
JOURNAL OF COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Halal Tourism in Thailand: An Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) Perspective

Sakiroh Yaena Benharoon^{1*}, Suwanat Tongsongyod¹

¹Faculty of Communication Sciences, Prince of Songkla University, Pattani, Thailand

*Corresponding author: sakiroh.y@psu.ac.th; ORCID iD: 0000-0001-7047-6758

ABSTRACT

Halal tourism in Thailand is a rapidly expanding phenomenon, driven by the global growth of the halal industry. Thailand has positioned itself as a leading halal-friendly destination in Southeast Asia. This qualitative study aimed to examine the role of integrated marketing communication (IMC) tools in promoting halal tourism within the Thai context. The research employed a comprehensive review of literature and secondary data from diverse, credible sources, using descriptive analysis as its primary method. The findings revealed that a strategic combination of IMC tools, such as advertising, public relations, digital and social media marketing, direct marketing, and sales promotions, enables tourism entrepreneurs to effectively address the unique needs of Muslim travellers. As a preferred destination for Muslim tourists, Thailand can utilize IMC to create value-driven, culturally aligned tourism experiences. This integrated approach enhances customer satisfaction, builds lasting impressions, and fosters loyalty by encouraging repeat visits to halal-friendly attractions. The insights from this study enhance Thailand's tourism competitiveness and provide a practical guide for hospitality entrepreneurs to leverage IMC tools effectively, promoting sustainable halal tourism and long-term industry growth.

Keywords: halal tourism, Muslim-friendly tourism, Islamic tourism, IMC perspective, Thailand

Received: 15 March 2025, **Accepted:** 2 July 2025, **Published:** 30 July 2025

Introduction

Halal tourism, also known as Muslim-friendly tourism, is one of the fastest-growing segments in the global travel industry, with an estimated market value exceeding US\$300 billion by 2030 (Azmi, 2023), and Muslim tourists invest significantly in travel experiences. According to industry predictions (Ghani, 2025), the halal tourism market is projected to grow from US\$256.5 billion in 2023 to US\$410.9 billion by 2032, with popular tourist destinations launching various initiatives to capitalise on the rise in demand. The Mastercard-CrescentRating Global Muslim Travel Index (Mastercard-CrescentRating, 2024) highlighted that the Muslim travel market experienced substantial growth in 2023, with approximately 145 million Muslim international arrivals, which is about 90% of the pre-pandemic levels in 2019.

This recovery indicates a strong bounce-back and the persistent demand within the Muslim travel sector. Nevertheless, the development of halal tourism has been initiated by various countries worldwide, including both Muslim and non-Muslim countries (Widodo et al., 2022).

In Thailand, halal tourism is a growing phenomenon emerging from the expansion of the halal industry. It represents a new trend for the hospitality sector, entrepreneurs, and investors. Halal tourism has gained popularity since the launch of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in December 2015. Thailand is renowned for its natural beauty and pioneering role in the halal food and products industry. With its significant Muslim communities, Thailand fosters a deep cultural understanding and a multicultural environment. Its Muslim-friendly atmosphere, along with the widespread availability of halal cuisine, makes it a top destination for Muslim travellers (Khaosod English, 2024). As a result, many Muslim tourists, particularly from neighbouring countries and the Middle East, visit Thailand's many beautiful and attractive destinations. The growing interest in halal tourism among Muslims makes it essential for Thailand's halal tourism industry to implement initiatives that ensure value for money. This includes offering Muslim-friendly tourist attractions, facilities, and hotels that serve halal food, as well as providing adequate and convenient prayer spaces on-site. These initiatives enhance the tourism experience, making it both memorable and tailored to the needs of Muslim travellers. Therefore, as one of the key industries for Thailand within the AEC, and with the country aiming to become Southeast Asia's halal hub by 2027 (The Nation, 2024), the halal tourism and services industry should be strategically positioned to reflect and meet the demands of Thailand's fastest-growing sector.

