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## Navigating the Path of Promise: An In-Depth Exploration of Taiwan's Halal Tourism Industry and Policy Initiatives

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**Abstract:** This study provides a comprehensive examination of Taiwan's emerging halal tourism industry, shedding light on its notable achievements, challenges, and the policy frameworks driving its evolution. Focused primarily on accommodation and restaurants, key sectors in this burgeoning industry, the research explores the impacts of the New Southbound Policy, a governmental initiative aimed at attracting Southeast Asian tourists. Drawing from a diverse range of stakeholders, including representatives from halal tourism, government officials, business owners, and certification bodies, the study employs qualitative methods such as structured interviews and observations to capture nuanced insights. The findings reveal commendable progress in Taiwan's halal tourism sector, particularly in accommodating the needs of Muslim travelers. Government-backed subsidy programs and advocacy for robust policies underline a proactive stance in addressing challenges such as limited halal options in prominent tourist areas. However, the study acknowledges inherent limitations, including regional specificity and language barriers, emphasizing the need for ongoing research to fully comprehend the multifaceted dimensions of this evolving industry. The analysis underscores the influential role of effective tourism policies, showing their pivotal impact on the trajectory of Taiwan's halal tourism. As policies geared towards maximizing social and economic benefits prove instrumental, the study emphasizes the significance of a supportive regulatory framework as a catalyst for success. In conclusion, this research positions Taiwan's halal tourism industry as a promising and resilient player on the global stage. As the industry matures, continuous research and collaborative efforts are advocated to ensure the adaptability, inclusivity, and sustained success of Taiwan's halal tourism initiatives in the ever-evolving global landscape.

**Keywords:** halal tourism, tourism industry, policy, implementation

**JEL Classification:** L83, Q53, Q56, Z3



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## Introduction

Taiwan has emerged as an appealing destination for Muslim travelers, with the Taiwan Tourism Bureau actively working to embrace and cater to their distinctive requirements (Wardhani et al., 2021). The nation has taken substantial measures to enhance the Muslim-friendly experience, certifying over 230 restaurants and hotels as Halal and ensuring separate kitchens for halal food preparation (Setyaningsih, 2021). These establishments offer prayer facilities, mats, and timetables, ensuring that Muslim travelers have access to essential amenities during their stay.

In a proactive effort to attract Muslim travelers from Malaysia, Indonesia, and Brunei, Taiwan has positioned itself as a leading Muslim-friendly destination after the UK and Singapore (Wardhani et al., 2021). At the Halal in Travel Global Summit 2023, Abe Chou, Director of the Taiwan Tourism Bureau KL Office, outlined Taiwan's initiatives to cater to the growing Muslim-friendly travel market. Nestled in East Asia, Taiwan is a captivating island nation situated southwest of Japan and north of the Philippines, making it an ideal location for Muslim travelers to explore and enjoy.

To heighten awareness among Muslim travelers, Taiwan has implemented a comprehensive outreach program, collaborating with both local and international travel agencies to develop user-friendly services tailored to the specific needs of Muslim tourists (Adham et al., 2020; Amalia et al., 2023; Jurnal et al., 2022; Nugraha et al., 2022; Rifa'i, 2018; Setyaningsih, 2021; Wardhani et al., 2021). The country has actively engaged in travel fairs and workshops to inform the industry about the available Muslim-friendly facilities and services. Brochures in various languages, including Bahasa Malaysia, have been distributed to tourists seeking Muslim-friendly information, underscoring Taiwan's commitment to providing a welcoming and inclusive environment for Muslim travelers.

Taiwan's endeavors to embrace Muslim-friendly travel go beyond accommodations and restaurants (Amalia et al., 2023). The nation has introduced Muslim-friendly facilities at various transportation hubs, scenic areas, and 13 National Scenic Sports locations, ensuring that Muslim travelers have access to essential amenities and services throughout their journey. These initiatives underscore Taiwan's dedication to creating a seamless and enjoyable experience for Muslim visitors, further cementing its status as a sought-after Muslim-friendly destination in the region.

