Does the perception of halal tourism destination matter for non-Muslim tourists' WOM? The moderating role of religious faith

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Abstract

Purpose – *Tourists often travel to different tourism destinations in advancing the knowledge of diverse cultures, environments, history and social aspects. The purpose of this study is to explore tourists' perception of halal tourism and its impact on word-of-mouth towards halal tourism destinations.*

Design/methodology/approach – *A quantitative research approach was applied in this study. Data were collected via 375 survey questionnaires and were analysed using partial least square method. Data were collected from Malaysia's capital city and tourist spots in Kuala Lumpur, the administrative capital city in Putrajaya, and several cities in Selangor, the richest state in the country.*

Findings – *The findings revealed that trip quality has a higher significant impact on satisfaction and trip value. The perception of a halal tourism destination is found to have a significant influence on satisfaction and trip value. Trip value is significantly related to satisfaction but not associated with word-of-mouth (WOM). Satisfaction of tourists has a significant impact on WOM towards travel destinations.*

Research limitations/implications – *This study comes up with a novel understanding of the theory of tourism practices by estimating non-Muslim tourists' perception and its significant influence of WOM towards tourism destinations. The results of this study are significant to industry practitioners, policymakers and marketers in promoting halal tourism. The results of this study provide useful insights for Malaysia's tourism industry, particularly for the tourism marketing in Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya cities as tourist destinations.*

Practical implications – *This study comes up with a novel understanding of the theory of tourism practices by estimating non-Muslim tourists' perception and the influence of WOM towards tourism destinations. The results of this study are significant to industry practitioners, policymakers and marketers in promoting halal tourism.*

Originality/value – *This study examined the potential impact of non-Muslim tourists' perception of halal tourism destinations and their WOM for halal tourism destinations.*

Keywords *Halal tourism destination, Non-Muslim tourists, Religious faith, Word-of-mouth, Malaysia*

Paper type *Research paper*

1. Introduction

Destination marketers may face difficulties in promoting halal tourism facilities to non-Muslim tourists. The demand for tourism products and services for the Muslims and non-Muslim tourists is considered a big challenge for halal tourism destination. A tourist always experiences a new and different atmosphere whenever he or she decides to spend holidays in some other countries of the world (Battour *et al.*, 2019; Rahman, 2014). Tourist gets the opportunity to gain knowledge about diversified socio-cultural dimensions during

their stay in a particular country that often creates a long-lasting impression throughout their lifetime (Rahman, 2019). A tourist always learns and experiences new things during his or her visit to a new country. For instance, tourists mostly prefer to perceive and experience the visited country's social aspects, cultural issues, traditions, foods, and tourism amenities (Henderson, 2016). A tourist who belongs to any country has diversified experience including social culture. These experiences are wide-ranging in terms of distinct races, different religious beliefs and diversified cultural norms. Also, while visiting a new place, a tourist has the tendency to observe the cultural norms and behaviour, historical and religious faith, religious practices and exotic locations from the local community. Various religious beliefs also cause tourists to visit the countries that support a wide array of religious faith, historical background and pilgrimage opportunities. Because religion-based tourism is gaining popularity around the world, many Muslim countries have been putting in an all-out effort to develop Muslim-friendly tourism industry in encouraging Muslims to visit their countries from around the globe (Sultana et al., 2020). The introduction of halal tourism by many countries has not merely attracted Muslim tourists; many non-Muslim tourists have also contributed significantly in making halal tourism acceptable worldwide (Rahman et al., 2020). It is, therefore, imperative for the halal industry developers to understand the non-Muslim tourists' perception of a halal tourism destination (PHTD) and the quality of tourism trips by determining the word-of-mouth (WOM) of non-Muslim tourists that potentially influence others to choose their possible future tourism destinations.

The decision to select a specific Muslim country as a travel destination depends on the non-Muslim tourist's experience and perception (Rahman, 2014). For example, in the demand-side perspective, non-Muslim travellers should choose the halal tourism destinations by observing the presence or absence of any tourism attributes, certain tourism facilities and legal barriers to travel to any destination. In the supply-side perspective, the Muslim-friendly destination providers find it challenging to ensure the required facilities that may satisfy the needs of the non-Muslim tourists by complying with the principles of halal tourism services. For instance, halal tourism is designed in such a manner where the hotels strictly adhere to Shariah compliance and do not entertain tourists with alcohol, non-halal food and beverages (Selim et al., 2019), and interestingly, there are some halal resorts which separate their beaches based on the gender of the tourists. Yet, in such a case, tourists from non-Muslim countries will be reluctant to pay a visit to any Muslim-friendly tourism destinations (El-Gohary, 2016). Therefore, in such a situation, the halal tourism providers may put an impetus on shared beliefs and religious principles among the non-Muslim tourists when it comes to tourism facilities. For instance, Islam and Judaism have a similar belief regarding dietary restrictions for food and beverages.

The previous studies focused more on tourism management services and destination marketing (Carboni and Janati, 2016; El-Gohary, 2016; Erawan, 2020); however, studies pertinent to non-Muslim tourists' perception and inclination to choose any Muslim nation's destination is scant in the existing literature. Many Muslim countries have been taking tourists' friendly measures to attract non-Muslim travellers in their countries. In this regard, a few Muslim countries, including Malaysia, are putting high impetus to develop halal tourism in such a way where non-Muslim tourists will be potentially attracted (Rahman et al., 2020). Every year, people across the countries and regardless of their religious faiths usually pay visits to these Muslim countries for several reasons. The people living in these Muslim countries ought to follow Islamic rules and principles. Hence, it often becomes problematic for the host countries to cater to the required tourism facilities that non-Muslim tourists may demand. As a result, the host Muslim countries design their tourism services to comply with the halal standards (Shafaei, 2017; Rahman et al., 2018a). The purpose in designing tourism products and services is not just to offer to the Muslim tourists only, but also accommodate non-Muslim tourists who visit to Muslim-friendly destinations. In such circumstance, halal tourism is a relatively groundbreaking concept that contains components to attract non-Muslim tourists around the world (Shafaei, 2017). The integrated service components in halal

tourism would comfort both Muslims and non-Muslims around the world. Malaysia is a Muslim country, and thus, halal tourism products and services are important for them, but non-Muslims can gain opportunities from these kinds of services in a way that they can obtain knowledge and experience. Consequently, some of the dimensions of halal have been integrated into the tourism sector because of the potential contribution of this sector in the national economy of Malaysia. Particularly, the current study endeavours to understand the non-Muslim tourists' perception regarding halal tourism services while they visit any Muslim country. As mentioned before, majority of people living in Malaysia are Muslims. However, many non-Muslim tourists with different religions regularly visit Malaysia for various purposes. Thus, this research aims to explore how non-Muslim tourists perceive products and tourism services offered by the halal tourism industry. More specifically, this study aims to investigate the perceptions of a halal tourism destination and trip quality towards WOM from non-Muslim tourists' perspective.

