



## Halal Tourism: The Practices of Halal Hotels in Alanya, Turkey

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### Abstract

The numbers of Muslims travelling to Turkey is increasing day by day. Although Turkey is one of most visited halal tourism destinations in the world, papers related to halal hospitality practices in Turkey are scarce. Current study is a conceptual paper that aims to fill this gap through evaluating recent halal hospitality developments in Alanya, Turkey. In this paper, first the author distinguishes between Islamic tourism and halal tourism terms which emerge from the relationship between Islam and tourism and then evaluates recent halal hospitality developments in Alanya. It is stated that factors that motive individuals to travel may present clues to distinguish these terms. Showing parallelism with the increasing number of Muslim tourists in Turkey, the number of halal hotels in the destination has increased. Many conservative hotel companies recently have changed their concept to Islamic to respond halal tourism market. It is also stated many halal hotels operating in Alanya has no halal certification which is possibly result of lacking official unit to do.

### Article Type

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## INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of halal tourism has gained considerable popularity since the 2010s. Factors influencing this popularity include factors such as increased population and purchasing power of Muslims, conservatism which means “the people who are more sensitive to religious matters” (Şen Küpeli, Koç & Hassan, 2018), Muslims’ staying longer when travelling, difficulty in getting visa to travel to Western countries (Marzuki, Hall & Ballentine, 2020), positive developments in global democracy, and the search for new tourist products by industry representatives (Şen Küpeli et al., 2018). Today, the role of Muslims in the global travel index is growing. Muslims tend to meet their holiday needs, as well as to perform their religious duties and not engage in behaviors or situations that religion orders them to avoid. Therefore, they also want to benefit from the activities and products that Allah has made lawful. Because, according to Islamic teachings, the halal goods are sufficient for pleasure, there is no need for the haram, illicit goods.

Turkey provides important contributions to the understanding of global halal hospitality with its experience in tourism, political climate and touristic attractions. According to Diamant (2019), 98 % of the population in Turkey is Muslim and Turkey is the 8<sup>th</sup> country in the world with the largest Muslim population according to the data of 2015. In 2030, the number of Muslims expected to constitute %26.4 of the world's population is expected to reach 2.2 billion people (Pew Research Center, 2011). In Global Muslim Travel Index in 2019, Turkey moved up and was ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> taking up a row after Malaysia and Indonesia. This index contains the dimensions of access, communications, environment and services. Turkey was ranked 6<sup>th</sup> in the ranking of transportation and overall ease of communications, 2<sup>nd</sup> in the ranking of environment, and 4<sup>th</sup> in the ranking of services. According to the results in 2018, 140 million international Muslims engaged in a touristic trip. This number is expected to reach 230 million by 2026 (Mastercard & CrescentRating, 2019).

In recent years, there has been an increasing number of papers related to halal tourism in Muslim and even non-Muslim countries (Battour, Ismail & Battor, 2011; Battour, Battor & Bhatti, 2014; Battour, Hakimian, Islamil & Boğan, 2018; El-Gohary, 2016; Henderson, 2016; Pamukçu & Sarıışık, 2017; Boğan & Sarıışık, 2019; Han et al., 2019a; Boğan, Dedeoğlu, Batman & Yıldırğan, 2020). Some of these papers clarified halal tourism, Islamic tourism and Muslim-friendly tourism terminologies (El-Gohary, 2016; Battour & Ismail, 2016; Boğan & Sarıışık, 2019). In some other papers, Islamic attributes of Muslim destination are presented as prayer facilities, halal food, Islamic entertainment etc. (Battour et al., 2011; Battour et al., 2014). Some papers examined the link between Islamic attributes and customer attitude and behaviors (Battour, Battor & Ismail, 2012; Battour et al., 2014; Han et al., 2019a). Despite the increasing number of papers in international context, the number of papers about halal hospitality in Turkey is scarce. Only a handful of halal tourism studies have been conducted in Turkey (Şen Küpeli et al., 2018; Boğan and Sarıışık, 2019; Yağmur, Ehtiyar & Aksu, 2020; Boğan et al., 2020). However, the number of Muslim tourists in Turkey does increase day by day. Accordingly, there is also a significant increase in the number of halal hotels for Muslim tourists, which comprise about %22 of all tourists (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2018). Halal hotels, which are inadequate in numbers and thus fall short of responding to the demands of both local Muslims and Muslims from different countries, have higher prices than other hotels. Current study is conceptual paper that attempts to fill this gap through evaluating recent halal hospitality developments in Alanya.

