

# Has “Islamic Tourism” Emerged After Over Fifty Decades of Publications? A Systematic Review

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## Abstract

With the expansion in the volume of Islamic tourism literature, this paper’s purpose was to undertake a systematic review to analyse this research area’s breadth and difficulties, providing evidence for the emergence of Islamic tourism. Using VOSviewer, a scientometric analysis of 922 scientific papers published between 1979 and early 2022 was conducted. To conduct a systematic review of the Islamic tourism literature, The Scopus database was adopted to extract bibliographic data to provide the principal dataset. Six clusters of Islamic tourism themes emerged from the findings, namely: (1) Halal tourism and hospitality for Muslims; (2) Tourism and Islamic heritage for non-Muslims; (3) Travel behaviour; (4) Developing countries and politics; (5) Islam, genderism and legislation, as well as (6) Religion, host community and product development. There are indicators that the Islamic tourism concept remains at an immature stage, with the unique version of Islamic legislation-based tourism yet to be comprehensively introduced. The research provides an empirically grounded taxonomy of Islamic issues research, with an emphasis on the tourism context. Therefore, the research could be useful for practitioners working to develop novel types of tourism, in addition to hospitality goods and services compatible with the Islamic faith. Furthermore, the research is beneficial for academics seeking to develop tourism based on authentic Islamic principles, as opposed to simply emphasising the congruence and contradictions between Islamic and typical forms of tourism.

**Keywords:** Scopus; Islamic tourism; tourism marketing; Halal tourism; bibliometrics; VOS viewer

## Introduction

With its extensive moral and social system, the Islamic religion can offer fundamental principles and applications to modern life. For example, Islamic legislation has inspired “Islamic finance” as a distinct financial system with philosophical underpinnings (Khadijah et al., 2010). This is evident in other industries, for example tourism and hospitality. Tourism represents a significant component of Islamic thought. Indeed, the fifth pillar of Islam is *Hajj*, involving travel for religious purposes (Eid, 2012). Additionally, the word tourism (*Syaha* in Arabic) is mentioned several times in the Quran (the holy book for Muslims), encouraging Muslims to travel for meditation (Haq & Yin Wong, 2010).

Recently, an increase has been observed in the number of articles discussing Islamic issues in the tourism sector. From both an inbound and outbound tourism perspective, practitioners are becoming increasingly interested in the Islamic tourism market. From an outbound perspective, the number of Muslim tourists has gradually expanded. By 2026, the number of Muslim visitors is estimated to exceed 230 million, contributing over \$300 billion to the global economy (Nuraini & Sucipto, 2021). Furthermore, the Pew Research Center has noted that by 2060, Muslims will comprise approximately 30% of the global population (Adie, 2019). From the inbound tourism perspective, Islamic countries offer rich heritage,

architectural and historical resources and monuments that entice tourists from all around the world, from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds.

No precise definition of Islamic tourism has yet been developed, because different researchers have varied perspectives on the subject (Addina et al., 2020; Preko et al., 2021). For example, Preko et al. (2021) tied Islamic tourism to strict adherence to Islamic teachings and ethical codes regarding behaviour, conduct, dress and food. Henderson (2010) deemed Islamic tourism as directed solely at Muslims, although Islamic tourism is not exclusive to Muslim tourists (see Eladway et al., 2020; Kayat & Ghaniah 2015). Moreover, debate continues as to whether Islamic tourism is merely an adaptation of traditional tourism to Islamic teachings (Preko et al., 2021), or whether the concept is more sophisticated and represents a unique tourism type (Muhamad et al., 2019).

Evidently, a knowledge gap is apparent concerning the determination of what Islamic tourism comprises and those areas that necessitate further investigation, so as to provide a comprehensive grasp of this concept. Comprehensive reviews of relevant research might assist with bridging this gap. Indeed, an extensive review of this body of knowledge has identified some systematic reviews of Islamic tourism (Addina et al., 2020; Awad Alsharari, 2020; Nuraini & Sucipto, 2021; Rasul, 2019; Sofyan et al., 2022; Yuliviona et al., 2019). Nevertheless, the majority of reviews have a particular focus, for example halal food product regulations and practices (Nuraini & Sucipto, 2021), crisis and disaster management (Sofyan et al., 2022), development of restaurants and food souvenirs (Addina et al., 2020), hotels' service quality (Awad Alsharari, 2020; Rasul, 2019), in addition to revisit intention and satisfaction (Yuliviona et al., 2019). One systematic review with a broad focus has been identified, having the aim of obtaining a comprehensive picture of Islamic tourism (Rasul, 2019). Rasul (2019) clarifies that his work's adopted thematic analysis method was undertaken completely by the author without any science mapping software being used, such as VOSviewer.

