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Halal Tourism Development In Japan : A Literature Review On Challenges and Opportunities For Muslim Tourists

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the development of halal tourism in Japan and to identify the challenges and opportunities in meeting the needs of Muslim tourists. This study employs a qualitative literature review approach through thematic analysis of scholarly articles, report, and official publications published between 2016-2026 related to halal Japan. The findings indicate that Japan has experienced significant progress in providing Muslim-friendly facilities, such as halal food, prayer spaces, and inclusive tourism services. However, several challenges remain, including limited public understanding of the needs of Muslim tourists, the lack of a fully integrated halal certification system, and language and cultural barriers. Nevertheless, these challenges can still be managed, as the Japanese government supports the presence of Muslim communities in Japan as part of its global engagement. The findings reveal that Japan has made significant progress in developing Muslim-friendly tourism through the provision of halal food, prayer facilities, digital information services, and inclusive tourism infrastructure.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, halal tourism has emerged as one of the key sectors in the global tourism industry. This development is closely associated with the growing global Muslim population, which is accompanied by increased cross-border travel mobility. Muslim tourists today are not only seeking visually appealing destinations but also considering religious aspects in their travel activities. Muslim travelers are obliged to observe Islamic instructions, following the holy Quran and the traditions of prophet Mohammad (Al-Ansi et al., 2021).The need for services that comply with Islamic principles, such as the availability of halal food, prayer facilities, and a Muslim-friendly environment, has become a crucial factor in determining travel destinations. This condition encourages various countries, including those with non-Muslim majorities, to adapt to these needs as part of a more inclusive and competitive tourism development strategy (Battour & Ismail, 2016)

The global Muslim travel market has continued to expand following the recovery of international tourism after the COVID-19 pandemic. Muslim travelers represent one of the fastest growing segments in tourism industry. This trend has increased the importance of halal tourism as a

strategic sector for enhancing destination competitiveness and inclusiveness in the global tourism market.

Halal tourism can essentially be understood as a transformation of conventional tourism into a more sensitive approach that accommodates the needs of Muslim travelers. Previously, halal tourism was often associated only with religious travel or pilgrimages to sacred places. However, the concept has now evolved into a broader framework. Halal tourism encompasses all tourism activities that allow Muslim tourists to fulfill their religious obligations without constraints. In practice, this includes the provision of halal food and beverages, prayer facilities such as ablution areas and prayer rooms, qibla direction indicators, as well as a social environment that supports Islamic values. Therefore, halal tourism is not limited to religious aspects alone but also integrates comfort, safety, and a comprehensive travel experience for Muslim tourists (El-Gohary, 2016).

In addition to its religious dimension, halal tourism also has significant economic implications. In various global reports, halal tourism has been identified as one of the key pillars of the Islamic economy. Muslim tourist expenditure continues to increase annually, driven by the growth of the Muslim middle class and improved access to international travel. According to the Global Islamic Economy Report, global Muslim consumer spending has reached trillions of US dollars, covering various sectors, including tourism(Bandial, 2025). This indicates that halal tourism is not merely a temporary phenomenon but has become part of a global trend with substantial potential for future growth.

Interestingly, the development of halal tourism is not limited to Muslim-majority countries but also occurs in non-Muslim countries such as Japan. Japan for example, its economy is oriented to target market object, even though muslim is minority, but Japan realize that muslim population is continuously growing along with consumptive lifestyle. It's become a major reason for Japan to create halal institution and attract Muslim tourist in enjoying the country(Nurdiansyah, 2018). Japan is one of the countries that actively responds to this trend through various innovations in the tourism sector. As a country with a predominantly non-Muslim population and a relatively homogeneous society, Japan faces unique challenges in providing tourism services that meet the needs of Muslim travelers. Nevertheless, Japan has demonstrated a strong commitment to developing Muslim-friendly tourism.

Compared with other non-Muslim-majority destinations such as Thailand and South Korea, Japan has demonstated a relatively rapid adaptation to the needs of Muslim travelers through the expansion of halal-certified services, prayer facilities, and destination marketing initiatives. However, Japan continues to face challenges related to halal certification standardization, language barriers, limited public understanding of Islamic practices.

The development of halal tourism in Japan is closely linked to the growing number of Muslim tourists visiting the country. The phenomenon of halal development in Japan will still be very interesting to observe. Not that halal availability in Japan makes Japan a halal successor of tourism, but the increasing number of tourists in the following years will also increase demand for halal availability for Muslim tourists(Kodir et al., 2019). Since 2013, Japan has experienced a significant increase in international tourist arrivals, including visitors from Muslim-majority countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and countries in the Middle East. This condition has encouraged the Japanese government and tourism industry stakeholders to pay greater attention to the needs of Muslim tourists as part of the national tourism development strategy.

