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A Review of Halal Tourism Marketing Strategies During The COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

This article review is intended to examine marketing strategies from several publications published concerning the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Halal tourism industry. A search in the database of Mendeley using a search string ["Halal tourism" AND "COVID-19"] conducted in June 2021 resulted in fourteen documents. These documents were then filtered in terms of the years of publication, the subject areas, type of document, category of access, and written in English. These papers were published in the areas related to Islamic Economics, Business, Marketing and Halal industry from 2020 to 2021 resulted in six relevant documents. Only relevant documents were selected for further analysis after the documents were reviewed for eligibility by looking at the abstracts and findings. The findings suggested marketing strategies as the key factors to be applied during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure the sustainability and continuity of halal tourism. COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the tourism industry globally. This review article investigates the segmentation, target market, and positioning (STP) and 7P's marketing strategies for the Halal tourism industry during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Halal tourism; Halal industry; COVID-19 pandemic; Marketing strategies, marketing mix; STP

1. Introduction

The tourism sector also referred to as travel industry comprise of several sectors such as transportation, accommodation, food and beverage, entertainment and others extended industries such as financial services, educational and travel agencies. Tourism been associated with individuals who basically the tourists travelling to other areas either locally or globally, for leisure, social, or business reasons. In contrast, the Halal tourism refers to Muslim travel activities that are performed in line with Islam and are compliance with rules of Islamic law or Shariah (El-Gohary, 2020). Motives of the early travelers were driven by the desire to improve human well-being, wellness, and health benefits while visiting their preferred vacation destination (Razak, 2020). Meanwhile, the tourists nowadays may be inspired to travel for a variety of reasons, including cultural curiosity, self- improvement, professional purposes, or personal reasons such as visiting friends and relatives.

The mobility of visitors to various tourist destinations has socioeconomic repercussions, for example based on the tourism sector data, the direct contribution to GDP in 2019 was approximately 2.9 trillion US dollars (Lock, 2021). However, the resilience of the tourism industry including Halal tourism have been tested by the COVID-19 outbreak globally and were severely damaged by the following year. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), tourism has lost over US\$4.5 trillion in 2020, with its contribution to GDP decreasing by a staggering 49.1 percent compared to the previous year, that is relative to a 3.7 percent GDP decline of the global economy due to ongoing restrictions to mobility. Previously, WTTC predicted that 50 million jobs in the global travel and tourism sector might be threatened, but 62 million jobs were lost and leaving just 272 million people working across sector worldwide, down from 334 million in 2019 (Nicola et al., 2020).

Hence, crisis management is critical for Halal tourism to develop a sustainable halal tourism system, promote social resilience, and provide recommendations for Muslim tourists and industry managers in catastrophe recovery (Sofyan et al., 2021). Overall, there seems to be an evidence to indicate that a well-plan marketing strategy is vital

since it closes related with Muslim tourists as consumers to the industry. The marketing plan and strategies should be targeted at reducing the industry economic harm of an unrestrained spread of the virus.

2. Methodology

A literature search on Mendeley database has been retrieved in the month of June 2021 focusing on English language academic journal articles and open sources. This peer-reviewed journal articles were searched by using string ["Halal tourism" AND "COVID-19"] was specified for most relevant articles that appear in the title, or the abstract, or the keywords of the articles. A preliminary search resulted in 14 documents published from 2020 until 2021. Only two years were selected due to the crisis of COVID-19 has started first case in Wuhan, China in December 2019. There were only six documents that were shortlisted after filtering by year of publication, document type, and access category. The next stage was to analyze the papers for eligibility by examining their relation to the study's purpose. Only eligible papers were downloaded and examined from the database, and they were published in the areas related to Islamic Economics, Business, Marketing and Halal industry. Finally, the subject matter of discussion and findings that based on segmentation, targeting, positioning (STP) and 7P's marketing strategies in the Halal tourism industry during the COVID-19 pandemic been revealed.