Given these limitations and the need for additional research, this paper's principal aim is to provide a systematic review of Islam tourism studies, in addition to relevant topics (such as halal tourism, Islamic destinations, as well as Muslim tourists), thereby conducting an in-depth investigation of Islamic tourism. Adopting the systematic review methodology is based on two main reasons. First, it has been evidenced as being beneficial for analysing the present circumstances concerning published research in the tourism and hospitality field, by integrating the findings and stimulating debates concerning future research (Gomezelj, 2016; Kim et al., 2018; Yang et al., 2017). For this particular case, the systematic review of the tourism and hospitality field provides thorough comprehension from a wide research perspective that can be applied in this field. Second, given the scarcity of publications on Islamic tourism and hospitality, a rigorous scientometric review of the extant data is necessary to establish the principal themes pertaining to this tourism type. More significantly, this research aims to strengthen the Islamic tourism and hospitality literature, specifically by emphasising future research topics and trends in a way that assist researchers and practitioners in the field. The remainder of this article is structured as follows. The research method is presented in the second section, alongside a discussion about the use of VOSviewer software for the literature analysis. The third section presents the findings relating to the main themes, which are organised into six clusters: (1) Halal tourism and hospitality for Muslims; (2) Tourism and Islamic heritage for non-Muslims; (3) Travel behaviour; (4) Developing countries and politics; (5) Islam, genderism and legislation, as well as (6) Religion, host community and product development. The fourth section presents the conclusions of the study, while the final section outlines the research limitations.

## Material and methods

Since this study aims to conduct a systematic review of the Islamic tourism literature, the optimal technique would be to apply a scientometric method to develop the maps, thereby identifying the major themes (Liu et al., 2019). Developing maps based on a rigorous body of literature permits for a holistic comprehension and assists with making connections across various disciplines. The principal advantage of using scientific maps is that they enable people from diverse fields to collaborate in knowledge development (Hu & Zhang, 2017; Rafols et al., 2012).

This paper adopts a mixed-method research approach to assessing the published articles using systematic search standards, alongside advanced review mapping that categorises the extant literature (Grant & Booth, 2009). The existing research and industry perspectives on Islamic and halal tourism were investigated. This type of review is necessary to provide a comprehensive, thorough and ground-breaking analysis of this emerging literature. The systemic review methods employ systematic techniques for identifying, evaluating and synthesising the entire research relevant to answering the selected research question, with the specific objective of mitigating systematic errors or bias (Schlosser et al., 2007). To guarantee a thorough, transparent and reliable systematic review, Tranfield et al.'s (2003) three-stage approach to systematic reviews was adopted, comprising of Planning, Conducting and Reporting the review.

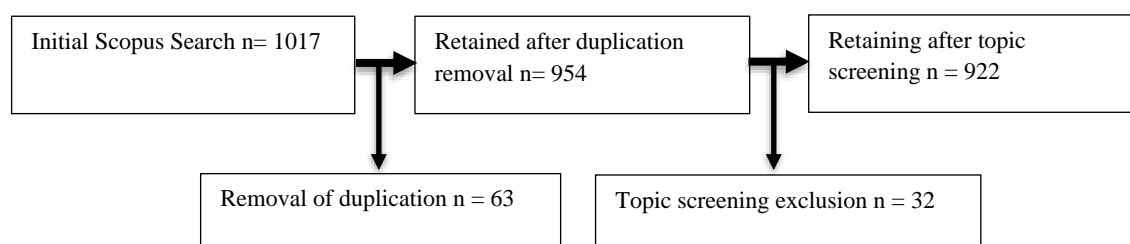


Figure 1 The systematic review selection criteria

### *Stage 1 – Planning the review*

The significance of this research was determined during the planning stage, establishing a holistic comprehension of Islamic tourism's interdisciplinarity and recommending future development within the industry. To identify sources, formulated the search technique, review processes, in addition to information and data analysis, a procedure was devised. As Harzing and Alakangas (2016) related, given that its size exceeds the Web of Science (WoS) and is second only to Google Scholar in terms of scientific databases, Scopus was selected. Harzing and Alakangas (2016) observed, that despite Google Scholar being a powerful search database, it comprises a substantial volume of stray citations, with marginal variations leading to duplicated findings. Furthermore, the site is not effectively organised and contains sources that may not reflect highly-scientific criteria. Even so, Scopus and WoS have large overlaps, meaning that findings from the two databases may only differ slightly, especially when large numbers of research papers are being compared (Vieira & Gomes, 2009).