Despite these positive developments, the development of halal tourism in Japan still faces several challenges. Research and data analysis play an essential role in understanding tourism trends and supporting sustainable tourism policies(Endoh, 2022). One of the main challenges is the limited understanding among local communities regarding the needs of Muslim tourists. Differences in culture and religion often create barriers in delivering services that meet the expectations of Muslim travelers. In addition, halal certification remains a significant issue. To date, Japan does not have a fully integrated national halal certification body, resulting in certification being issued by various Muslim organizations with differing standards. This condition leads to a lack of clarity and consistency in the implementation of halal standards in Japan.(Salleh et al., 2019).

In addition, language barriers are one of the factors that affect the comfort of Muslim tourists (Said et al., 2022). Not all tourism industry stakeholders possess adequate communication skills in foreign languages, particularly English or languages spoken in Muslim-majority countries. This may lead to misunderstandings in conveying information related to halal services. On the other hand, stereotypes and limited public understanding of Islam still persist, which may influence perceptions toward Muslim tourists. Therefore, socio-cultural approaches are highly important in supporting the development of halal tourism in Japan.

A socio-cultural approach in halal tourism emphasizes the importance of harmonious interaction between Muslim tourists and local communities. Such interactions can help foster mutual understanding and respect for differences, thereby creating a more comfortable and enjoyable travel experience for both parties. Community engagement fosters a sense of ownership and ensures that tourism development aligns with local values and needs (Chantarungsri & Alam, 2025). In this context, education becomes a crucial strategy that needs to be implemented, both for local communities and tourism industry stakeholders. This educational effort aims to enhance understanding of the needs of Muslim tourists and to reduce potential misunderstandings.

Furthermore, the role of various stakeholders in the development of halal tourism is essential. The government acts as a regulator that can formulate policies supporting halal tourism development, such as providing prayer facilities in public spaces and simplifying the halal certification process. Tourism industry players serve as service providers who interact directly with tourists, and therefore need to improve the quality of Muslim-friendly services. Meanwhile, Muslim communities play a bridging role in helping communicate the needs of Muslim tourists to local society.

In the current digital era, technological advancements also offer significant opportunities to support the development of halal tourism. Muslim tourists can now easily access information regarding halal destinations through various digital platforms, such as social media, travel applications, and dedicated websites. Innovations such as the "Halal Japan" application serve as an example of how technology can be utilized to assist Muslim tourists in locating halal food, prayer facilities, and other services in a practical and efficient manner. This indicates that digitalization plays an important role in expanding access to information and enhancing the overall experience of Muslim travelers.

Amid the existing challenges, Japan also has significant opportunities to develop halal tourism as part of its global economic strategy. The increasing number of Muslim tourists each year indicates a highly promising market potential. According to the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO), Japan welcomed more than 33.4 million international visitors during the first eleven months of 2024 (Reuters, 2024), surpassing the pre-pandemic record of 31.9 million visitors in 2019 (*Data List | Japan Tourism Statistics*, 2019) In addition, visitors from Muslim-majority countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia continued to grow significantly, reaching more than one million combined visitors in 2024(Hashem, 2025). In addition, government support and the openness of Japanese society toward foreign cultures provide important capital for developing this sector. In fact, some business actors in Japan have begun to recognize the importance of providing halal services as part of their business strategies, leading to the emergence of various enterprises offering Muslim-friendly products and services.

Given these potentials and challenges, the development of halal tourism in Japan requires a comprehensive and integrated strategy. The approach adopted should not only focus on the provision of physical facilities but also encompass social, cultural, and technological aspects. Education, cross-cultural communication, and the utilization of digital technology are key factors in creating sustainable halal tourism. Therefore, halal tourism not only fulfills the needs of Muslim tourists but also serves as a means to strengthen intercultural relations and enhance the competitiveness of Japan's tourism industry at the global level.

Although previous studies have examined halal tourism development in Japan, most studies focus on specific issues such as halal food provision, Muslim tourist satisfaction, destination image, or

tourism marketing. Limited studies have comprehensively synthesized the challenges, opportunities, and strategic implications of halal tourism development in Japan. Therefore, a more integrated literature review is needed to provide a holistic understanding of halal tourism development in a Muslim-minority destination.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the development of halal tourism in Japan and to identify the challenges and opportunities in meeting the needs of Muslim tourists. This research is expected to provide a comprehensive overview of the current condition of halal tourism in Japan and to serve as a reference for the development of more inclusive and sustainable tourism policies and practices in the future.

2. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method. The SLR approach was selected to provide a structured and comprehensive synthesis of previous studies concerning halal tourism development in Japan. Through this method, the study systematically identifies, evaluates, and analyzes relevant scholarly publications to generate a holistic understanding of the challenges, opportunities, and strategic implications of halal tourism development in a Muslim-minority destination.

To ensure a systematic and transparent literature selection process, this study applied predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria in identifying, screening, and classifying relevant publications. The literature search was conducted through several academic databases, including Scopus, Google Scholar, and SINTA-accredited journals. The search process focused on publications published between 2016 and 2025 using keywords such as “halal tourism,” “Muslim-friendly tourism,” “Islamic tourism,” “Japan,” and “Muslim travelers in Japan.”

The data used in this study are secondary data derived from journal articles, conference proceedings, books, research reports, and official publications related to halal tourism in Japan. The inclusion criteria covered studies discussing halal tourism services, Muslim-friendly facilities, tourism policies, socio-cultural adaptation, and tourism development in Japan. Meanwhile, unrelated studies, duplicate articles, non-academic publications, and sources with unclear methodologies were excluded from the review process.

Data collection was carried out through identification, screening, classification, and documentation of relevant literature. Articles were first screened based on titles and abstracts, followed by full-text review to ensure their relevance to the research objectives. The selected studies were then grouped into several thematic categories according to the major issues discussed in the literature. After the screening and eligibility process, 38 relevant publications were selected and analyzed in this study. The selected publications were evaluated based on their relevance, methodological clarity, publication credibility, and contribution to halal tourism studies.

Furthermore, thematic analysis was employed to examinee and interpret the selected literature. This analytical technique enabled he researcher to identify recurring patterns, key issues, and relationships among previous studies concerning halal tourism development in Japan. Through a systematic review of the literature, analysis explored various dimensions of halal tourism, including the availibility of Muslim-friendly facilities, socio-cultural adaptation, stakeholder involvement, goverment policies, and the role of digital technology in supporting tourism services.

The data analysis process was conducted descriptively and interpretatively by comparing findings from different studies to identify dominant patterns and research gaps. In addition, triangulation of sources was applied by comparing information from journal articles, official tourism reports, and institutional publications to improve the credibility and reliability of the findings. This analytical process enabled the study to produce a comprehensive understanding of halal tourism dynamics in Japan while maintaining methodological consistency and academic validity.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. The Development of Halal Tourism in Japan

The development of halal tourism in Japan indicates that the country is increasingly serious in responding to the needs of Muslim tourists. However, the approach adopted is still largely characterized as Muslim-friendly tourism rather than a fully established halal system, as certain aspects—such as comprehensive halal certification for food and beverages in supermarkets—have not yet been fully implemented. According to Japan Today, Japan still needs to intensify its efforts to promote the country to the global market (Rosliana, 2017). The halal industry in Japan has expanded into various market segments, ranging from Narita International Airport to numerous universities across Japan. However, up to the present, the number of Japanese companies involved in the halal industry remains very limited(Roosiani & Puspitasari, 2021). Meanwhile, Thailand continues to be a major destination for international tourists, prompting the Japanese government to undertake various initiatives to attract foreign visitors, particularly Muslim tourists from the Middle East and Southeast Asia. Thailand offers a diverse array of digital services that cater to the needs of Muslim individuals. These services are developed by both the government tourism organization and commercial enterprises with global operations. Factor contributing to increased destination awareness is Thailand's efforts to advertise itself as a Muslim-friendly destination through various resources and marketing(Nasution, 2023). This is reflected in the availability of official Muslim travel guides provided by the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO), which include information on mosques, prayer facilities, Muslim-friendly restaurants, and accommodations that can be utilized by Muslim travelers visiting Japan.

The availability of halal tourism guides provided by the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) indicates that both the Japanese government and private sector are highly committed to accommodating Muslim tourists. Japan has demonstrated a considerable ability to adapt to various Islamic requirements and practices. This development reflects the country's growing efforts to promote halal tourism. Nevertheless, several challenges remain, particularly regarding halal certification issues and language barriers.

Japan's commitment to providing facilities for Muslim tourists has grown significantly over time. During the administration of Shinzo Abe, Japan began to engage more actively in the halal industry as part of its strategy to diversify national revenue(Puspitasari & Roosiani, 2021). This diversification strategy has attracted private sector investment in halal tourism-related businesses, including digital information platforms, modest fashion such as hijab-inspired kimono, and halal-certified food products issued by organizations such as the Nippon Asia Halal Association (NAHA).