Meanwhile, according to the Mastercard-CrescentRating (2024) Global Muslim Travel Index, Southeast Asia remains a popular region for Muslim tourists, with Indonesia and Malaysia consistently ranking first among destinations within the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), followed by Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Singapore, the United Kingdom (UK), Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Thailand are among the top non-OIC destinations for halal tourism. Thailand ranked 32nd among popular destinations for Muslim tourists and 5th among non-OIC countries in the GMTI 2024 scale with a score of 52, as shown in Appendix A and Appendix B. This ranking remains unchanged from 2023, despite Thailand being a predominantly Buddhist country. It has a sizeable Muslim population in the southernmost provinces of Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, and some parts of Songkhla. Apart from that, Bangkok, the capital of Thailand, was ranked among the top 10 trending summer destinations for 2024. Thailand is establishing itself as a leading halal-friendly travel destination in Southeast Asia. With continuous investment, policy support, and infrastructure improvements, Thailand is well-positioned to attract a larger number of Muslim tourists from around the world. It has proven to be a popular destination for Muslims, mainly from Malaysia; a total of 4,952,078 Malaysian tourists visited Thailand in 2024 (Bangkokbiznews, 2025). Most travellers seek affordable holidays and enjoy Thai cuisine, which is widely popular among international visitors. Thailand's dedication to halal tourism enhances its reputation as a diverse and welcoming destination, ensuring Muslim travellers enjoy a comfortable and fulfilling experience.

Remarkably, as a Muslim-minority country, most entrepreneurs in Thailand are unfamiliar with the intricacies of the halal concept within their societies and face challenges in implementing halal services (Mufidah et al., 2024). By contrast, Thailand's fast-growing halal tourism industry requires entrepreneurs to modify their services to meet evolving halal requirements. More significantly, what promotional instruments can be utilised to reach the target market, particularly Muslim travellers? How can integrated marketing communication (IMC) be used to attract more Muslim tourists to Thailand, make it an alluring holiday destination, and a top tourist attraction in Southeast Asia and across the world?

This paper aims to examine the role of IMC tools in enhancing the promotion of halal tourism in the context of Thailand. The insights from this study will strengthen the competitiveness of Thailand's tourism industry. It will also serve as a guideline for hospitality entrepreneurs to leverage IMC tools more effectively, advancing sustainable halal tourism development and ensuring long-term benefits for the tourism industry.

Literature Review

Definition and Concept of Halal Tourism

In short, halal tourism in Thailand is growing rapidly, creating numerous opportunities for entrepreneurs who need to adopt new management approaches to meet customer demands. As a top tourist destination, Thailand is seeing businesses adapt to meet the needs of Muslim travellers by providing halal-friendly services. Therefore, marketing communication tools and strategies are essential for businesses to implement and adapt, enabling broader reach, effective targeting, and the long-term growth of sustainable halal tourism.

Theoretical Framework

Integrated marketing communication (IMC) is a strategy that organisations or brands use to effectively communicate their products or services to target customers. The goal is to build awareness, enhance understanding, and influence consumer purchasing decisions (Kotler & Keller, 2016). This concept has continuously evolved to adapt to changes in the marketing environment and consumer behaviour. It involves utilising diverse tools and strategies to maximise customer reach by integrating IMC techniques to achieve organisational or brand objectives.

The key tools in the marketing communication process include advertising, public relations, personal selling, sales promotions, and direct marketing. These elements are integrated to ensure clarity, consistency, and maximum communication impact. Additionally, digital and social media marketing tools utilise online platforms such as websites, social media, and digital advertising as communication channels to effectively reach customers (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2022).

Schultz et al. (1993) emphasised the importance of consistency and customer-centric integration across all marketing communication efforts. Building on this, Kitchen and Burgmann (2010) positioned IMC as a strategic, cross-functional process that evolves in response to media convergence and organisational complexity. Iacobucci (2021) further connected IMC to relationship marketing, underscoring the value of aligning communication tools to foster long-term customer engagement and brand loyalty. Schultz (1996) reinforced this by highlighting the significance of an integrated communication process that maintains message consistency and enhances the overall customer experience. Ultimately, as Sayre (2008) concluded, the core objective of all marketing communication efforts is to deliver a coordinated, cohesive, and unified brand message to a clearly defined target audience.

Unlike traditional marketing communication, which often consists of fragmented and uncoordinated campaigns across multiple platforms, IMC ensures that all efforts function cohesively to deliver a consistent message. Stăncioiu et al. (2013) emphasised that IMC involves the strategic planning, creation, integration, and execution of all consumer contact points, each serving as a potential message distribution channel capable of directly or indirectly influencing purchasing decisions. This integrated approach highlights the value of synergy across communication tools, aiming to create a seamless brand experience that enhances consumer trust and engagement.