### *Stage 2 – Conducting the review*

During this stage, the processes established during the previous Planning stage were adhered to, including identification of the research and studies, carrying out the quality assessment, data extraction and monitoring progress, in addition to data synthesis. The document search dates were purposefully designed to start with the earliest available output and end on January 28, 2022, when the first list of documents was extracted. To collect additional studies, the search

process was not restricted to a certain time period, instead data were collected from all pertinent studies irrespective of the article publication year. The last search was conducted on January 28, 2022. Using a Boolean search in Scopus, the following search criteria were used: “Islamic Touris\*” OR “Muslim Touris\*” OR “Halal Touris\*” OR “Islamic destination”. The results identified a list of 1017 papers containing at least one of the search criteria in the article title, keywords, or abstract. Keywords and abstracts from the identified 1017 papers were reviewed in order to ascertain their relevance to this current investigation. Resultantly, 85 articles were omitted due to not fulfilling the inclusion criteria. Figure 1 presents the publication selection procedure. Irrespective of the language source—if English was the abstract and title language—establishing and mapping the research clusters was carried out on the basis of the remaining 922 documents, comprising of nine book series, 26 conference papers, 174 books, as well as 713 journal articles.

### ***Stage 3 – Reporting the review***

The revolutionary science mapping software VOSviewer was adopted to create the mapping and state-of-the-art reviews for a rigorous and visually impactful report. This software uses co-citation analysis in order to create a visual map of correlations between the scientometric indicators. To extract the noun phrases that regularly appeared, sophisticated thematic analysis techniques were adopted. The 922 resources comprising the Islamic tourism literature were all mapped in relation to their subject matter. In accordance with Van Eck and Waltman (2010), map production enabled effective scientometric mapping outcomes to be developed via the default settings for VOSviewer. At least 50 resources including noun phrases were used to undertake extraction and mapping. The map was organised so that highly analogous phrases were in close proximity, using VOSviewer’s clustering tool. The body of research’s taxonomy is developed by the grouping of highly analogous terms through cluster alignment. Terms’ linkages provide the basis of assigning network nodes, thereby producing clusters. As Korom (2019) as well as Van Eck and Waltman (2010) clarified, an equivalent theme is probably shared by resources within a cluster.

### **Results**

As Figure 2 presents, scholarly interest in Islamic tourism increased from 1979 to 2022, with a sharp increase during the late 2000s. Between 1979 and 2007, fewer than 10 articles with keywords like “Islamic tourism”, “Halal tourism”, “Islamic destination” and “Muslim visitors” were published annually in the literature. From 2008 to 2021, the rate of increase accelerated considerably, with the number of published articles more than tripling from the previous year in 2007, while the rate of increase has continued accelerating, reaching over 140 articles in 2022. Academics have begun focusing on religion and its effects on tourism to a greater extent, with research particularly considering the linked between Islamic teachings and tourism adaptation.

The scientometric analysis revealed six clusters of extant literature relating to Islamic tourism, which were colour coded red, green, dark blue, yellow, purple, and light blue. The first cluster (red) represents ‘Halal tourism and hospitality for Muslims’; the second cluster (green) is associated with ‘Tourism and Islamic heritage for non-Muslims’. The third cluster (dark blue) is associated with ‘Travel behaviour’. The fourth cluster (yellow) is associated with ‘Developing countries and politics’. The fifth cluster (purple) is related to ‘Islam, genderism and legislation’. The final cluster (light blue) is associated with ‘Religion, host community and product development’. To perform an in-depth analysis of these key clusters, each one was broken down into themes. Figure 3 presents the thematic analysis results. The size of the noun phrase represents the frequency of occurrence in the map; the larger the circles the higher the

number of publications mentioning the term, noting that each term has a minimum of 50 articles relating to it.

