

Research Article

Prospects of Halal Green Tourism in Brunei Darussalam

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ORCIDNor Surilawana Sulaiman: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4227-9703>Norkhairiah Hashim: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9631-3789>**Abstract.**

In recent years, there has been a growing interest among academics worldwide in the concepts of halal and green tourism, particularly focusing on sustainability. This trend has created both opportunities and challenges for tourism stakeholders, as there is a strong interest from tourists in both halal and green tourism experiences. Brunei Darussalam, with about 80% of its land covered in primary tropical forest and a significant portion devoted to permanent forests and forest reserves, offers numerous green tourist attractions despite its small size. To gain a comprehensive understanding of the concepts and relevant aspects of halal-green tourism, this study explores the existing literature and theories related to the topic. Using a qualitative approach and secondary data collection, the study provides insights into halal-green tourism in Brunei. Furthermore, a SWOT analysis of the Brunei tourism industry is presented based on the information gathered. The data indicates that Brunei offers an ideal balance of environmentally friendly and halal-friendly services, making it an attractive destination for halal-green tourism. The SWOT analysis serves as a valuable guideline for relevant authorities and policymakers in planning the future development of the country's tourism industry. Additionally, local travel agencies can utilize this analysis to promote and enhance halal green tourism in Brunei.

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1. Introduction

Tourism has long been regarded as an economic vehicle for both developing and developed countries, and it is frequently regarded as the first or second largest industry in many countries, including Kenya, Hawaii, and Goa [1], for its economic impact and job creation, as well as the effects on the balance of payment [2]. Some consider tourism to be the world's third largest economic activity, after oil and automobiles, and it is one of the fastest-growing industries [3].

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Brunei Darussalam (hereinafter Brunei) is one of the world's wealthiest countries due to its oil and gas industry [1]. So, driven by wealth from oil, development has become a little lax. However, the 1997 Asian financial crisis jeopardised Brunei's economic stability [1]. Therefore, it is urgently necessary to restructure its economy away from its unsustainable oil and gas industry and toward a more market-driven, globally competitive, and diversified economy. Given that, the government is now considering tourism development as a way to achieve economic development.

Among the three major impacts of tourism; economic, sociocultural, and environmental, the economic impact played a dominant role in policy-making [4]. The negative socio-cultural and environmental effects of tourism were largely disregarded in favour of the economic advantages which caused the tourism industry to grow haphazardly and without proper planning in many nations. Soon after, social and environmental degradation became a problem [2].

An effort has been made to develop strategies for making tourism sustainable as a result of increased awareness of the damaging effects of tourism on the environment. In the last two decades, there has been an increase in interest in the connection between tourism growth and environmental quality [5], with the rise of speciality tourism, such as green tourism. Tourism has historically been viewed as a relatively green industry [6].

The tourism industry acknowledges that both practitioners and researchers are becoming increasingly interested in Halal and green tourism. The development of tourism in Brunei will be significantly impacted by the growing demand that arises as a result of the anticipated increase in demand for travel to new, halal and green destinations. To fill in the gaps in our knowledge, studying Brunei tourism from any perspective is consequently required. Hence, the knowledge of halal green tourism concepts and components is pertinent to the industry players alike in developing halal green tourism infrastructure and facilities, halal green travel packages, and halal green travel activities.

1.1. Halal Tourism Concept

One of the travel services that has been around and has been heavily marketed by the majority of Muslim nations is halal tourism. With an estimated 1.8 billion Muslims in the world, spread across more than 50 nations, halal tourism has large business potential and will only grow as Muslim travellers increase globally. [7, 8]. Suid, et al., [9] studied the ideas of Islamic tourism and Islamic characteristics since they can be utilized as the foundation for focusing on market segments of Muslim tourists. Thus, MasterCard

and Crescent rating (2018), the Muslim travel market is still expanding quickly and will continue to do so until it reaches US\$300 billion in 2026 in the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI). Around 131 million Muslims are anticipated to have travelled abroad as of 2017, and by 2020, that number is projected to increase to 156 million, or 10% of all travellers.

Due to the global situation of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is also seen that the trend of halal tourism is expanding rapidly, including in non-Muslim nations such as Korea and Japan, by offering a wide range of products and services intended to attract tourists from both within and outside the country, even in very limited circumstances.

