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Impact of the Halal Tourism Industry in Malaysia during the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract:

This study aimed to identify the impact of the halal tourism industry in Malaysia during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this context, the research methodology used is a qualitative design through library research by obtaining data from previous studies, journals, articles, and newspapers, as secondary sources which are analyzed through content analysis. The findings of this study show that the halal tourism industry is affected by the COVID-19 pandemic when the MCO is implemented to curb the spread of COVID-19, including those involving tourism for Hajj and Umrah. During the pandemic period, innovative strategies are a must for adapting to the challenges and obstacles arising, which are critical and should be overcome as soon as possible. We can look for example from other countries' strategies to attract the tourists by converting normal tour into virtual tour methods, for example, used in some tourist attractions, such as animal sanctuaries and zoos. Despite the aims to improve the tourism industry, it also helps maintain the need for the ecosystem in the sectors. The development of pandemic contingency or natural disaster planning assists the industry in preparing for the worst-case scenario and sustaining and surviving during a difficult period. The practical implications are that the findings will help planners, policymakers, and industry in the halal tourism sector to develop an initial preparation package to face the uncertainty of global and local disasters and calamities by using modern technology to ensure that the halal tourism sector has an alternative if tourism cannot be done physically. The originality of this study offers a clear of empirical evidence from an analysis of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the halal tourism sector in Malaysia with detailed data from current studies and industry parties involved. The study will provide an influential contribution to the players in the halal tourism industry to improve the package of more flexible equipment to face critical times.

Keywords: COVID-19, tourism industry, shariah-compliant hotel.

新冠肺炎大流行期间马来西亚清真旅游业的影响

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摘要:

本研究旨在确定新冠肺炎大流行期间马来西亚清真旅游业的影响。在这种情况下，所使用的方法是通过图书馆研究进行定性设计，从以前的研究、期刊、文章和报纸中获取数据，作为通过内容分析进行分析的二手资料。这项研究的结果表明，当实施行管令以遏制新冠肺炎的传播时，清真旅游业会受到新冠肺炎大流行的影响，包括那些涉及朝圣和副朝旅游的行业。在大流行期间，必须采取创新战略来适应出现的挑战和障碍，这些挑战和障碍至关重要，应尽快克服。我们可以从其他国家的策略中寻找例子，通过将正常的旅游转变为虚拟旅游的方式来吸引游客，例如在一些旅游景点，如动物保护区和动物园。尽管旨在改善旅游业，但它也有助于维持该部门对生态系统的需求。大流行病应急或自然灾害计划的制定有助于行业为最坏的情况做好准备，并在困难时期维持和生存。实际意义是，研究结果将帮助清真旅游部门的规划者、政策制定者和行业制定初步准备方案，以通过使用现代技术确保清真旅游部门有一个应对全球和当地灾害和灾难的不确定性。如果无法实际进行旅游，则可以选择。这项研究的独创性通过分析新冠肺炎大流行对马来西亚清真旅游业的影响以及来自当前研究和相关行业各方的详细数据提供了明确的经验证据。该研究将为清真旅游业的参与者提供有影响力的贡献，以改进更灵活的设备包以应对关键时刻。

关键词： 新冠肺炎、旅游业、符合伊斯兰教法的酒店。

1. Introduction

Sustainability is a global concern that affects every aspect of human life, including economic, environmental, and social aspects. Similarly, tourism is one of the major sectors of many economies where sustainability is becoming increasingly important. Over the time, we can see the emergence of the Islamic tourism industry due to the overwhelming support has partly become one of the significant sectors contributing to economic growth. According to recent data, Muslim spending on halal travel totaled USD169 billion in 2016 and is expected to reach USD283 billion by 2022 due to increasing Muslim travelers that are estimated to number 131 million worldwide (11 percent of all international travelers) expected to increase by 156 million by 2020 (Mastercard & Crescentrating, 2018). The current Muslim population is 2.18 billion or 28.26 percent of the total population, and it is growing at a rate of 1.84 percent per year, and the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) expected that Muslim tourists will reach 230 million by 2026 locally and internationally with injection of global economy \$300 billion. Additionally, between 1993 and 2015, the Muslim average per capita GDP increased from USD\$1763 to USD\$10,728; the 57 OIC countries have a combined GDP of USD27.9 trillion (Azam et al., 2019). These statistics demonstrate the potential for the Halal travel industry to tap into the global Muslim consumer market.

Islamic tourism can be defined as “permissible tourism activities based on Islamic law and covering behavior, dress, conduct, and diet” (World Travel Market & Euromonitor, 2007). To consider the halal tourism, it must comply with the shariah guidelines with the elements of shariah that must be observed in ensuring in line with the Maqasid al-Shariah. These five principles of Maqasid Al-Shariah are originated from Al-Quran and Sunnah, which include preserving faith

(religion), preserving life, preserving mind/intellect, preserving wealth (resources), and preserving lineage (next generation) because it is considered at the first level of necessities (daruriyyat) (Aziz, 2018).