2. Conceptual model and hypotheses development

Figure 1 shows a conceptual model that includes how non-Muslim tourists are affected by halal tourism services quality. The proposed model ascertains two factors integrating PHTD and trip quality to determine non-Muslim tourists' satisfaction. Oliver (1993) stated that satisfaction has widely been used within the expectation–disconfirmation paradigm. In line with this paradigm, a disconfirmation between previous expectations and product or services quality affects satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Oliver (1980) indicated that satisfaction is determined based on a consumer's internal factors and perceived performance. In the context of halal tourism, non-Muslim tourist's expectation regarding the PHTD and trip quality may reflect their satisfaction, which in turn may influence the WOM for others. The model also has proposed a link moderated by the religious faith between these constructs. Based on the conceptual model and review of literature, eight hypotheses were established to explain the relationship between the driving forces behind non-Muslim tourists' satisfaction and their WOM. The literature supports the relations between the PHTD and trip quality, satisfaction and trip value. Tourists' trip value enhances satisfaction and WOM. Satisfaction is widely used in different studies and is also identified as a crucial antecedent of WOM.

Both the Muslim and non-Muslim tourists show mixed reactions to halal tourism because of its complex nature (Battour *et al.*, 2019). In this study, non-Muslim tourists' PHTD refers to the amenities of tourism services and destination image which are mostly designed to cater for non-Muslim considerations. Travellers' satisfaction regarding any destination is ascribed following the travellers' perceived service quality in the recent literature (Rahman *et al.*, 2019; Rahman and Zailani, 2017; Rahman *et al.*, 2017a; Rahman *et al.*, 2018b; Rahman, 2014). Based on Wu *et al.* (2017), the perceived tourism service quality is the precursor of visitors' tourism satisfaction. According to Hapsari *et al.* (2017) and Moise *et al.* (2019), the

Figure 1 Conceptual model
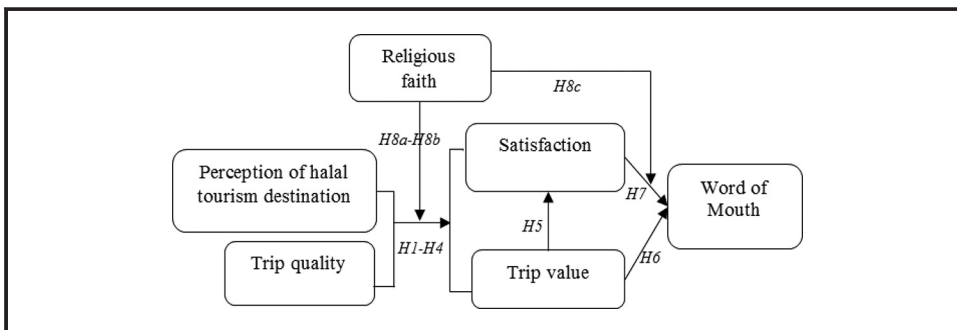
WOM of customers plays a significant role especially when determining satisfaction about any particular product or services. Wu (2016) explored a model relevant to the global tourism destinations where the author identified the satisfaction of tourists on any travelling destination. Many researches have described the perception of halal tourism destination (Hapsari et al., 2017; Moise et al., 2019) and the impact of WOM of non-Muslim tourists regarding a halal travel destination. The term "trip value" is defined as the perception of the consumers for what they have gained and what they have given up concerning the usage of any product and services (Kotler et al., 2014). The consumers' perception regarding the value of any product or services works as a good driving force to make a purchase decision of those products and services (Gallarza and Saura, 2006). Moreover, the decision-making behaviour of any consumer is highly influenced by the value of the product and service even during consumption and post-consumption stages (Gursoy et al., 2014). Rahman and Zailani (2016), and Han et al. (2017) identified significant coherence between the perceived value of commodity consumers and tourism trip value. Travellers often give importance to satisfaction as one of the key factors for their perceived value, especially in travel destinations. Rahman (2014) concluded that the components of Islamic tourism products and services increase the satisfaction of the tourists significantly. Rahman et al. (2019) conducted the study on halal brand equity in Muslim tourists' perspective and found that satisfaction is attributed to brand image and awareness. There are no adequate studies on PHTD and its impact on satisfaction and trip value, particularly from non-Muslim tourists' perspectives. The perceptions of halal tourism destination from the non-Muslim tourists seem to have a significant influence on satisfaction and trip value. Therefore, this study proposes that the following hypotheses:

H1. Perception of halal tourism destination has a significant influence on satisfaction.

H2. Perception of halal tourism destination has a positive influence on trip value.

Trip quality generally refers to the evaluation, feelings and perception of the trip by the tourists from the beginning till the end. According to Battour et al. (2019), trip quality is defined as an overall perception on meeting up the expectation of the tourism products and services throughout the entire trip. Similarly, Chen and Tsai (2007) inferred that trip quality in tourism refers to the overall evaluation of tourism products and services of any certain tourism destination. The evaluation of tourism products and services is a psychological process that often incorporates the expectation of the tourists towards their tourism destinations (Žabkar et al., 2010). However, there is a likelihood that trip quality may influence trip value and trip satisfaction towards halal tourism destinations. Tourists often grow a perception about any particular tourism destination through a comparison between their satisfaction and expectation about the trip quality and tourism products and services (Bigne et al., 2001). High trip quality is ascertained when the tourists' expectation on the tourism goods and services is exceeded, whereas a poor trip quality is the result of failing to achieve tourists' expectation level of products and services of any tourism (Bigne et al., 2001). The study conducted by Lee et al. (2005) also acknowledged the outcomes of the previous studies and found that trip quality is one of the key factors that significantly influences higher trip satisfaction and reflects positive trip value regarding the tourism destination (Bigne et al., 2001; Lee et al., 2005). Hence, trip quality is determined as one of the influential factors in tourism study. Thus, the study postulates that:

H3. Trip quality significantly influences the satisfaction of halal tourism destination.

H4. Trip quality of halal tourism significantly influences trip value.