To correctly define halal tourism, it might be preferable to define tourism first. According to the UNWTO, tourism includes the actions of people who visit and remain in locations other than their typical surroundings for up to one year in a row for pleasure, business, or other objectives [10]. While, Cook et al. [11] define tourism as the temporary movement of people to destinations outside their normal places of work and residence, the activities undertaken during their stay in those destinations, and the facilities created to cater to their needs. Notably, tourism includes the movement of people (tourists) which represents the demand side and activities or facilities to cater to tourists' needs (destination) which represents the supply side [12].

The phrase "halal" refers to what it means to be allowed or permitted by Shariah. The term "halal" is derived from the Arabic words halla, yahillu, hillan, and wahalalan. Halal encompasses all that is permitted in a Muslim's life and not only the foods that a Muslim may consume. In Islam, there are five actions (al-ahkam al-khamsah) that are used to classify the morality of human behaviour. The other four are Fard (obligatory), Mustahabb (preferred), Makruh (undesirable), and Haram (forbidden) [13].

World Travel Market explains halal tourism as a type of religious tourism that is in conformity with Islamic teachings regarding behaviourism, dress, conduct, and diet [14]. So, halal tourism can simply be interpreted as tourism that is allowed according to Islamic teachings to be done by Muslims [12]. To sum up, halal tourism is any tourism object or action which is permissible according to Islamic teachings to use or engage by Muslims in the tourism industry [12].

Halal tourism aims to provide greater convenience for Muslim tourists to still be able to carry out their worship while travelling [15, 16, 12] and avoid all Allah's prohibitions [16]. Both concepts considered Shariah law as the basis for delivering halal tourism products and services to tourists such as tourist attractions, lodging accommodations, food restaurants, and so on [15].

In terms of halal tourism development, an important paradigm that must be understood is that halal tourism does not seek to alienate Muslim tourists from conventional tourist activities or exclude non-Muslim travellers from certain travel destinations [15]. The development of halal tourism aims to provide greater convenience for Muslim tourists to still be able to carry out their worship while travelling [15]. For non-Muslims, halal tourism is expected to provide safe and healthy travel services, as well as introduce Islamic teachings as a universal value.

In addition, the basics need that are prioritized to be met in halal tourism are closely related to their worship activities. At least six basic needs that Muslims need in their daily lives including when doing tourist activities [17, 18]. These basic needs include the need for purification facilities with water, facilities for worship (salat), halal food, and tourism activities that do not conflict with Islamic values such as no element of immorality and evil, Ramadan services, and recreational facilities/services with privacy. Figure 1 summarizes the characteristics of halal tourism.



Figure 1: Characteristics of Halal Tourism.

1.2. Green Tourism Concept

Green tourism is defined as environmentally friendly tourism activities with various focuses and meanings [19, 2]. These terms are used for two purposes: first, to tell customers that the holiday destination they are going to is exotic [20], beautiful and unspoiled [2]. Second, green tourism claims can be used to signal that tourism operations taking place in that area do not harm the environment [6]. In broad terms, green

tourism is about being an environmentally friendly tourist or providing environmentally friendly tourist services.

The green tourism concept would be highly appealing to tourism enterprises and operators owing to increasing governmental pressure to improve environmental performance by adopting effective and tangible environmental management techniques [19]. It is a type of tourism that involves visiting fragile, pristine, and largely undisturbed natural regions, to provide a low-impact, often small-scale alternative to traditional commercial tourism [19].

Environmentalists see green tourism as an important endeavour that will allow future generations to visit places that have been relatively undisturbed by human meddling. [19]. As a result, responsible green tourism strategies and plans include those that reduce the harmful effects of traditional tourism on the environment while also enhancing local people's cultural integrity. [2].

According to Bohdanowicz and Martinac [21], the tourism industry is the most environmentally damaging, emitting massive amounts of non-durable items, wastewater, and energy as well as carbon. Therefore, in addition to assessing environmental, social, and cultural factors, promoting recycling (waste consumption), energy efficiency, and water conservation [22] is an essential component of green tourism and the creation of economic opportunities for local communities. For these reasons, green tourism frequently appeals to environmental and social responsibility activists. Even Peršić-Živadinov and Blažević [23] stressed that the concept of green and sustainability should be incorporated into the tourism industry. However, for this paper, the terms green and sustainable are considered synonyms.