Given that Islamic tourism has received scant focus in the extant literature, a thorough literature review has been conducted with a broad focus. Notably, Figure 3 presents the six clusters that are the outcome of an expansive literature search pertaining to Islamic tourism generally, as opposed to having a specific emphasis on tourism and the hospitality industry. Furthermore, the findings convey the scarcity of tourism-related studies focusing on Islamic issues. The map presents six clusters with different colours according to topics (red, green, dark blue, yellow, purple, and light blue). To summarise the main findings concerning Islamic tourism, key terms revealed by the map are included.

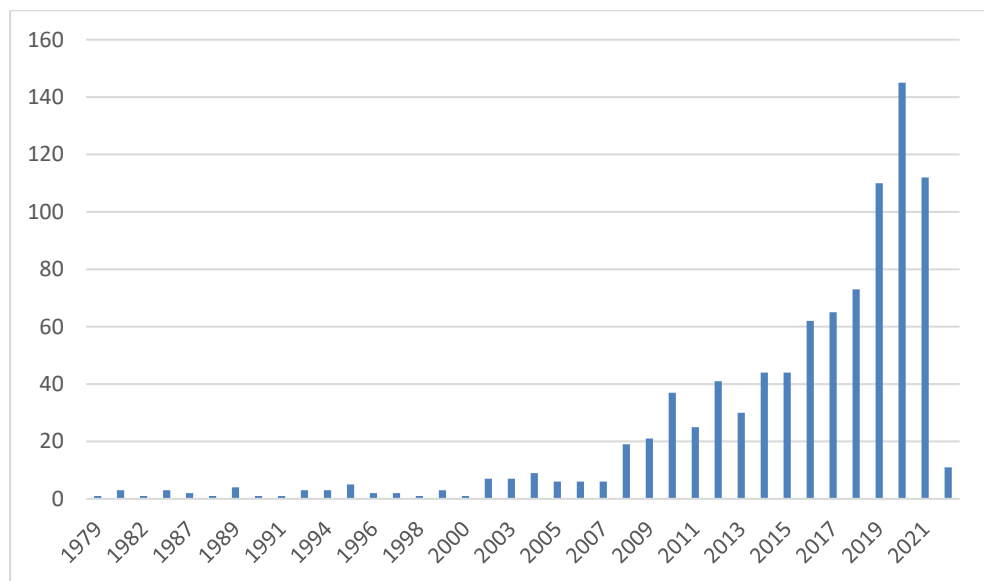


Figure 2. Publications on Islamic tourism

### ***Cluster 1 (red): Halal tourism and hospitality for Muslims***

Figure 3 and Table 1 indicate that ‘halal’ is the most used keyword in Islamic tourism research, referring to the ability to fulfil vacation demands while upholding religious sensitivities (Moshin et al., 2020; Pamukcu & Sariisik, 2021). Halal tourism encompasses practically all tourism-related industries, for example accommodation, dining, recreation, as well as transportation (Pamukcu & Sariisik, 2021). Hotels declare themselves to be halal-friendly by providing information on Islamic identity, or telling guests about the availability of halal cuisine, halal restaurants, alcohol-free policies, prayer facilities and Qibla direction (Muharam & Asutay, 2022). Furthermore, halal tourism concerns how, from a supplier perspective, non-Islamic destinations can effectively respond to Muslim tourists’ food needs (Jia & Chaozhi, 2021). Despite halal food pertaining to religious restrictions, Jia and Chaozhi (2021) provided insights into how it may be transformed into an attraction. Halal tourism is a global industry not limited to Muslim-majority countries (Feizollah et al., 2021). For example, Japan and Thailand are both non-Muslim countries that seemingly provide popular halal touristic attractions (Feizollah et al., 2021). Non-Muslim tourists’ perceptions of halal tourism’s products and services enhance the quality of their trips (Battour et al., 2019). Nevertheless, in certain non-Muslim countries such as Sweden, a lack of awareness remains regarding halal tourism (Abbasian, 2021). Authentication of Halal tourism offers faces challenges (Vargas-Sánchez & Moral-Moral, 2020). Yusuf et al. (2021) highlighted the significance of halal certification within the hospitality industry. Halal tourism is an expanding segment representing a potentially attractive niche (Vargas-Sánchez & Moral-Moral, 2020).