## Theoretical Background

### The term ‘halal’

Halal, which is a concept of Islamic terminology, can be defined as what is allowed by Allah. The opposite of halal is “haram”, and in Islam, what is forbidden at all costs is called “*haram*”. Everything that is not prohibited to be eaten, drunk or used by verses or hadiths is halal. While halal provides benefits to people; haram imposes harm. It is established by one of the following three things whether something is halal or not (Döndüren, 2019). First, it is reported that there is no sin on it. In the Qur'an, Allah wills: “He has only forbidden to you dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than Allah. But whoever is forced [by necessity], neither desiring [it] nor transgressing [its limit], there is no sin upon him. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful” (el-Bakara 2/173). Secondly, there is nothing in the Qur'an and Sunnah that it is haram. Third, it is identified halal in the Qur'an and Sunnah, i.e. eating and drinking clean things. The verse states: "This day [all] good foods have been made lawful, and the food of those who were given the Scripture is lawful for you and your food is lawful for them. ..." (el-Mâide 5/5).

### Halal tourism and Islamic tourism

Islam derives its origin from the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Islam is a religion that is influential in all areas of life of Muslims such as finance, education, travel, and dressing (Vargas-Sánchez & Moral-Moral, 2019a). Therefore, the effects of Islam have been widely observed in travel and tourism industries in recent years. Islamic doctrine encourages Muslims to travel (Razak, Hall & Prayag, 2020). However, it is obvious that the encouraged action of travel in question is far from the tourism activities of our day. In Islam, travelling is realized to recognize the greatness of Allah and to worship Allah. It is about people’s realizing of their helplessness against Allah and of learning lessons from the state of helplessness (Din, 1989; Boğan & Sarıışık, 2019). According to Din (1989) travelling in Islamic tourism has two main goals as spiritual and social. “While the spiritual goal is to reinforce one’s submission to the ways of God, the social goal which follows is to encourage and strengthen the bond of sillaturrahim (Muslim fraternity) among the Ummah (Muslim community). However nowadays the types of tourism, which are called as Islamic tourism, halal tourism or Muslim-friendly tourism, are mostly based on recreation and pleasure. In this regard, some researchers (El-Gohary, 2016; Elaziz & Kurt, 2017; Boğan & Sarıışık, 2019) argue that calling today's modern tourism movements which are centered on hedonic consumption as halal or Islamic is doubtful.

**Table 1.** Some Definitions of Halal Tourism

Definitions	Source
The main and only term to brand and describe tourism products and/or activities that have full compliance with the rules and guidance of the Halal concept and Islamic Shariah.	El-Gohary (2016)
Any tourism object or action which is permissible according to Islamic teachings for Muslims to use or engage in as part of the tourism industry.	Battour & Ismail (2016)
The provision of a tourism product and service that meets the needs of Muslim travelers to facilitate worship and dietary requirement that conform to Islamic teachings.	Mohsin, Ramli & Alkhulayfi (2016)
Tourism and hospitality that is co-created by consumer and producer in accordance with the teachings of Islam.	Razzaq, Hall & Prayag (2016)
To travel undertaken for recreational, leisure and social purposes and, although the motivations for travelling are not necessarily spiritual, there is a desire to behave in a manner deemed permissible, or halal, in accordance with Islamic teachings.	Vargas-Sánchez & Moral-Moral (2019a)
It refers largely to leisure travel undertaken by Muslims without having to compromise their beliefs.	Khan & Callanan (2017)

The concepts of Islamic tourism, Muslim-friendly and halal tourism and halal-friendly tourism, which are mostly used interchangeably in the literature, have not yet been fully positioned in the tourism literature (Vargas-Sánchez & Moral-Moral, 2019b; Boğan & Sarıışık, 2019, Han, Al-Ansi, Olya & Kim, 2019; Khan & Callanan, 2017). As stated by Khan and Callanan (2017), according to Şen Küpeli et al. (2018) “compared to halal tourism, the term ‘Islamic tourism’ is more widely used in literature” (p. 256). However, the main reason for the researchers who assert that the term of halal tourism should replace the term of Islamic tourism is that the word halal should be considered as an umbrella term or brand (Şen Küpeli et al. 2018; Battour & Ismail, 2016; El-Gohary, 2016) and that it reduces the impact of Islamophobia in the Western world (Khan & Callanan, 2017). El-Gohary (2016) stated that “it is preferred to use the term “halal tourism” as the main and only term to brand and describe tourism products and/or activities that have full compliance with the rules and guidance of the halal concept and Islamic Shariah” (p. 127). However full compliance with Islamic Shariah rules is questionable.