The perception of tourism products and services makes up the concept of tourism trip value. Perceived trip value is the outcome of benefits or services gained from the price paid (Song et al., 2013). Some of the recent studies defined the perceived value of tourists as the relationship among time, money and efforts (Eid and El-Gohary, 2015a; Bajs, 2015). The evaluation of perceived value by the tourists predominantly depends on the tourists'

travelling experience and the perception of the quality of tourism products and services. The evaluation of trip value is an outcome that is usually generated from the experiences of the travellers. For example, Eid and El-Gohary (2015b) asserted that tourists' experience and perceived satisfaction consist of the perception of trip value and such perceived trip value is potentially influenced by tourists' trip satisfaction and WOM about their performed trip (Bajs, 2015). Travellers always remain in a position to evaluate and identify the overall perception of their trip destinations during their travelling. The outcome of such trip evaluation can either be satisfactory or dissatisfactory regarding their destinations. Also, the trip value experienced by the tourists is likely to enhance their trip satisfaction and may lead to a word of recommendation or WOM for future visit to destinations. Rahman *et al.* (2019) examined the relationship between trip value and satisfaction. Battour *et al.* (2019) found that satisfaction and trip value are the predictors of WOM. The arguments discussed earlier lead up to the establishment of the following hypotheses:

H5. The trip value of halal tourism destination influences tourists' satisfaction positively.

H6. Word of mouth is positively influenced by the halal tourism trip value.

Tourists' satisfaction can influence WOM towards tourism destinations (Abubakar and Ilkan, 2016). Wardi *et al.* (2018) found that customers' satisfaction has a potential influence on WOM. WOM attributes to tourists' satisfaction and recommendation of their visited places to others, especially to their friends and relatives. For example, the required elements in halal tourism have potential and positive influence over the WOM of the travellers (Rahman, 2014; Moise *et al.*, 2019). In line with that, Wu *et al.* (2017) indicated that an individual's experience obtained from the product and service performance has a significant relationship with satisfaction towards halal tourism destinations. Alves *et al.* (2016) reported that some antecedents of the WOM such as satisfaction, social interaction, cultural activity and travel motivation. The study also supported that the tourists' satisfaction leads to the WOM for others towards the travel destinations. Moise *et al.* (2019) and Hapsari *et al.* (2017) pointed out that satisfaction regarding halal facilities influences satisfaction. Han *et al.* (2017) identified that the value of halal products and services plays a key role in increasing tourists' satisfaction, which reflects WOM towards visiting tourism destinations. Tourists' satisfaction towards halal tourism destination may influence WOM for a more preference towards the travel destinations. Grissemann and Stokburger-Sauer (2012) found a direct impact of tourist satisfaction on WOM. It might be argued that satisfaction has a direct relationship with WOM for a further visit to the halal tourism destinations. Thus, the current study offers the following hypothesis:

H7. Satisfaction has a significant impact on word-of-mouth.

The research on halal tourism covers a large chunk of religion perspectives. Tourism marketing has been integrating religious aspects to attract both Muslim and non-Muslim travellers (Eid and El-Gohary, 2015a; Cleveland *et al.*, 2013). Religious faith is a spectrum within which a person combines the doctrines of any specific religion instilled into his or her beliefs and values (King and Crowther, 2004). Eid and El-Gohary (2015b) postulated that religious faith internalises a varied commitment which glorifies a particular belief or faith. The religious faith of an individual has a social force that reflects human behaviour. Cleveland *et al.* (2013) identified that religious faith is a significant influential factor regarding consumption patterns. In line with this, religious faith can reflect the tourists' choice of halal tourism destination. People's religious beliefs influence their choice of halal perceptions towards products and services. King and Crowther (2004) stated that to measure the religious faith, it is important to be precise with the religion needs. Eid and El-Gohary (2015a) developed a religious faith in the tourism research context. Religious faith is measured by adopting the attributes of halal, faith and ritual practices. Tourists have multifaceted demand for tourism products and services and halal tourism destinations (Rahman, 2014), and this is perhaps because they have a different level of religious

obligations. The religious faith of non-Muslim tourists may reflect the choice of halal tourism destinations, which leads to the satisfaction and WOM to others in travelling to the destinations. Sim and Bujang (2012) highlighted the role of religious faith in the relationship between consumers' perceived value and behaviour. In a halal tourism destination facility, tourists' religious faith in halal services encourages them to be more comfortable. Religious faith within halal service quality and trip value influence tourists to have a positive impression about the overall halal tourism destination, which leads to WOM for others to choose it as future tourism destination. Thus, based on this theoretical background, it can be posited that when tourists have positive religious faith with the perceptions of halal tourism destinations and trip quality, the effect of potential attributes on tourists' subjective assessment of halal services, trip value and satisfaction would be stronger. Thus, this study postulated that:

H8a. Religious faith moderates the effect of PHTD on satisfaction.

H8b. Religious faith moderates the effect of trip quality on trip value.

H8c. Religious faith moderates the effect of satisfaction that leads to word-of-mouth.

3. Research methodology

3.1 Constructs operationalisation

This study highlighted the empirical analysis. For empirical analysis, this study mainly followed a two-step approach: measurement model and structural model analysis, applying a partial least square (PLS). The measurement model was used to estimate the reliability and validity analysis whereas the structural model was applied to find out the path coefficient using Smart PLS 3.0 software. Structural questionnaire method was used to find out non-Muslim tourists' perception regarding halal tourism products and services in Malaysia. The country Malaysia was selected for data collection because it is the best global market for Muslims and the country has developed Islamic economies (Battour *et al.,* 2019). The items in the questionnaire were developed based on the previous literature and it contains three parts, namely, the demographic profile of the respondents, items demonstrating the perception of non-Muslim tourists about halal tourism destination and its findings. In the second and third sections, a seven-point Likert scale was used whereby scale 7 denotes strongly agreed and the lowest 1-scale represents strongly disagree. Based on the review of literature, the development of measurement scales facilitates the operationalisation of the construct for the relationship model. Based on the study by Rahman *et al.* (2017b) and Rahman *et al.* (2020), 12 items were measured for the perception of halal tourism products and services. Nine items were taken from Rahman *et al.* (2020) to measure the perception of trip quality and trip value. Non-Muslim tourists' satisfaction and WOM were identified using ten items which were taken from the study conducted by Wardi *et al.* (2018). Four items were adopted from Eid and El-Gohary (2015b) in evaluating religious faith.

3.2 Survey administration and sample

The current study uses survey methods through a self-administered questionnaire to examine the conceptual model of this study. Before distributing the questionnaire for the actual survey, it must be tested to confirm the content validity of the instrument items in the questionnaire. *A pilot survey was conducted on 30 respondents and the responses were used to test the content validity of the instrument items.* The reliability test was run to check the Cronbach's alpha ad measurement items. The Cronbach's alpha values for all constructs were ranged between 0.72 and 0.88, which indicates the achievement of the content validity of the scale. Nunnally (1978) argued that the Cronbach's alpha value should be 0.7 and above. The questionnaire was prepared in English for data collection as most of

the participants were international tourists and majority of them have a college or university certificate. The respondents of this study were non-Muslim tourists who had visited Malaysia.

