collaboration with local communities. The community can help identify

Muslim-friendly places such as halal restaurants, lodging, and tourist visits. For example, in the Thailand Muslim Friendly app, we can search for halal restaurants such as Usman Thai Muslim Food. This restaurant is a halal restaurant located in the capital city, Bangkok founded by Usman Yama, a Muslim resident in Southern Thailand and visited by many Muslim tourists (Danang, 2023). By promoting their restaurant business on the application, it can have an impact on business people as well as the ease of Muslim tourists in finding halal places. The local community can also help in creating cultural and educational content for Muslim tourists, as well as providing training to the local workforce on halal tourism services. With the support of local communities, the app can be more effectively promoted and adopted by Muslim travelers, while benefiting the local economy and culture.

The Halal Science Center at Chulalongkorn University works with the government and religious institutions to develop halal certification and standardization for the tourism industry, with transparent funding. The Central Islamic Council of Thailand (CICOT), the center is an important hub in the development of halal products in Thailand. CICOT has a key role in setting guidelines and standards for halal certification in Thailand, with around 100 certified halal auditors to ensure product conformity to set standards. Cooperation between scientists and Islamic scholars at CICOT has resulted in innovative and high-quality halal products (Euis Amalia, 2024). The Thai government actively cooperates with Muslim countries and Islamic international organizations to develop halal tourism in the Southern Thailand region. One form of this cooperation is through participation in international forums such as the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT). In the IMT-GT meeting, the discussion on halal tourism became one of the focuses, recognizing the great potential of this sector in driving economic growth in the Southeast Asian region. As a result, a halal tourism route is planned from Aceh in Indonesia, through Penang and Phuket in Malaysia, to Hat Yai, Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat in Thailand. This pathway aims to facilitate cooperation between countries in the development of halal tourism with a focus on building infrastructure that supports the comfort and safety of Muslim tourists (Billee et al, 2019). In addition, the government makes efforts to develop halal tourism in Thailand by providing mandatory worship facilities and infrastructure for Muslim tourists such as at Suvarnabhumi International Airport in Bangkok, Muslim tourists have been facilitated with prayer rooms available for them to worship. In addition, almost every shopping mall in Thailand also provides prayer rooms for Muslim visitors. Despite the insignificant Muslim population in the country, halal tourism is growing rapidly in Thailand, with the successful merging of halal and conventional tourism concepts, even though only about 5% of the total population is Muslim in Southeast Asia.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of halal tourism through the Thailand Muslim Friendly app in Thailand was created by the Tourism Authority of Thailand to assist Muslim travelers in finding halal facilities and services easily. The app provides information on halal restaurants, prayer locations, Qibla direction, shopping centers, and other facilities. Through this app, Muslim travelers can access these services with or without an internet connection. The contribution of Muslim travelers to the Thai economy and the cooperation between the Ministry of Tourism and Sports and Chulalongkorn University are significant enough to develop halal tourism in the country. In addition, the successful

implementation of halal tourism in Thailand was compared with other countries and the potential for growth in this sector was discussed. Overall, the importance of meeting the needs of Muslim tourists and promoting halal tourism in Thailand was emphasized.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors expressly declare that there is no conflict of interest that may affect the writing or publication of their article entitled "Implementation of Halal Tourism Through Thailand Muslim Friendly Application in Thailand". The authors have conducted careful research on this topic without any personal attachments or interests that might interfere with the accuracy or results of the research they disclose. This submission is intended to assure the reader that the article was prepared and presented with honesty, neutrality, and freedom from any form of bias. By affirming the absence of conflicts of interest, the authors confirm their commitment to the principles of scientific integrity and transparency in presenting research results. In addition, this explanation provides a framework for the reader to understand that the research was conducted objectively and accurately, and that the findings expressed are based on rigorous analysis and not influenced by irrelevant external factors. By providing additional relevant information, the authors also provide an opportunity for readers to assess the validity and reliability of the research results that have been presented, thus strengthening the credibility of the entire article. Thus, the declaration of no conflict of interest not only reflects the integrity and academic responsibility of the authors, but also strengthens the reader's confidence in the quality and reliability of the research presented.

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