These developments of halal tourism, indicate that Japan's halal tourism not only driven by the government's effort but also supported by active participation from the private sector. Halal-related business increasing also and it's reflects growing awareness of the economic potential of Muslim tourism. As a result, halal tourism haas become important part of Japan's strategy to invite international visitor.

In the development of halal tourism in Japan, particularly in the field of digital information, Halal Media Japan—a privately owned Japanese company based in Tokyo—plays a strategic role as both an information and promotional platform that bridges the needs of Muslim tourists with service providers in Japan. Although it operates within the Japanese context, Halal Media Japan has been able to position itself effectively in connecting Muslim travelers with halal-related services. This platform not only provides information on halal restaurants, mosques, and prayer facilities but also offers educational content for local communities and industry stakeholders regarding halal concepts and the needs of Muslim tourists. This indicates that digitalization functions not merely as an information tool, but also as a mechanism for reducing uncertainty among Muslim tourists in non-Muslim destinations. Through a digital approach and user experience–based content, the platform enhances information accessibility and strengthens Muslim tourists' trust in Japan as a destination,

despite the absence of a fully standardized national halal certification system(Kurniawan & Jatmika, 2021).

The role of Halal Media Japan shows that digital platforms have become an important component in halal industry. In a context where a standardized national halal certification has not been fully established, Halal Media Japan helps Muslim travelers to reach information about halal Restaurants, Muslim-friendly food products, prayer room, not only in Tokyo but also for any places in Japan like Aichi Prefecture, Hokkaido, Kyoto, and many places in Japan.

In addition to the strong role of information media in promoting halal tourism, the Japanese government has also facilitated the import of halal food and ingredients as part of the halal food supply chain supporting halal restaurants in Japan. The halal supply chain is strictly regulated by the government, ensuring that product halalness is maintained not only at the production stage but throughout the entire distribution process. In fact, the halal supply chain requires rigorous supervision from upstream to downstream (Kitayama et al., 2018). This indicates that the Japanese government is highly committed to developing halal tourism by facilitating the availability of halal food ingredients for use in various halal restaurants, although there are still aspects that need further improvement.

Beyond promotional efforts and food-related aspects, the Japanese government has also demonstrated commitment to developing prayer facilities across various regions. This is evident from the increasing availability of prayer spaces in shopping centers, airports, and the growing number of mosques in Japan. The government recognizes that the behavior of Muslim tourists in Japan shows that spiritual needs are a primary priority (Saville & Mahbubi, 2021)

When compared to other countries such as Thailand, Japan is still in the early stage of development in adopting the concept of halal tourism comprehensively. Thailand, for instance, already has a more structured national halal certification system and a more aggressive halal tourism promotion strategy in the global market. In contrast, Japan still relies on a more flexible Muslim-friendly tourism approach, which has not yet fully met comprehensive halal standards.

Nevertheless, this flexible approach has its own advantages, as it is more easily accepted by Japanese society, which is generally secular yet highly appreciative of its cultural values. This approach allows Japan to maintain its local cultural identity while gradually accommodating the needs of Muslim tourists. Therefore, the development model of halal tourism in Japan can be considered an adaptive model that aligns with the local socio-cultural context.

This finding suggests that the success of halal tourism development in Japan depends not only on the availibility of halal facilities but also on cooperation among various stkeholders. Government, local communities, Muslim communities, tourism business all play important roles in creating a more inclusive touris environment. This condition shows that halal tourism can be developed gradually while still respecting local culture and Japan's social life.

3.2. Challenges in Halal Tourism Development in Japan

In recent decades, Japan's economic growth has slowed as a result of a rapidly aging population and shrinking labour force. However, the tourism industry has the potential to revitalise theeconomy and the expansion of halal tourism can play an important role in this revitalisation (Hasanah et al., 2025). The development of halal tourism in Japan faces various complex challenges, primarily because Japan is a non-Muslim-majority country with a relatively limited understanding of halal concepts. The low level of literacy among both local communities and tourism industry stakeholders regarding the needs of Muslim tourists—such as halal food, prayer facilities, and other religious practices—has become one of the main obstacles.

Moreover, several Muslim community organizations in Japan independently issue halal certifications, including the Nippon Asia Halal Association (NAHA), the Japan Muslim Association (JMA), and the Japan Islamic Trust (JIT). The absence of centralize certification institution has led to competition among them, and causing the certification process increasingly complicted and expensive (Dewanto et al., 2024). This lack of standardization has the potential to create confusion among

Muslim tourists and may affect their level of trust in the halal status of products and tourism services. In fact, halal logos play a crucial role as an important indicator in building consumer trust (Shaari et al., 2019).