Conversely, few empirical studies have focused on the halal tourism field, particularly in non-Islamic contexts, meaning it remains in its nascent stages (Jia & Chaozhi, 2021; Moshin et al., 2020). Ultimately, halal tourism remains an emerging and under-researched academic field (Vargas-Sánchez & Moral-Moral, 2020), thus being a research area necessitating further focus (Moshin et al., 2020).

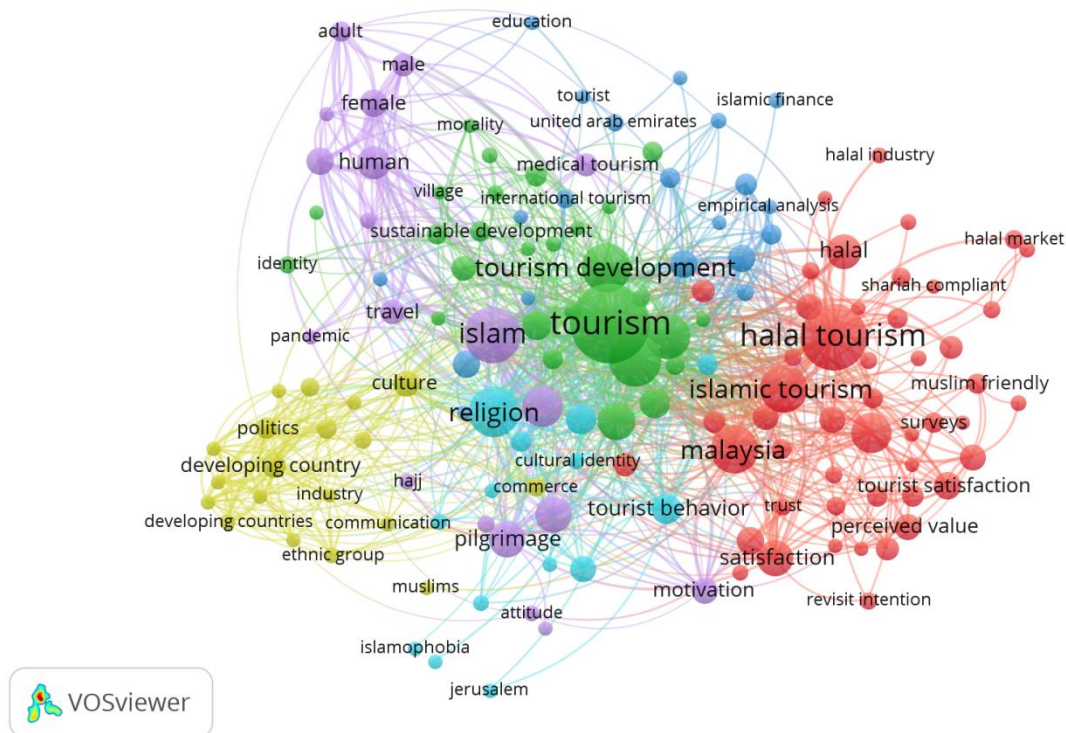


Figure 3 Six research clusters of Islamic tourism and associated themes in the academic literature

Table 1 Top trending and top impact terms by cluster

Cluster	Top trends of terms	Top impacts of terms
Red: Halal tourism and hospitality for Muslims	halal tourism; Islamic tourism; tourist destination; Muslim tourist; satisfaction; halal; religiosity; Islamic attributes; Muslim travelers; perceived value; tourism market; halal food.	halal certification; revisit intention; halal industry; hospitality; brand image; sales; halal market; shariah compliant; tourist attractions; halal products; tourist experience
Green: Tourism and Islamic heritage for non-Muslims	Tourism; Islamism; tourism development; heritage tourism; cultural heritage; tourist satisfaction; heritage; architecture; conceptual framework; conservation; sustainability; sustainable development.	Globalization; morality; sustainable development; spatial analysis; ; village; cultural tourism; Muslim tourism; conservation; heritage conservation; historic preservation; sustainability; cultural landscape.
Dark blue: Travel behaviour	Tourist attraction; Islamic finance; knowledge; economic and social effects; economic impact; education; empirical analysis; ethics; methodology; security; sustainable tourism; tourist	travel behavior; perception; questionnaire survey; tourist attraction; ecotourism; Islamic destination; empirical analysis; knowledge; methodology; international tourism.
Yellow: Developing countries and politics	Muslim; culture; commerce; migration; developing countries; ethnic group; communication; demography; economic factors; environmental protection; government; industry; policy; political factors; population	Muslim; culture; economic factors; political factors; population; demography; developing countries; ethnic group; government; commerce; industry; environmental protection; policy; migration; communication
Purple: Islam, genderism and legislation	Islam; human; female; humans; motivation; male; medical tourism; adult; umrah; attitude; Christianity; hajj	Islam; human; female; humans; male; motivation; adult; medical tourism; Christianity; hajj; umrah.
Light blue: Religion, host community and product development	Religion; middle east; tourist behavior; gender; minority group; cultural tradition; cultural identity; multiculturalism; women; ethnicity; islamophobia; Jerusalem; orientalism.	Religion; tourist behavior; middle east; gender; minority group; cultural tradition; women; cultural identity; ethnicity; multiculturalism; women's status; orientalism; Jerusalem; islamophobia