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the world has been facing an unprecedented global health, social, and economic emergency since the end of 2019. COVID-19 crippled the travel and tourism industry in unexpected ways. In 2019, Muslim travel spending increased by 2.7 percent to \$194 billion, up from \$189 billion in 2018. With the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Muslim travel spending is expected to fall to \$58 billion in 2020 before recovering to 2019 levels by 2023 (Syukri et al., 2021). Thus, this research aims to analyze the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the halal tourism industry in Malaysia and propose solutions to overcome the impacts.

2. Problem Statement

According to DinarStandard (2020), since the end of 2019, the sudden outbreak of COVID-19, there has been an unprecedented impact on the global health, society, and economy. The tourism industry is not excluded, and the huge impact that could be unforeseen is the impact on the Muslim travel business, which is hajj and umrah. The trips were canceled or curtailed and had compounding losses. Before this pandemic happen, Muslim travel spending are stated increased by 2.7% in 2019 to \$194 billion from \$189 billion in 2018. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the spending of Muslims on travel is expected to fall from \$58 billion in 2020 with the expectation to make recovery to 2019 level by 2023 (Syukri et al., 2021). Besides, according to the Association of Hotels (MAH), the cancellation of rooms prevailing on the movement order and travel restrictions are around 193,000 room nights from January to March 2020, which is equivalent to the amount of RM75m catering to the revenue loss

(Awan et al., 2020). Thus, in this paper study would be related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the halal tourism industry in Malaysia and propose solutions to overcome the impacts.

3. Literature Review

3.1. Negative Impact of COVID-19 on Hotel Tourism Industry

The coronavirus disease COVID-19, which is rapidly spreading the globe in 2019, has a substantial influence on global economics. Consequently, movement restrictions have a negative impact on global economic progress. As a result, the impact of COVID-19 on the hotel tourist industry, which is the most impacted sector due to mobility restrictions, was examined in this study. This study gathered data on two companies that are involved in the hotel tourist industry; both companies have a negative share price movement, indicating a decline in profit. Simultaneously, our research created a supply and demand curve simulation for COVID-19 impact on the hotel tourism business. According to this research, when demand decreases, the price of a hotel decreases in accordance with market equilibrium. When prices are reduced, many hotels limit their operations, resulting in a lesser supply to balance the price changes. As a result, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the hotel tourism industry saw less demand and faced lower hotel service prices. Because of the disruption created by the global COVID-19 outbreak, the hotel industry is facing an unprecedented catastrophe. This research contributes to a greater knowledge base about COVID-19's impact on the global economy. Furthermore, the findings of this study will assist the government in formulating appropriate policies to assist the hotel tourism industry in surviving in the current economic climate. This research is also assisting the hotel business in preparing their financial management so that they may survive the post-COVID-19 environment.

3.2. Sustainability of the Tourism Industry during the COVID-19 Pandemic

COVID-19 is a phenomenal outbreak that has infected the world in a brutal and unpredictable form, wreaking havoc on global economies. The tourism business is one of the most affected industries, with individuals being restricted from traveling interstate and globally, as well as assembling publicly in a mass location, to avoid illness spread. Every segment of the tourism industry has seen a significant drop in profit. Apart from being economically beneficial, the COVID-19 has social and environmental implications for tourism. Thus, the objective of this article research by the author is to determine the economic, social, and environmental effects of COVID-19 on the tourism industry. Furthermore, this research used literature review techniques, analyzing multiple publications from various journals focusing on COVID-19 and the tourism sectors. The findings indicate that the most

concerning effect of the pandemic will be a reduction in job opportunities and layoffs in the tourist industry, which depends on people traveling. The very worst effect that could occur simultaneously is the temporary or permanent closure of existing tourist operational premises such as hotels, shopping outlets, and other tourism transporters and activities. Through this study by the author, we will be able to identify the problem and provide solutions or strategies for overcoming the unexpected challenge to ensure the tourism industry's long-term viability.

3.3. The Effect of Risk Perception and Travel Motivation on Domestic Tourists' Behavior during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Several studies have been conducted on the relationship between perceptions of tourist risk and human behavior to travel. Most past studies have shown that perceptions of risk correlate negatively with their behavior to travel, decision to travel, and frequency of travel. The risk that existed before did not involve a pandemic like the risk experienced now which is the COVID-19 pandemic, so the perception of risk on the COVID-19 pandemic may be higher than the risks that have occurred before (Parahiyanti et al., 2022). Han et al. (2020) say that the risks that arise are psychological risks. Tourists are afraid of COVID-19 and there is anxiety to travel, so there are many tourists who cancel their trips on the same day COVID-19 was declared a pandemic by the WHO. According to a study by Sinha and Nair (2020), tourists are beginning to emphasize various aspects in deciding to undertake tourism activities.