The data was collected using non-probability sampling method, as this procedure enabled the authors to have access to a sufficient number of potential respondents. The researchers of this study politely approached the tourists, explained the main objective of the study and asked their permission to participate willingly in this study. Moreover, the researchers reassured the respondents that the data will be used only for academic purpose and their information will be kept confidential. The respondents were also informed that they will remain anonymous as their names, affiliations, addresses and phone numbers were not recorded during this survey. The respondents were asked to complete the questionnaires and handed them back to the researchers.

The data was collected from diverse tourist spots in Malaysia. There were different tourism locations selected, namely, Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Putrajaya and several municipalities of which a total of 375 completed survey questionnaires were returned to researchers out of the total of 500 distributed questionnaires. The response rate of the surveyed questionnaires is 75%. A reliability and factor analysis tests were applied for the subsequent improvement of the instrument. From that, six items were dropped because of the lower factor loading ranges (below 0.50). Sekaran and Bougie (2010) suggested that items with a value of less than 0.50 should be excluded. Data were collected between September and December 2018, which was supposed to be peak season for tourists from around the world to visit Malaysia. The collected data were then keyed into SmartPLS software for data management and to analyse and test the conceptual model and hypotheses of this study. Multiple and interdependent connections can easily be evaluated using this tool. Simultaneously, it helps determine the representing an unobservable concept and accounting for measurement error in the estimation process (Hair *et al.*, 2017). Moreover, G*Power 3.1.9.2 statistical method was used to estimate the strength of 375 samples. The G*Power statistical method demonstrated a significant level of 0.05 that represents a strength of 0.938, which is higher than 0.80. Chin (2001) argued that a satisfactory sample strength of any study is determined if it exceeds the strength level of 0.80. Thus, it can be inferred that the sample collected for this study has the required level of strength.

4. Results and analysis

4.1 Respondents' profile

In the current study, the respondents are both male and female, with the percentage of male respondents higher (62.4) than that of female respondents (37.6). Among these respondents, majority of the participants is above 40 years old, with 63.2% of the entire sample in this study. Respondents below the age group of 20 cover 1.6% of the total respondents and respondents who are above 30 years old are distributed of 13.1% and 22.1%, respectively. In terms of the respondents' level of education, 94.4% of the respondents have graduated from colleges and universities while the remaining 5.6% of them only have a diploma certificate. By profession, the respondents are divided as employed (71.7%), self-employed (19.7%) and finally unemployed with only 8.6%. The profiling of the respondents is identified based on their monthly income. For instance, 30.9% of the respondents earn more than US$5,000 per month whereas the remaining 69.1% of them earn below US$4,999. As per the country of origin, the respondents are from Singapore (42.1%), China (21.9%), India (11.2%), Thailand (8.3%), Philippines (4.8%), United Kingdom (7%), Australia (4.8%), South Korea (2.7%) and Taiwan (2.1%), respectively. More than half of the respondents (53.7%) visit another country once a year which is followed by 29.3% of respondents who travel abroad twice in a year and 17.0% of the respondents travel to other country thrice in a year.

4.2 Measurement model assessment

The validity and reliability of the measurement model are weighted before testing the structural model (Hair *et al.*, 2017). A pilot study was conducted to achieve content validity to know whether there are any remaining ambiguous words or not. The reliability and validity results were revealed to the measurement model. Confirmatory factor analysis was used to rectify the measurement items and revealed the convergent validity (Table 1). In this stage,

Table 1 Convergent validity					
Items	Factor loading	Alpha	CR	AVE	rho_A
PHTD		0.966	0.970	0.728	0.970
[gp1] It is my choice to travel to Muslim destinations (countries) that contain Islamic principles and rules	0.810				
[gp2] Travelling to a Muslim destination is often related to cultural matter	0.887				
[gp3] It is an opportunity to meet with other religions	0.871				
[gp4] I feel relaxed when I visit halal tourism destinations	0.886				
[gp5] All rules and regulations should not be an obligation while non-Muslim travellers visit and Muslim destinations	0.875				
[gp6] I understand Islamic/halal tourism	0.764				
gp7] I do not reject to wear Burqini/Burkini or Muslim-friendly swimsuit while swimming in the beaches or pools	0.859				
[gp8] I would consider such swimsuit as an exceptional experience in my life	0.871				
[gp9] Muslim prayer facilities (e.g. copy of Al-Quran, Sign of Qiblat, Surah Yasin, and prayer mats) in the hotel do not bother me	0.808				
[gp10] Holy books in the hotel rooms do not bother me	0.925				
[gp11] Azan (call for prayer) in the early morning does not bother me.	0.850				
[gp12] It is not disturbing for me to receive ample water supply in the washrooms or any other locations	0.823				
Trip quality		0.927	0.943	0.732	0.930
[tq1] The environment in Malaysia is clean, organised and auspicious for tourism	0.822				
[tq2] The service quality in the restaurants is of high quality	0.848				
[tq3] Malaysians are rather friendly and hospitable	0.844				
[tq4] There is an availability of transportation facilities to reach out to the tourist spots	0.879				
[tq5] Malaysia as a travel destination does not pose a threat for the tourists	0.882				
[tq6] The staff of tourists' locations is willing to help tourists	0.858				
Trip value		0.889	0.931	0.819	0.915
[tv1] It is worth travelling to Muslim destinations	0.837				
[tv2] The value effort to visit a Muslim destination is worthwhile	0.938				
[tv3] The value for spending time in Muslim destination is worthy	0.936				
Satisfaction		0.924	0.943	0.768	0.926
[sa1] I took a wise decision to visit Malaysia	0.862				
[sa2] The tourism attractions, products and services in Malaysia are the matters of pleasure for me	0.873				
[sa3] Visiting Malaysia and spending holidays here are the right decisions from my point of view	0.916				
[sa4] In this visit I stayed longer than my last visit to Malaysia	0.870				
[sa5] Malaysia is a perfect tourism destination compared to other countries in my opinion	0.860				
Word-of-mouth		0.805	0.862	0.562	0.889
[wom1] I will recommend others to visit Malaysia and I will do it willingly	0.719				
[wom2] I will be loyal towards Malaysia when it comes to selecting a tourism destination	0.861				
[wom3] I wish to visit Malaysia willingly again in the coming days, months or years	0.873				
[wom4] As per leisure spending, Malaysia is a wonderful destination (good image) for me	0.716				
[wom5] Malaysia will be recommended as a travel destination to my friends and family members	0.719				
Religious faith		0.822	0.865	0.673	0.854
[rf1] I need to stand with my religious belief	0.764				
[rf2] My religious faith is the complete guideline in my life	0.895				
[rf3] I always follow my religious beliefs as an entire approach in my life	0.795				
[rf4] I always take religion importantly because it answers the meaning of my life	0.646				