This condition indicates that the challenge of halal tourism development in Japan is not solely related to the availibility of facilities but also to institutionl coordination and public trust. The absence of a unified halal certification system may create uncertainty among Muslim tourists when evaluating the halal status of products and services. Muslim tourists needs availibility of unified halal logos by Japan's government like another non Muslim countries Thailand and Singapore. Therefore, strengthening collaboration among halal certification bodies, tourism stakeholders, and government institutions is essential to improve service consistency.

Another important challenge is the language barrier and cultural differences between Muslim tourists and local Japanese communities. Most people in Japanese society lack first-hand experience with Muslims or Islam and what little information they do have tends to be vaguely informed by general images of Islam as a "Middle Eastern culture" associated with violence and terrorism, even if they're hazy ideas that lack the same immediate "punch" as they do in Western countries (Ostermiller, 2025). Japanese society generally has limited use of foreign languages, as Japanese remains the primary language of daily communication. Language barriers have become one of the main obstacles in delivering Muslim-friendly tourism services (Salleh et al., 2019). This condition often makes it difficult for tourists to obtain clear information regarding halal food or prayer facilities, while local business operators may not yet fully understand halal concepts comprehensively.

From an operational perspective, maintaining the integrity of the halal supply chain also presents a significant challenge for halal food businesses in Japan. The halal status of products is not only determined at the production stage but must also be preserved throughout the entire distribution process until it reaches consumers. This requires strong supervision and coordination among producers, distributors, and halal certification bodies. Moreover, halal facilities in Japan are still more developed in major cities compared to other regions (Latib et al., 2023). This situation poses a challenge for halal tourism stakeholders, as outside major urban areas, halal restaurants, food products, and halal-certified supermarkets remain limited.

In addition, social factors such as stereotypes toward Islam and issues of Islamophobia also influence the acceptance of Muslim tourists by local communities. Although these attitudes are not always openly expressed, they can affect the overall comfort of foreign visitors in Japan. Skepticism toward Muslims still exists to some extent, largely influenced by negative portrayals of Islam in global media, particularly following events such as the 9/11 incident (Takahashi, 2021).

This findings suggests that the challenges of halal tourism development in Japan are multidimensional and cannot be addressed solely through infrastructure expansion. While the provision of halal-certified products and prayer facilities remains important, long-term development also depends on strengthening institutional coordination, improving public awareness of Islamic values, and enhancing stakeholder collaboration. The success of halal tourism in Japan needs integrates economic, socio-cultural, and policy dimensions.

Therefore, the challenges in developing halal tourism in Japan are not limited to the provision of facilities but also involve social, cultural, policy-related, and industrial system factors that are not yet fully integrated. As a result, a more comprehensive and collaborative approach involving the government, industry stakeholders, and Muslim communities is required to address these issues.

In addition to the challenges mentioned above, trust is also a critical issue in the development of halal tourism in Japan. Muslim tourists tend to be cautious when consuming food products in non-Muslim countries, especially when information regarding halal status is not clearly communicated. The lack of transparency in such information may influence tourists' decisions in choosing destinations and tourism services. Furthermore, the Japanese language, which is relatively difficult for foreign tourists to understand, can make it more challenging for Muslim travelers to verify the halal status of products through ingredient labels on packaging.

On the other hand, business actors in Japan also face challenges in understanding the diversity of halal standards. Differences in Islamic schools of thought (madhhab) often lead to varying interpretations regarding the halal status of certain products, making it difficult for businesses to determine appropriate standards. This indicates that the development of halal tourism is not only related to technical aspects but also requires a deeper understanding of religious values.

3.3. Opportunities for Halal Tourism Development in Japan

Japan has significant opportunities to further develop its halal tourism sector. There are various supporting factors that can strengthen this development, one of which is the concept of *omotenashi* (hospitality), reflecting the Japanese people's welcoming attitude toward foreign visitors. The Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) employs both visual and textual strategies to convey the meaning of *omotenashi*. Symbols such as bowing and the presentation of food reflect values of hospitality, attentiveness, and respect (Harsiwi & Wicaksono, 2025).

At the bilateral level, Japan has signed Memorandums of Cooperation (MoC) in the development of halal tourism with several Southeast Asian countries. Cooperation with Indonesia was marked by the signing of the Halal Tourism Development MoC in 2023 (Nujhan, 2025). From a market perspective, the increasing demand for halal products and services also represents a major opportunity for industry players in Japan. Japanese companies have begun to engage in the halal industry across various sectors, including digital information services, food, tourism, and international trade. Not only Muslim entrepreneurs but also Japanese nationals themselves have started to open halal restaurants. For instance, several halal-certified restaurants in Tokyo are owned by Japanese citizens, such as Yakiniku Panga, Halal Wagyu Ramen Shinjuku-Tei, Cabe Restaurant, Kedai Nenek, and many others. This demonstrates that Japanese society is increasingly receptive and enthusiastic in welcoming Muslim tourists.