3. Findings (Analysis of Articles Review)

The articles were reviewed in terms of their discussions and findings pertaining to segmentation, targeting, and positioning strategy and marketing mix of halal tourism during Covid 19 pandemic. Core interpretation of the variables used in the articles is highly crucial to guarantee the variables match to the concepts under interest in the area. For example, El-Gohary (2020) in his study highlighted that, success of the halal tourism is closely related to the transport connectivity between locations destinations of origin and destination. In the same vein, Maulana et al. (2020) assert that *Place* strategy is strength for halal tourism because successful service distribution will lead to competitive advantage. Collectively, both studies provide similar insight of *Place* strategy and distribution even though using a different variable.

Hence, in assessing these articles, we examine the operational definition of the variables and the instruments used to represent the variables. Major analysis of the articles review focused on the findings about the halal market characteristics and the implication of its marketing mix strategy. The marketing strategy formulation for halal tourism is discussed in the following subtopics.

3.1 Segmentation, targeting and positioning (STP)

In his thorough examination of the market segment, Peristiwo (2021) conclude that halal tourism is aimed at Muslim customers. However, it is also embraced to non-Muslim customers as halal tourism which likely to offer additional values in term of safe and healthy, while embedding Islamic principles as a universal value service. Other authors (Maulana et al., 2020) hold the view that the market segment targeted to some group of customers, such as tourists, which can be classified as personal or on vacation consumers. Peristiwo (2021) in his study also identify a notable impact of tourism companies targeted internal customers referring to employees in the marketing context. Meanwhile internal customer is found as another important segment to the tourism industry (Maulana et al., 2020; Peristiwo, 2021).

According to Maulana et al., (2020) halal tourism management must establish a positioning content which heighten the message that halal services conform to the hygiene standards during this pandemic. Since halal tourism sector that has suffered major losses, the positioning of positive impact of hygiene, security, physical condition, wellbeing, environmental preservation, and regional regulations, able to strengthen halal tourism (Muawanah et al., 2021).

3.2 Marketing Mix for Halal Tourism

Marketing mix has been elaborated consisting of the seven marketing elements which are product/service, price, place, promotion, people, physical environment, and process. Throughout this review only Maulana et al., (2020) has describe all the marketing elements involved. On the other hand El-Gohary (2020) focused only on product and services. Meanwhile Muawanah et al. (2021) and Peristiwo (2021) discussed on price and place respectively.

The table below summarized the discussion pertaining to all marketing mix as for the subject matter.

Table 1: Marketing Mix of Halal Hospitality Industry

Article	Marketing Mix	Remarks
El-Gohary (2020)	Product/service	The halal hospitality will stay regardless of pandemic impacts and will continue to grow and reach full potential
Muawanah et al. (2021)	Price	Budget support from stakeholders as cost-efficient strategy
Maulana et al. (2020)	Product Price Promotion Place Physical environment Process People	Service as competitive advantage Price strategy based on cost, value, and competition. Collaborative action in posting the pictures on consumer social media. Distribution includes physical, electronic channels, or both. Noticeable evidence of service quality Design of customer service processes to ensure consistency in service quality. Productive service providers will provide high quality services.
Peristiwo (2021)	Place	Logistics needs to be regulated in halal tourism as an essential element for a viable halal tourism strategy during the pandemic.

4. Implications

The findings of this article review, provide an insight into the marketing mix that is currently being practiced and will be implemented in the future by companies in the halal tourism industry throughout the crisis, notably the COVID-19 pandemic. During the crisis, impacted industries particularly halal tourism should re-evaluate and modify the relevant marketing strategies in order to remain competitive in the market and contribute significantly not only to the industry but also to the country's economic growth. Furthermore, the outcomes may be useful for future researchers in addressing research gaps and building a research framework.

5. Conclusion

This review indicated that impacted organizations in this challenging situation must take proactive measures in all aspects, including changing their current strategies into a new paradigm. Marketing activities, as the company's backbone, should be given adequate attention at every marketing component, from STP to each marketing mix. Organizations must also be adaptable or pivoting to different target market and business model and always ready for change by having a contingency plan in place so that they can manage any circumstance effectively, particularly when confronted with a catastrophe such as COVID-19. It is also crucial for the organization to provide employees with crisis management training and knowledge for exposure and awareness in dealing with uncertain circumstances in all aspects of economic, political, health, safety, and disaster so that the impact can be minimized with an adequate plan and accurate measurement.

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