- Cluster 1: Halal tourism and hospitality for Muslims
- Cluster 2: Tourism and Islamic heritage for non-Muslims
- Cluster 3: Travel behaviour
- Cluster 4: Developing countries and politics
- Cluster 5: Islam, genderism and legislation
- Cluster 6: Religion, host community and product development

***Cluster 2 (green): Tourism and Islamic heritage for non-Muslims***

Unlike the previous cluster, researchers in this cluster have focused on studying the targeting of non-Muslim tourists visiting Islamic heritage and architectural attractions (Kayat et al., 2015). However, tourism requires local communities' support. Certain studies have concentrated on demographic and cultural characteristics that enable the local population to be prepared to support tourism development (Kayat et al., 2015). Kayat et al. (2015) focused specifically on those local residents distinguished by culture and Islamic law. Moreover, Eladway et al. (2020) considered that local residents in Islamic countries must be encouraged to participate in the tourism industry. Additionally, researchers have investigated non-Muslims perceptions and attitudes towards Islamic tourism attractions' intangible heritage (Masoud et al., 2019). Researchers have established that culinary tourism significantly affects Sharia tourism in Islamic tourism destinations (Rusby & Arif, 2020). Experts have determined the Quran has approximately 15 verses relating to tourism, with the Quran's principal aim being to advocate tourism as a means of inspiring people to consider the implications of past generations' actions (Saghayi & Esfahani, 2016). Furthermore, certain academics have discussed the potential of establishing tourist guidance based on scientific interpretation derived from Islamic teachings (Shehada, 2020).

***Cluster 3 (dark blue): Travel behaviour***

The behavioural aspect represents a significant dimension of Islamic tourism. Through analysing previous studies that have focused on the behavioural dimension, there are seemingly three research perspectives, namely the Muslim tourist, the non-Muslim tourist, as well as the owner of tourist facilities. The overwhelming majority of these studies have concentrated on the Muslim tourist (Aji et al., 2021; Battour et al., 2019; Monoarfa et al., 2022), whereas few studies have adopted the other two perspectives.

Regarding the first perspective, the studies concentrated on comprehending the behaviour of Muslim tourists in relation to Islamic tourist attractions and in non-Islamic attractions. Concerning non-Islamic tourist attractions, despite numerous non-Islamic countries having targeted halal tourism (Aji et al., 2021), there is a dearth of empirical studies investigating Muslim demand for tourism that take into account the requirements linked to Islamic law (Aji et al., 2021; Jia & Chaozhi, 2021). The researchers attempted to ascertain the effect of Islamic practices and beliefs on Muslim travel and leisure behaviour (Battour et al., 2019). Studies indicate that the presence of Islamic characteristics in sites of attraction have played a crucial role in enhancing Muslim tourists' satisfaction (Monoarfa et al., 2022). Muslim tourists' religiosity affects the identification of travel motives and destination preferences (Shakona et al., 2015). First, there is a preference for destinations that provide services adhering to Islamic law, which depends on the extent of the tourist's religiosity and commitment to Islamic teachings (Hassani & Moghavvemi, 2019). Second, Hassani and Moghavvemi suggested that non-religious people avoid sites that promote products and services of an Islamic nature. Additionally, researchers have been attracted to investigating the new generation of Muslim tourists, determining that knowledge and religiosity affect their interest in visiting halal tourist attractions and recommendations that others do so (Sudarsono et al., 2021).

