

COMPLETION REPORT

The Development of Halal Food in Japan: Tourism and Muslim's Identity Construction in Japan
(Case Study in Tokyo and Osaka)

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Muslims form a sizeable population in the world that is around 23.2% (Pew 2012). They have unique traditions which one among others is related to the *halal* practice. The word "*halal*" means "permissible" or "lawful". Opposite to *halal* is *haram*, which means unlawful or forbidden. All foods are considered *halal* except the following: swine/pork and its by product or derivative, animals not slaughtered according to Islamic requirement, alcohol and intoxicant, blood and blood by product, foods contaminated by any of the aforementioned products. The main questions of this research are: First, what is the reason behind the emergence of halal-friendly tourism developed in Japan? Second, how far does Japan develop halal-friendly tourism currently?

The emergence of halal-friendly tourism developed in Japan has an economic reason. Japanese government and tourism industry have been trying to promote the travel to Japan, including for Muslims who's share is very low. Japan Tourism Agency-Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism report 2013 on the section of guests by nationality (4th quarter of 2011) mentions that China (18.1%), Taiwan (13.3%), and the Republic of Korea (11.2%) rank first, second, and third in the total number of foreigner guests. Whereas South East Asian countries' share is low: Singapore (3.3%) and Thailand (2.7%). The inbound tourists from two majority Muslim countries in South East Asia, Indonesia and Malaysia, are even lower than from aforementioned countries, i.e. tourists from Malaysia reaches 1.4% of total inbound tourist and tourists from Indonesia are not significant yet. In addition the percentage of inbound tourists from other Muslim countries in Middle East and Central Asia are also in insignificance numbers. That is why it is reasonable that Japanese government and tourism industry have been trying stronger currently to promote the travel to Japan for Muslims travelers from Muslim to increase its tourism market. Providing halal-friendly tourism service is an aptly strategy to invite Muslim travelers to come to Japan since, as represented at some online travel guide, many of them often ask whether there is halal foods in Japan or not? The halal-friendly tourism is one of promising halal industry in Japan currently.

Besides driven by economic factors, the development of halal-friendly industry in general or halal-friendly tourism in Japan for more specific is motivated by some Muslim NPOs (Non-Profit Organizations) that want to strengthen the identity of Japanese Muslims and of Muslims who travel to Japan (Muslim international tourists). Those NPOs such as Islamic Center Japan, Japan Muslim Association (JMA), Nippon Asia Halal Association (NAHA), and Japan Halal Association (JHA) publish the halal certificate more often currently than years ago. JHA which is the most developed Muslim NPO on halal affair also offers the installation of *qibla* (prayer direction) mark at hotel or public prayer rooms, halal manager training, halal auditor training, and halal kitchen cleansing service.

On how far does Japan develop halal-friendly tourism currently, the research found that the government, the tourism agencies, and the society in Japan have starting to develop halal-friendly tourism, but still in a fairly limited scope. The identity construction on halal tourism in Japan relates to two concerns: to maintain religiously permitted foods and to keep five day prayers of Muslim visitors. Whereas the five times prayer is part of the Islamic pillars then Muslims should keep it whenever they are, including when they are in travel. Some hotels and tourism

agencies (in numbers are not many, compared to the total number of hotels in Japan) realize about the obligation of Muslims to perform five times prayers a day. They provide proper facilities for Muslim visitors to pray, for instance *qibla* mark. Narita international airport in Tokyo and Kansai international airport close to Osaka provide prayer rooms inside the airport building. By identifying as Muslim-friendly hotels, besides provide halal food menus, some hotels such as Hotel Nikko Kansai Airport, Hotel Granvia Kyoto, Sheraton Miyako Hotel Osaka, Park Hyatt Tokyo, Sakura Hotel Hatagaya, Agora Place Asakusa, and Hotel Chinzanso Tokyo serve rooms with *qibla* mark.

Related to halal food services, local or national companies in Japan began to produce halal chicken, mutton and beef, but most of them are still imported from Brazil, Australia, or Malaysia. Narita international airport in Tokyo and Kansai international airport close to Osaka provide halal restaurant that offer the halal meal, serve pork-free and alcohol-free menus. In some big cities such as Tokyo and Osaka, etc. some restaurants also serve halal menus. There are approximately 200 *halal* restaurants in Japan. They are owned by Muslims and non-Muslims. In addition, the *halal* foodstuff stores, both real and online shops, are also growing. The Japan government at national and local level promotes with great enthusiasm halal-friendly tourism such as through publishing a booklet of tourism guide for Muslims, including in Indonesian language. The halal-friendly tourism has been showing its progress in this country.

Publication of the Results of Research Project:

Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue, Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.)

- Date: 26 November 2014,
- Venue: State Islamic University Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia
- Name of Forum: Discussion in the Institute of Southeast Asian Islam
- Title of Presentation: “*Halal Tourism di Jepang: Identitas Agama, Wisata, dan Pasar Asia Tenggara*” (“Halal Tourism in Japan: Religious Identity, Tourism, and Southeast Asia Market”)
- Presenter: Dr. Suhadi

Thesis (Name of Journal and its Date, Title and Author of Thesis, etc.)

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Book (Publisher and Date of the Book, Title and Author of the Book, etc.)

I plan to submit the academic article from this research project approximately titled “The Development of Halal-Friendly Tourism in Contemporary Japan” in December 2015 to: *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* based in USA.