Several factors have contributed to the growth and development of IMC, notably the internet and social media, which have become powerful marketing tools for event planning, real-time engagement, employee training, and surprise marketing tactics (Zahra, 2016). In sum, marketing communication is a strategic approach to conducting marketing activities that persuade target customers and maximise organisational benefits.

In this study, the theoretical framework is based on IMC tools and strategies, which play a crucial role in business operations, particularly in the halal tourism industry, where marketing communication is essential. Given the intangibility of tourism products, creating value relies on building a strong image, fostering trust, and enhancing tourists' experiences. IMC in the halal tourism sector integrates various communication tools to ensure a consistent presentation of tourist attractions and tourism business brands. Effective IMC strategies enhance awareness and foster long-term relationships with tourists. These tools are vital for building brands and promoting travel, enabling tourism businesses to remain

competitive in the digital age. The conceptual framework used in this study integrates key IMC components tailored to the halal tourism industry (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework



Methods

To comprehensively explore the role of IMC in promoting halal tourism in Thailand, researchers must develop a deep understanding of IMC tools and strategies tailored specifically for the halal tourism industry. This involves enhancing their understanding of key IMC components, including advertising, public relations, personal selling, sales promotions, direct marketing, and digital and social media marketing, and how these elements interact to influence Muslim travellers' perceptions and decision-making processes.

In this study, the methodology involved a comprehensive review of literature and secondary data obtained from various available resources. This included both online and offline materials, such as journal articles, books, research papers, and social media data. These sources were carefully selected based on their relevance, credibility, and timeliness to ensure the data accurately reflect the current state of halal tourism and marketing communication practices in Thailand. The selection process involved a systematic review of literature and materials that provide comprehensive insights into the topic, with preference given to sources offering empirical evidence, authoritative perspectives, and recent developments.

Subsequently, the collected data were critically analysed to examine how IMC tools have been applied in promoting halal tourism in Thailand. The review also aimed to examine the effectiveness and coherence of these tools in reaching Muslim travellers and building Thailand's image as a Muslim-friendly destination, especially in comparison to other regional competitors.

The study employed a qualitative research approach in the form of descriptive analysis. This qualitative descriptive method was used to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon as it naturally occurs. By analysing relevant literature and secondary data, the study aimed to provide insights into the role of IMC in promoting halal tourism in Thailand.

The collected data were subjected to thematic analysis, which involved identifying, organizing, and interpreting key patterns or themes related to the use of IMC tools. This approach allowed the researchers to draw meaningful conclusions about how various communication strategies are applied and how effectively they support the positioning of Thailand as a Muslim-friendly destination.

The data collected in this study is presented in a descriptive, language-based format, enabling an in-depth analysis of the role and effectiveness of IMC strategies in promoting halal tourism in Thailand. This qualitative approach enables the researchers to interpret the meanings, intentions, and contextual applications of various IMC tools. By examining their strategic implementation, the study offers valuable insights into how effectively these tools contribute to positioning Thailand as a Muslim-friendly destination.

Moreover, it highlights the extent to which these communication strategies align with the values and expectations of Muslim travellers, fostering greater engagement, trust, and brand loyalty within the halal tourism sector.

Results and Discussion

With the increasing number of Muslim tourists, Thailand has positioned itself as a welcoming destination by offering halal-friendly services and infrastructure, including halal-certified restaurants, prayer facilities, Shari'ah-compliant hotels, gender-segregated recreational spaces, and Muslim-friendly transportation options. These elements help create a comfortable and inclusive environment for Muslim travellers. To further solidify this position, integrated marketing communication (IMC) is essential for effectively promoting halal tourism in Thailand. A cohesive and strategic approach ensures impactful marketing efforts that attract Muslim travellers. IMC combines various marketing tools to deliver a consistent and clear message to the target audience. In the Thai halal tourism industry, the role of IMC can be categorised as follows:

Advertising

Advertising is a key driver in the growth of halal tourism in Thailand, positioning the country as a leading destination for Muslim travellers. Through targeted advertising efforts, Thailand actively highlights its commitment to providing Muslim-friendly services, such as designated halal zones in major cities, halal-certified restaurants, prayer facilities, Muslim tour packages, and cultural events like halal food festivals. These promotional efforts aim to increase awareness and build trust among Muslim tourists by clearly communicating the availability of services that align with Islamic principles and lifestyle requirements (Stephenson, 2014).