Bae and Chang (2020) analyzed behavioral intentions toward 'contactless tourism' in South Korea. Additionally, Han et al. (2020) studied the behavior to choose safer tourist destinations, and Lai et al. (2020) focused their study on the intention to travel to China after the COVID-19 pandemic. There are research gaps on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic risk on tourist behavior in the Malaysian context. In the context of risk, Khan et al. (2019) found that tourism motivation can increase tourists' intention to go on a trip even if their perception of risk is high. Based on previous studies, Motivation to travel had a significant influence on the relationship between perceptions of risk and intention to travel within the country during the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.4. The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Hotel Industry Workers

The tourism industry creates employment opportunities for the services sector. According to the figures published by the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM) as of 2018, there are 3.5 million employees recruited for tourism-related jobs where accommodation/hotels account for 6.4%, food and beverage services - 34.1%, airlines - 4.9%, retail - 33.1%, and others - 21.4%. The results for the hotel industry percentage amounted to 5,833,333 million

employees. With tourist arrivals increasing significantly, the number of hotels has grown in Malaysia and the number of jobs available has increased. According to Sinha and Nair (2020), Malaysia is labeled as a services sector, where the industry needs labor force to meet customer demand and ensure smooth operations can be provided to their hotel guests. However, the local hotel sector is estimated to lose RM3.3 billion in revenue by June 2020 because of MCO, which has been extended until May 12, 2020. According to Sinha and Nair (2020), the character of the industry is highly dependent on the environment and tourism activity. Hotel workers in Kuala Lumpur have been struck the hardest by the pandemic. Of a total of 17,826 employees, 542 were laid off, accounting for 3% of the total workforce. Meanwhile, 3641 employees (20% of the total) were asked to take unpaid leave, whereas 2880 employees (16%) faced compensation cuts. A total of 17,826 employees, 542 were laid off, accounting for 3% of the total workforce. Meanwhile, 3641 (20%) employees were asked to take unpaid leave, whereas 2880 (16%) employees faced compensation cuts.

3.5. Impact of COVID-19 on Malaysia Tourism Industry Supply

The COVID-19 pandemic has influenced the global product and service demand and supply. Curfews and absolute lockdown measures in many places have made the hospitality and tourism business a risky venture for those who work in it. Besides that, the restaurants, cafes, and bar industries have all closed down (Hamid et al., 2021). Therefore, several authors explain how COVID-19 affects the tourism supply chain's major affiliates. According to Deb and Nafi (2020) regarding the issue of transportation, to reduce international outbreaks, the administration has banned flights into and out of the country. Other than that, supply chains that are affected by COVID-19 are travel agents or tour operators faced with huge losses when Malaysian authorities have been instructed to ensure that travel agencies return money to consumers who have paid for vacation packages (Hamid & Isa, 2020). Lai et al. (2020) stated that restaurants and food supply are affected when they must close between the hours of 7 p.m. and 6 a.m. every day to stop the virus spread and had to increase social distance, limit their activity to delivery, or shut down completely. From this several research it can be conclude Malaysia tourism industry supply chain also impacted by the pandemic COVID-19.

3.6. COVID-19 Effects on the Aviation Industry

According to Zubair and Shamsudin (2021), the impact of COVID-19 on the aviation or airline business was severe because travel was completely disallowed, and all airlines were forced to close for an extended time. This has a negative effect on any airline company.

It encompasses the entire global airline business, including Malaysian airlines and the aviation industry. Malaysia's three major airlines are Air Asia, Malindo Air, and Malaysian Airlines are in the worst situation. According to a Malindo Air source, the general population is scared of flying, which has resulted in a 20% drop in passenger numbers (Karim et al., 2020). Due to the global travel ban enforced to prevent the spread of the deadly illness, Malaysia Airlines now operates less than 50 flights each day (Yusof, 2020). Other than that, Yeh (2021) stated that between 2019 and 2020, airlines reported a 60 percent drop in global seat capacity and a 2,699 million drop in passenger numbers, resulting in a \$371 billion loss in gross passenger operating revenue. Costs for disinfection and temperature control have increased because of airline travel limitations. From the current data, it can be concluded that the aviation industry must face a hard time to develop the business again to achieve the same level before COVID-19 occurs.

3.7. Tourism Marketing during COVID-19

Transportation, hotels, travel agents, and other extended businesses are part of the tourism industry affected by the pandemic (Anwar et al., 2021). Therefore, the tourism industry had to work up their marketing strategies to survive during the pandemic. According to Toubes et al. (2021), the industry must offer a public-health-friendly product with minimal risk of infection and a profitable product that is reasonable for the customer and industry to provide the service. For instance, establish a tourist voucher. They defined tourist vouchers as a concept of discount vouchers for purchases in tourist accommodations, restaurants, and other tourism industries. By implementing this strategy, all sectors in the tourism industry will get the benefit from it. Additionally, this strategy was also recommended by Fabeil et al. (2020). They stated that marketing strategy can include alternative promotion and prices, distribution channels, product innovation, and use of reasonable online campaigns and marketing. The majority of the tourism industry also has replaced their marketing and services through online and digital marketing by using websites and social media to promote their business. They have also expanded their payment method to other alternatives such as e-wallet and online payments.