In terms of the second perspective, studies have concentrated on how to market Islamic-themed attractions to non-Muslim tourists. Researchers have established that the perception of halal tourism among non-Muslim tourists enhances the perceived visit quality (Battour et al., 2019). Furthermore, it is apparent that perceptions of Islamic tourist sites among non-Muslim tourists have contributed to the achievement of tourist contentment and perceived visit quality (Rahman et al., 2021). Finally, researchers have found variations in the reasons for hotel owners implementing halal tourism, which may be classified into three groups (Rachmiatie et al., 2022). The first group represents investors using the word ‘halal’ for targeting and branding purposes. The second group represents those who consider the ideology underpinning halal hotels to be based on strong Islamic values. The third group comprises those who avoid halal brands yet implement Islamic values in their hotels. Rachmiatie et al. (2022) suggested that based on their experience, this group deems halal certification to not be a priority, although minimal attempts to adhere to halal standards may strongly appeal to Muslim tourists.

#### ***Cluster 4 (yellow): Developing countries and politics***

The developing countries cluster focuses on issues pertaining to practices in third world countries, which are reflected in the tourism sector or exploit the tourism sector in various ways. For example, certain regimes have implemented Islamic tourism to provide a specific representation of the country’s Islamic history. For example, Jordan has reappraised its history in order to present the country’s monarchy as a key factor in Islamic history, as well as to provide a preferential representation in the diplomatic and international relations fields (Neveu, 2010). Moreover, Islamic tourism has been employed to convey Islamic existence in certain communities where Muslims are minorities. For instance, Thomas (2017) clarified how the development of heritage tourism in Ahmedabad city, India, has sought to emphasise Muslim belongingness there. Furthermore, religion has occasionally been utilised for promoting tourism, presenting harmonious cultural nationalism (Bandyopadhyay, 2016). However, political instability and religious regulations are crucial factors affecting the average tourists’ duration of stay (Hateftabar & Chapuis, 2020).

#### ***Cluster 5 (purple): Islam, genderism and legislation***

This cluster’s principal emphasis was on Islamic issues pertaining to tourism, for example genderism (Brown & Osman, 2017; Górak-Sosnowska, 2021; Hosseini et al., 2022; Rosli et al., 2018; Suhud & Willson, 2016), spiritual tourism (Atikah et al., 2022; Lochrie et al., 2019; Martín et al., 2020; Nugraha & Widyaningsih, 2022; Rahman et al., 2019), in addition to legislation governing Islamic tourism (Abd Rahman & Ahamat, 2019; Putri et al., 2020). The studies identified significant behavioural differences between male and female Muslim tourists (Rosli et al., 2018). Muslim women prefer solo travel due to the absence of family responsibilities, as well as gender constraints during travel (Hosseini et al., 2022). Researchers discussed several issues associated with sexual context (Brown & Osman, 2017; Górak-Sosnowska, 2021; Suhud & Willson, 2016). Suhud and Willson (2016) defined halal sex tourism as paid sexual activity between a male tourist and a female host under an Islamic contract marriage. The researchers explained that this form of temporary marriage contract is signed in order to circumvent adultery strictures. From an alternative perspective, researchers investigated issues related to non-Muslim female tourists in Islamic destinations (Brown & Osman, 2017; Górak-Sosnowska, 2021). Occasionally, non-Muslim female tourists enter romantic relationships with host Muslim men (Górak-Sosnowska, 2021), while also facing the host’s male sexualised gaze during their holiday (Brown & Osman, 2017).

In this cluster, researchers discussed several issues linked to spiritual tourism. According to Atikah et al. (2022) spirituality is the principal motivation for Muslim travellers



to make *Umrah*. Moreover, Lochrie et al. (2019) suggested that travel agencies should heighten the intensity of ‘enjoyable’ elements alongside the inherent religious benefits of religious travel. Furthermore, Putri et al. (2020) pointed to the fraud that arises among *Umrah* travel businesses, which leads to general reputational damage. Even so, in certain Islamic countries, for example Malaysia, there is no self-standing law on *Umrah* pilgrims’ protection, although there are several laws, including Consumer Protection, that provide limited rights to pilgrims (Abd Rahman & Ahamat, 2019).

