

## Muslim-Friendly Ecotourism in Halal Industry Ecosystem: An Exploratory Study in Karimunjawa

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**Abstract:** Over the years, Muslim friendly tourism (MFT) study has seen significant moving forward to accommodate religious tourism consistent with Islamic teaching. To build consumer's confidence and certainty, a more concise understanding of this concept is required for ecotourism. This is a key topic of inquiry in this study. The main objective of this study is to improve on their halal sensitivity on the MFT products and services. Due to the reconsidering nature of the study, the case study on one of the ecotourism destinations at the Karimunjawa Islands is selected because it has been raised on the potential to be assessed and implement as Muslim friendly ecotourism (MFET). This study conducts qualitative research based on secondary data, participant observation, and interviews. Further review of these articles resulted in three main themes — MFET concept, halal logo and certification and knowledge of Islamic sustainable tourism. Several recommendations are highlighted related to conducting more qualitative studies in the context of MFT.

**Keywords:** Karimunjawa Islands; Ecotourism; Muslim Friendly Ecotourism; Muslim-friendly tourism; Shariah Compliance

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### Introduction

Ecotourism is relatively focusing on travel which concerns conserving natural areas while enjoying the scenery as well as cultural presence (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1987). While according to Pedersen (1991), he has been identified as six criteria for the ecotourism, covers related to nature-based, conservation supporting, sustainably managed, environmentally educating, local participation and involvement. In the modern context, the International of Ecotourism Society defined ecotourism as "responsible travel to natural areas conserving the environment and improving the well-being of the local people and involves interpretation and education" (TIES, 2015). Interpretation and educational involvement have been added by TIES as added values and opportunities. Thus, the knowledge about the country, local people, environment and wildlife will immerse.

Research on ecotourism with a Muslim-friendly tourism concept is required as an essential approach to attaining Muslim needs in the product and services industry (COMCEC, 2016). This is because it had been enlightened by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) countries as it can vastly increase economic profits (Ghani, 2016). The spiritual, emotional beings and their motivation to commit to ecotourism activities could also be greatly driven by Islamic spiritual appreciation of tourist life (Haque & Momen, 2017). Despite the fact that spirituality has a significant impact on shaping human behaviours, the tourist looking forward to experiencing nature-based tourism (ecotourism). They care much about *Halalan-toyyiban* (lawful and safe) and basics needs of Muslim tourist during the trips

(COMCEC, 2016; Yan, Zahari, Ismail, & Zain, 2017). Therefore, they have to be aware especially in regard to religious practices such as use nature and its resources in a balanced, treat nature with kindness, do not damage nature in any way, share natural resources and conserve (Ammar, 2010).

Within the global context, MFT taps on hospitality concern such as providing Muslim friendly accommodation and Halal food and beverages. In recent years, there has been renewed interest in the sustainable development goals (SDGs) proposed to conserve place in a way of development. One observer has already drawn attention to developing MFET in Philippine island, to adapt to the climate change on the destination (Tagoranao & Gamon, 2019). On the contrary, Taiwan currently progresses hospitable tourists from Middle East countries to travel in their country. The movement to provide facilities and services gives numerous benefits both locally and globally (Yousaf & Xiucheng, 2018). The two perspectives given on looking at the establishment of MFET, one side is on sustaining the environment and another side on providing facilities and services. Both are valuable to support the demands and supply competitors for Muslim tourist needs.

In the context of the study, Indonesia has been chosen place to assess the potential of MFET. It has been reported, the Karimunjawa Islands located in the Java Sea, Indonesia has multi-ethnic communities on the Island and creates a new culture and behavior that prove the high performance on conserving the area. This proves by Wibowo, Aditomo, & Prihantoko (2018) asserts that the awareness-raising efforts of the National Park have had increased quite high 40 percent with obedience 56

percent on the rule of area zonation in Karimunjawa. Therefore, Karimunjawa National Park is a natural conservation area that has original ecosystems and managed with zoning systems. It is also used to support education, research, conserve of natural resources and sustainable tourism. The potential of the ecosystem in Karimunjawa is related to marine tourism which nature resources. Consequently, the collaboration between authority and local community were in good condition to give consistent awareness and better understanding such as promoting soft-skill using notice board and banners (Handoko & Pujimahanani, 2018).

