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# THE POTENTIAL INDUSTRY OF ISLAMIC TOURISM IN ASEAN COUNTRIES

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**Abstract:** ASEAN countries are rich with natural resources and historical heritage. The high number of Muslim populations in ASEAN countries can be a potential revenue to promote Islamic tourism. This study aimed to examine the potential industry of Islamic tourism as an alternative revenue and it seeks to investigate the effective and efficient way in promoting Islamic tourism in ASEAN. There are many factors that promote Islamic tourism in ASEAN countries. Push and pull factors influence Muslim tourists is deciding which place they want to visit. Collaboration and coordination among ASEAN countries can enhance Islamic tourism in developing Islamic tourism which can provide economic benefit to enhance the countries' revenue.

**Keywords:** Islamic tourism, muslim, southeast countries

## INTRODUCTION

Southeast Asian countries have the highest Muslim population in the world. Most people in Southeast Asian countries embrace Islam and it becomes the main religion including Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam. Moreover, countries in this region are rich with natural resources, historical background, cultural activities and diverse delicacy. With the trend of Halal industry in the global market, Southeast Asian countries have many potentials in developing Halal sector to enhance their revenues

Islamic tourism is one of the prominent sectors in Halal industry and through tourism each country in Southeast Asian can diversify their economies or earn income from their foreign currency. As we tourism is also become one of the biggest and potential revenues to generate income in this globalized and inter-connected world, particularly in ASEAN.

The 10 ASEAN countries have good market for Islamic tourism and there are countries who already promoted their Islamic tourism namely Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam. Malaysia has massive promotion in its Halal industry. The remaining countries have fewer international arrivals due to limited exploration and less promotion in their domestic resources. Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the region has promoted Lombok as the popular destination for Islamic tourism. While Brunei Darussalam is the pioneer for Shariah Law, the country is the first state that implement Shariah law in Asian region since 1 May 2014.

Looking at the condition for Islamic tourism, there are many other sources can be explored beside these countries in ASEAN such as in the Philippines, Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar, Vietnam and Lao PDR who has less Muslim. Nurrachmi (2015) mentions that tourists from the Middle East are well-known for high spending consumers and prefer to spend their holiday in the same cultural environment. Hence, these conditions are a good momentum and great opportunity for ASEAN countries to attract Muslim and non-Muslim travelers to visit Southeast Asian countries.

ASEAN countries are also member of United Nation (UN) member and it has adopted the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda that consists of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Tourism is featured in SDG 8,12 and 14. Thus, developing Islamic tourism has become important priority for ASEAN. This paper is aimed to observe the potential of Islamic tourism industry as alternative revenue in ASEAN countries and it seeks to examine the effective and efficient way to promote Islamic tourism in ASEAN countries.

The remaining part consists of five sections. The next section reviews literatures which explore the definition and dimension of Islamic tourism. Research methodology is elaborated in the following part to discuss the process for collecting relevant literature from the beginning until the final. In the discussion and analysis part covers the potential industry of Islamic tourism and ways in promoting Islamic tourism effective and efficiently in ASEAN countries. In part five depict conclusion and recommendation to sum up the whole paper.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Definition and Dimension of Islamic Tourism

Islamic tourism is new to some of tourism scholars and researchers are attracted to carry out studies that integrate the teaching of Islamic and tourism theories. Tourism is an act of powerful motive to visit places of interest. The activities can be in terms of recreation, leisure, religious, family or business purpose. A strong tourism sector may contribute to the economic development of a country. According to COMCEC (2014) there are direct and indirect contributions of tourism for a country. National income and improving the balance of payment of country may contribute to the direct benefit. While the indirect contribution is through multiplier effect and by providing connection from country that has hard infrastructure to the country that has soft infrastructure.