2. Methodology

Given the sensitivity of the subject, the majority of the information gathered in this study is drawn on already available grey literature resources, such as government papers (i.e. National Development Plan), media stories (i.e. the Brunei Times, the Scoop and Borneo Bulletin), and related authority websites (i.e. Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism website), particularly for Brunei-specific information. In addition, for this work, data from white literature on the subject, such as relevant documents, journals, and proceedings, was acquired and reviewed. By combining and analyzing the data that is currently available, this research seeks to contribute to the literature. The study focused on Brunei Darussalam's context, which is outlined in the subtopic below.

Based on the data collected, the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of halal green tourism in Brunei Darussalam are extracted. Then the findings will be mapped in the SWOT matrix. The SWOT analysis has been used in many planning and development as a tool for organizing and interpreting data [24]. SWOT involves determining the specific objectives of the business and then identifying the internal and external factors that support the objectives [25]. As a result, weaknesses and threats should be re-evaluated and re-examined, while strengths and opportunities for progress should be highlighted.

3. Halal Green Tourism in Brunei Darussalam

Brunei is located on the island of Borneo and is bordered by Indonesia and Malaysia, both of which are well ahead in terms of tourism development [1]. Without a sure, our country boasts many unique infrastructures, including wonderfully gorgeous mosques that make it easy for Muslim tourists to worship. Brunei is also recognized as an Islamic country, and it is simple for them to obtain halal-certified food. This specialty is great for showcasing Brunei to tourists as a halal location.

The green industry emerges and is well implemented [26] from the halal business [27]. The green industry idea governs productivity and adequacy in the optimal use of resources to adapt to technological advances with the times [27, 26]. Maintain natural capacity and provide natural preservation to keep it alive in accordance with the requirements established to maintain natural ecosystems [26].

Even though Brunei Darussalam is a small country, it boasts several Halal Green tourist attractions. For example, Mangrove Paradise Resort & Villa, which is now well received by both domestic and foreign visitors, not only introduces the design of the resort and villas that resemble the design of a floating residence on the water-oriented like the 'Kampong Ayer Residence,' but also promotes seafood produced by the resort's owners. Furthermore, there are certain dwellings in the form of homestays that have succeeded in boosting the number of tourists staying at the resort and homestay by introducing cheap lodging packages as well as local traditional meals.

Tourism has caused a slew of issues in many developing countries where it has developed haphazardly and unrestrained. Without a doubt, the tourism industry has reaped the economic benefits necessary to assure the sustainability of its socioeconomic development. Tourism in Brunei Darussalam, fortunately, should not and cannot be ignored, as stated in the Seventh National Development Plan 1996-2000: *"In the Brunei context, tourism is a newly emerging industry. In promoting the tourism industry, the*

religious, moral, and cultural values of the country will be fully preserved and respected. To support the development of eco-tourism in particular, the over-exploitation of natural resources as well as damage to the environment has to be avoided.” [28]

In addition, the honorable Dato Paduka Haji Ali bin Haji Apong, former minister of the Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism, Brunei during the inauguration of the International Seminar on Halal Tourism and Hospitality 2022 (ISHTaH 2022) in his inauguration speech stresses that the stakeholders in the planning industry do not mean the Brunei Tourism Board, Tourism Development Department, Travel Agents Association, hotel operators, tour guides, restaurant operators, public transport operators, tour destination operators only, and it includes every individual in the country who is the host or host of tourists in the country. The public must also practice these commendable Islamic values not only by respecting guests or tourists. Tourists as described earlier but even preserve the cleanliness of public places such as by dumping garbage in the designated places, and not damaging or vandalizing public facilities that have been developed by the Government and other parties.

Tourism development must be based on sustainability criteria and must be long-term economically bearable and ethically as well as socially equitable for the local population of the tourism destinations. Therefore, beginning with the 6th National Development Plan, the government adopts the philosophy of sustainable development as central to its socioeconomic development. In this respect, the country hopes “to maximize the economic utilization of national resources” and “to maintain a clean and healthy environment” [28]. Stephen mentions that government officials reiterate that Brunei Darussalam’s policy is to achieve sustainable tourism, one that is sensitive not only to the environment but also to the Bruneian culture and way of life [29].

