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Abstract

Globally, halal tourism has been acknowledged as one of the tourism's segment whose growth is exponential. Halal tourism has been identified as one of the highest spending tourist markets. The hospitality industry is recognising the need to adopt Halal-compliant facilities around the globe. Halal tourism can be understood as the offer of tourist services designed to meet the needs of Muslim tourists following their religious commitments. Halal destinations serve Halal food, have a no-alcohol policy and have gender-segregated swimming and spa areas, among other Halal compliant products. Consequently, in Kenya, the hospitality industry is gradually embracing the Halal tourism concept. Mombasa County has identified Halal tourism as a key growth area. Its rich Islamic influence would make it a preferred Halal destination for Halal tourists worldwide. However, Mombasa County has some restaurants currently only providing Halal food. Subsequently, the country is missing out on the growing global Halal tourism. Hence, the study sought to examine the influence of perceived benefits on the intention to adopt the Halal tourism concept in star-rated hotels. The study population was 15 star-rated hotels in Mombasa County. The respondents consisted of hotel managers, supervisors and operatives. The study embraced a cross-sectional research design where primary data were collected using questionnaires and interviews. Data were analysed using descriptive analysis by computing frequencies and means and inferential analysis using correlation and multiple regression analyses. The coefficient of determination from the multiple regression model showed that perceived benefits explain 62.2% of the intention to adopt the Halal tourism concept. The study found that perceived benefits is a significant determinant of the intention by star hotels to adopt Halal tourism. The study recommended the need for the hotels to undertake a cost-benefit analysis before adopting Halal products and services.

Keywords: Halal tourism, halal concept adoption, perceived benefits

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1.0 Introduction

Travel-related businesses and destinations worldwide have recognised the halal tourism market as having high spending tourists and an incredible growth potential worth investing funds (MasterCard & Crescent rating, 2017). As a result, airlines, accommodation establishments, sightseeing attractions and travel agents, to name a few, have all found it worthy to invest to position themselves in the impressive halal tourism market (Battour & Ismail, 2015). A growing Muslim population and increased awareness of the halal tourism concept are the two primary ingredients catalysing the rapid growth of the halal tourism sector (Battour & Ismail, 2016; Kamran & Omran, 2018; Markham, 2014; Rahim et al., 2013). Halal tourism development is, therefore, significant for most destinations as the benefits are not restricted to Muslim travellers only but are open to everyone (Jaelani, 2017). Halal tourism can be understood as offering tourist consumption services designed to meet Muslim tourists' needs per their religious obligations.

The hotel industry globally recognizes the need to provide halal-compliant services. Britain and France traditionally have relations with Muslim countries, but the rising power in Halal tourism is now Spain. Indicatively, the number of Saudis visiting Spain in 2013 was 85% higher than in 2012 (El-Gohary, 2016). Countries like Germany, United Kingdom, Belgium, France, and Netherlands have preferred Turkey as a Halal tourism destination contributing to over three million Halal tourists that the country hosts annually (Samori & Sabtu, 2014). Even non-Muslim countries such as Japan has taken significant initiatives in training their hospitality workforce in the best practices for handling halal tourists (Battour, 2018).

South Africa and Zanzibar are nations capitalizing on Halal tourism in Africa (Ayoub, 2017). For instance., in KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa, establishments providing services to tourists have invested in gender-segregated facilities such as halal kitchens and prayer rooms to tap into the growing halal market implying the adoption of the halal tourism concept in this region. Along similar lines, people living in the Zanzibar archipelagos are Muslim, and the islands are known for their vast Islamic culture. Moreover, the attractive beaches and food outlets of Zanzibar attracts tourists from Middle Eastern countries. The halal concept covers the consumption of all permitted products and services and the omission of all prohibited items and acts in Islam. Thus, globally, the odds are in favour of the halal tourism sector. Kim et al. (2015) reported that the share of the halal tourism market globally stood at 12%, with revenue projections of 156 billion dollars in 2017. In addition, the value of the halal tourism market will stand at 10 trillion dollars by the year 2030.

The Muslim travel market records growth every year (Global Muslim Travel Index, 2019). For instance, there were 25 million Muslim tourists in 2000 globally, which rose to 140 million by 2018 and the number is expected to increase to 230 million tourists by 2026 (Global Muslim Travel Index, 2019). Therefore, the halal tourism market would bring tremendous benefits to tourism destinations, such as Mombasa. Statistics suggest that the halal tourism market has enormous growth potential globally. In Mombasa County, the hospitality industry has identified Halal tourism as a key growth area and that the rich Islamic influence could make it a preferred destination for halal tourists. Hence, adopting the Halal tourism concept may augment the tourism performance of Kenya.