The main consideration relates to the MFET is on any activity, event, experience or indulgence undertaken in a state of ecotourism that is in accordance with Islamic guiding principles (IGP). This, in principle, can give rise to a definition of MFET. It was pointed out by Tagoranao and Gamon (2019) that define MFET as “the visitation of the natural and greenish environment, the flora and fauna as well as understanding and appreciating the traditional culture of the Muslims and other indigenous people”. It was understood the interconnectedness of indicators added from the actual definition of ecotourism itself was extended on providing Muslim care needs. However, the extends prior consideration in the study was an approach proposed by Kristjánsdóttir, Ólafsdóttir, & Ragnarsdóttir (2018) which uses an integrated method for sustainable tourism which is by the interconnectedness of MFT and ecotourism. To propose MFET, there are seen MFT, ecotourism and sustainable tourism that need to be integrated as in line with the MFET definition.

MFET also plays an important role in the responsible travel to a natural area that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of local people, and involves interpretation and education. Meanwhile, it should be friendly with environmental conservation by good values (Tagoranao & Gamon, 2019). By employing several IGP in MFET, the goal of this paper is to improve on their halal sensitivity on the MFT products and services.

So, this article is divided into four parts. The first part of the paper examines the literature on the current practice in MFET, while the second part explains the methodology adopted by this research. The third part which is the crux of this article highlights the result and discussion on the participant observation and interview. The conclusion part which attempts to determine the relationship between the findings and the literature is presented in part four.

## Sustainable of Muslim Friendly Ecotourism in Halal Industry Ecosystem

Halal industry ecosystem in perspectives of Muslim friendly ecotourism approaches are more than inculcate default halal just for Muslim consumers such as food (Ashfaq, 2019), but more than that which include non-food. The extant literature indicates that by sustaining the action and approach of MFT by facilitating the faith-based needs during travel (Hasanah & Harun, 2018; Puad, Som, Masutani, & Ahmad, 2016), a compromise proactive initiative to achieve a conducive and enabling environment will be essential. Based on COMCEC (2016) three main broad components of MFT are key faith-based needs (Faith-based needs of the Muslim travelers), demand-side key themes (reasons and motivation for travel by Muslims) and supply-side key themes (Travel and hospitality services and facilities). These components deliberated in most countries

as a benchmark to target Muslim tourists and market MFT destination.

The literature also observes a significant shift of hotels, travel packages, restaurants and cruises to provide products and services in accordance with MFT (Vargas-Sánchez & Moral-Moral, 2019a). Given the rising prevalence of providing Muslim needs, there is an essential need to observe the quality of the environment and not jeopardize the quality of life for the visited communities (Michael, 2017). One of the recent news areas for investigation has been the field of travel when the knowledge about the country, local people, environment and wildlife are integrated into one-based (Ramli, 2015). In the setting to unite conservation, communities and sustainable travel, the paradigm of mind making steps through the ecotourism product because most of the discussions are linked to human and nature activities (Greening, 2014; Xu, Kim, Liang, & Ryu, 2018). However, several areas of possible future research are highlighted by Khalid (2019) include the presence of spiritual in MFET that could develop a more comprehensive understanding.

In the Quran, Allah The Almighty stated that “*Gives each thing its created form and then guides it*” (Al-Quran 20:50), which means that the guiding principles for life on Earth are clearly described in the Qur’an. The basic principle of Islamic in social action is to build good and forbid the bad action towards sustainable of ecotourism. Allah The Almighty stated that: “*Be a people among you who call on good, insist on what is right, and forbid wrong: they are successful*” (Al-Quran 3:104). This creates a relationship that cares about nature. In other verse, Allah The Almighty mentioned “*Eat their fruits when they bear fruit and pay their harvest, and do not waste, for Allah does not love wastage*” (Al-Quran 6:141).