Thus, halal green tourism is expected to lead toward sustainable development tourism and significantly contribute to natural competitiveness internationally. Though the halal-based sector and environmentally-friendly tourism services have not yet become an advantage for national competitiveness, this tourism sector contains massive potential if managed seriously [30]. For example, the development of infrastructure supports the acceleration of growth of the halal industry, and human resources improvement is very useful for the labour competition among ASEAN countries therefore it will enhance the community’s income, and government support through good policies will gain positive participation from local communities.

Baum and Conlin attempted to explain tourism development in Brunei under a strict Islamic ethos and provide an interesting western perspective on this issue [31]. During the country’s Legislative Council session, the Minister of Industry and Primary Resources

revealed that the new plan has identified 69 projects to raise the tourism industry in Brunei Darussalam, which included upgrading museums, building a sanctuary for proboscis monkeys, training tourist guides, increasing tourist facilities at a remote village, as well as the building of the second phase of the Kampung Ayer Cultural and Tourism Gallery [32]. The tourism master plan will focus on two clusters, namely natural assets and culture, and heritage and Islamic tourism. These tourism products are still parallel to the earlier master plan, with additional attention paid to Islamic tourism, which is growing niche tourism in several Islamic countries in the world today.

The key players in the tourism industry are transportation infrastructure (airlines, cruise, buses, and trains), accommodation infrastructure or hospitality suppliers (green hotels, beach resorts, homestays, etc.), food & beverage or catering, channels or travel agencies, attraction and entertainment infrastructure, and education and healthcare infrastructure.

Halal green tourism in Brunei has enormous potential and can contribute significantly to the country's diverse economy's GDP. Among the initiatives for promoting a sustainable tourist industry are strengthening and ensuring the sustainability of current tourism goods while adding more activity-based niche tourism, such as bird watching, diving, sports, adventure tourism, and cultural and community-based tourism. To date, there has been an increase in community-based tourism, particularly those that offer authentic cultural immersion experiences and green destinations like Eco Ponies Garden in the Tutong District, Sumbiling Eco Village in the Temburong District, and Kampong Sungai Bunga in the Kampong Ayer (Water Village) in Bandar Seri Begawan.

Brunei tourism has received awards in recognition of stakeholders' collaborative actions to reduce the negative environmental or social impact caused by rapid tourism expansion. Brunei Darussalam's Kampong Ayer was recently awarded the 'ASEAN Sustainable Tourism Award' (ASTA) in the Urban ASEAN sustainable tourism category [33]. Bangar Town in the Temburong District, on the other hand, has received the 'ASEAN Clean City Award' [34]. Meanwhile, the commercial sector has proved its dedication to sustainable tourism, with the Radisson Hotel and Ulu-Ulu Resort receiving the 'ASEAN Green Hotel Award' in January 2020 for their efforts in energy conservation, the usage of green products, and community involvement [35, 36].

Moreover, according to Mastercard Crescent Rating Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI 2021), Brunei scored 100 in the service category (such as at airports and places of prayer), and 100 in the environment category (trust and security). In addition, Brunei Darussalam also scored 72 in the category of access (transport infrastructure), 67 in the environmental (climate) category, and 55 in communication (communication ability).

Overall, Brunei ranked 6th in the service category. The rating of services for destinations that provide good service to Muslim tourists remains the same. But since the tourism industry was disrupted in 2020, then the 2019 data is used for the evaluation of this metric. We hope that all stakeholders involved in the tourism industry will work hard to improve the quality of services in the tourism industry so that Brunei Darussalam's eyes and position in this index will rise.

Figure 2 below summarizes the concept of halal green tourism that the authors concluded by combining the both concept of halal and green tourism. Therefore, halal green tourism in our suggestion means any travel or tourist activity that are halal, with no immorality as well as environmentally friendly that could bring not just economic impact but also socio-cultural and environmental sustainability.