In particular, advertising campaigns emphasise halal-certified accommodations that offer amenities such as alcohol-free environments, pork-free kitchens, qibla directions in rooms, and gender-segregated recreational facilities (e.g., women-only swimming areas). Government and tourism authorities, notably the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), play a central role in these efforts by launching strategic branding campaigns such as "*Muslim-Friendly Thailand*" and "*Halal Thai Experience*." These campaigns are designed to build confidence in the authenticity of Thailand's halal offerings and reinforce the country's image as an inclusive, culturally sensitive destination for Muslim tourists (Mohd Isa et al., 2018).

Accordingly, advertising in Thailand strategically highlights halal certifications granted by recognised Islamic authorities, which plays a crucial role in strengthening trust and confidence among Muslim travellers. By showcasing compliance with Islamic dietary laws and lifestyle values, such advertising not only raises awareness and shapes positive perceptions, but also significantly influences travel decisions. As a result, it encourages Muslim travellers to consider and ultimately choose Thailand as their preferred destination for both leisure and religiously accommodating experiences.

Public Relations (PR)

PR plays a vital role in shaping the perception, credibility, and attractiveness of Thailand's halal tourism sector. Through strategic communication, targeted media outreach, and engagement with Muslim communities, PR helps strengthen Thailand's positioning as a halal-friendly destination. Effective PR efforts raise awareness and build trust among Muslim travellers by communicating Thailand's commitment to respecting Islamic values and providing appropriate tourism services. Key PR strategies include the distribution of press releases to share updates about halal tourism initiatives with both regional and international media, enhancing transparency and credibility. Additionally, organizing media familiarization trips by inviting journalists from Muslim-majority countries allows them to experience halal-friendly services in Thailand first-hand, subsequently promoting positive narratives through articles, social media, and travel features (Battour & Ismail, 2016). Participation in international halal travel exhibitions such as the MATTA Fair (Malaysia), Halal Expo Indonesia, and Arabian Travel Market (Dubai), also help Thailand connect with industry stakeholders, build strategic partnerships, and showcase its offerings to a wider Muslim audience (Jafari & Scott, 2014). Furthermore, government

initiatives play a supportive role in reinforcing PR efforts. The Thai government promotes multiculturalism and respect for Islamic traditions by developing halal infrastructure, supporting Muslim-friendly services, and implementing intercultural programs to foster inclusivity and mutual understanding. These efforts not only enhance the overall quality of tourism services, including hospitality standards, infrastructure, and cultural sensitivity but also play a crucial role in strengthening Thailand's image as a diverse, inclusive, and welcoming destination. By actively addressing the religious and cultural needs of Muslim travellers, Thailand positions itself as a credible and respectful player in the global halal tourism market, fostering long-term trust, satisfaction, and loyalty among this expanding segment.

Digital and Social Media Marketing

Digital and social media marketing are essential components in the promotion and expansion of halal tourism in Thailand. These platforms significantly enhance the visibility of halal tourism offerings, engage Muslim travellers, and enrich their overall travel experience. Social media channels such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok are particularly effective in reaching younger Muslim travellers, who often rely on online sources when researching travel destinations and planning their itineraries (Taufique et al., 2022).

Through digital content, including high-quality videos, virtual tours, influencer endorsements, and real-time live streaming, Thailand can offer potential Muslim tourists immersive previews of its halal-friendly services. These include halal-certified accommodations, restaurants, prayer facilities, and cultural experiences, all of which are key decision-making factors for Muslim travellers (Battour & Ismail, 2016; Han et al., 2019).

Moreover, digital platforms facilitate seamless travel planning by enabling direct bookings for halal-certified hotels, restaurants, and tour packages. This convenience not only enhances user satisfaction but also contributes to stronger perceptions of Thailand as a well-prepared and welcoming destination for Muslim visitors. A robust digital marketing strategy further strengthens brand credibility and trust, positively influencing travel decisions and reinforcing Thailand's position as a leading halal-friendly destination in Southeast Asia (Taufique et al., 2022).

It is evident that digital and social media platforms are not only key sources of information and awareness about halal tourism but also serve as powerful marketing tools for connecting with the global Muslim market. By strategically leveraging these channels, Thailand can expand its reach, build meaningful engagement, and foster long-term loyalty among Muslim tourists.

Direct Marketing

Direct marketing is a powerful and strategic tool for promoting halal tourism in Thailand, as it enables tourism businesses to directly target specific customer segments with personalised communication. Through channels such as email, SMS, and social media messaging, businesses can send tailored offers, promotional content, and detailed information about halal-friendly services, including accommodations, restaurants, and tour packages, directly to Muslim travellers. This level of personalisation allows businesses to build meaningful relationships by addressing the specific religious and cultural needs of Muslim tourists, which contributes to increased trust and engagement (Samori et al., 2016).