all items were included in the measurement model as they attained higher factor loading of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2013). The results of the measurement model are shown in Figure 2. As stated by Henseler et al. (2009), the construct validity and convergent validity require the fulfilment of the value to be 0.50 and above for both factor loadings and average variance extracted (AVE). In the meantime, the cut-off value of the coefficient is also required to be 0.70 to demonstrate composite reliability (in this regard, refer to Table 1; Dijkstra and Henseler, 2015). In the current study, for all the selected variables, the AVE values ranged between 0.562 and 0.819, which demonstrates the fulfilment of convergent validity as suggested by Hair et al. (2013), which is to have the AVE of 0.50. On the other hand, in this study, the outcomes of construct reliability (CR) demonstrate that CR values for all the constructs are higher than 0.70, which fulfil the CR condition as suggested by Hair et al. (2017). Table 2 demonstrates the testing of discriminant validity for all the ten selected dimensions for this study. Also, this study applied the criterion suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981) in obtaining discriminant validity. According to Hair et al. (2013), the square root of AVE for each latent construct should be higher than the correlations of any other latent constructs.
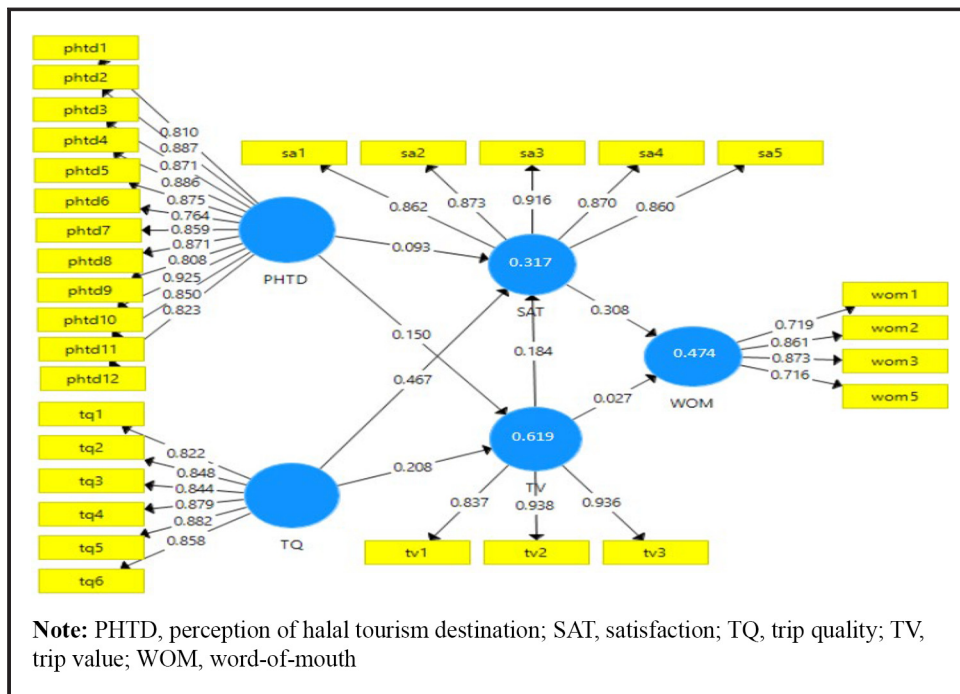
Figure 2 Measurement model

Note: PHTD, perception of halal tourism destination; SAT, satisfaction; TQ, trip quality; TV, trip value; WOM, word-of-mouth

Table 2 Discriminant validity

Construct	1	2	3	4	5
PHTD (1)	0.853				
Satisfaction (2)	0.190	0.876			
Trip quality (3)	0.136	0.521	0.856		
Trip value (4)	0.178	0.307	0.229	0.905	
Word of mouth (5)	0.570	0.309	0.230	0.117	0.750

Notes: PHTD, perception of halal tourism destination; SAT, satisfaction; TQ, trip quality; TV, trip value; WOM, word-of-mouth

4.3 Structural model assessment

This paper's proposed model is based on the hypothesis of the latent variables and the relationship between the variables identified by the structural model. The beta value (β), t-value and coefficient of determination (R^2) identified the magnitude of the relationship among the latent variables. However, the percentage of variance was identified by the coefficient of determination (R^2) where independent variables often explain dependent variables that range from 0 to 1. According to Cohen (1988), when the relationship magnitude values become closer to 1, the dependent variables are explained more by the independent variables. Thus, tourists' satisfaction explained 31.7% variance, whereas trip value and WOM explained 47.4% and 61.9%, respectively. The R^2 value did not change before and after moderating the interaction. If the t-value for each indicator is greater than 2.32, it denotes a significant level at $p < 0.01$. When t-value becomes ≥ 1.64, it is thought to be an optimum level at $p < 0.05$ (Hair et $al.$, 2017). The relationship magnitude, whether positive or negative, between independent and dependent variables is determined by the beta coefficient value. To test the study's structural model, a nonparametric bootstrapping technique was applied, which resulted in 5,000 replications. According to Figure 3, the results of the structural model showed that trip quality has a highly significant impact on satisfaction ($\beta = 0.467$, $t = 12.784$) and satisfaction has a higher significant relationship with WOM ($\beta = 0.308$, $t = 6.401$); thus, H3 and H5 are accepted. The results also showed that trip value has a significant relationship with satisfaction ($\beta = 0.184$, $t = 4.828$) and trip quality has a significant impact on trip value ($\beta = 0.208$, t = 4.402). Therefore, H4 and H7 are accepted. The findings revealed that PHTD has a positive impact on trip value ($\beta = 0.150$, $t = 3.258$) and satisfaction ($\beta = 0.093$, $t = 2.617$), but there is no significant relationship between trip value and WOM ($\beta = 0.024$, $t = 0.474$), and thus, H1 and H2 are accepted but H6 is not accepted. Hence, H6 is not supported; this is perhaps