In summary, Taiwan has made significant progress in preparing to welcome Muslim travelers, emphasizing Halal-certified establishments, prayer facilities, and tailored services to meet their unique needs. By actively promoting itself as a Muslim-friendly destination and collaborating with industry partners to raise awareness, Taiwan has positioned itself as an appealing and accommodating choice for Muslim travelers globally.

## Literature Review

Halal tourism is a relatively new concept in the tourism industry, offering holiday services that align with Islamic beliefs and practices. A literature review on halal tourism identified several key themes, including the definition and concept of halal tourism, the potential market for halal tourism, and the challenges and opportunities in developing halal tourism. The study also highlighted the need for further research to explore the policy and practice of halal tourism in various countries (Abdullah, 2021; Addina et al., 2020; Al-Ansi & Han, 2019; El-Gohary, 2016).

One of the challenges in developing halal tourism is the lack of standardization and certification (Setyorini et al., 2021). A study on halal tourism in Malaysia emphasized the importance of halal certification in ensuring the quality and authenticity of halal products and services (Henderson, 2016). The study also highlighted the need for a comprehensive and integrated approach to halal tourism development, involving various stakeholders, including government, industry, and consumers.

In the context of Taiwan, a study investigated the policy and practice of halal tourism development, focusing on accommodation and restaurants. The study emphasized Taiwan's achievement in developing its halal tourism industry, despite being a Muslim-minority region. However, it also pointed out the limited existing literature on Taiwan's halal tourism industry, highlighting the need for further research in this area.

Another study explored the potential of halal tourism in Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim-majority country. The study identified several challenges in developing halal tourism, including the lack of infrastructure and facilities, the limited availability of halal-certified products and services, and the need for greater awareness and education among stakeholders. The study also highlighted the potential of halal tourism in promoting sustainable tourism development and enhancing the socio-economic well-being of local communities.

In the context of Taiwan, a study discussed the strategy of the Taiwan government in building a Muslim-friendly environment, particularly through the concept of halal tourism. The study emphasized the emerging phenomenon of halal tourism and the increasing interest

in capturing the Muslim tourism market, indicating the relevance and timeliness of research in this area.

Another study explored the potential of halal tourism in Turkey, a country with a significant Muslim population and a rich cultural heritage (Boğan, 2020). The study identified several challenges in developing halal tourism, including the lack of standardization and certification, the limited availability of halal-certified products and services, and the need for greater awareness and education among stakeholders. The study also highlighted the potential of halal tourism in promoting cultural exchange and enhancing the socio-economic well-being of local communities.

Overall, the literature on halal tourism highlights the growing interest and investment in developing and promoting halal tourism, particularly in countries with significant Muslim populations. However, it also emphasizes the challenges and opportunities in developing halal tourism, including the lack of standardization and certification, the limited availability of halal-certified products and services, and the need for greater awareness and education among stakeholders. Further research is needed to explore the policy, practice, and implications of halal tourism in various countries and contexts.

## Result and Discussion

The evolution of Taiwan's burgeoning halal tourism industry is currently in its formative stages but has already showcased significant advancements, particularly within the domains of accommodation and restaurants (Setyaningsih, 2021). Aligned with the objectives of the New Southbound Policy, the Taiwanese government has actively promoted tourism from Southeast Asia, resulting in an influx of approximately two million visitors from the region in 2019, with around 15% identifying as Muslims (Ahmed, 2021). This influx has not only fueled economic growth but has also underscored the imperative for a comprehensive understanding of the intricacies and potential implications of halal tourism, prompting a call for further research and exploration (Ahmed, 2021; Setyaningsih, 2021; Taiwan Tourism Bureau, 2017).