3.8. Recovery Plan for Tourism Industry in Malaysia

The Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture (MOTAC) stated that the goals for this recovery plan are to rebuild travel confidence, revitalize domestic tourism, and maximize the resources (Yusof, 2020). To achieve these goals, the government has unveiled a stimulus program to help the economy of the tourism industry such as by offering tax incentives, restructuring of loans, and deferment of bank repayments. As reported by the Ministry of Finance (2020), a wage-

subsidy program has been implemented, with each retained employee receiving RM600 per month for a maximum of three months. Tourism front-liners are also given a one-time payment of RM600 and RM500 to compensate for their daily earnings. Unemployed or fired workers can also apply to the Social Security Organization (SOCSSO) provided that their salaries are under RM4000 a month. Additionally, Visit Malaysia 2020 has also been turned into domestic tourism to make up for the drop in international visitors. Several procedures have been taken to boost this domestic tourism industry. For instance, incentives on personal income taxes up to RM1000 and digital vouchers worth up to RM100 per person for domestic flights, rails, and hotels (Foo et al., 2021).

3.9. Islamic Tourism in Malaysia during the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Impact and Recovery Plan

Malaysia is considered an ideal Islamic tourism destination, with an abundance of halal cuisine, prayer facilities, and Islamic attractions from places and festivals. This is because Malaysia is an ideal Muslim-friendly destination with the government-backed business incentives. Despite this, Malaysia is attractive to both Muslims and non-Muslims. Unfortunately, an epidemic outbreak began in Wuhan City in December 2019. Hubei Province, China, that caused the COVID-19 virus had made a huge impact on the world, including Malaysia, which paralyzed the tourism industry. In this research, the authors examine on the effects of the pandemic on Islamic tourism in Malaysia can be tracked using two factors: the first is based on statistical numbers of tourists entering Malaysia from arrival and expenditure before and after Malaysia closed the border, and the second is based on a declining number of growth projections from the tourism sector that was affected by this pandemic. Besides this, there also a recovery plan under the Ministry of Tourism and Culture (MOTAC) and Standard Operating Procedures from the Malaysia National Security Council (MKN) have been established to overcome the impacts and provide a fresh start for Islamic tourism in Malaysia, as stated in this article initiative under MOTAC that introduced the green travel bubble that reduced the restriction during traveling by allowing travelers to travel without permission from the police within the green zones only (Syukri et al., 2021).

3.10. Implementing 'Cleanliness Is Half of Faith' in Re-Designing Tourists, Experiences and Salvaging the Hotel Industry in Malaysia during COVID-19 Pandemic

In the current COVID-19 pandemic, businesses must now serve customers with high concerned about safety and sanitation. This is significantly for the hospitality industry due to the industry had a negative impact. Given the distinct characteristics of services in advanced, without physical interaction between service providers, the technology alone will not suffice to

create a memorable experience between customers and suppliers. From this research, the authors successfully defined the "new normal" for service customers and "new service design" in the hotel industry. The main concern of the customers is that they expect contactless customer services to reduce the human-to-human interaction. They prefer "untact" service and avoided human interactions with the less crowded spaces to create a memorable experience without having any worries (Awan et al., 2020).

4. Methodology

This study used the qualitative approach with non-numerical information by analyzing with in-depth study primary and secondary data that obtained from articles, journals, books, conference papers, and related sources. The data analysis method is converting raw data into research results by categorizing the data. The data obtained from the different sources were classified based on the analysis of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the halal tourism industry in Malaysia and the solutions in improving those impacts.

The selection of the sample, which is the halal tourism industry, is to see the effects of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. This is because among the most obvious and affected effects is the tourism sector due to the movement control order (MCO) issued by the government, which is not only on local movement but from overseas into the country and vice versa.

The data are analyzed from sources that refer to the losses from the effects of the halal tourism sector due to the Covid-19 pandemic. At the same time, it also affects Hajj and Umrah tourism, which is the main tourism for Muslim tourists because Hajj and Umrah are matters of worship. In addition to the GDP impact on the country with this decline in halal tourism, the data also looks at the impact of existing hotels from a survival perspective throughout the pandemic. Therefore, the author will discuss solutions and suggestions as a preparation at all times for any situation in the future.