Real-time communication via social media direct messaging also enhances convenience for Muslim travellers by providing timely responses to enquiries, updates on halal services, and reassurance during travel planning or while at the destination. This immediacy supports informed decision-making and builds tourist confidence (Stephenson, 2014).

Moreover, direct marketing serves as an effective feedback mechanism. Through post-visit surveys, follow-up emails, and satisfaction forms, tourism businesses can collect valuable insights into Muslim tourists' experiences. These insights are critical for refining halal offerings and ensuring that the services meet the expectations of this growing market segment (Battour & Ismail, 2016).

By leveraging direct marketing strategies, Thailand's halal tourism sector can strengthen customer relationships, improve service quality, and ultimately enhance its appeal as a leading halal-friendly destination.

Sales Promotions

Sales promotions play a significant role in enhancing halal tourism in Thailand by attracting Muslim travellers through special offers, discounts, and value-added experiences. These promotional activities not only stimulate tourist interest but also contribute to strengthening Thailand's image as a halal-friendly destination. By offering attractive deals, tourism operators can appeal to price-sensitive Muslim tourists, encourage repeat visits, and maintain a competitive advantage within the expanding halal tourism market (Ahmad & Noor, 2020). Common sales promotion strategies include discounts on halal-certified hotels and restaurants, exclusive family-oriented tour packages tailored to Muslim needs, and seasonal promotions aligned with peak travel periods such as school holidays, summer vacations, and long weekends. Moreover, special promotions during significant Islamic observances like Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr are effective in attracting Muslim tourists and enhancing Thailand's halal tourism appeal. By implementing well-designed and culturally sensitive sales promotions, Thailand's halal tourism sector can not only increase the volume of Muslim visitors but also enrich their overall travel experience. These efforts contribute to consolidating Thailand's position as a leading halal-friendly destination in Southeast Asia, meeting the growing demand of Muslim travellers for accessible and affordable halal tourism options.

As previously noted, many entrepreneurs in Thailand remain insufficiently prepared to fully address the specific demands of the halal tourism market, which poses a significant barrier to effectively capturing the rapidly expanding Muslim travel segment. This lack of preparedness limits their ability to develop targeted marketing strategies and provide services that meet the cultural and religious needs of Muslim tourists. However, IMC strategies, combined with diverse promotional tools, can play a pivotal role in overcoming these challenges and fostering sustainable growth in the halal tourism sector. More importantly, IMC tools assist entrepreneurs by delivering consistent and culturally sensitive messages across multiple communication channels, ensuring that marketing efforts effectively resonate with Muslim travellers. By integrating advertising, public relations, digital and social media marketing, direct marketing, and sales promotions, Thailand can amplify its visibility, strengthen brand credibility, build trust, and clearly communicate its halal-friendly attributes to Muslim travellers (Taufique et al., 2022). This holistic approach not only enhances customer satisfaction but also strengthens Thailand's position as a competitive and welcoming Muslim-friendly destination in the regional halal tourism market. In comparison with traditional marketing, IMC's integrated approach ensures coordinated communication that effectively addresses the specific needs of halal tourists, improves brand positioning, and increases marketing efficiency. Such an approach is crucial for Thailand to enhance its competitiveness as a Muslim-friendly destination in the regional halal tourism industry.

Current IMC strategies in Thailand's halal tourism sector have succeeded in raising awareness of Muslim-friendly services and destinations through multiple channels such as social media, travel expos, and halal certification promotion. These efforts have helped position Thailand as an emerging halal tourism destination, attracting more Muslim travellers and fostering positive brand recognition. However, the strategies often lack full integration and consistency across platforms, leading to fragmented messaging. Halal certification processes are not yet universally standardized or widely recognized, which may undermine traveller confidence. Additionally, the cultural nuances and specific needs of diverse Muslim markets are sometimes insufficiently addressed.

Compared to Malaysia and Indonesia, Thailand needs to intensify efforts to develop an integrated halal tourism strategy, strengthen halal certification, and improve Muslim-friendly infrastructure. Adopting targeted marketing and data-driven approaches, already practiced in these countries, can further boost Thailand's competitiveness as a credible halal-friendly destination in the region.