Within Taiwan's halal tourism landscape, attention is notably directed toward the pivotal sectors of accommodation and restaurants (Ahmed, 2021). Despite these notable strides, challenges persist, including the limited availability of halal food options near major tourist attractions and the absence of halal certification for certain establishments (Ahmed, 2021). In response to these challenges, the government has instituted subsidy programs to bolster the presence of Muslim-friendly restaurants and has actively advocated for the formulation of robust halal tourism policies, demonstrating a commitment to overcoming obstacles and fostering an inclusive and accommodating environment (Taiwan Tourism Bureau, 2017).

An integral aspect of this research initiative has been the active engagement of diverse stakeholders in the halal tourism industry. This collaborative approach ensures that the perspectives and experiences of a range of stakeholders, including halal tourism representatives, district officers from the Bureau of Tourism, entrepreneurs managing restaurants and accommodations, as well as halal certification bodies, are meticulously considered in the findings (Setyaningsih, 2021). Employing a qualitative research methodology, the study utilizes structured interviews and observations to glean nuanced insights into the evolving policy and practice of halal tourism development in Taiwan (Setyaningsih, 2021).

The ensuing analysis underscores the pivotal role of effective tourism policies in influencing the robust performance of Taiwan's halal tourism industry. Policies designed to maximize social and economic benefits for the region or locality emerge as catalysts for positive outcomes (Ahmed, 2021). While the study accentuates the positive impact of

supportive tourism policies, it also conscientiously acknowledges inherent limitations, including regional specificity and language barriers. Consequently, the study deliberately confines its scope to Taipei and Taichung, recognizing these cities' central roles as major tourism hubs and emphasizing the need for a nuanced understanding of the local dynamics (Ahmed, 2021; Setyaningsih, 2021; Taiwan Tourism Bureau, 2017).

In conclusion, Taiwan's halal tourism industry, though in its nascent stages, has already showcased promising achievements, particularly in the spheres of accommodation and restaurants. The government's proactive measures, such as subsidy programs and stakeholder engagement, underscore its commitment to overcoming challenges and fostering a halal-friendly environment. This research contributes invaluable insights into the evolving policy and practice of halal tourism development in Taiwan, emphasizing the imperative for ongoing research and exploration in this dynamic and rapidly evolving domain. As the industry continues to mature, further investigation and collaboration are essential to ensure the sustained success and inclusivity of Taiwan's halal tourism initiatives.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, this study delves into the dynamic landscape of Taiwan's nascent halal tourism industry, showcasing notable strides in the realms of accommodation and restaurants. The government's strategic initiatives, driven by the New Southbound Policy, have successfully attracted a significant influx of visitors from Southeast Asia, with a noteworthy percentage identifying as Muslims. These developments underscore the industry's potential for growth and highlight the need for nuanced research to comprehensively grasp its intricacies.

The focal points of halal tourism development, namely accommodation and restaurants, have witnessed commendable progress, yet challenges persist, including the limited availability of halal options in key tourist areas. Government-backed subsidy programs and advocacy for robust halal tourism policies indicate a proactive approach to surmounting these challenges and fostering an inclusive and accommodating environment.

Stakeholder engagement has been a cornerstone of this research, ensuring a diverse range of perspectives, including those of halal tourism representatives, government officers, business owners, and certification bodies, are considered. Employing a qualitative research methodology, the study relies on structured interviews and observations to provide nuanced insights into the evolving policy and practice of halal tourism in Taiwan.

The analysis underscores the influential role of effective tourism policies in steering the positive trajectory of Taiwan's halal tourism industry. As policies aimed at maximizing social and economic benefits prove instrumental, it becomes evident that a supportive regulatory framework is a catalyst for success. However, the study acknowledges inherent limitations, including regional specificity and language barriers, underscoring the need for further research to capture the diverse facets of this evolving industry.

In essence, Taiwan's halal tourism industry, while in its early stages, exhibits promise and resilience. The government's commitment, coupled with stakeholder collaboration, positions Taiwan as a destination poised for sustained success in catering to the diverse needs of Muslim travelers. As the industry matures, ongoing research and collaborative efforts will be essential to ensure the continued success, inclusivity, and adaptability of Taiwan's halal tourism initiatives in an ever-evolving global landscape.

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### An Mu De

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