Another point is whether Islamic/halal tourism is a type of tourism or tourism approach. While some researchers claim that halal tourism is a tourism type or subcategory of religious tourism (Şen Küpeli et al. 2018; El-Gohary, 2016; World Travel Market, 2007), some others assert that it is an understanding or approach (Boğan, Batman & Sarıışık, 2016; Boğan & Sarıışık, 2019). The researchers who acknowledge halal tourism as a type of tourism did not provide, deliberately or not, any justification (except Battour & Ismail, 2016; Boğan & Sarıışık, 2019). Boğan and Sarıışık (2019) clearly distinguish Islamic tourism from halal tourism, accept Islamic tourism as a type of tourism as there are different motivational sources that drive the individual to Islamic tourism whereas they acknowledge halal tourism as an understanding or approach such as sustainable tourism. Because it comes to the forefront in the scope of halal tourism that one has to fulfill, regardless of the purpose of travel, his Islamic obligations and stay away from the situations or actions that Allah has forbidden him. Therefore, Muslims may enjoy their tourism experience in halal way regardless of the type of tourism they are engaged in such as halal medical tourism and halal thermal tourism (Rahman, Zailani & Musa, 2017). In the concept of halal tourism, regardless of the purpose of travel, religious doctrines play an important role in the attitudes and behaviors of the individuals in the process of touristic product consumption (Şen Küpeli et al. 2018).

In the related literature, it is stated that the concept of Islamic tourism and halal tourism cannot be regarded as synonymous (Boğan & Sarıışık, 2019; Battour & Ismail, 2016). In Islamic tourism, the motivation factors that drive the individual to travel are fundamentally religious and aim to gain Allah's approval. These factors mostly include visiting friends and relatives which is known as silaturahmi, pilgrimage, umrah, trade, ziyarah (a visit to the tomb of a holy person), contemplation, i.e. reading the verses written by Allah in the book of universe, and understanding incapacity of human beings against Allah (Razak et al. 2020; Boğan & Sarıışık 2019; Din, 1989; Jafari & Scott, 2014). In the Qur'an and hadiths, these factors direct the individual to travel and shed light on the difference between Islamic tourism and halal tourism. Tourism activities driven by these motives and aim to gain Allah's gratification can be considered within the scope of Islamic tourism. On the other hand, regardless of the type of travel and the activities enjoyed during the tourism experience, the tourism activities performed with the condition of fulfilling the religious obligations and not being involved in any act which is deemed to be haram may be considered within the scope of halal tourism. Battour and Ismail (2016) support this claim and stated that “an activity that is accepted by God and deserving of reward from him is categorized as ‘Islamic’. It would be better to use ‘halal’ as brand name rather ‘Islamic’ for any related product and service in tourism industry” (p. 151).

**Table 2.** Some Definitions of Islamic Tourism

Definitions	Source
A tourism type which has emerged as a result of individuals' preferences to travel with the purpose of gaining the consent of God.	Boğan & Sarıışık (2019)
To travel undertaken for religious and pilgrimage purposes, being associated with acts of faith relating to the Islamic religion.	Vargas-Sánchez & Moral-Moral (2019b)
To engage in tourism activities with the purpose of recreation and entertainment in accommodation facilities that offer services in compliance with Islamic rules and beliefs and are located in coastal destinations where the trio of sea-sand-sun stands out.	Doğan (2008)
A type of religious tourism that is in conformity with Islamic teachings regarding behaviours, dress, conduct and diet.	World Travel Market (2007)
Essentially a new touristic interpretation of pilgrimage that merges religious and leisure tourism.	Jafari & Scott (2014)
As tourism in accordance with Islam, involving people of the Muslim faith who are interested in keeping with their personal religious habits whilst travelling.	Carboni, Perelli & Sistu (2014)
Activities carried out by Muslims in compliance with Islamic rules and in line with Islamic motives.	Özdemir (2012)

According to Vargas-Sánchez and Moral-Moral (2019b) Islamic tourism refers “to travel undertaken for religious and pilgrimage purposes, being associated with acts of faith relating to the Islamic religion. The main example is the pilgrimage to Mecca” (p. 2). The definition they do about Islamic tourism is for religious tourism. There is no need to use Islamic tourism term for this purpose. It is like calling Christian tourism, Jewish tourism. On the other hand, they define halal tourism as “to travel undertaken for recreational, leisure and social purposes” (p. 3).