The analysis carried out in the form of content and document analysis through a descriptive approach to achieve the objective of the study to improve the tourism industry also helps maintain the need for the ecosystem in the sectors. The development of pandemic contingency or natural disaster planning assists the industry in preparing for the worst-case scenario and sustaining and surviving during a difficult period.

5. Findings and Suggestions

5.1. Impact of COVID-19 on Halal Tourism Industry from GDP Percentages

Since Muslim-friendly travel is a significant source of revenue for most nations across the world and one of the fastest-growing categories of global tourism, the impact of COVID-19 is being felt across the entire Muslim-friendly tourist ecosystem. The measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19 have resulted

in a significant reduction in tourists traveling to bordering countries. Because unnecessary businesses and multiple sites of interest, such as geoparks, attractions, hotels, and spas and wellness, were not recognized as part of essential businesses and services, they were forced to close (Jaiyeoba, 2021).

The termination of the Visit Malaysia Year 2020 (VM2020) campaign is one of the effects on tourism activity in Malaysia. This is because 64 percent of Malaysia's tourists come from China, Singapore, and Indonesia, all of which have been severely damaged by the pandemic, resulting in a significant reduction in and cancellation of tourism visits to Malaysia. The campaign's cancellation has a significant impact on the government's goal of recruiting about 30 million tourists. Tourists who had already arrived in Malaysia but were under the MCO's jurisdiction could only order food from internet food delivery services while staying in their accommodations. The hotel service then delivered the food to the tourists in the room once the ordered food arrived at the hotel site.

The Malaysian Association of Hotels (MAH) (as cited in Malek, 2020) reported that as of March 16, just before the first movement control order was implemented, 170,085 hotel room bookings worth RM 68 million had been canceled, with losses projected to increase by the end of the year. This is because people began suspending all social and outdoor activities as the number of positive cases increased rapidly, demonstrating the seriousness of the COVID-19 virus spreading throughout the community. Additionally, MAH predicts that 30 percent of the 4,888 hotels registered with the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture (MOTAC) will close. As shown in Table 1, 170,085 hotel room reservations were canceled between 11 January and 16 March 2020, resulting in a revenue loss of RM68,190,364 (Syukri et al., 2021).

Table 1. Severity of hotel cancellations (Malaysian Association of Hotels, as cited in Malek, 2020)

Ranking	State	Room cancellations	Losses due to room cancellations (RM)
1	Kuala Lumpur	55,050	23,021,301
2	Sabah	32,392	11,550,605
3	Pulau Pinang	17,753	8,908,000
4	Selangor	22,929	7,212,048
5	Negeri Sembilan	13,534	6,690,500
6	Johor	18,455	5,636,470
7	Kedah	3239	3,291,500
8	Perak	2403	1,022,289
9	Melaka	4074	690,499
10	Pahang	180	144,628
11	Sarawak	76	22,525
Total		170,085	68,190,364

5.2. Hajj and Umrah Pilgrimages for Malaysians Temporarily Suspended

The COVID-19 epidemic had quite an impact on pilgrimage, which is the fifth of Islam's pillars. The Muzakarah Hajj Resolution in 2019 has stipulated that

istitho'ah whether related to physical state or health is one of the obligatory conditions of Hajj. If the doctor confirms that the prospective pilgrim is at a high risk of getting COVID-19 disease infection that is plaguing during the hajj season, the prospective pilgrim with a chronic illness is considered to not meet the requirements of physical *istitho'ah* and health *istitho'ah*. Therefore, the obligation of performing Hajj falls from it. Because COVID-19 is contagious, Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Hajj and Umrah has recommended Muslims to postpone their pilgrimage until the pandemic has been successfully controlled. Regarding these issues, not only pilgrimages face losses but also travel agencies and the country's economy.

Malaysian Umrah pilgrimages have been temporarily halted as of January 8, 2022, and returning pilgrims will be subject to mandatory quarantine at specified centres as of January 3, 2022. Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin said the decision was made because of issues over the COVID-19 Omicron type, particularly among Saudi Arabian visitors. Many were also discovered to have disobeyed quarantine regulations at home and had issues adhering to health protocols. The Association of Bumiputera Tourism Operators of Malaysia, the Umrah and Hajj Travel Agencies' Association, and the Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents, all representing travel agencies, said that postponing umrah travel would result in significant financial losses for pilgrims. According to Bumitra Secretary-General Ab Rahman Mohd Ali, the decision was made too quickly and has a significant impact on umrah pilgrims and related tourist industries, including a significant financial loss due to cancellations. Travel companies have urged the government to reconsider its decision to halt umrah pilgrimages, claiming that it is costing them and their customers a lot of money. If the government follows through with postponing the umrah, the organizations have also requested financial aid from the government to cover the additional costs, which include transportation charges, hotel and flight cancellations. Other than that, pilgrims are also exposed to other risks such as SOPs, policies, and increased travel fees, indicating that pilgrims' perceptions of travel risks were influenced by travel-related concerns. Relevant parties, including the government and travel agents, must assess and analyze the community's ability so that Umrah and Hajj are not limited to those with a high income. Despite the tightening of policies and circumstances, a choice of prices must still be supplied to avoid discrimination and injustice as it is one of our Islam pillars.