Figure 3 Structural model
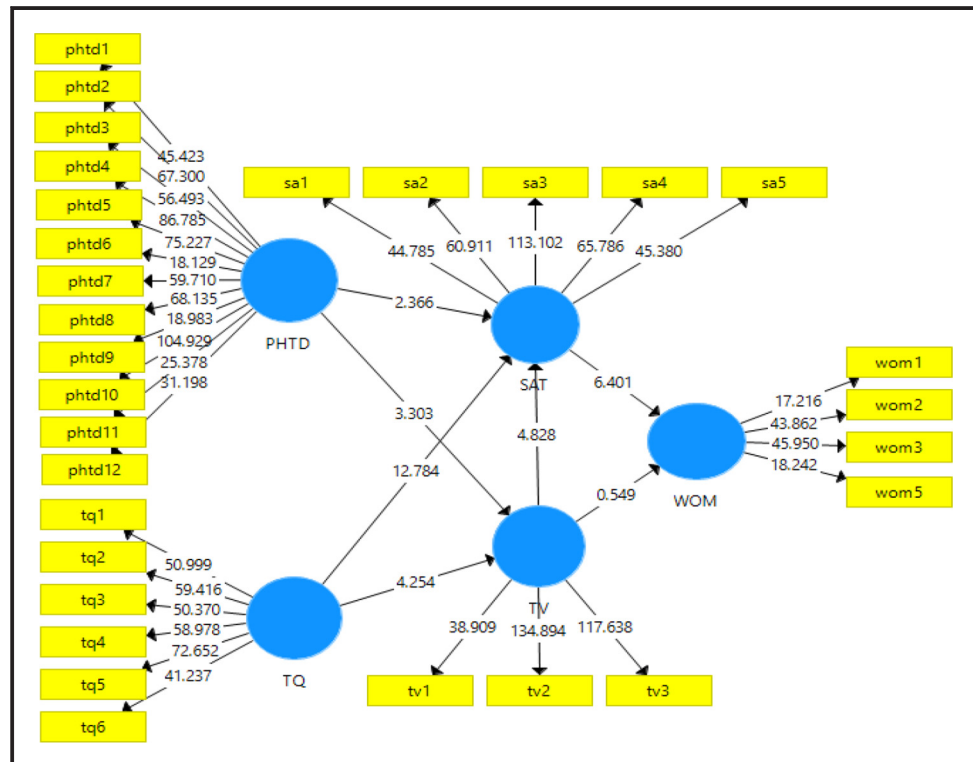
because of almost half (42.1%) of the respondents were Singaporean. Also, it may be assumed that the ratios are two Singaporeans respondents to every Chinese respondent (2:1), five Singaporeans respondents to every Indian respondent (4:1) and five Singaporeans to every Thai (5:1). For the robustness of the model, the researchers examined the moderating effect of religious faith. The results indicated that religious faith has a moderating effect on the relationship between PHTD and satisfaction but there is no moderating effect of religious faith between PHTD and trip value. However, religious faith has a moderating effect on the relationship between satisfaction and WOM. Thus, *H8a* and *H8c* are accepted and *H8b* is not accepted. Hence, *H8* is considered as not significant. This is because Singapore is very near to Malaysia (just across the causeway) of which the people frequently travel to Malaysia. Because of this, their marginal utility of satisfaction decreases with more visits and this will influence their WOM. The results of the structural model are illustrated in Table 3, and the results of the hypotheses were significant.

4.4 Importance–performance matrix

For the robustness of the existing findings, this study applied the importance–performance matrix (IPM), which highlighted the variable to improve a specific target variable (Ringle and Sarstedt, 2016). The results indicated that the importance–performance matrix achieves the total effects in the relationship with other respective factors (e.g. perceptions of halal tourism product and services, trip value, trip quality, satisfaction and religious faith) on the target factor of the WOM to specify their importance. The target factor of WOM as a latent construct was used to evaluate the total effect and performance as shown in Table 4. The findings revealed that trip value is an important factor in expecting WOM as it is influenced by high importance and performance values, followed by religious faith, trip quality, satisfaction and

Table 3	Path coefficient				
Hypo.	*Relationship*	*Beta (β)*	*SD*	*t-Value*	*Comments*
H1	PHTD → Satisfaction	0.093	0.039	2.366**	Supported
H2	PHTD → Trip value	0.150	0.045	3.303**	Supported
H3	Trip quality → Satisfaction	0.467	0.036	12.784**	Supported
H4	Trip quality → Trip value	0.208	0.049	4.254**	Supported
H5	Satisfaction → Word-of-mouth	0.308	0.048	6.401**	Supported
H6	Trip value → Word-of-mouth	0.027	0.049	0.549	Not supported
H7	Trip value → Satisfaction	0.184	0.038	4.828**	Supported
Moderating effect					
H8a	RF × PHTD → Satisfaction	−0.062	0.036	1.722*	Supported
H8b	RF × trip quality → Trip value	0.011	0.044	0.250	Not supported
H8c	RF × Satisfaction → Word-of-mouth	−0.083	0.042	1.976*	Supported

Notes: PHTD, perception of halal tourism destination; RF, religious faith; *t*-value ≥ 2.32 considers significant level at 0.01 and *t*-value ≥ 1.64 considers significant level at 0.05

Table 4	Total effects and performance	
Constructs	*Total effect*	*Performance*
Perception of halal tourism destination	0.026	51.848
Religious faith	0.146	67.348
Satisfaction	0.267	62.465
Trip quality	0.156	66.203
Trip value	0.040	73.036

Importance-Performance Map

Note: PHTD, perception of halal tourism destination; SAT, satisfaction; TQ, trip quality; TV, trip value; WOM, word-of-mouth
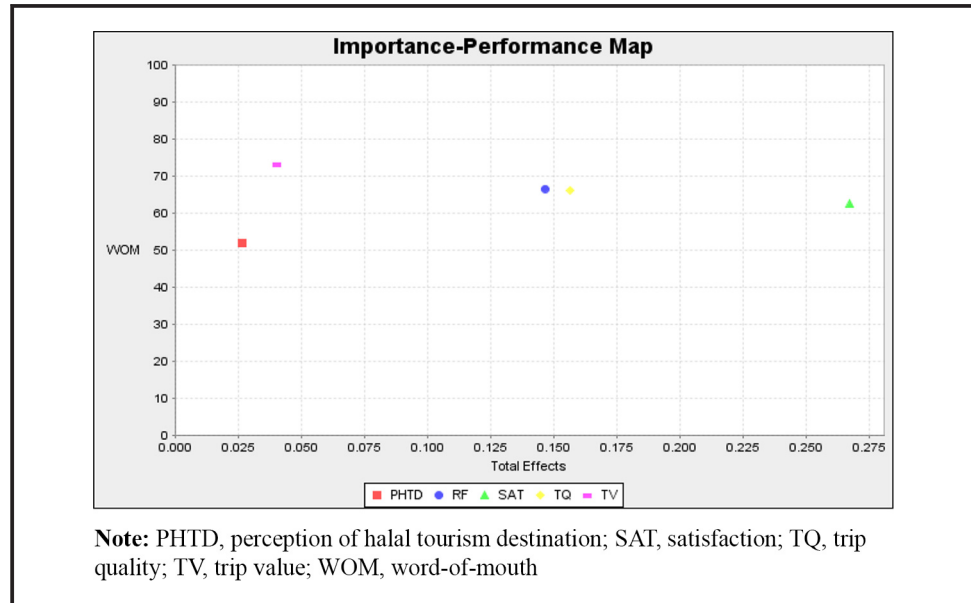
perceptions of halal tourism products and services. Figure 4 presents the IPM and illustrates the findings of WOM as a particular target factor.