### Halal Hotel and its Attributes

Hotel businesses in the tourism industry in Turkey and in the world that operate on the basis of Islamic principles or doctrines or at least do not contradict with Islamic principles or doctrines are called by different names. While the hotel is called as sharia-compliant hotel, Muslim-friendly hotel, Islamic hotel, halal hotel in international context, it is called as conservative hotel, non-alcoholic hotel, halal-concept hotel, modest hotel and Islamic hotel in Turkey (Doğan, 2008). However, the most commonly used words in the literature are Islamic hotel, halal hotel and Muslim-friendly hotel (Khan & Callanan, 2017). Some researchers purport that some of these names are more appropriate than others. According to Razalli, Abdullah and Hassan (2012) and Şen Küpeli et al. (2018) it is more appropriate to call these hotels as ‘Islamic hotels’ rather than Sha’riah-compliant hotels. Because Shariah compliance requires more details from the construction to finance etc. However, there is no difference in the fact that the word Islam is replaced with the word Shari’ah-compliant. Because an attribute which is already of Islamic nature, originates from the Sharia, which derives its origin from the Qur’an and Sunnah. So, both are the same. It is more appropriate to call hotels operating in Muslim countries as halal hotels, hotels operating in non-Muslim countries as Muslim-friendly or halal-friendly hotels.

The fact that a hotel is deemed to be halal is not only about having no alcohol and offering halal food. In other words, the concept of halal cannot be limited to food and beverage (Carboni et al., 2014). In the literature, the general attributes that halal hotels should embody are as follows: no alcohol and nightclub, halal food, no pork and additive derivatives, conservative TV channels, masjid, Muslim staff, dressing of personnel in compliance with Islamic principles, staff to serve only guests of their gender, the presence of Quran, prayer rugs and qibla indication in rooms, separate gym and swimming pool for men and women, the order of beds and toilets in opposite direction to the Qibla, bidet nozzles at toilets, customers’ clothings in compliance with Islamic principles, separate floors for men, women

and families (Vargas-Sánchez & Moral-Moral, 2019b; Stephenson, 2014; Battour et al., 2011; Henderson, 2010). However, the most widely accepted attributes are halal food, prayer facilities, no alcohol and pork and additive derivatives and gender segregation (Battour et al., 2011). As suggested by El-Gohary (2016), Vargas-Sánchez and Moral-Moral (2019b) propose that the hotels which do not have all attributes and meet all qualifications mentioned above and serve both Muslims and non-Muslims would be called as Muslim-friendly hotel rather than Islamic hotel or halal hotel. However, one of the biggest challenges in these hotels is the difficulty in satisfying the different demands of Muslim and non-Muslim tourists from different cultures in the same place (Carboni et al., 2014).

Mastercard and CrescentRating (2009) identified six key faith-based needs of Muslim travellers (called faith-based service needs 1.0) and categorized them in three dimensions as need to have, good to have, nice to have. Halal food service, prayer facilities cover needs to have dimension. Good to have dimension includes water-friendly washrooms, and Ramadan services and facilities. Lastly nice to have dimension includes no non-halal activities, and recreational services and facilities. In report published in 2019 by Mastercard and CrescentRating, it has uncovered three new faith-based needs of Muslim travellers (called faith-based service needs 2.0) as no Islamophobia, social causes, and local Muslim experiences. While no Islamophobia takes part in need to have dimension, social causes, and local Muslim experiences take part in good to have dimension. Additionally, water-friendly washrooms relocated and took part in need to have dimension.

Battour et al. (2011) classified Islamic attributes of hotels as tangible and intangible dimensions. Tangible elements cover prayer facilities (as mosque or prayer room, Quran and qiblah direction pointer, Muslim toilets), halal food. Intangible elements cover Islamic entertainment (segregation of beaches, gyms and swimming pools by gender), Islamic dress code, general Islamic morality (not being exposed to situation like kissing, prostitution), Islamic call for prayer. According to them while tangible attributes are applicable in both Muslim and non-Muslim countries, intangible attributes are not realistic for Western countries (Battour et al. 2011). In another study, Battour, Battor and Bhatti (2014) developed a measurement tool about Islamic attributes of destination which consist of worship facilities, halalness, general Islamic morality and lastly alcohol drinks and gambling free. By empirically testing they found that these four dimensions individually has positive effect on overall tourist satisfaction.