5.3. Reduced Number of Hotel Guest Visits

The tourism business has been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 has a significant impact on the entire tourism ecosystem. In comparison to the last health-related disaster, the COVID-19

pandemic is more worldwide and has a much longer duration of effect. On a lesser scale, tourist studies on SARS in 2003, the H1N1 outbreak in 2009, and MERS in 2015 reveal similar patterns. Additionally, most countries have suspended all inbound and outbound flights due to the impact of the coronavirus on halal tourism, especially shariah-compliant hotels. All halal tourism sites suffered direct and indirect losses because of the suspension of inbound and outgoing flights. Such losses will have a significantly severe impact on halal travel companies and the travel and tourism industries.

One of the current trends in Malaysia is shariah-compliant hotels because of the better customer service and facilities provided by shariah-compliant hotels also it is Muslims friendly, it is also gaining appeal among Muslim travelers throughout the world, particularly from the Middle East. Due to the travel restrictions in Muslim countries, the COVID-19 epidemic impacted these hotels. According to the Malaysian Association of Hotels, the hotel business in Malaysia has lost over RM 560.72 million because of the epidemic and the nationwide Movement Control Order (MCO) issued to fight the disease. The cancellation of rooms by tourists from abroad as well as within the country affected the number of guests at the hotel. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic not only occurs in conventional hotels but also occurs in shariah-compliant hotels in Malaysia. Most hotels, whether conventional or shariah-compliant, are suffering losses due to the lack of guests. The reduced number of guests visiting the hotel not only affected the profit of the hotel but also the employees. Employees in the hotel industry are in a bad condition, as many hotels are downsizing, lowering compensation, or sending employees on unpaid leave for an uncertain period. This is because there is no stable income of profit that can afford financing to pay employees' salaries. Other than that, due to the decreasing number of guests visiting their hotel, several hotels in Malaysia have been closed down, as reported in 12 newspaper articles.

At least 120 hotels in Malaysia had to close due to COVID-19. Although some hotels are closed, there are still hotel owners who try to maintain the hotel operate in the interests of their employees and other financial commitments they have. In the Malaysian context, there are three main strategies used by hotels: cost-cutting strategies, becoming quarantine hotels, and pricing strategies (Adam, 2021).

5.4. Decrease in the Number of Events in Hotel

The COVID-19 pandemic has not only impacted the number of guests that visit the hotel and the employee salaries. Another impact caused by the COVID-19 pandemic can be found in the decreasing number of events at the shariah-compliant hotel. Some hotels not only sell rooms for guests but also provide hall rental services and rooms for meetings or seminars. The cancelation of hall bookings for weddings had the greatest impact on hotel profits. People will usually rent a shariah-compliant hotel hall to hold a wedding event.

This is because the venue is spacious, can be attended by many guests, and provides a surau for guests who attend the wedding events. Due to the government's ban on crowds or New Year celebrations, many hotels must cancel wedding events by the end of 2020 because cases of COVID-19 keep increasing.

The COVID-19 pandemic effects and movement control orders have left a huge impact on the hotel industry. This is because although the government has given flexibility to hold events by ensuring that there is a physical distance and a limited number of guests, people are still afraid of this easily spread COVID-19 disease. People began taking precautions by postponing weddings and even gatherings. This is to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Even if there are hotel guests who want to continue the ceremony or assembly, it still does not guarantee much profit for the hotel industry. This is because many hotels are closed due to the lack of guests and employees who had to be laid off to cover expenses. Because of seminars or meetings that could not be held at the hotel since the movement control order was issued, the public took the initiative to conduct seminars online or referred to them as webinars. This online seminar or meetings has become a new norm for the community who think that online meetings save more money and time. This has contributed to the decreasing number of events in hotels.

Other events that affect the number of guests who visit a shariah-compliant hotel include school and university graduations, which are frequently held there. Because it is more comfortable and has a great setting, hotels are chosen as a location for graduation. As a result, it impacts the number of hotel visits. However, because of the COVID-19 epidemic, the number of activities at the hotel, including meetings, weddings, and school or university graduations, has decreased. Due to government regulations to avoid crowds during the COVID-19 pandemic, some of these events were canceled or could not be implemented.