Islam has encouraged its ummah to travel and appreciate the creation of Allah because by travelling people can gain experience, knowledge and to add networking. As mentioned in Quran Surah Al-Hajj (22) Verse 46 and Surah Al-Ankabut (29) Verse 20

*“So, have they not traveled through the earth and have hearts by which to reason and ears by which to hear? For indeed, it is not eye that are blinded, but blinded are the hearts which are within the breasts” (QS 22:46)*

*“Travel through the land and observe how He began creation. Then Allah will produce the final creation. Indeed Allah, over all things, is competent” (QS 29:20)*

Islamic tourism can be defined as visiting to Islamic cultural heritage, Holy places and religious sites in different Muslim countries according to Islamic values, principles and targeted to Muslim tourists for knowledgeable and holistic travel. Bakar (2011) states that there should be a new perspective in Islamic tourism in a hope of provide a healthy growth to this industry in the global market. Bakar also elaborates that in Islam there are two principles such as:

1. Tawhid compliance at the level of ideas and beliefs
2. Shariah compliance at the level of practice and ethical values.

These two principles can acknowledge Muslims into certain aspect of Shariah such as pertaining to Halal food. Furthermore, travelling and journey are highly recommended by the

Qur'an. Allah asked us to travel through the earth to take the lessons from His creation that He offers to us in His mercy.

Islamic tourism is also an activity that involved the visitation of Mecca for pilgrimage practice which has been performed since the Prophet (PBUH) and included in the five pillars of Islam. However, there are many Muslim travelers who are eager to explore the Islamic lifestyle during their holiday such as places to buy Halal food, awareness of five times praying, different design of Masjid in every state and to increase their faith to Allah by being grateful for all the beautiful creation.

From its name, Islamic tourism is mainly targeting people with Islamic beliefs however the non-Muslims are also fascinated with Islamic tourism due to multitude reasons such as fair pricing, peace and security, family friendly environment and hygiene. Islamic tourism as a concept has been used with different names and connotation namely Halal tourism, Shariah tourism and Muslim friendly tourism.

Al-Hamarneh and Steiner (2004) report that there are three concepts of Islamic tourism namely economic concept, cultural concept and religious conservative concept.

1. Economic concept

This concept focuses on inclusion of new tourist markets and tourist destinations. The major tourism players consider Muslim countries as one of the emerging tourist markets with huge economic, demographic and destination potentials.

2. Cultural concept

The cultural concept of Islamic tourism includes visions and ideas that outline the inclusion of Islamic religious cultural sites in tourism programs with “pedagogical” and self-confidence building elements. It tries to encourage a reorientation inside the tourist destinations towards less consumption and “western culture” loaded sites towards more Islamic historical, religious and cultural sites.

3. Religious conservative concept

This concept is based on the conservative interpretation and understanding of Islam. Merging elements of the extremely conservative Islamic lifestyle with the modern tourism industry could indeed present new tourism options, spaces and spheres.

As potential players in global market, there are some backgrounds that may encourage countries in ASEAN in promoting Islamic tourism to the global market.

1. The incident of September 11, 2001

Since the incident of September attack in 2001, the connotation of Islam phobia has emerged through the Western media and causes a cultural tension and misunderstanding about Islam. Because of the potential issue rises in the Western countries including the United State and certain Europe countries, many Muslims prefer to stay within the same culture when choosing holiday destination.

2. Travel banned for Muslim to certain countries

The issue of terrorism that gives a bad name to Muslim community caused a difficulty for Muslim to travel to the United State. Having personal name that similar with the name of the Prophet, the Sahabah (e.g. Muhammad, Yusuf, Ali and Ibrahim) provide a prejudice for Muslim and directly relate the person with a group of terrorists. According

to Aljazeera (2019), citizens of Iran, Libya, Somalia, Syria and Yemen are five countries consistently on travel ban list in the US.

### 3. Growing awareness and demand

With awareness of Halal food among the Muslim, the demand for Halal industry is increased. Islam has become the fastest growing religion in the world. The population of Muslim in Asia is around 805 million people (Wacharajirasophon, 2016). With the growth of Halal food in the global market and with 63.3% of Muslim in Asian countries from the world population, this is a great opportunity for Southeast Asian countries to enhance their Islamic tourism by providing Halal food for its travelers.

There are various business components exist in the Islamic tourism industry namely tour packages, accommodation, transportation, food and beverages, and finance. These components are elaborated as follows

#### 1. Halal Hotels

Halal food only, no alcohol and gambling are some main indicators of Islamic hotel, other than that the availability of Quran, prayers mats and arrow indicating the direction of Mecca in every room is necessity. The position of beds and toilets should not face the direction of Mecca. Lastly there should be separate recreational facilities for men and women.