According to Samori and Rahman (2013), segregation cafes and restaurants by gender and disallowing unmarried couples to occupy the same bedroom are two strictest rules of halal hotels. However, the features of hotels may differ to the target market, hotel location, investment opportunities (Şen Küpeli et al., 2018), religiosity levels of owners, legislative regulations and competition.

### **Halal Tourism Practices in Turkey**

Tourism is a sine qua non of the Turkish economy. Despite the coup attempt in 2016 and the fighter jet crisis with Russia, tourism industry in Turkey experienced a rapid recovery in 2017. However, the number of tourists which had decreased to 30 million in 2016 exceeded 37 million in 2017 with an increase of 24% (UNWTO, 2018). In 2018, according to data from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, more than 46 million tourists (including 6.624.191 foreign residents) visited the country (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2018). Table 3 provides the number of tourists from OIC countries. Examining the number of Muslims visiting the country between 2011 and 2018, it is seen that there is a continuous increase, except for 2015. In 2018, the number of Muslim tourists comprises approximately 22% of the total number of tourists. Iran, Iraq, Azerbaijan, Saudi Arabia and Kazakhstan, respectively,

are the Muslim countries which send tourists to Turkey the most (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2018).

**Table 3.** The Numbers of Muslim Tourists Visiting Turkey in 2011-2018

Country	Years							
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Tunusia	63.176	86.595	91.683	100.612	102.341	100.185	111.627	142.372
Eyght	79.665	112.025	107.437	108.762	100.040	94.871	100.971	148.943
Sudan	7.458	8.161	9.319	10.714	11.434	10.562	12.162	15.661
Bahrain	9.712	13.342	16.230	24.305	32.476	41.505	59.442	77.075
Qatar	7.661	13.971	18.630	29.743	35.832	32.681	48.764	96.327
Libya	53.562	213.890	264.266	267.501	234.762	72.014	99.395	188.312
Iran	1.879.304	1.186.343	1.196.801	1.590.664	1.700.385	1.665.160	2.501.948	2.001.744
Yemen	8.066	11.826	17.354	26.033	24.237	25.325	28.491	39.545
Algeria	84.844	104.489	118.189	160.052	171.873	176.233	213.333	288.207
Morocco	68.645	77.884	82.579	89.562	109.775	87.660	114.155	176.538
Iraq	369.033	533.149	730.639	857.246	1.094.144	420.831	896.876	1.172.896
Pakistan	26.735	28.394	34.170	48.420	59.700	52.023	77.464	113.579
Suudi Arabia	116.711	175.467	234.220	341.786	450.674	530.410	651.170	747.233
Jordan	94.914	102.154	102.871	131.329	162.866	203.179	277.729	406.469
Azerbaijan	578.685	593.238	630.754	657.684	602.488	606.223	765.514	858.506
Kyrgyzstan	41.197	42.866	64.905	81.941	88.369	88.877	104.911	114.926
Turkmenistan	137.476	135.168	148.709	180.395	174.330	165.762	230.881	252.911
Tajikistan	16.822	22.823	27.174	34.678	31.917	24.768	30.532	40.879
Uzbekistan	85.011	105.976	129.292	143.354	143.331	134.330	195.745	241.235
Indonesia	40.282	56.113	57.385	59.486	56.867	47.232	85.031	119.337
Kuwait	41.617	65.167	88.238	133.128	174.486	179.938	255.644	298.620
United Arab Emirates	35.579	48.071	52.424	53.736	51.600	38.315	49.360	43.292
Lebanon	137.110	144.491	143.629	161.274	197.552	191.642	237.476	338.837
Albania	53.141	59.565	65.113	76.273	80.032	83.029	103.593	125.935
Kazakistan	315.907	380.046	425.773	437.971	423.744	240.188	402.830	426.916
Malaysia	36.222	41.169	55.139	69.968	69.616	49.255	61.166	95.591
Bangladesh	6.168	6.652	8.856	12.706	12.212	8.951	11.346	17.932
Total	4.394.703	4.369.035	4.921.779	5.889.323	4.155.576	5.371.149	7.727.556	8.589.818
Total of all countries	31.456.076	31.782.832	34.910.098	36.837.900	36.244.632	25.352.213	32.410.034	39.488.401