Furthermore, the advancement of digital technology also provides significant opportunities for the development of halal tourism in Japan. Digital platforms and social media, such as Halal Media Japan, play an important role in providing accurate information about halal services, thereby assisting Muslim tourists in planning their trips. These digital platforms make it easier for Muslim travelers to access information related to halal services efficiently(Hakim, 2019).

These findings indicate that the opportunities for halal tourism development in Japan are supported not only by increasing market demand but also by country's ability to adopt halal tourism system. Government support in bilateral level with Muslim countries, government policies, private sector participation, local values, and digital innovation creates a favorable environment. This suggests that Japan has strong potential to strengthen its position.

Therefore, the opportunities for developing halal tourism in Japan are not only driven by the increasing number of Muslim tourists but are also supported by government policies, economic potential, the strength of local cultural values, and the advancement of information technology. Optimal management, combined with strong integration with local Muslim communities, will further accelerate the growth of halal tourism in Japan.

In addition to economic opportunities, the development of halal tourism in Japan also has the potential to strengthen cultural diplomacy. The presence of Muslim tourists from various countries can serve as a platform for positive cultural exchange, thereby enhancing Japan's image as an open and inclusive nation.

Furthermore, the growing global trend of the halal lifestyle provides additional opportunities for Japan to expand its halal industry beyond the tourism sector into other areas such as food, cosmetics, and fashion. In this context, halal tourism can serve as a gateway for the broader development of the halal economy in Japan.

3.4. Strategies for Strengthening Halal Tourism in Japan

Strengthening halal tourism in Japan requires comprehensive and integrated strategies, as Japan is a non-Muslim country with social, cultural, and religious values that differ from those of Muslim-

majority countries. A purely physical approach is considered insufficient to meet the indicators of halal tourism. Therefore, it is necessary to establish supportive government policies to facilitate the development of halal tourism, alongside socio-cultural engagement with local communities and the provision of comprehensive digital information.

One of the main strategies for developing halal tourism is strengthening halal regulations and standardization. To date, Japan does not yet have a fully integrated national halal certification body, as certification is still managed by various Muslim community organizations. This condition may create confusion among Muslim tourists in determining the halal status of products and services. Therefore, synergy between the government and Muslim institutions is required to establish a more standardized and credible halal certification system. Such standardization will enhance Muslim tourists' trust and strengthen Japan's image as a halal tourism destination (Srifauzi et al., 2024).

This finding suggests tht halal certification standardization is not merely an administrtive requirement but also a strategic instrument for destination competitiveness. A clear and consistent certification system can reduce uncertainty among Muslim tourists, improve service quality, and strengthen the credibility of halal tourism products. Therefore, regulatory harmonization should be considered a long term strategy for supporting the sustainable development of halal tourism Japan.

The next strategy involves improving Muslim-friendly infrastructure and services. The provision of facilities such as halal restaurants, a reliable supply of halal food ingredients, prayer rooms integrated with ablution facilities, and accommodations that support the needs of Muslim tourists—including accessible digital information—are essential factors in creating a comfortable travel experience. In addition, tourism industry stakeholders need to improve service quality by gaining a deeper understanding of Muslim tourists' needs. Another source stated that there are approximately 191 prayer rooms around Japan placed around several hotspots at this time being, suchasairports, information centers, shopping malls, restaurants, and tourist attractions and 105 masjids in almost every prefecture (Putra Pratama, 2022).

These findings indicate that the availibility of Muslim-friendly infrastructure is one of the key determinants of tourists satisfaction. Although the number of prayer facilities and mosques in Japan has increased significantly, their distribution remains concentrated in major urban areas. Therefore, expanding Muslim-friendly facilities to secondary cities and emerging tourists destinations is essential to ensure more inclusive and accesible halal tourism development.

Furthermore, a socio-cultural approach is equally important in strengthening halal tourism in Japan. This approach serves as a form of adaptation for Japanese society in addressing cultural and religious differences. Such differences often become barriers in interactions between Muslim tourists and local communities. Therefore, efforts are needed to educate Japanese society about the needs and religious practices of Muslim tourists. This approach aims to reduce stereotypes and enhance social acceptance. Studies indicate that public understanding of halal concepts still needs to be improved to support the optimal development of halal tourism (Sannomaru et al., 2026).