Table 2. Malaysian hotel occupancy and revenue (Jan.–June 2019/2020 forecast) (Malaysian Association of Hotels, as cited in Malek, 2020)

Month	2019	2020		
	Occupancy (%)	Average Daily Rates (RM)	Occupancy (%)	Estimate Loos of Room Revenue (RM)*
Jan	58.5	227.89	55	49.4 m
Feb	68	238.07	44	327.5 m
Mac	65	223.64	22	596 m
April	65	219.55	6	1.12 b
May	53	206.70	11	537 m
June	64	228.75	16	660 m
Total:	3.36 b			

* Based on 200,000 star-rated hotel rooms only, excluding F&B and event losses

5.5. Solutions for Halal Tourism Industry from GDP Percentages

The halal tourism industry is one of the sectors badly

affected during the COVID-19 pandemic. Hotels, restaurants, tourist places, and other tourism businesses are facing loss due to this pandemic. Consequently, the halal tourism industry has established several actions to ensure the continuous operation of their business. The first solution is by expanding the halal tourism business. For instance, for the hotel industry, they can expand their business by selling foods from their hotel restaurants. This will also attract the attention of the people because they rarely eat hotel food as they could not go out. Hotels could also provide drive-through services for the people who want to buy their food. It is done to minimize physical contact, hence minimizing the risk of contamination with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additionally, hotel industries can also use digital and online marketing to let the public know about their new services. Due to the pandemic, people could not go out and spend more time on their phones. This will be a good opportunity for the hotel industry to get involved in digital and online marketing. For instance, they can promote their new services and products using their websites and social media. Nowadays, social media is essential for every business as people often search and obtain information from social media and official websites. By doing this, the public could notice the services and products offered by hotels and increase the sales of hotel industries. Other than that, hotels could also invest in online advertising. This is because online advertising is proved to be more effective than physical advertising.

Finally, hotels could also do promotions for their hotel rooms. In this pandemic era, hotel rooms are used for isolation of people that are potentially to be COVID-19-positive. Additionally, the hotel industry could also volunteer to collaborate with the Ministry of Health (MOH) to make their hotels as the accommodations for people who are from overseas such as for students that were sent home from their universities abroad. Hotels could also promote their quarantine room services to factories that are permitted to operate during MCO. Factories are the places that often have the case of COVID-19 as they are crowded and closed. So, the management will offer to put their positive workers to the hotels until they finish their quarantine.

5.6. Solutions for Hajj and Umrah Pilgrimages for Malaysians Temporarily Suspended

The COVID-19 pandemic affects not only the tourism industry but also Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages. This pandemic has caused the government of Saudi Arabia to close their borders and not allowing pilgrims from all around the world. This indirectly also affects business that are related to Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages such as Hajj and Umrah agencies. Therefore, there are several solutions and conditions for pilgrims and hajj agencies to follow after the government of Saudi Arabia

lifted their borders. First, the Hajj agencies must assess the health of the pilgrims before they are allowed to go. Those who did not pass the health screenings are incompatible to go for Hajj and Umrah. This is because they are considered to be a high-risk category of people to get infected by COVID-19.

Next, Hajj and Umrah travel agencies must also be responsible for ensuring the safety of pilgrims. This includes ensuring the cleanliness of the accommodation to prevent and minimize the risk of contamination with COVID-19 viruses. They also must provide health aids such as hand sanitizer, general medicine, and COVID-19 test kits. Additionally, the organizer must also be aware of the health conditions of the pilgrims. If they are seen to be unwell, they must be tested and quarantine if needed. It is done to prevent the transmission among other pilgrims.

Finally, Hajj and Umrah travel agencies must comply with all regulations designated by the government of Saudi Arabia and ensure the pilgrims also comply with the requirements needed. For instance, if there is a time limit for *tawaf* or places that are prohibited to enter. Hajj and Umrah agencies must ensure that all pilgrims obey the proactive measurements done by the Saudi Arabia government. All the regulations are being regulated to minimize overcrowding between pilgrims to perform various Hajj rituals such as when performing *tawaf* (ritual of circumambulating the Kaaba seven times) and *Sa'i* (ritual of 'Al-Safa and Al-Marwa' Hills). By minimizing overcrowding, infection with COVID-19 virus could also be minimized and prevented. However, it is still required for the pilgrims to undergo self-quarantine after they returned to Malaysia as required by the Malaysian government.

5.7. Solution for the Reduced Number of Hotel Guest Visits

The solution that can be done to increase the number of hotel guest visits is marketing. Shariah-compliant hotels must use strategic marketing to attract and retain customers, so that the number of guests increases as it did before the COVID-19 pandemic. Marketing can be done most effectively using the newspaper, the internet, local television channels, radio, and social media. The details of the parties of shariah-compliant hotel can be specified and promote that the hotel provides various promos on the COVID-19 pandemic such as Promo Pack monthly, Package Dinner Romantic, Package Promo Raya, Promo Package Ramadhan, Package Tickets Staycation, or any other shariah-compliant yet appealing promotional package that can entice visitors to spend their vacations there.