According to Doğan (2008), the reason underlying halal tourism practices coming to the forefront in the last 10 years in Turkey is that the social class which is defined as the conservatives has developed and gained power both in political and economic aspects. According to him, halal tourism practices in Turkey are an outcome of the effort to create an Islamic way of living as an alternative to Western life or endeavor of modernized Muslim community to ensure its own transformation within its own rationality. On the other hand, Aydın (2017) associates the development of Islamic tourism in Turkey with the fact that Turkish society speaks out its Islamic sensitivities and that Turkey attracts a lot of tourists from other Muslim communities. Boyraz, Mutluç and Dikmen (2017) listed the positive attributes of Turkey in the context of halal tourism as follows: the number of international tourists hosted, high experience in the field of tourism, strong sectoral infrastructure, being a member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and geographic proximity to the Islamic countries. When evaluated as a whole, it is obvious that halal tourism activities, regardless of the reason or motive behind it, have become an important part of the Turkish tourism industry.

Islamic tourism movements in Turkey started in the early 1990s but have gained significant momentum in the 2000s (Özdemir & Met, 2012). The number of halal hotels was 5 before 2002 in Turkey. However, it has exceeded 200 in the current time. On the other hand, since the existing number of hotels fall short of meeting the high demand,

the prices are quite high. The majority of tourists preferring to stay in halal hotels in Turkey are domestic tourists (Doğan, 2008). Nevertheless, the number of foreign tourists from Muslim countries has been growing recently. It is even indicated that non-Muslim tourists who would like to experience the different and who are against the consumption of alcohol and pork prefer to stay in these hotels especially in Alanya region (Boğan & Sarıışık, 2019).

According to Aydın (2017), the occupancy rate of halal hotels in Turkey is 25% more than that of other hotels. He claims that tourism facilities which are idle and cannot be used at full capacity will be able to maintain their operational survival more easily through a concept change. As a matter of fact, it is known that hotels especially located in coastal regions and serving non-Muslim tourists have changed their concepts into halal hotel in recent years. Nevertheless, this situation also brings along some difficulties for the hotels. Since halal hotels require that the direction of beds and toilets do not coincide with the Qibla and that some facilities (as floors, gym, spa) should be separate for women and men, the hotels which switch to Islamic concept may suffer from certain challenges because the building was not constructed in line with Islamic concept at the beginning (Rosenberg & Choufany, 2009).

As in the leading countries, such as Malaysia, in halal tourism industry, the need for standardization and certification for the businesses operating within the scope of halal tourism in Turkey (hotels, restaurants etc.) are repeatedly highlighted by the researchers (Boğan et al. 2016; Tekin, Turhan & Turhan, 2017; Boğan & Sarıışık, 2019). It is reported that there is no public certificate authority for halal hotels in Turkey (Akbaba & Çavuşoğlu, 2017). According to Pamukçu (2017) and Akbaba and Çavuşoğlu (2017), halal certificate authorities in Turkey are GIMDES (general specification of halal hotel and accommodation service) and ADL Consulting Company (halal hotel certificate). On the other hand, no hotel business has applied and is granted with halal hotel certificate by these institutions so far. Within the scope of halal hotel standards, GIMDES and ADL Consultancy company checks for specific attributes concerning rooms, food & beverage, common / public areas, business management and employees.

In order to standardize the attributes of Islamic hotels and the services provided, it is essential to establish international halal tourism certifications. Thus, the uncertainty in the literature regarding the attributes of Islamic hotels will be eliminated, the lack of knowledge of new entrepreneurs who would like to enter the sector will be reduced and customers will be able to enjoy safer services (Vargas-Sánchez & Moral-Moral, 2019a). Nevertheless, the existence of different schools of thought, or mazhabs in Islam, it is difficult to establish an international halal certification. For instance, according to the Shafi'i and Hanbali mazhab, any sea creature can be consumed provided that it lives in water. According to the Maliki mazhab, any sea creature except eel can be consumed. According to the Hanafi mazhab, only the sea creatures in the form of fish are consumable (Eum, 2008). However, it is necessary to note that there is no big gap between the concepts of halal or haram in Islamic mazhabs. So much so that, the difference is hidden in the details.

Another important development in the context of halal tourism in Turkey is that halal tourism has been acknowledged as a course at both undergraduate and postgraduate programs with the purpose of creating human resources for halal hospitality enterprises. In this scope, Sakarya University of Applied Sciences took the lead in 2017. In addition, it is possible to indicate that the number of articles, projects, papers and postgraduate thesis studies on topics such as halal tourism and Islamic tourism has increased. There are 3 doctoral theses and 7 master's theses prepared in this context. Finally, two congresses titled as halal tourism congress were organized under the leadership of Kastamonu University in Turkey.