#### 2. Halal Transport (Airlines)

Providing cleanliness, Halal food and beverages and publications that are coherent with Islam are the major indicators for Halal transport.

#### 3. Halal Food and Beverages

Criteria of all animals must be slaughtered according to Islamic principles and non-alcohol drinks should be served in the premise are the main element for Halal food and beverages.

#### 4. Halal Tour Packages

The component of the tour package must be based on Islamic themed. The package should include visits to the mosques, Islamic monuments, promotion and event during Ramadan.

#### 5. Halal Finance

With every resources of Islamic tourism in line with Islamic principles, Islamic finance is the element for financing in Halal industry. Islamic finance requires participation in sharing the profit and loss among of all parties who involved in this finance enterprise and it also prohibits interest.

The major component of Islamic tourism is the same with conventional tourism such as hotels, restaurants, logistics, finance and travel packages. There are requirements based on Shariah principles and at the simplest level these principles prohibit adultery, gambling, consumption of pork and other Haram (forbidden) foods, selling or drinking liquor and dressing inappropriately. In Islamic teaching, Muslim are expected to avoid from unnecessary consumption and indulgence. Islamic tourism is about satisfying tourists looing for a destination that can fulfil their needs without being offensive in any way. Muslim tourists usually travel with family members and hence the concept is tailored around the travel needs of Muslim tourists who predominantly seek a family friendly environment.

Through Islamic tourism, countries in ASEAN can invite the whole world towards the path of Islam. Bhuiyan, et al (2011) document that tourism creates economic involvement and job opportunities for less developed countries. In the end, there will be balance condition in the economic sector for ASEAN nations. Other than that Islamic tourism has potential for economic growth and as we know that ASEAN member already have the basic infrastructure and environment for catering the needs of Muslim travelers and they can benefit more from Islamic tourism market. Hence, development of Islamic tourism could play a vital role in economic growth and prosperity in these countries.

According to Kovjanic (2014) there are two factors that determine Muslim travelers in deciding tourist destination.

1. Push factor

This factor is the reason that discourages Muslim travelers to visit their holiday destination. Western media that broadcast about the misunderstanding of Islam in the Western country cause Muslim travelers to reconsider visiting the United State and Europe.

2. Pull factors

It includes things that attract tourists to visit the tourism destination. Well-structured tourist infrastructure (e.g., new hotel, theme parks, resort projects, shopping center) and general infrastructure (eg, modern roads and airport) may fascinate the Muslim traveler to visit the tourist destination. Nevertheless, a good promotion and affordable price are things that might consider the travelers to visit.

Every traveler has different needs in travelling. If the ASEAN countries are aiming non-Muslim and Muslim travelers, they need to consider about the character of the visitors. Tourist from the Middle East, the West and the Asian have different needs in spending their money. Nurrachmi (2015) reports that tourist from the Middle East are well-known as high spending, they have less interest in visiting cultural and historical sites but prefer destination that offer fun, shopping and family activities. While tourists from Asian and the West, prefer to visit Holy places, cultural and historical places.

Successful examples have been done from Indonesia, Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia in promoting Islamic tourism as an interested destination. These countries have promoted Islamic tourism by establishing Shariah Compliant Hotel (SCH) in several cities. Muslim travelers are comfortable in places that comply with Shariah law and accommodate their special needs. Infrastructure and facilities according to Shariah is the essential thing in Islamic tourism. Moreover Mohamed (2013) states that Brunei known for being a 'dry' country where alcohol prohibited to sell in all supermarket, hotels and even in its national carries (e.g., Royal Brunei Airlines) and halal food is available everywhere prior the country implement Shariah law in 2014.

After seeking factors that influence Muslim travelers in choosing holiday destination, an effective and efficient promotion is required to get the tourist's attention. The following section elaborates the details.