To sum up, a well-coordinated IMC approach ensures the consistency, clarity, and cultural sensitivity of brand messages across all communication channels. This is essential for building trust, fostering

positive perceptions, and creating emotional resonance with the target Muslim market. Such consistency not only strengthens engagement but also encourages customer loyalty and repeat visits, which are critical for sustained success in the halal tourism sector. Moreover, by effectively leveraging IMC strategies, tourism stakeholders, including entrepreneurs, government agencies, and service providers, can collectively enhance Thailand's competitiveness as a leading halal-friendly destination. This integrated approach supports the promotion of authentic, culturally respectful experiences that meet the specific needs of Muslim travellers, thereby driving long-term, sustainable development within the halal tourism industry. Ultimately, the effective use of IMC contributes significantly to positioning Thailand as a preferred destination for Muslim tourists amid intensifying regional competition. By ensuring cohesive and culturally appropriate messaging, IMC enhances Thailand's brand appeal, builds trust, and strengthens its competitive advantage in the halal tourism market.

Conclusion

Effectively meeting customer expectations and ensuring satisfaction requires the strategic use of integrated marketing communications (IMC) and tailored promotional strategies. IMC enables marketers in Thailand to deliver a consistent and compelling message across multiple channels, addressing the unique needs of diverse customer segments. By combining advertising, public relations, direct marketing, digital and social media, and sales promotions, businesses can stimulate sales, strengthen brand awareness, build customer loyalty, and create a positive brand image.

A well-designed communication strategy informs, persuades, and engages consumers while differentiating the brand from competitors, thereby improving promotional efficiency and return on investment. For Thailand's rapidly growing halal tourism industry, IMC offers Thai entrepreneurs valuable tools to provide cohesive, value-driven experiences that attract and satisfy Muslim travellers, fostering lasting impressions and encouraging repeat visits to halal-friendly destinations.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Studies

This study is limited by its reliance on secondary data, lacking first-hand empirical evidence from key stakeholders and tourists. As a result, it provides only a preliminary assessment of current IMC strategies and falls short of delivering an in-depth comparison with best practices from leading halal tourism destinations such as Malaysia and Indonesia. Additionally, the rapid evolution of digital media may affect the timeliness and applicability of some findings.

To address these limitations, future research should employ empirical methods such as surveys, interviews, or focus groups with both tourists and industry practitioners to assess the practical effectiveness of IMC tools. Comparative studies with regional leaders in halal tourism, along with targeted investigations into digital marketing, influencer engagement, and inter-agency coordination, are also recommended. These approaches will enhance the strategic relevance and integration of IMC within Thailand's halal tourism development.

Acknowledgement

The authors would like to express their deepest gratitude to Associate Professor Dr. Nik Norma Nik Hasan from the School of Communication, Universiti Sains Malaysia, for the valuable opportunity to share knowledge, which greatly contributed to the development of this research.

Conflict of Interest

No conflicts of interest were disclosed.

Author Contribution Statement

SYB: Conceptualisation, Data Curation, Data Analysis, Writing – Review & Editing; ST: Data Curation, Writing – Review & Editing

Funding

This research did not receive any funding, either internal or external.

Ethics Statements

This research did not require IRB approval because it did not involve human participants, and all data were obtained from publicly available sources.

Data Access Statement

Research data supporting this publication are available upon request to the corresponding author.

Author Biography

Sakiroh Yaena Benharoon is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Communication Arts, Faculty of Communication Sciences, Prince of Songkla University, Thailand. Her research interests include communication and identity, communication in community-based tourism (CBT), and tourism communication.

Suwanat Tongsongyod is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Communication Arts, Faculty of Communication Sciences, Prince of Songkla University, Thailand. Her research focuses on marketing communication.

References

- Adinugraha, H. H., Nasarruddin, R., Andrean, R., & Shulthoni, M. (2023). Halal tourism in Malaysia: Its development and strategy. *Social Sciences and Education Research Review*, 10(1), 93–98. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8151093>
- Ahmad, S. Z., & Noor, S. M. (2020). Halal tourism: Marketing strategies and Muslim consumers' perception. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 11(3), 653–667. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-01-2019-0018>
- Anggara, W. P. (2022). Globalization of culture and identity: Case study of halal tourism Thailand as a Muslim friendly tourist destination. *Journal of Halal Product and Research (JHPR)*, 5(2), 72–78. <https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:261571783>
- Azam, M. S., Abdullah, M. A., & Razak, D. A. (2019). Halal tourism: Definition, justification, and scopes towards sustainable development. *International Journal of Business, Economics and Law*, 18(3), 23–31.