All the promotional packages offered by the shariah compliant hotel are beneficial, as is the comparison material in spending time in the hotel, particularly during the pandemic COVID-19. Furthermore, the diversity of package tickets supplied for various events

was consistent with the business's development strategy of staycation in the tourism industry hospitality sector during the pandemic COVID-19. One of the business strategy advancements in the sector of hospitality that can be done during pandemic COVID-19 is the concept of tourist staycation. This is because it helps offset a decline in the number of rentals; therefore, the concept of staycation increases hotel room occupancy.

Additionally, the strategy of development of the hospitality business through staycation belongs to a long-term strategy. Long-term strategy is a business development strategy that employs system operating sectors of the tourism industry hospitality, each of which has input, output, and outcome. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the notion of hospitality company development through Staycation is the right option as an attraction of domestic guests, particularly those who wish to spend time in a hotel room and use hotel facilities to comply with health rules. The Staycation concept can promote shariah-compliant hotels to compete in the COVID-19 pandemic.

5.8. Solution for Decrease in the Number of Events in Hotels

Deep cleaning is one of the steps or solutions in raising the number of events in hotels. Every room must be disinfected before cleaning the frequently used sections regularly. The hotel also mandates all personnel to wear masks, keep their distance, wash their hands frequently, and check the body temperature of each employee who wishes to enter. Deep cleaning or disinfectant spraying operations must be performed regularly to destroy viruses, particularly coronaviruses, and to refresh the air circulation. From the hotel lobby entrance to the hotel rooms, the use of masks, the availability of hand sanitizer, and body temperature checks should be enforced when entering the hotel. The hotel should also supply masks for customers who do not have or use masks. If necessary, guests can give a letter with fast test or swab results to make them stay safer and more comfortable. If all of the hotel's rooms and facilities were always sanitized, many businesses would be more confident in holding events there during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Another way to attract additional companies was to have events in the hotel and follow the health regimen. Strict health measures are followed for the employees themselves. The hotel must ensure that their staff is in good health. The shariah-compliant hotel must always remind and invite hotel guests to follow the hotel's health protocol and not admit non-mahram hotel guests. Those planning a wedding or meeting at the shariah-compliant hotel must also follow the health regulations.

As a result, attendees have to wear masks, use a hand sanitizer, and keep a one-meter space between each other. However, attendees are uneasy when there are visitors who are not permitted to bring children to weddings or other occasions. If a youngster has already been escorted to the hotel, the child must wear a mask. If there are many youngsters at one event, the hotel can

arrange a separate room for them. If all employees and guests who come to the hotel can adhere to all health protocols such as wearing face masks, using a hand sanitizer, and keeping the distance, of course, people will be sure to hold events such as weddings or Aidilfitri banquets at the hotel. With that, the number of events held there will increase and add benefits to the shariah-compliant hotel.

6. Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic had brought a huge impact on the tourism industry due to many restrictions including the tourism activity. Furthermore, it also paralyzes the aviation industry and impedes hotel industry players. During the pandemic period, innovative strategies are a must for adapting to the challenges and obstacles arising, which are critical and should be overcome as soon as possible. We can look for example from other countries' strategies to attract the tourists by converting normal tour into virtual tour methods, for example, used in some tourist attractions, such as animal sanctuaries and zoos. Despite the aims to improve the tourism industry, it also helps maintain the need for the ecosystem in the sectors. The development of pandemic contingency or natural disaster planning assists the industry in preparing for the worst-case scenario and sustaining and surviving during a difficult period.

Even if the people have become extremely fearful and have financial constraints during the COVID-19 pandemic, their desire to travel is still present and will not go away. Their fears with regard to the COVID-19 will slowly subside, maybe taking some time, at least a year or probably less. As we can see now, this disease is considered as a normal flu, and the precautions are not as strict as before. We can see that during the lockdown and restrictions, tourism lost a lot but eventually in a month it will be as good as before; the situations will slowly become normal, and the tourism industry will resume soon.

The recovery and restarting of the tourism industry during the COVID-19 pandemic by following the most recent MOTAC recovery plan will transform the tourism sector into a new global economic challenge. The tourism industry will focus on new and innovative long-term strategies as it recovers and restarts by inventing new technologies to adapt with the current situations, besides preparing for tourism retaliation by tourists after the pandemic situation, returning to a consistent and normal routine. With regard to this matter, further longitudinal research on pre-crisis, mid-crisis, and post-crisis economics is also essential in gathering data. The information obtained would be useful for tourism development by implementing it in recovery plans. Furthermore, it also has a significant impact on the growth of Islamic tourism as a growing industry in the halal segment nowadays.

From this research, the results of the study that provide practical implications are the findings will help

planners, policymakers, and industry in the halal tourism sector to develop an initial preparation package to face the uncertainty of global and local disasters and calamities by using modern technology to ensure that the halal tourism sector has an alternative if tourism cannot be done physically. Additionally, the results will benefit tourists to continue traveling regardless of time and have new experiences after the post-Covid-19 outbreak.

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