## Fundamental of Muslim Friendly Ecotourism (MFET)

In 2015, the Malaysian Standard for Muslim friendly hospitality and services (MS2610:2015) was launched to insist on the tourism industry by implement the MFT concepts. MFT is based on Islamic tourism concepts. It is important to understand the philosophy behind Islamic tourism. Among the verses from Al-Quran as following;

Allah the al-Mighty Say, “*(O Muhammad), ‘travel through the land and observe how was the end of those before. Most of them were associators [of others with Allah]’*” (Al-Quran 30:42). So, travel freely and discover the world. Allah the Almighty stated “*(O disbelievers), throughout the land [during] four months but know that you cannot cause failure to Allah and that Allah will disgrace the disbelievers*” (Al-Quran 9:2). Specifically, travel is encouraged in Islam. As mention by Usman, Sobari and Sari (2019), tourism could be driven by good intentions, such as to see the greatness of God’s creation, to get a blessing from God, to gain knowledge and to see the beauty of God’s creation. It also pointed out by Naqur (2003) that the concept of struggle (*jihad*), fasting and intellectual discourse could be wrapped up in the aim of travel in Islam. Therefore, the fundamental of MFET in Islamic tourism would be deduced as referring to the responsibility of the Muslim traveller to overcome the problem and keep them with the highest moral standards and consistently being obedient to God in their behaviour and attitude towards the nature.

## Islamic Guiding Principles (IGP) in MFET

In Islamic law, the Islamic jurists have set the IGP for MFET to rationalize tourism action and its connections with traveller and industries which are (Al-Umuri, Zaidan, & Qadir, 2017; Yakan, 1999);

- **Islamic law:** Prioritizing the Shariah guidance as well as objectives of Shariah, which means protecting the religion, life, mind, wealth and family (Sanad & Scott, 2010).
- **Goodness:** This means tourism in the area of concern, whether in food or drink, speech or behaviour, and avoid hatred and fornication (Cornelisse & Cornelisse, 2019).
- **Moral value:** Non-ethical tourism for examples, obscene, nasty, deteriorating and careless. In other words, tourism should contribute to the development of moral values of Muslims, or at least to preserve them, and ethical values: good care, honesty, love, cooperation, holiness, integrity and generosity (Holden, 2018; Vargas-Sánchez & Moral-Moral, 2019b).
- **Good behaviour:** Commitment to beliefs and moral values or to establish a distinctive Muslim behaviour in all respects and therefore is a symbol of Islam and this is a necessity for tourism in Islam (Ali et al. 2016)
- **Maintaining the obligations of Islam:** Perform recreational tourism to disobey Muslims from performing Islamic duty obligations or losing religious duties are not allowed (Tieman, 2011).

## Halal Logo and Certification

Halal and haram of the product must be very clear and not in the *syubhah* (doubtful) area. As narrated by Abi Abdillah al-Nu'man bin Bashir said, the Prophet peace be upon him (PBUH) has mentioned, "*Halal is clear and haram is clear; in between these two are certain things that are syubhah*" (Narrated by al-Bukhari & al-Muslim) (Al-Nawawi, 2014). In Indonesia, the authority for halal certification body is Halal Assurance Organizing Agency (*Badan Penyelenggara Jaminan Produk Halal* or BPJPH). This certification body will assist by Indonesian Ulema Council's Assessment Institute for Foods, Drugs and Cosmetics (*Lembaga Pengkajian Pangan, Obat-obatan dan Kosmetika Majelis Ulama Indonesia* or LPPOM-MUI) for validation and endorsement of halal products. This authority will ensure all applications of halal will undergo progressively and integrity process to certified the products. When compliance with halal standards, criteria and requirements, the halal logo and certification will be given.

Recent studies have shown that Muslim purchasing behaviour for food and beverages is highly dependent on the logo and labelling (Ali et al., 2017). It has been shown satisfactorily and trusts towards the halal logo even though there is still has some sceptical attitude. Studies have contradict demonstrated on the unaware of halal logo among the youngest generation, they are more on-trend than preserving what to consume (Krishnan et al., 2017). This may be problematic and cause a problem by the consumer side which not really care about products that have halal certification. However, the religiosity matters cannot be depending on trend rather than upholding the IGP.