- Azmi. (2023, October 2). Halal tourism: Attract 2 billion halal conscious tourists! *American Halal Foundation*. <https://halalfoundation.org/unlocking-halal-tourism-attracting-2-billion-halal-conscious-guests/>
- Bangkokbiznews. (2025, January 2). Statistics 2024, 35.54 million foreigners travelled to Thailand, top 10 countries with the highest arrivals. <https://www.bangkokbiznews.com/business/business/1160350>
- Battour, M., & Ismail, M. N. (2016). Halal tourism: Concepts, practises, challenges and future. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 19, Part B, 150–154. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2015.12.008>
- Boğan, E., & Sarıışık, M. (2019). Halal tourism: Conceptual and practical challenges. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 10(1), 87–96. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-06-2017-0066>
- Chaffey, D., & Ellis-Chadwick, F. (2022). *Digital marketing: Strategy, implementation, and practice* (8th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Ghani, F. (2025, February 1). Niche to mainstream: Evolution of halal tourism in global travel industry. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/2/1/niche-to-mainstream-evolution-of-halal-tourism-in-global-travel-industry>
- Han, H., Al-Ansi, A., Olya, H. G., & Kim, W. (2019). Exploring halal-friendly destination attributes in South Korea: Perceptions and behaviors of Muslim travelers toward a non-Muslim destination. *Tourism Management*, 71, 151–164. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2018.10.002>
- Henderson, J. C. (2010). Sharia-compliant hotel. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 10(3), 246–254. <https://doi.org/10.1057/thr.2010.3>
- Iacobucci, D. (2021). *Marketing management* (6th ed.). Cengage Learning.
- Jaelani, A. (2017). Halal tourism industry in Indonesia: Potential and prospects. *International Review of Management and Marketing*, 7(3), 25–34. <https://www.econjournals.com/index.php/irmm/article/view/4352/pdf>
- Jafari, J., & Scott, N. (2014). Muslim world and its tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 44, 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2013.08.011>
- Khaosod English. (2024, July 8). Thailand’s halal industry set for expansion following GMTI 2024 ranking. <https://www.khaosodenglish.com/tourism/2024/07/08/thailands-halal-industry-set-for-expansion-following-gmti-2024-ranking/>
- Kitchen, P. J., & Burgmann, I. (2010). Integrated marketing communications. In *Wiley International Encyclopedia of Marketing*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444316568.wiem04001>
- Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2016). *Marketing management* (15th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Mansouri, S. (2014). Role of halal tourism ideology in destination competitiveness: A study on selected hotels in Bangkok, Thailand. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Law, Education and Humanities (ICLEH 14)*, 20–23. Pattaya, Thailand
- Mastercard-CrescentRating. (2024). *Global Muslim Travel Index 2024*. <https://www.crescentrating.com/reports/global-muslim-travel-index-2024.html>
- Miskam, S., Othman, N., Ab Hamid, N., Syed Ager, S. N., Abdullah, M., Mohd Shahwahid, F., Abdul Wahab, N., & Saidpudin, W. (2015). War 11 an analysis of the definition of halal: Shari’ah vs statutes. *World Academic and Research Congress 2015 (World-AR 2015)*, Jakarta, Indonesia, 111–121. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/287336009>
- Mohd Isa, S., Chin, P. N., & Mohammad, J. (2018). Muslim-friendly tourism: Concept, practices and challenges in Malaysia. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 8(5), 887–897. <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v8-i5/4221>