In addition, the utilization of digital technology has become a highly effective strategy in the development of halal tourism. Currently, various halal-related applications are accessible to Muslim tourists, such as Halal Japan, which provides information on halal food and products, and Halal Media Japan, which offers information on prayer facilities and halal restaurants, along with other useful digital tools. This digitalization not only facilitates tourists' access to information but also serves as an effective promotional medium for halal tourism destinations. The use of technology in halal tourism can enhance destination attractiveness and expand its reach in the global market (Anggara et al., 2024).

These findings explain that the strengthening pf halal tourism in Japan should not only focus on infrastructure development but also involve socio-cultural adapttion, digital inovation, and collaboration among stakeholders. The integration of government support, Muslim community participation, and technological advancement can contribute to creating a more inclusive and sustainable halal tourism ecosystem in Japan.

Collaboration among the government, the halal industry, and Muslim communities is essential and must be carried out in an integrated manner. This is because policy frameworks and socio-cultural dynamics are closely interconnected, and such collaboration ensures that Muslim tourists can travel comfortably while in Japan.

From a stakeholder theory perspective, the development of halal tourism cannot be implemented in a partial manner; rather, it must involve various stakeholders who have interests in the sector. The government, industry players, Muslim communities, and local society are key actors that must work together to create a sustainable halal tourism ecosystem. Each of these actors plays a crucial role in advancing halal tourism in Japan. Studies on halal tourism from non-Muslim majority countries showed that they have institutions and the application of rules related to Islamic values, which is one of the most prominent points in implementing a solid halal tourism concept (Idris & Rozaidah, 2024).

Furthermore, from a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) perspective, Japan possesses strengths in terms of its cultural richness, technological advancement, and the hospitality of its people (*omotenashi*). However, it still faces weaknesses in halal certification systems and public understanding of halal concepts. Despite these limitations, Japan still has significant opportunities to develop halal tourism, even though it is currently more oriented toward Muslim-friendly tourism. In the context of global competition, Japan remains a competitive and promising destination.

In addition, it is important to highlight that Japan can adopt benchmarking strategies by learning from countries that have successfully developed halal tourism, such as Malaysia and Thailand. These countries have implemented integrated halal certification systems, strong government support, and consistent global branding strategies. By adopting best practices from these countries while still maintaining its unique cultural identity, Japan can accelerate the development of its halal tourism sector. However, such adaptation should be carried out selectively to ensure compatibility with Japan's socio-cultural context. This approach allows Japan to develop a hybrid model of halal tourism that combines global standards with local values, thereby creating a more competitive and distinctive tourism experience in the international market.

The findings indicate that the future development of halal tourism in Japan depends not only on the availability of halal facilities but also on the country's ability to integrate islamic tourism requirements with local cultural values. Unlike Muslim-majority destinations with religious infratructure, Japan tends to emphasize service quality and cultural adaptation.

Furthermore, the Japanese government should encourage greater public awareness regarding the presence of Muslim communities in Japan. In recent years, the number of Muslim tourists, foreign workers, international students, and long-term residents has continued to increase, making Muslims an increasingly visible part of Japanese society. Therefore, efforts to promote intercultural understanding through public education, community engagement programs, and cultural exchange activities are essential. Such initiatives can help reduce misconceptions about Islam, strengthen social cohesion, and create a more welcoming environment for Muslim visitors and residents. In the long term, improving public acceptance of cultural and religious diversity will support the sustainable development of halal tourism in Japan

3.5. Implications and Recommendations for Halal Tourism Development in Japan

From a socio-cultural perspective, interactions between Muslim tourists and Japanese society have the potential to enhance cross-cultural understanding. However, without adequate education, differences in values and religious practices may lead to misunderstandings. Therefore, continuous educational approaches are necessary to improve public literacy regarding halal concepts and Muslim religious practices (Sannomaru et al., 2026). The presence of halal tourism carries political significance, as it allows various interests to emerge within this sector. Although halal tourism is a product of the Islamic economic system, developed as a response to the failures of socialism and capitalism in achieving social welfare, the involvement of non-Muslim countries in developing halal tourism has instead become a neoliberal strategy to incorporate the Islamic economic system into the global market (Rahmah & Tapotubun, 2020).

Based on these implications, several strategic recommendations can be proposed. First, the Japanese government needs to strengthen halal regulations and standardization through the establishment of a more integrated certification system, including collaboration and dialogue with Muslim communities in Japan. Second, the improvement of Muslim-friendly facilities and services should be implemented more evenly, not only in major cities but also in other tourist destinations. Third, the utilization of digital technology needs to be optimized to expand access to information for Muslim tourists (Yudiantoro & Suselo, 2024).