## Halal Hotels in Alanya

In the present study, the main reason underlying the preference of Alanya as research area is that it is the coastal destination where halal hotels are located the most intensely taking into consideration the volume of investment and number of facilities. According to tourism statistics in 2018, Alanya region hosted over 3.5 million tourists, which means that Alanya has hosted more than 8% of overall number of tourists visiting Turkey. In recent years there has been a significant increase in the number of halal hotels in Alanya. It was determined that there are 18 halal hotels in the region (Tekin et al. 2017). Majority of these hotels operate as 5-star hotels. Adenya Hotel & Resort, Bera Hotel Alanya, Wome Deluxe Hotel and Adin Beach Hotel are just a few of these hotels. Most of the halal hotels operating in Alanya are seasonal and provide services with an all-inclusive system (Boyras et al., 2017). While “Bera Otel Alanya” is the first hotel granted with halal certificate by Turkish Standards Institute (TSE), Adenya Hotel & Resort is the first hotel business granted with halal operational licence at hotel basis provided by World Halal Council (Boğan et al., 2016). Furthermore, Atlas Beach and Modern Saraylar Hotels operating in the region have the halal certificate granted by Halal Association whose headquarters is located in Turkey. However, the certificate in question is limited to the food & beverage services offered by the hotels.

As other countries, Muslims living in Turkey are not a homogenous group. The degree of understanding and applying Islam to life varies remarkably (Boğan & Sarıışık, 2019; Battour et al. 2011). This may cause differentiation of the expectations from the halal hotel preferred. In fact, it is a known fact that the halal hotels are preferred not because of high Islamic sensitivity but because of romantic jealousy. Owners of halal hotels indicate that their customers are not only from conservative part of the society and that "couples staying here are mostly those who do not prefer a conservative life but have extreme jealousy on each other. They claim that they feel much more comfortable since women and men use different pools for swimming” (Yenialanya, 2014).

Faced with heterogeneous tourist groups, hotels should carefully identify, in line with the customer characteristics, the attributes they should have and provide. Dal and Topay (2018) listed the motives driving majority of individuals to stay in halal hotels in Alanya as the presence of separate facilities (pool, beach, hamam etc.) for different sexes, no alcohol consumption, appropriate environment for families, and halal food. In the same study, it was highlighted that some customers who consider themselves conservative were not satisfied with the gender segregation regarding the facilities as this separation prevented them from spending sufficient time with their families and therefore did not want to stay in such a hotel in the future.

The hotels operating in Turkey cannot be expected to reflect all the above-mentioned attributes of Islamic hotels as Turkey has adopted a secular management approach. In addition, customer groups of these hotels cannot be considered homogeneous. Customers' expectations from hotels vary depending on the country of origin and the degree of customer's commitment to Islam. In these hotels, where the majority of customers are of Turkish origin, customers are opposed to strict rules such as serving female customers by female staff and male by male staff, and separate floor plannings for men, women and families (Dal & Topay, 2018; Özdemir & Met, 2012). As Rosenberg and Choufany (2009) noted, this approach saves these hotels from loss of income and the additional cost of hiring more staff. On the other hand, such attributes as halal food, qibla indication, the presence of rosary and prayer rugs are of high importance for customers (Özdemir & Met, 2012).

In halal hotels, women are not allowed to walk in public areas with swimsuits and bikinis, except burkinis. Female

waiters work in the swimming pool area for women, and children who have reached the age of puberty are not allowed to be in the places allocated for women. Some hotels have family pools, which can be utilized on booking basis. On religious days, Sufi music concerts and religious conversations are organized in the hotels.

One of the biggest problems faced by halal hotel businesses today is the fact that those which do and do not fully comply with Islamic principles market themselves as Islamic or halal hotels due to the lack of a legal standard concerning these hotels. For instance, some hotels qualify themselves as Islamic hotel just because of non-alcohol concept and presence of masjids. Wilson and Liu (2010) describe this situation as the endeavor of hotels to increase their market shares. As a matter of fact, the poisoning of 72 people in a halal hotel in Alanya in 2018 blew the lid of the situation. Customers who want to spend their holiday in compliance with Islamic rules and were directed by an online travel agency faced with such a service-delivery that does not fulfill any requirements of Islamic way of understanding. Seventy-two people with symptoms of diarrhea, abdominal pain and vomiting were referred to hospitals by ambulances. This is a reflection of the desire to attract customers with high income levels who wish relatively longer accommodation and thus to generate more money over those customers. Therefore, it indicates that the hotel in question failed in fulfilling the minimum criteria such as providing healthy and clean food, which goes beyond offering halal food.