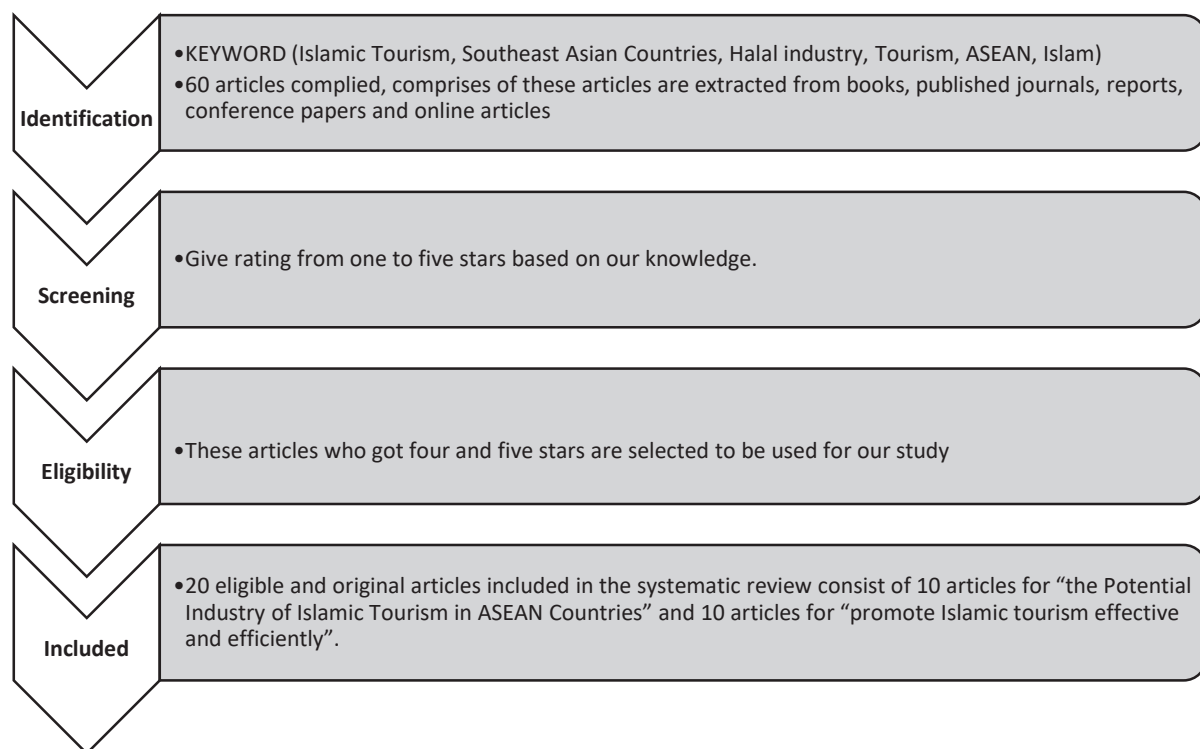
## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Large number of articles has been published in the scope of tourism industry since 1990's. The approach is based on observation in the business environment of Islamic tourism,

online research, study analysis from journals and brainstorming with other researchers from 2015 to 2017. The author documents the literatures and interprets the studies to achieve the research objectives.

The process of collecting relevant articles comprises of three main steps. It begins with 60 articles, these articles are extracted from books, published journals, reports, conference papers and online articles. Then in the first list, we screen and sorts them out to selects the most relevant one and rate them into list two. After that we give rating from one to five stars based on our knowledge. After reviewing and the skimming process only 20 articles are selected into list three. Lastly, we choose article based on research objectives closely related with the topic being viewed. There two subtopic comprises of 10 articles for the Potential Industry of Islamic Tourism in ASEAN Countries and 10 articles for promote Islamic tourism effective and efficiently.

### Flowchart of Paper Selection



Source: Author

## DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

### The Potential Industry of Islamic Tourism in ASEAN Countries

ASEAN countries are rich with natural resources and diverse heritage, and Islamic tourism is one of the most essential resources. Muslim and non-Muslim tourists have been attracted to visit countries in ASEAN. If we see the following table, Thailand and Malaysia have the highest number of tourist arrivals based on data from ASEAN in 2017 with Thailand 29,881 tourist and Malaysia 25,721 tourist. The following paragraph elaborate development of Halal industry in Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand based on table 2

## 1. Malaysia

As an emerging country, Malaysia is one of successful country in ASEAN who developed Islamic tourism and it is one of the main destinations for Muslim visitors from around the world. Malaysia has been recognized as the No.1 ranked destination in 2015 version of the Global Muslim Travel Index (Master Card and Crescent Rating, 2015).