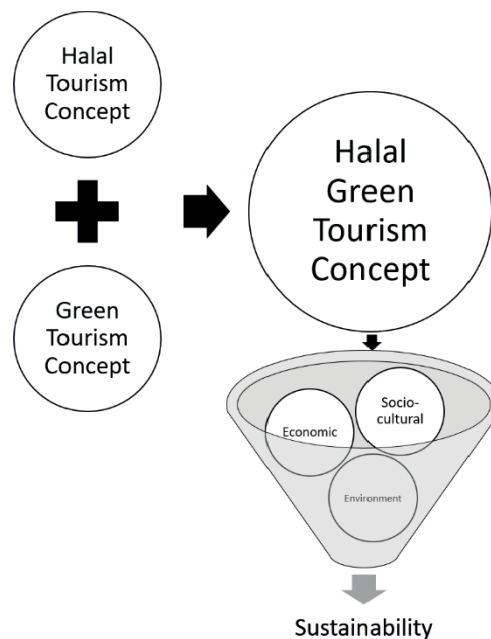


Figure 2: Halal Green Tourism.

Although Brunei's tourism business has tremendous potential, more attention must be paid to developing, innovating, and upgrading the industry. Brunei's opportunity to become a global halal centre can thus be realized. To do this, identification must begin with SWOT so that plans may be developed and operated optimally [37]. SWOT can also able to help analyse the factors to identify the strengths and weaknesses and the existing threats and opportunities [38]. The components were mapped in the SWOT analysis based on the data collection, which is exclusively relevant to the tourism industry in Brunei Darussalam. The SWOT matrix reported in Table 1 below could influence the development of the tourism business in Brunei Darussalam.

TABLE 1: SWOT Matrix for Halal Green Brunei Tourism.

Internal factors	External factors	STRENGTH (S)	WEAKNESS (W)
		Halal Certified Food Products Halal Certified Restaurants Political and Economic Stability Rich culture and heritage Natural resources and pristine rainforest Safe and secure Strategic location	Inadequate public and private infrastructure Lack of 'new' experience Lack of professional guides Product and services standards Limited awareness and access to new experiences Lack of pre and post-arrival information
		S-O Strategies Core Strengthening the collaboration among stakeholders for promotion and halal green tourism awareness. Developing a segmented halal green tourism market.	W-O Strategies Provide skill training related to halal green tourism services. Cooperating with the government to enhance the infrastructure.
		S-T Strategies Established policies, guidelines or standards of halal green tourism. Working with academics to generate halal green tourism concepts or strategies.	W-T Strategies Collaborate with the local travel agency or related stakeholders for promotion and halal green tourism awareness. Promote rigorously and enhance brand image.
		THREAT (T) Climate and natural disasters Disruptive world events Loss of identity differentiation Conflict of interest among stakeholders Over-use/exploitation of existing resources	

SWOT analysis aids in the formulation of the core strategy as an organisational priority by relevant stakeholders. Before further advertising Brunei as a halal green tourist destination, the study's findings may also cause changes to the organization's mission, goals, tactics, or current strategy. To carry out the plan successfully, the government, residents, and experts must collaborate by building a large network to enable extensive promotion by working with travel agents and putting the experts' suggestions into practice [39].

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, halal green tourism is a form of tourism for tourists who want not just Shariah-compliant activities, facilities and services, but also green, and environmentally friendly. Undeniable that Brunei has the ideal ratio of environmentally friendly and halal-friendly services. The overall environment in Brunei is ideal for halal green tourism. Besides, the awards received proof that Brunei has greatly offered halal green tourism services. Therefore, Brunei needs to restructure its tourism industry and revise it to give formal recognition of halal green tourism. It is hoped that the related stakeholders could utilize the data gathered and analyse the SWOT to further its halal green services by strengthening the strength with take advantage of opportunities and dealing with the existing threats, then overcoming the weaknesses that exist.

These findings will undoubtedly be beneficial to tourism policymakers, policy implementers, tourism educators, and academics. Most importantly, the findings could be used as a guideline for future tourism planning, development, and decision-making procedures by governmental entities involved in the business. Any ineffective methods used in tourist planning and development can be modified and improved, hence positively contributing to sustainable tourism development. In the long run, it is envisaged that this would contribute to the eventual attainment of national goals in terms of diversifying the country's economy away from oil and gas.

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