The product certified as halal not only being halal but it includes safety aspects. It means that halal-certified products by competent authorities are in good quality, safety is confirmed

and fit for consumption according to Shariah principles (Bukhari et al., 2019). Based on Bukhari et al. (2019), halal logo main attribution is on food traceability. This can undertake several landmarks studied observed halal food manufacturers have been trusted by the local and international market (Ngah et al., 2015).

## Knowledge of Islamic Sustainable Tourism (IST)

Sustainable tourism is aim to keep balance of the economic, social, cultural and environmental outcome which related to the manners of host and guest to preserve the originality of the destination while providing benefits to local communities, conserve environment and protect cultural resources (Aquino, Lück, & Schänzel, 2018; Mondal, 2018). It should be noted here that based on Bagiada (2018) characteristic of sustainable tourism as follows; 1. Reduce excessive use of natural resources; 2. Using sustainable natural, cultural and socio-cultural resources; 3. Involve local communities in the development of tourist areas; 4. Provide economic benefits to local communities; 5. Maintain biodiversity; 6. Do not damage the natural environment; 7. Enabling natural resources for future generations; 8. Coordinate with relevant stakeholders in tourism object development; 9. Train local people to be skilled and professional; 10. Provide accurate, efficient and effective information; 11. Integrating a holistic planning; and 12. Doing marketing responsibly.

In Islamic perspective, sustainable tourism could be seen from the host and local communities into their religious belief, practice, and commitment (Mahmood & Nurunnabi, 2019). Based on that, it was found that religious beliefs and religious commitment were very high among local people, and this religiosity showed association with the welcoming behavior of local people Islamic religiosity influences the perception of residents regarding tourism development. This showed the practice and commitment of religious can repair any harm and damage as much as possible to protect the environment. Bazazo et al., (2017) and Muneeza et al. (2019) study also found the standard of ethics among community participation can promote Islamic tourism in the destination approach. Hence, the Islamic sustainable tourism can be defined as the good care of destination as it reflected from the understanding and knowledge of people and make all responsible parties are aware of what will happen as a result of any work that may be done by one of the users and visitors to the area.

## Methodology

This research adopts a qualitative methodology, which would provide an understanding of the potential of social phenomena and a comprehensive overview of the subject matter under study (Silverman, 2013). For this paper, the preliminary findings are based on the collection of both the primary and secondary data, and this stage is divided into two phases. The first phase is the library-based research stage which all the relevant literature on current practice in sustainable of Muslim friendly ecotourism in Halal industry ecosystem, fundamental of Muslim friendly ecotourism, halal logo and certification and knowledge in sustainable ecotourism were identified in the context of tourism practice in Indonesia. The second phase of the data collection is the fieldwork, in which the primary data mainly generated from participant observation and interviews. The data analysis used is a content analysis and descriptive technique.

In determining the location of the research, the authors refer to the potential destination that one of the most essential things in proposed MFET that can be blend with the environment and also meet the needs of Islamic tourism sustainable and a

tourist destination to become benefit and more interesting in the future (Muneeza et al., 2019). Therefore, the authors choose the area of the Karimunjawa Islands, Indonesia. The details can be described in Figure 1 and 2.