5. Discussion

The findings pointed out that the perceptions of a halal tourism destination and trip quality have a significant influence on non-Muslim tourists' satisfaction and trip value. Hence, perceptions of halal tourism destination and trip quality are a significant precursor of satisfaction and trip value of non-Muslim tourist towards halal tourism destination. In line with this, the study conducted by Wardi et al. (2018) found that halal service facilities have a substantial effect on satisfaction. Eid and El-Gohary (2015a) found that tourists' physical attributes in the halal perspective have a positive impact on their satisfaction. Satisfaction can reflect tourists' perceptions of Islamic/halal facilities in a tourism destination. The findings of Rahman et al. (2017b) and Rahman (2014) concluded that Islamic attributes significantly influence the satisfaction of tourists. Besides, many non-Muslim tourists think that it is indeed an opportunity for them to gain knowledge about the culture and customs of the Muslims by availing halal products and services in the tourism industry. Meanwhile, the empirical outcomes of this study comply with the prior studies that used structural equation modeling analysis in the other research fields such as halal medical tourism services which are mostly Muslim-friendly (Rahman and Zailani, 2017; Rahman et al., 2017a; Rahman et al., 2018b).

The results revealed that the perception of halal tourism destinations influences trip value. It implies that respondents are happy to have a trip in Malaysia. This country is ultimately worthwhile for spending money, time and effort. A recent study conducted by Rahman et al. (2020) identified that it is important to have an overall perception regarding halal products and services by the non-Muslim travellers during their visit to any Muslim destination. Battour et al. (2019) reported that if a woman is travelling alone and seeking privacy at the hotel during her stay, the hotel authority must acknowledge the required privacy and arrange a separate room for her under the halal tourism spectrum. In the case of halal tourism and non-Muslim perception, most respondents are concerned about any sexual activity such as prostitution and kissing in public. Nevertheless, these sexual activities are

strictly prohibited when it comes to halal tourism and especially to the Muslim tourists (Battour et al., 2019). Eid and El-Gohary (2015b) found that tourists' satisfaction is positively impacted by the perceived value of halal tourism products and services. Moreover, tourists' trip value is greatly influenced by the perceived value of halal products and services (Iniesta-Bonillo et al., 2016). Besides, the overall impact of the perceptions of a halal tourism destination and trip quality on trip value and satisfaction is positive, which is linked to the relevant previous literature on tourism management services (Battour et al., 2019; Rahman et al., 2020; Eid and El-Gohary, 2015a). Thus, this study postulates that non-Muslim tourists might select halal tourism products and services especially when the prices for these services are relatively cheap. In this study, the items such as the value for money, the value for the effort and the value for time came up with greater factor loading under the trip value measure, indicating the satisfaction among non-Muslims tourists about the halal tourism attributes in Malaysia.

The results of this existing study indicate that trip quality positively influences satisfaction and trip value. It is relevant to the findings of Battour et al. (2019) and Rahman et al. (2020) who mentioned that trip quality is a key component for the tourists' satisfaction and their trip value. This is because of the fact that the non-Muslim tourists will be reluctant to select halal tourism destination if they are not satisfied in regards to the value for time, value for money, value for experience in the tourism products and services. Higher satisfaction and trip value is influenced by the higher perceived quality trip services, which could lead to WOM and more positive behavioural intentions of tourists. Battour et al. (2019) mentioned that Muslim tourists are likely to reject any tourism destination because of the absence of Islamic attributes. On the other hand, non-Muslim tourists may be inclined to travel to a Muslim-friendly destination because of dietary purposes such as getting halal products and beverages. Haq and Wong (2013) claimed that travelling to a halal tourism destination is greatly influenced by media channels. Hence, media channels are always a potential source to promote halal tourism to non-Muslims tourists by sharing the experience and diversified cultures. Besides, the item "Visiting Muslim country as a somewhat cultural matter" with a higher factor loading in the halal tourism destination scale demonstrates the inclination of non-Muslim tourists to travel to any Muslim-friendly tourism destinations. Thus, available existing halal tourism services and their ability to meet up the needs of the tourists may be likely to attract non-Muslim travellers to the maximum extent.

Therefore, non-Muslims may desire a halal destination when he or she prefers to experience Muslims' values, quality trip, cultural norms, history, historical places, religious practices and Muslim-favourable locations. This study was conducted in Malaysia where the majority of the people are Muslims in terms of religion. Besides, Malaysia is a country where people of multiple races and religions live together in peace and harmony. For example, 61.3% of the people follow Islam, 19.8% of the people follow Buddhism, 9.2% of the people follow Christianity, 6.3% of the people follow Hinduism and the rest 3.4% of the people follow some other religions in Malaysia (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2019). Hence, non-Muslim visitors can also adjust themselves in the multiracial environment through halal tourism. Besides, every year tourists from different countries visit Malaysia for many purposes. The majority of people in Malaysia are Muslims. Therefore, Malaysia conserves Muslim's values and principles for all. Moreover, halal products are clean, hygienic, healthy (Rahman et al., 2021) and environmentally friendly so any person can consume those. Many countries with the majority of non-Muslims are offering Muslim-friendly facilities to attract more Muslim visitors into their countries. For example, Japan airports set up prayer rooms for Muslims. The hotels of those countries are also offering facilities and halal food that may attract Muslims.