Boğan and Arıca (2019) examined the comments on online platforms by 4 and 5-star halal hotel customers in Alanya under the titles of complaints and satisfaction. Based on the examination of customer reviews, the themes related to the halal concept which brings along the highest satisfaction are gender segregation in facilities and the presence of mosque/masjid in the hotel. On the other hand, the themes with the highest complaint are as follows: improper music content and loud music which are incompatible with Islamic understanding and the inappropriate dressings of women in the facilities allocated to women.

## **Conclusion**

Halal is an Islamic term that effects entire life of Muslims from eating-drinking to cosmetics. During the last two decade, there has been an increasing number of tourism-related concepts that originated from Islam such as halal tourism, Islamic tourism, Muslim-friendly tourism etc. Thus far, a bulk of papers has been published studying the clarification of related concepts (Battour & Ismail, 2016; Boğan & Sarıışık, 2019), customer reactions to halal related attributes (Battour et al., 2011; 2014), qualified employees' job pursuit intention in hotels (Boğan et al., 2020) and even non-Muslims perception of halal tourism (Battour et al., 2018). A big part of these papers is conducted out of Turkey. Although Turkey is one of most popular halal tourism destination, there is a limited number of papers examining halal hospitality practices in Turkey. To fill in this knowledge gap, this study aims to evaluate the recent halal hospitality developments in one of the most popular mass tourism destination of Turkey, Alanya.

Before evaluating halal tourism practices in Alanya, the related terms as halal, haram is explained. Although there are many terms originated from the link between Islam and tourism such as halal tourism, Islamic tourism, Muslim-friendly tourism, current study clarified the terminology among two most common terms as halal tourism and Islamic tourism. It is stated that the terminology about Islam and tourism is still confusing in literature. Islamic motivational factors that emerge in Islamic doctrines differentiate Islamic tourism from halal tourism. The main purpose of the tourists in Islamic tourism is to win Allah's pleasure. However, in halal tourism, the individual participates in the conventional tourism types as beach tourism, culture tourism, and cruise tourism by following the Islamic rules. Halal

medical tourism, halal beach tourism, halal gastronomy tourism could be unique forms of tourism type.

Under current circumstances where tourism has become a necessity rather than a luxury need, Muslims engage in tourism activities as never before. Tourists engaging in modern tourism activities show the intention to fulfill religious obligations during the touristic consumption process and not to be involved in haram. The concept of tourism that appeals to this market stands out as halal tourism. The size of the market, its positive economic effects in the future, and the fact that Muslim tourists spend more and stay longer than other tourists whet appetite in the Western countries as well as the countries where the Muslim population is dense. In countries such as Spain, Russia, France, Thailand and Singapore, tourism products that can meet the demands of Muslim tourists are being developed and produced. In parallel with the Muslim-friendly tourism developments in Western countries, the share of halal tourism practices in the Turkish tourism industry is increasing day by day. Following Malaysia and Indonesia, Turkey ranks third in global Muslim travel market indices (Mastercard & Crescentrating, 2019). In addition to local tourists' demands on the hotels with halal concept, Muslims from abroad are also effective in the demand increase in question. Many conservative hotel companies in Alanya accord their facilities to halal hospitality such as not to serve alcohol drinks, providing prayer facilities as prayer rug, direction of qibla. However, it is stated halal hospitality attributes are limited to providing Islamic facilities or serving alcohol-free drinks (Boğan & Sarıışık, 2019; Boğan et al., 2020). Beyond that it requires a holistic adaptation including from finance, decoration to segregation of facilities by gender as swimming pool, gymnasium, wellness facilities and even the beach (Rosenberg & Choufany, 2009). Furthermore, particularly Western tourists, who are flexible with regard to pork and alcohol consumption, feel positive about staying at those hotels with the motivation of experiencing the different (Battour, Hakimian, Ismail & Boğan, 2018). Therefore, it is not possible to say that only religious Muslims spend their holidays in these hotels. It is stated that non-Muslim tourists who look for experience difference and who do not look for alcohol drinks and pork could stay in halal hotels. Beyond that individuals who are romantic jealous (not only men but also women) are prone to stay in halal hotels which provide gender-segregation facilities.

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