However, the extent to which hotels in Kenya have embraced Halal tourism has not been established. In most hospitality facilities in Kenya, the adoption of the Halal tourism concept is relatively low. Despite Halal tourism being recognized as one of the fastest-growing tourism segments, statistics show that leisure travel among Muslims is growing tremendously. In 2015, for example, there was a growth of 40,875 visitors from the United Arab Emirates, up from

24,828 the previous year (Mwakio, 2017). These statistics indicate an emerging market for Halal tourism in Kenya that can be explored as a competitive advantage for the country. Unfortunately, in Kenya, there are hardly any studies that have been conducted to address the influence of perceived benefits on the adoption of the halal tourism concept which this study seeks to address.

2.0 Research Methodology

A cross-sectional research design was used in the study since it is more exact (Busk, 2014). Furthermore, as Bethlehem (1999) indicated, cross-sectional research design makes it easy to collect, organize, analyse, and interpret data. The study was conducted in Mombasa County. The county hosts a considerably higher number of star-rated hotels that this study targets. The Arab architecture and the old town form the true heart of Mombasa. The county also has a considerable number of beautiful sandy beaches along the coastal strip. It has a higher number of Muslims whose Islamic moral practices influence could make Halal tourism inevitable. The study used self-administered questionnaires to collect quantitative data. The Fisher et al. (1983) formula was used in this study to compute the sample size of 380 hotel workers including managers, supervisors, and operatives. Kothari (2008) asserts that the use of questionnaires to collect data does not interfere with the respondents, and thus valid and reliable information can be obtained. Cronbach Alpha test for internal consistency of measurement items was used to test the reliability of the questionnaire. This study considered alpha levels above .70 level to indicate the reliability of the constructs used in the questionnaire (Zaiontaz, 2013). Results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Variable	Cronbach alpha	Criterion alpha $\alpha > .70$	Conclusion
Perceived benefits scale	.942	Yes	Reliable

As seen in Table 1, the alpha coefficient for the perceived benefits construct was .942, above the recommended minimum of .70 (Castillo, 2009), demonstrating the reliability of the data collected. The filled questionnaires from the hotels were assessed for completeness where incomplete ones were discarded. The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS, v.20) was used for data analysis. Data cleaning was performed before data analysis to check for possible errors to ensure the reliability of the study results. The data were transformed into respective variables. To test the hypothesis, this study used simple linear regression analysis at a 5% level of significance.

3.0 Results

3.1 Sample Characteristics

The study sought and obtained information on gender, nationality, religion, level of education, job position, and hotel star rating as the respondents' demographic details. Most (63.8%) of the respondents were males. The majority (87.6%) of the respondents were Kenyans. However, other foreign nationals who worked in the hotel industry in Kenya were from Uganda, Tanzania, and Ethiopia. In terms of religion, the majority (68.1%) of the respondents were Christians, whereas Muslims accounted for 30.0%. The study further revealed that most respondents (66.1%) were diploma holders, with a few (20.8%) having a bachelor's degree qualification. Few (1.0%) of the respondents had education qualifications beyond the undergraduate degree. The study also established that most (49.2%) hotels are three-star-rated

hotels, 34.5% are four-star-rated hotels, and 12.4% are two-star-rated hotels, whereas 3.9% of the hotels are five-star-rated hotels.

3.2 Perceived Benefits and the Intention of Adopting the Halal Tourism Concept

The respondents' opinions on the extent to which the perceived benefits could influence the hotels' intention to adopt the Halal tourism concept are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Perceived Benefits of Adopting the Halal Tourism Concept

	Mean	SD
Improved market share	3.52	1.26
Enhanced hotel staff productivity because of training	3.67	1.13
Improved service delivery	3.57	1.27
Improved customer satisfaction	3.90	1.04
Increased hotel occupancy rate	3.85	1.18
Increased sales volume	3.98	1.10

Source. Analysis of Survey Data

Note. N = 307. Scale [Range of Means Interpretation]: 5-point Likert scale where: 1= *to no extent at all* [1.00-1.80], 2= *to a small extent* [1.80-2.60], 3= *to a moderate extent* [2.60-3.40], 4= *to a large extent* [3.40-4.20], 5= *to a very large extent* [4.20-5.00].