In this study, the relationship between tourists' satisfaction and their WOM, their perceived trip value and their obtained satisfaction are collectively important findings. This is because tourists' satisfaction and trip value can lead to WOM for a further visit to

the destinations. The needs of the tourists can easily be forecasted by finding out of the relationship between satisfaction and WOM, which may help develop a positive perception of halal tourism among the non-Muslim tourists. Besides, the items "compared to my last visit, a longer period of current visit" and "choice to visit" demonstrate an optimum factor loading under satisfaction measures, implying that tourists who have visited Malaysia are happy to spend the time in this country which leads to a positive recommendation for themselves and others for another future trip to Malaysia. The non-Muslim tourists' satisfaction and trip value are the significant antecedents of WOM. Rahman (2014) and Rahman et al. (2019) investigated tourism attributes in the Islamic perspective that has a positive relationship with WOM. Han et al. (2017) supported the current study findings conducted on Muslim tourist's halal perception. The findings indicated that tourists' perceptions of halal tourism destination have a significant impact on WOM. It implies that if non-Muslim tourists are satisfied with the facility of halal tourism destination, a positive WOM will be spread around and they will recommend the tourism sites in Malaysia to their relatives and friends. Besides, the items "return to Malaysia" and "recommend Malaysia as a holiday" have a higher factor loading in the WOM scale. This implies that non-Muslim tourists are willingly visiting the halal tourism destinations and subsequently recommend others for a future visit to Malaysia. Iniesta-Bonillo et al. (2016) found that there is a significant relationship between the perceived value of tourists (e.g. halal attributes, facilities) and WOM. Moreover, the available existing halal services which are often favourable among the non-Muslim tourists motivate them to recommend halal tourism destinations such as Malaysia. It denotes that tourists can share their experiences positively with their friends, family and relatives. Nevertheless, when tourists have a bad experience on their travel to a halal tourism destination, they may share their knowledge negatively to the society or their relatives and others.

The findings indicate that tourists' religious faith plays an essential role in the association between the perception of halal tourism destination and satisfaction, tourists' satisfaction and WOM in travel destinations. Hence, it is evident that religiosity greatly influences the travelling behaviour of non-Muslim tourists. Religious faith is an instinctive issue for an individual as behaviour of tourists often relies on tourists' level of religiosity. The outcomes of this study demonstrate that halal tourism destination on satisfaction and WOM is moderated by the religious faith. Tourist's religious faith increases satisfaction, halal perceptions and trip value in travelling to halal tourism destinations. The findings have a similar view of Rice and Al-Mossawi (2002) who found that consumers' religious beliefs have a significant impact on their behavioural intention towards products and services. The findings ensure that non-Muslim tourists' travel behaviour is not only influenced by their perceptions but also influenced by their level of religious faith on the trip quality and trip value. It implies that higher religious faith leads to increased satisfaction and, this, in turn, influences others through WOM to travel to halal tourism destinations.

6. Theoretical and managerial implications

The findings revealed that the PHTD and trip quality are crucial for the WOM, measured by the satisfaction and trip value of non-Muslim tourists towards travel destinations. The religious faith is found to have an important theoretical contribution of this study as it has a significant moderation effect on the relationship between PHTD and satisfaction, and WOM. The findings of this study may contribute to the tourism developers and halal tourism promoters and operators to enhance tour satisfaction for the non-Muslim tourists that can possibly generate positive WOM in recommending others to make a future trip to Malaysia. In this study, non-Muslim tourists' perceptions of a halal tourism destination and trip quality

can increase their trip value and satisfaction, which in turn influences WOM for future travel to destinations.

The tourism service promoters and stakeholders need to be aware of all the dimensions of tourism products and services and their ability to satisfy tourists and ensure trip value and positive WOM. Otherwise, there is a possibility that the excessive provision of these aspects might be counter-productive. The structural model analysis results provided evidence that the perception of halal tourism destinations, religious faith, trip quality, trip value, satisfaction and WOM are significant factors for tourism destination marketing. Tourism industry players may pay attention to particular aspects of halal tourism destination image, tourists' religious faith and trip quality for the non-Muslim tourists' satisfaction and trip value as they can influence the non-Muslim tourists' WOM in attracting people towards halal tourism destinations. Besides, trip quality and perceptions of a halal tourism destination can attract more tourists for future travel to halal tourism destinations. The results also indicate that non-Muslim tourists have a significant willingness to travel to halal tourism destinations as they may gain knowledge about the different cultures, history, environment and tourism experience. Thus, it is expected that this study has potential in given consideration into the halal tourism perceptions of non-Muslim tourists. The Muslim countries (e.g. Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iran, UAE) may be potential destinations for non-Muslim tourists as these countries have diversified culture (diverse cultures) and history that will enhance knowledge about halal tourism services. This study may contribute to the knowledge of halal tourism destination images from the non-Muslim tourists' perspective.

The outcomes of this study will provide tourists operators and tourism marketing agencies with the assistance of identifying halal tourism sector from the perspectives of the tourists, especially those who are non-Muslims. The tourism operators and managers should create a better package of satisfactory and quality products and services of halal tourism destination in such a way that would create a positive perception among the non-Muslims tourists. In the meantime, they must be aware of proper balance among the provision of halal tourism product and services facilities for all tourists. The study can also contribute to the development of a new market segment to attract tourists from different parts of the non-Muslim countries.

The findings identified that the majority of the participants like halal tourism and trip quality for future travel to halal tourism destinations. There are non-halal restaurants in Malaysia and in some Muslim destinations, while some of the hotels do have non-halal restaurants within their premise. Gender segregation is important for halal tourism destination. Muslim tourists may be interested to book a room at a hotel if the hotel practices gender segregation. Some non-Muslim tourists prefer gender segregation in hotels and resorts because they are willing to accept the rules of halal destination, but some non-Muslim tourists may be reluctant to book a room at a hotel if there remains any obligation to follow and practise Islamic rules (gender segregation). The tourism and travel operators need to understand the tourists' perceptions of halal products and services of any halal tourism destination such as Malaysia.

7. Conclusion and future study

The halal tourism sector has been gaining reputation in many countries, including Malaysia, in the recent years. Every year, Malaysia receives an increasing number of tourists from many countries around the world. Both Muslim and non-Muslim tourists pay a visit to Malaysia for many purposes. Because Malaysia has been promoting halal tourism, it is necessary to understand how non-Muslim travellers perceive halal tourism services during their stay in Malaysia. This research considered the perceived dimensions such as trip quality in the halal tourism destination, the influence of tourist's religious faith on Muslim-friendly tourism destination, trip value, non-Muslim tourists satisfaction towards halal tourism and their influence of WOM for future tourism

recommendation. These dimensions have been scarcely discussed in the previous researches. However, the current research work is not without limitations. Because the study only focuses on non-Muslim tourists' perceptions towards halal tourism destinations, it can hardly be generalised. Most halal attributes or facilities are available for Muslim tourists, such as halal food and prayer amenities. This study finds that non-Muslim tourists' PHTD and trip quality are the crucial components in measuring tourists' WOM through the tourists' satisfaction and their trip value for future travel to destinations. However, several motivational factors, such as tourists' perceived value, service quality and tourism packages, may also influence non-Muslim tourists' satisfaction and, in turn, lead to WOM. Thus, a longitudinal study is recommended as a future research endeavour in Middle East countries or any other region with similar background or characteristics of the respondents (e.g. long-haul tourists from countries with less Muslim population). This study can be directed using other variables such as tourists' engagement in food choice and shopping behaviour in a halal tourism destination.

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