Furthermore, Japanese government should promote broader public awareness regarding the growing presence of Muslim communities in Japan. The increasing number of Muslim tourists, foreign workers, international students, and long-term residents indicates that cultural and religious diversity is becoming an integral part of contemporary Japanese society. Therefore educational programs, intercultural dialogue initiatives, and community-based activities should be strengthened to improve public understanding of Islamic values and practices. These efforts can reduce misconceptions and foster social inclusion.

In addition, collaboration among the government, industry stakeholders, and Muslim communities should be further strengthened to create a sustainable halal tourism ecosystem. In response to the increasing arrival of Muslim tourists, the Japanese government has sought to provide comfort and memorable experiences for Muslim travelers (Imam & Muhyidin, 2024). With appropriate strategies, Japan has strong potential to become one of the leading halal tourism destinations in the world (Damayanti, 2023).

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, Japan possesses both unique challenges and significant opportunities in the development of halal tourism. Halal tourism in Japan has shown considerable improvement over time. Although it has not yet fully achieved a comprehensive halal system, Japan offers an attractive alternative through the concept of "Muslim-friendly tourism," which serves as a key strategy to attract Muslim tourists from around the world. Various halal-related facilities are already available according to halal tourism indicators, such as halal restaurants, prayer facilities, and information regarding the halal status of products through digital platforms. However, these facilities are more commonly found in major cities, while in smaller or less developed areas, access to prayer spaces and halal food options remains limited.

Despite this progress, several challenges and obstacles persist in its practical implementation. Differences in socio-cultural values and daily practices between Muslim communities and Japanese society present certain limitations. In addition, stereotypes toward Islam continue to influence public perception. These conditions indicate that the development of halal tourism does not solely depend on the provision of physical facilities but also requires continuous socio-cultural engagement and educational efforts.

On the other hand, Japan holds substantial potential in advancing halal tourism. The increasing number of global Muslim tourists, strong government support, the richness of local cultural values such as *omotenashi*, and the advancement of digital technology are key factors that can drive the growth of this sector. The role of digital media and Muslim communities is also crucial in enhancing services for Muslim tourists visiting Japan.

Therefore, the development of halal tourism in Japan requires stronger synergy among the government, industry stakeholders, and Muslim communities to create a more integrated and sustainable system. If managed effectively, Japan has the potential to become one of the leading halal tourism destinations in the world.

The findings indicate that the success of halal tourism development in Japan is not primarily determined by the availibility of halal facilities alone, but by the ability of stakeholders to integrate halal tourism principles within Japan's socio-cultural context. This suggests that an adaptive Muslim-

friendly tourism model may be more suitable for Japan than the direct adoption of halal tourism models implemented in Muslim-majority countries.

This research also contributes academically by enriching the study of halal tourism in Muslim-minority countries, particularly Japan, which has not been extensively explored in a comprehensive manner. By integrating aspects of challenges, opportunities, and strengthening strategies, this study is expected to serve as a reference for future research employing more in-depth approaches, both qualitative and quantitative.

For future research, it is recommended to conduct field studies involving Muslim tourists and tourism industry stakeholders in Japan to obtain more current and empirical data. This would allow future studies to provide more specific and applicable recommendations for the development of halal tourism in Japan.

In addition, Japan continues to have strong opportunities in developing halal tourism, particularly in the digital era, where the increasing number of global Muslim tourists, government support, local cultural strengths such as *omotenashi*, and technological advancements can contribute significantly to national economic growth. Digital media and Muslim communities remain important elements in improving services for Muslim tourists.

Although there are still areas that need improvement, halal tourism in Japan has shown promising progress. Strengthening branding as a Muslim-friendly destination is an important strategy that should be emphasized. Japan can leverage its local cultural strengths, such as the concept of *omotenashi*, as added value in attracting Muslim tourists. Moreover, halal tourism can facilitate cultural exchange between Muslims from various countries and Japanese society, fostering mutual understanding and respect.

In a broader context, the development of halal tourism in Japan also reflects the increasing importance of inclusivity in the global tourism industry. As international travel becomes more diverse, destinations are required to adapt to the needs of various cultural and religious groups. Halal tourism, therefore, should not only be viewed as a niche market but as part of a larger movement toward inclusive and sustainable tourism development. Japan's experience in developing Muslim-friendly tourism can serve as a valuable model for other non-Muslim countries seeking to attract Muslim travelers. By continuing to strengthen its strategies and policies, Japan has the potential not only to expand its tourism sector but also to contribute to the promotion of intercultural understanding at the global level.

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