Besides that, for nearly 16 years Malaysia regularly held Malaysian International Halal Showcase (MIHAS), the annual event provides exposure for Halal product to global consumers. SESRIC (2018) states that number of Muslim visitor arrivals is around 22 percent of the total arrivals. The strength of Malaysia success story on Islamic tourism is the commitment of the Tourism Ministry which identified the Muslim travelers' market as a priority market in 2009.

The development of the Halal Master Plan is a big achievement for Malaysia because it addresses the issue of certification, sectoral development, halal integrity, implementation, timeframes and responsibilities, projecting the country's international image as an authority in halal product matters.

## 2. Indonesia

Tourism is an important component in Indonesian economy and the country is the world's most populous Muslim country. Islamic tourism has a huge potential to grow in the country where it is rich with nature and culture. To strengthen the position of Indonesia as a Muslim friendly destination in November 2015, the country launched the "Muslim Visitor" guide to Indonesia and replace the term "Shariah tourism" with the term "Halal tourism" in its products and services.

There are popular places of Islamic tourism that well-known to the International tourists namely Lombok, West Sumatra and Aceh. Selection of these three destinations are based on certain criteria involving 80 metrics/parameters. From these three regions, Lombok has won two awards in the World Halal Travel Awards in 2015 as "World's Best Halal Destination" and "World's Best Halal Honeymoon Destination". These awards reflect the successful of Indonesia in implementing the right and strategy to the market.

Indonesia is challenged to promote conventional tourism and Islamic tourism in tandem successfully while launching the Islamic tourism campaigns. Government should set the right strategies and initiatives to select the most convenient places to the market for Islamic tourism destinations because the country consists of 34 provinces and thousands of Islands. One way to implement the strategies Indonesia has involved in several international events and forums in the domain of Islamic tourism to promote its position and raise awareness to the target consumers for Indonesian tourism products and services. For example, Indonesia hosted OIC's First International Forum on Islamic Tourism in Jakarta in 2014. Besides that, in August 2016 Indonesia hosted the 12<sup>th</sup> World Islamic Economic Forum (WIEF) in Jakarta.

Meanwhile for Halal certification, it is published by MUI (Majelis Ulama Indonesia) stating the "Halalness" of a product under Islamic law. Arifin et al., (2019) report that this Halal certification is a condition that authorizes permitted government agencies to include Halal labels on product packaging. The procurement of Halal certification consists of food products, medicines, cosmetics and other products.



### 3. Thailand

Number of Muslim in Thailand is not as high as Indonesia and Malaysia but Halal industry in Thailand has developed well. According to the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) Thailand is one of many Muslim minority countries that has made significant progress in catering the needs and demands for Muslim tourists. Shafaei (2015) report that Thailand is considered as a major competitor for Malaysian Islamic tourism based on Middle East tourist.

Nurdiansyah (2018) reports that the Thai government aware that Tourism is one sector that is important to economic growth. It is a big opportunity for Thailand because most of population in Southeast Asia is Muslim, and Halal tourism should be an important policy in increasing the number of Muslim tourists in improving the economy of Thailand. The implementation of Halal certification is a must to support Halal tourism policy in Thailand.

Other than that, to support the development of Islamic tourism in Thailand since April 2017 the country had more that 730 weekly flights from cities in 17 Muslim majority countries, more that any other country in Asia. Thailand also gives visa-free and or visa-on-arrival facilities to citizens of 12 Muslim-majority countries. Visitors from the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait are the top average daily spenders according to 2015 statistics published by the Tourism Authority of Thailand.

Beside having a Muslim-friendly accommodation such as praying room, Halal certified restaurant and easy access to Halal food and beverage, in Thailand the government has urged the development of Halal food products to help boost export. The country is known as offering investors a strong government support, rich agricultural resources, skilled labor and excellent infrastructure. Food processing is the core strength of Thailand industry and in 2011 the country has exported Halal food to 57 OIC countries and achieves approximately \$6.8 billion. The capability of Thailand to produce Halal food product can be an opportunity for other ASEAN countries to collaborate to increase the development of Halal food.

Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand are countries in ASEAN with its successful stories in developing Islamic tourism. There are some ASEAN countries who have few Muslim population, but their countries are Muslim friendly place. Myanmar, Vietnam, Thailand and the Philippines have provided Halal hotels which serve Halal food for Muslim guest, Qibla direction in hotel's rooms, prayer mats for Muslim guest and services that offered during Ramadan. Meanwhile in table 1 depicts that Lao PDR is a country with the lowest Muslim population in ASEAN. The country is challenged with the growing industry of Islamic tourism. The issues of Halal industry in Lao PDR consist of there is no Halal committee to inspect and certify, and food products are mainly imported. This condition can be a good opportunity for other countries in ASEAN to promote its Halal food to Lao PDR.

**Table 1. Number of Muslims and Tourist Arrival in ASEAN Countries.**

NO	COUNTRIES	TOTAL POPULATION IN 2017	MUSLIM POPULATION IN %	MUSLIM POPULATION	TOURIST ARRIVAL IN 2017
1	Brunei Darussalam	428,697	78.80	337,813	218
2	Cambodia	16,005,373	1.90	304,102	4,775
3	Indonesia	263,991,379	87.20	230,200,482	10,407
4	Lao PDR	6,858,160	0.01	686	4,684
5	Malaysia	31,624,264	61.30	19,385,674	25,721
6	Myanmar	53,370,609	4.30	2,294,936	4,681
7	Philippines	104,918,090	11.00	11,540,990	5,361
8	Singapore	5,612,253	14.30	802,552	15,231
9	Thailand	69,037,513	4.90	3,382,838	29,881
10	Vietnam	95,540,800	0.10	95,541	7,944

Source: World Development Indicator (2017), World Fact Book (2017), ASEAN (2018)

**Table 2. Islamic Tourism in Selected ASEAN Countries**

DEVELOPING COUNTRIES	MALAYSIA	INDONESIA	THAILAND
NUMBER OF MOSLEM	61.3% from 31.6 million	87% from 263.9 million	4.9% from 69 million
ECOSYSTEM FOR ISLAMIC TOURISM	Implement Shariah Law for certain states	Certain provinces are popular with beautiful Mosques and Islamic history	South Thailand is popular with ancient Islamic history
ACHIEVEMENT IN ISLAMIC TOURISM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual Event (MIHAS and World Halal Conference)</li> <li>The development of Halal Master Plan</li> </ul>	Lombok has won two awards in the World Halal Travel Awards in 2015 as “World’s Best Halal Destination” and “World’s Best Halal Honeymoon Destination”.	Easy access for Halal certified food and beverage in Muslim minority country
HALAL CERTIFICATION	Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM)	Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI)	The Central Islamic Committee of Thailand (CICOT)

Sources: SESRIC (2018), Nurdiansyah (2018)

Islamic tourism may be the source of prosperity for countries in ASEAN and have the potential to generate a country’s revenue if it is promoted in an effective and efficiently. Although every ASEAN country has different background in terms of social economy, political condition, natural resources to explore, human resources to train and the capability in managing their tourism industry however they have the same purpose in promoting Islamic tourism is to enhance their national income and job creation for their citizen.

## **Promote Islamic Tourism Effective and Efficiently**

Budget allocation might be the issue in promoting Islamic tourism for some countries in ASEAN. The author provides suggestion to make an efficient promotion for destination countries.

1. Establish infrastructure facilities that encourage Muslim tourists to travel to destination country namely Islamic resorts and hotels, alcohol free accommodation and easy access to prayer room.
2. Involve mass media to promote Islamic tourism in destination countries
3. Provide mobile content for halal industry. In this digital era, people are aware that information can be accessed through internet. Through updated website for Islamic tourism industry, travelers can gain more information regarding the best destination they want to visit according to their budget, purpose and needs particularly for young travelers.
4. The needs for visiting Islamic places are not only come from Muslim travelers but also non-Muslim travelers.

Other ASEAN members can learn and collaborate with Malaysia who gain success in promoting Islamic tourism. Malaysia's tourism industry can give high impact from the perspective of economic, social, environmental and politic. This condition happened because Islamic tourism in Malaysia provides a new peculiar and universal needs which will influence to the development of tourism industry. The following paragraph elaborate the impacts of Islamic tourism in Malaysia on economic, social and environmental.