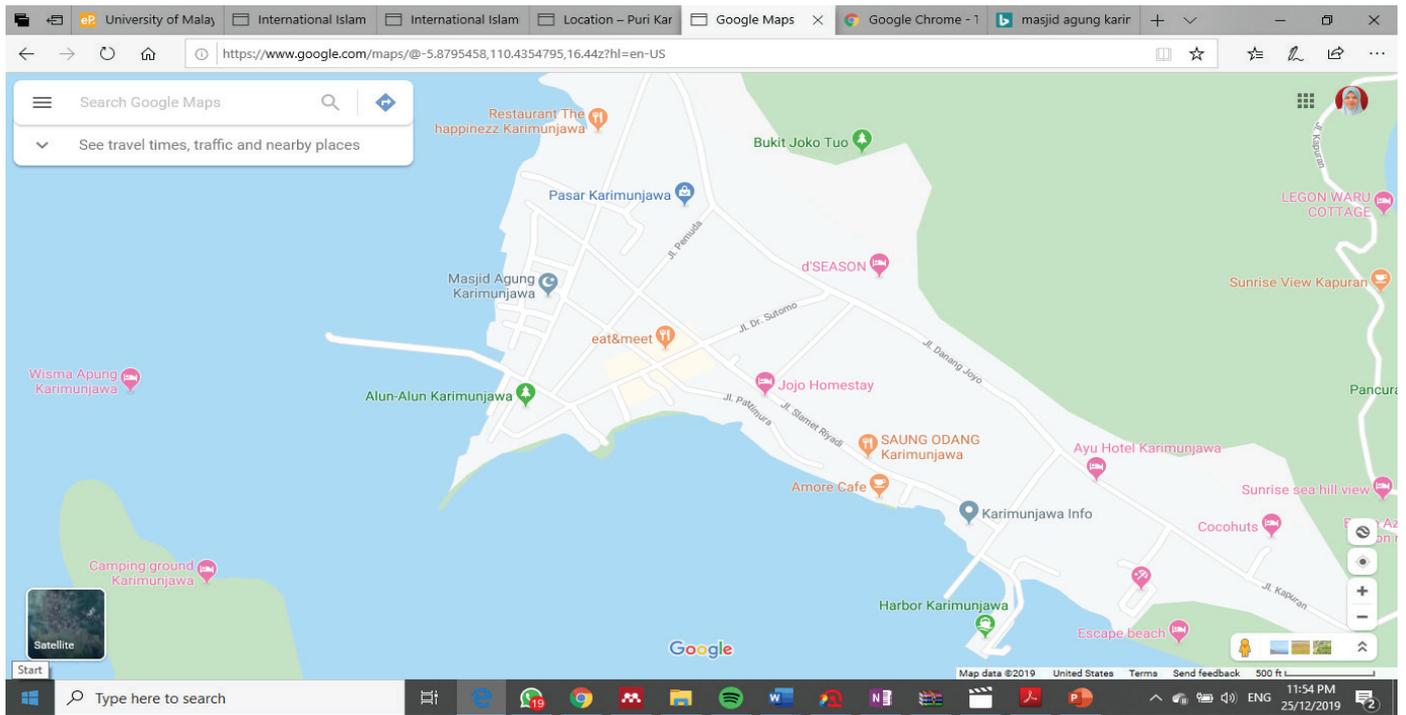


Figure 1. Map of one part of Karimunjawa Island, fieldwork for observation and interview.



(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)

Figure 2. a) Saung Odang Karimunjawa, b) Masjid Agung Karimunjawa, c) Pasar Karimunjawa, d) Harbor Karimunjawa

## Results and Discussion

The findings showed that Karimunjawa Islands was potential for develop and establish of MFET. This argument is in line with some of the informants' feedback during collecting the data in Karimunjawa Islands. Below are narratives of some of the informant's description.

### Understanding of the MFET concept

The results showed that people in Karimunjawa Islands have a good understanding of the MFET concept. During the observation, the researcher has introduced several basic faith-based needs of Muslim tourists for implementation of MFET. Such as Muslim friendly accommodation in homestays and chalets, halal food in restaurants or cafe, separated toilet with bidet shower and mosque as it located at the center of the islands. One of the informants from Karimunjawa homestay commented that:

*"The homestay providers have been acknowledged to ensure the security of the environment and a safe area should be provided. We also provide halal food, comfortable accommodation, and facilities suitable for Muslim tourists."*

The finding showed that the MFET concept can be applied when the local communities have a good understanding the basic needs of Muslim travel and the hospitality. Hence, the collaboration between local communities as a society was collective and eager to sustain the Islamic sustainable tourism. Limitation on the Knowledge of Halal Food Logo and Labelling Findings revealed that local communities at Karimunjawa Islands have limited concern towards the Halal food logo and labelled food. They believed that the preparation of food only based on their understanding to make sure the food is safe and healthy to consume. An informant stated that:

*"The basic economy at the Island is as a fisherman. We know about halal as we catch the fish and sell the catch to the collectors. Most of us are fishermen but we not sure about the food supply chain as it contaminated or not contaminated with non-halal sources. Also, we are unnoticed about the halal logo and labelling."*

### Knowledge of IST

The finding indicated that some of the informant have knowledge on sustainable tourism, but not appropriately understanding on IST. The informant described their understanding on preserving the coral by not stepping on it while snorkelling and have a proper waste management system. An informant remarked that:

*"As a tour guide, we will mention the rules and regulations when brings the tourist for island hopping. The responsibility to manage and preserve the Islands is our responsibility. In related to conservation effort regarding natural turtle hatchery and shark tourism in Karimunjawa, we do aware of that."*

Thus, the concept of MFET is needed to improve for IST

in order to conserve the destination attraction by concerning of six criteria of ecotourism. Its went back to the criteria of MFT (Chookaew *et al.*, 2015) and ecotourism (Yoder, 2017) in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Criteria of Muslim Friendly Ecotourism

Ecotourism	Muslim Friendly Tourism	Muslim Friendly Ecotourism
Nature-based	The service to the tourists should be compatible with Muslim principles as a whole journey.	Keeping Muslim tourists with the environment's principles organized by Islam
Preservation/conservation	Guides and staff should show discipline and respect for the principles of Islam.	The retraining from the cruelty to God creatures.
Environmental education	All activities must be organized so as not to conflict with Islamic principles.	Environmental education instils Islamic moral values.
	Travel destinations must not be contrary to Islamic principles.	Management with Islamic principles.
Sustainability	Buildings must conform to Islamic principles.	Activities should be with conservation.
Distribution of benefits	Restaurants must follow the international standard of halal service.	Work as <i>Khalifah</i> of Allah.
Ethics/responsibility	Transportation services must have a security system;	Understand and follow the standard ethics especially Islamic ethics
	Some places should be reserved for all Muslim travellers performing religious activities.	First public interest, then individual

A thorough study on this subject is no guideline on the implementation of MFET is offered. From the participant observation and interviews, it was revealed that belief, practice and commitment are importance aspects to sustain the area of the destination. Under belief, most focus was given to provide halal food and beverages. The practicality of practices was related to preserve the ecosystem of Islands. The commitment can be shown when the tour guides and homestays owners ensure the safety and hygiene for tourists while staying at Karimunjawa Islands. The Karimunjawa Islands has the untouchable area yet among the market. Hence, it has huge potential to promote and positioned itself as a MFET destination.

## Conclusion

This study highlighted the sustainable of Muslim friendly in halal industry ecosystems by focusing on the MFET concept, halal logo and certification and knowledge on Islamic sustainable tourism. The potential of tourism providers such as the Karimunjawa Islands was chosen as a destination to explore three aspects above. Research results show that local communities and tourism providers have massive knowledge about the conservation of ecotourism as it is the attraction for Karimunjawa Islands. This study was also managed as per local tourism providers, laws and regulations for the conservation of the island's ecosystem were under protocols and guidelines. This is a result of continuous attempts in the conservation among the local communities and the authorities.

Basically, halal is not only about food, but to sustain the Halal ecosystem, the related issues on safety, environment, halal food handling, and halal logo and certification are needed to generate the soundest knowledge and commitment (Abdullah *et al.*, 2015). A more interesting is given here in which the facilities and products in Karimunjawa Islands could be potential to develop in line with the MFET concept. However, there are the possible cases here that need to be considered when the new ideas proposed, the culture and the commitment could hold the responsibility under all authorities. Further research, however, should be used to examine this issue further. This is because the exposure on MFET concepts and crucial on having halal logo and certification are overlooked. The review suggested several recommendations are highlighted related to the issues by conducting more qualitative studies in the context of MFT.

## Conflict of Interests

We declare we have no conflict of interest.

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