- Mufidah, A., Abdullah, T., & Khaeran, R. (2024). Halal tourism in Thailand: Unraveling Muslim tourists perspectives on culinary practices and requirements. *Jurnal Pendidikan Ilmu Sosial*, 33(1), 77–90. <https://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/jpis/article/view/68899/pdf>
- Muslim, A. K., & Harun, A. (2022). Exploring the concept of Muslim friendly tourism. *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage*, 10(3), 55–89. <https://doi.org/10.21427/n4fm-gb33>
- Osijo, I. U., Murwani, F. D., Djatmika, E., Sopiah, & Boonsayan, R. (2024). The legal politics of halal tourism in Thailand: The impact of digital advertising interventions on consumer intent, recommendations, and engagement in the contemporary era. *MILRev: Metro Islamic Law Review*, 3(2), 320–342. <https://e-journal.metrouniv.ac.id/milrev/article/view/9992/4205>
- Panyathanakhun, W. (2021). Halal tourism: Concept, dynamic and potential of Thailand. *Silpakorn University Journal*, 41(1), 1–12. <https://so05.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/sujthai/article/view/246186/169575>
- Puangniyom, P., Swangcheng, N., & Mahamud, T. (2017). Halal tourism strategy to promote sustainable cultural tourism in Thailand. *Proceedings of International Conference on Studies in Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (SASSH-17)*, Cebu, Philippines, 194–198. <https://uruae.org/siteadmin/upload/UH0117455.pdf>
- Samori, Z., Md Salleh, N. Z., & Khalid, M. M. (2016). Current trends on halal tourism: Cases on selected Asian countries. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 19, 131–136. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2015.12.011>
- Sayre, S. (2008). *Entertainment marketing and communication: Selling branded performance, people and places*. Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Schultz, D. E. (1996). The inevitability of integrated communications. *Journal of Business Research*, 37(3), 139–146. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0148-2963\(96\)00063-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0148-2963(96)00063-X)
- Schultz, D. E., Tannenbaum, S. I., & Lauterborn, R. F. (1993). *Integrated marketing communications: Pulling it together and making it work*. NTC Business Books.
- Stăncioiu, A., Botos, A., Orzan, M., Părgaru, I., & Arsene, O. (2013). Integrated marketing communication in tourism – An analysis. Case study: Muntenia and Oltenia. *Theoretical and Applied Economics*, 6(583), 7–34. <https://store.ectap.ro/articole/868.pdf>
- Stephenson, M. L. (2014). Deciphering ‘Islamic hospitality’: Developments, challenges and opportunities. *Tourism Management*, 40, 155–164. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2013.05.002>
- Suryandari, N., & Rahmawati, F. (2022). Halal tourism trends: Case examples in some Asian countries. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, 672, 205–212. <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.220705.021>
- Sutaputra, C., & Seanyen, T. (2021). Muslim tourists’ behavior & service marketing mix for halal tourism in Thailand. *The Journal of Pacific Institute of Management Science*, 7(1), 307–314. <https://so05.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/pacific/article/view/252798/171271>
- Taufique, K. M. R., Siwar, C., Chamhuri, N., & Sarah, F. H. (2022). Muslim tourists’ perception and social media influence on halal tourism in non-Muslim majority destinations: Evidence from Malaysia. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 13(8), 1810–1829. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-10-2020-0306>
- The Nation. (2024, July 4). Thailand among top travel destinations for Muslim tourists, says study. <https://www.nationthailand.com/news/general/40039388>

- Widodo, S., Situmorang, S. H., Lubis, A. N., & Lumbanraja, P. (2022). Halal tourism: Development, challenges and opportunities. *Frontiers in Business and Economics*, 1(2), 50–58. <https://doi.org/10.56225/finbe.v1i2.85>
- Zahra, I. (2016). Integrated marketing communications (IMC) a comparative study of Arabic and international research literature with a special focus on the sultanate of Oman. *Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*, 7(3), 5–21. <https://doi.org/10.24200/jass.vol7iss3pp5-22>

Appendix A

Top OIC destinations according to the Global Muslim Travel Index

Rank	GMTI 2024 Rank	Destination	Score
1	1	Indonesia	76
2	1	Malaysia	76
3	3	Saudi Arabia	74
4	4	Türkiye	73
5	5	United Arab Emirates (UAE)	72
6	6	Qatar	71
7	7	Iran	67
8	7	Jordan	67
9	9	Brunei	66
10	9	Oman	66
11	9	Singapore	66
12	12	Egypt	65
13	12	Kuwait	65
14	14	Maldives	64
15	14	Uzbekistan	64

Source: Mastercard-CrescentRating (2024)

Appendix B

Top non-OIC destinations according to the Global Muslim Travel Index 2024

Rank	GMTI 2024 Rank	Destination	Score
1	9	Singapore	66
2	24	United Kingdom (UK)	58
3	28	Taiwan	55
4	30	Hong Kong	54
5	32	Thailand	52
6	35	Spain	49
7	35	Georgia	49
8	39	Australia	48
9	39	Germany	48
10	39	Ireland	48
11	39	Japan	48
12	43	South Africa	47
13	43	Bosnia and Herzegovina	47
14	43	Philippines	47
15	45	France	46

Source: Mastercard-CrescentRating (2024)