### **1. Impact on Economics**

Increasing number of travel agencies promoting Muslim packages in Malaysia and outside Malaysia generates more income to Malaysia particularly through tourist from the Middle East who are well known with high spending power. Moreover, Islamic tourism provides a lot of job opportunities for local people especially for those who are emphasizing the Islamic lifestyle. For instance, in hospitality, this industry hires workers who are wearing headscarf (hijab) for female staff in the hotel industry.

### **2. Impact on Social**

Islamic tourism can act as a factor or medium to increase the relationship between Muslim people around the world. Promoting Islamic tourism through media can provide information about the meaning of Islamic teaching according to the Prophet of Muhammad (PBUH), Quran and Sunnah. Furthermore, the negative stigma between tourist and the host can be reduced such as drinking alcohol, illegal spouse according to Shariah and kissing openly in the public.

### **3. Impact on Environmental**

Islamic tourism contributes to less environmental degradation since the product usually related to the place with controlled activities namely visitation to mosques, pertaining Halal food and high consideration to cleanliness where Islam taught is very particular about it.

Namin (2013) mentions marketers and destination managers should consider effective strategies in connection to Islamic features of destination, tourist satisfactions and loyalty to destination. Furthermore, marketers should pay attention on cultures of Islamic countries

when designing travelling and tourism packages. Hospitality managers should pay attention to Islamic architecture in designing hotels.

The main thing about promotion in Islamic tourism, its purpose is to provide a better understanding about Islam and spiritual traditions toward Muslim and non-Muslim. There should be an enhancement for research in the field of Islamic tourism to enrich the Islamic literature.

## **CONCLUSION**

Southeast Asian countries are potential places for Islamic tourism. Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei and Thailand have move forward in developing Islamic tourism in their countries. There are countries with less Muslim countries also promoting Islamic friendly places to travelers such Vietnam, Cambodia, Philippines and Myanmar. The paper has the purpose to examine the potential of Islamic tourism industry as alternative revenue and it seeks to investigate the effective and efficient way to promote Islamic tourism in ASEAN.

The basic definition of Islamic tourism is related to visit Holy place and Islamic heritage. There are two principles that should be notify in developing Islamic tourism in the global market, 1) tawhid-compliance at the level of ideas and beliefs and 2) Shariah-compliance at the level of practice and ethical values.

Beside attributes such as destination image, religious motivation, and service quality that attracts tourist in visiting the place, promotion is an essential thing in attracting Muslim tourist. Cooperation among ASEAN countries in developing Islamic tourism can boost the Muslim travelers in visiting place. Further, establish infrastructure and facilities according to Shariah, promotion through mass media and arrange Islamic tourism event among ASEAN countries can be done to develop this industry.

## **Recommendations**

Islamic tourism is emerging in the global market and it is a new contributor to economy especially in the tourism industry for ASEAN countries. ASEAN countries have large opportunities to develop Islamic tourism due to Islam is the main religion embraced by people in ASEAN. Furthermore, Islamic tourism can be considered as sustainable tourism because it contributes positive impacts to the economy, environmental and social while generating income to local people, whereby mostly local people serve the tourists with Islamic value considerations.

Tourism is an important constituent for the ASEAN development agenda and over the years several conferences and forums have been organized to highlight the major issues and challenges facing the development of Islamic tourism in world. Hence it is a big opportunity for ASEAN countries beside Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand to promote Islamic tourism to the global market. Furthermore, collaboration among the ASEAN members are necessary because there are others ASEAN countries who have difficulty to get access for promotion to other group of countries and the country is not aware how to develop strategy for Islamic tourism. For instance, sharing of expertise and experience for the development Islamic tourism among ASEAN members. There are leading Islamic destination like Malaysia, Turkey and

United Arab Emirates who can facilitate the transfer of knowledge and exchange of expertise for ASEAN countries.

There are members of ASEAN who have issues for political instability and civil conflicts, there is an overall negative global media positioning of these countries. Thus, cooperation for making a positive image in ASEAN is important as an element for tourism development. There is a need for joint action and cooperation at the ASEAN level to counter negative media publicity and address the growing Islamophobia by highlighting the cultural and religious values and contributions of the Muslims to the history, culture, architecture and art. These efforts will help not only to build up a positive image but also pave the way for development of Islamic tourism.

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