The average scores for all the items measuring perceived benefits generally ranged from 3.52 to 3.98 (Table 2), demonstrating that the respondents felt that perceived benefits could influence the hotels' intention to adopt the Halal tourism concept to a large extent. The results further revealed that respondents reported increased sales volume as the most essential perceived benefit that could influence the hotels' intention to adopt the Halal tourism concept ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 1.10$). The results revealed the lowest average score of 3.52 ($SD = 1.26$) on the improved market share as a perceived benefit that could influence the hotels' intention to adopt the Halal tourism concept to a large extent. Other perceived benefits that could influence the hotels' intention to adopt the Halal tourism concept are enhanced hotel staff productivity because of training ($M = 3.67$, $SD = 1.13$), improved service delivery ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 1.27$), improved customer satisfaction ($M = 3.90$, $SD = 1.04$), and increased hotel occupancy rate ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 1.18$).

3.3 Influence of Perceived Benefits and the Intention of Adopting the Halal Tourism Concept

The simple linear regression was used to test the influence of perceived benefits on the hotels' intention to adopt the Halal tourism concept. Table 3 display these results and show a robust and simple correlation between perceived benefits and the hotels' intention to adopt the Halal tourism concept ($R = .678$). The coefficient of determination was .461, indicating that 46.1% variation in the hotels' intention to adopt the Halal tourism concept resulted from perceived benefits.

Table 3: Regression R and R-Square for Perceived Benefits on Hotels' Intention of Adopting the Halal Tourism Concept

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	S.E.
1	.679 ^a	.461	.460	.63755

Source. Analysis of Survey Data (2021)

Note. a. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived benefits

Table 4 presents the regression model results predicting the hotels' intention of adopting the halal tourism concept using perceived benefits as the predictor variable. As shown, the regression model with perceived benefits as the predictor was a significant predictor of the hotels' intention to adopt the Halal tourism concept [$F(1,305) = 261.198, p < .001$]. The perceived benefits variable was found to be a statistically significant predictor of the hotels' intention to adopt the Halal tourism concept ($B = .689, p < .001$).

Table 4: Regressions Coefficients for Perceived Benefits and Hotels' Intention of Adopting the Halal Tourism Concept

Regression Model	B	S.E	β	t	p
1 (Constant)	1.455	.165		8.808	.000
Perceived benefits	.689	.043	.679	16.162	.000

Source. Analysis of Survey Data (2021).

Note. a. Dependent Variable: intention to adopt the Halal tourism concept

The regression model equation is presented as:

Intention to adopt the Halal tourism concept = 1.455 + .689 (Perceived benefits)

4.0 Conclusion

The study concluded that perceived benefits positively affect the hotels' intention of adopting Halal products and services. Improved market share, greater hotel employee productivity due to training, improved service delivery, improved customer satisfaction, increased hotel occupancy rate and increased sales volume are just a few of the benefits mentioned by respondents. The perceived benefits of Halal facilities largely influence adoption of the halal tourism concept. Halal tourism becomes significant as countries begin to lure tourists using Muslim-friendly attractions while offering competitive prices, promotions and services. Consequently, the hotels will have to weigh the benefits of adopting Halal products and services against the costs associated with the Halal tourism concept. The perceived benefits have a positive and significant relationship with the hotels' intention of adopting the halal tourism concept.

5.0 Managerial Implications

The findings of this study revealed that perceived benefits are positively and significantly related to the intention to adopt the Halal tourism concept. Improved market share, greater hotel employee productivity due to training, improved service delivery, improved customer satisfaction, increased hotel occupancy rate and increased sales volume are just a few of the benefits mentioned by respondents. The adoption of the Halal concept in the hotel business is said to have numerous advantages. In terms of increased market share, Halal products and

services may assist in attracting more customers, particularly Muslim customers who place a high value on Halal products and services. Increasing the number of guests who visit the hotel may result in a higher market share. The Halal approach is also thought to boost employee productivity. Hotel workers are carefully trained on the code of conduct and how to engage customers under the Halal concept. The findings of this study are in line with those of Palupi et al. (2017), who stated in a study on the importance of optimizing Halal tourism in Indonesia that Halal tourism is a large sector with much room for growth; thus, optimization in this industry is critical. Furthermore, the findings support Eid and El-Gohary's (2015) findings in a study on Muslim tourists' perceived value in the hospitality and tourism industries, which found that perceived benefits from Halal tourism are critical if they are to remain competitive in a dynamic environment.

6.0 Limitations and Further Research

Several limitations are noted in this research. First, the research was conducted in star-rated hotels in Mombasa County. Consequently, researchers can conduct a similar study by focusing on other star-rated hotels in Kenya and beyond. Second, the study looked at perceived benefits as a predictor of star-rated hotels' intention to adopt the Halal tourism concept. Hence, future research can consider other factors such as customer readiness and stakeholder involvement as viable predictors. Lastly, little is known about how the Halal tourism concept affects hotel visitor satisfaction and service delivery, giving a theoretical argument. Future research should thus figure out how considerably the Halal tourism concept affects guest satisfaction.

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