### ***Cluster 6 (light blue): Religion, host community and product development***

This cluster emphasises Islam’s significance in defining Islamic tourism from the perspective of Muslim tourists (Albayrak et al., 2018; Chien, 2020; Papastathopoulos et al., 2021), the role of Muslim host communities (Fattah & Eddy-U, 2020; Ghaderi et al., 2020; Hall et al., 2019; Kirillova et al., 2014; Koburtay et al., 2020; Meimand et al., 2019), and finally, the interaction between tourism and religion (El-Gohary, 2016; Haq & Yin Wong, 2010; Henderson, 2003; Muhamad et al., 2019), which leads to the development of tourism products and services (Al-Makhadmah, 2020; Bafadhal, 2022; Jaelani et al., 2020; Yahaya et al., 2020). By the end of the 1980s, the Islamic tourism concept had not yet been formed. Islam’s influence at the time was restricted to prohibiting specific acts connected with traditional (western) tourism, for example gambling and prostitution, albeit having no significant impact on how tourism-related activities were conducted (Din, 1989).

Researchers such as Papastathopoulos et al. (2021) have uncovered faith-based characteristics in travellers that enable them to continue participating in religious activities and rituals while on vacation. For example, weakening the Islamic prohibition on the use of donor technologies has initiated a surge in reproductive tourism in Muslim nations that permit the use of donor gametes in assisted reproductive technologies (Chien, 2020). Albayrak et al. (2018) discovered that religious tourism is a multi-dimensional concept, comprising dimensions such as mental engagement, learning new things, interacting and belonging, spiritually and emotionally connecting, relaxing, as well as finding serenity.

The host community plays a significant role in tourism, yet research investigating Muslim host communities’ perspectives remains scant (Fattah & Eddy-U, 2020). Host communities’ Islamic beliefs affect their interaction with tourists, while the nature of the interaction is affected by the residents’ religiosity (Ghaderi et al., 2020). For example, the limited role of women’s advancement in the hospitality industry is one implication of religiosity (Koburtay et al., 2020). Meanwhile, residents’ perceptions of tourism’s impacts as threatening their religious values differ according to their religiosity level (Meimand et al., 2019). The business incentive underpinning halal may fall short of the religious duty of providing guests with hospitality (Hall et al., 2019); commercial hospitality, influenced by religion, is primarily perceived as a profit-making endeavour (Kirillova et al., 2014).

Religion and tourism are intimately connected, with the former motivating travel and the latter providing an array of visitor attractions (Henderson, 2011). In the literature, religious tourism remains under-researched (El-Gohary, 2016). Religious tourism is distinct from other means of travel (Preko et al., 2021). Islam has identified a religion-related form of tourism that adheres to Islamic precepts while simultaneously facilitating religious practice (Henderson, 2003; Muhamad et al., 2019). Additionally, spiritual tourism was investigated as a novel means of marketing the religion of Islam (Haq & Yin Wong, 2010). Meanwhile, Islam has promoted various forms of tourism, thereby facilitating tourism’s development. Salons are a form of Muslim health tourism combining religion, tourism and health in Sharia (Bafadhal, 2022). Furthermore, a novel form of religious tourism incorporating horse riding and archery has emerged (Jaelani et al., 2020), while the Crescent-Rating Standard and the Salam Standard



have been established as international standards for assessing Muslim-friendly hotels. Finally, several hindrances to tourists’ access to holy places continue to be in place because of the religious privacy of certain areas where non-followers are prohibited from visiting (Al-Makhadmah, 2020). Researchers have proposed virtual museums of holy religious places as an appropriate alternative, thereby enabling followers of all religions to see these sites (Al-Makhadmah, 2020).

**Latent gaps**

The map illustrates research areas on Islamic issues in the tourism and hospitality field, alongside other relevant subjects that have been investigated in the literature. Table 2 presents the issues characterising each cluster in Figure 3, thereby assisting with identification of the subjects it would be meaningful to investigate further. Based on the broad literature review of Islamic tourism, the first two categories— ‘Halal tourism and hospitality for Muslims’ and ‘Tourism and Islamic heritage for non-Muslims’—have received significant attention. However, less research has been undertaken relating to the remaining clusters (clusters 3 -6).

Table 2 Research topics 10+ publications

Topics	Cluster	Publications	Topics	Cluster	Publications
Customer satisfaction	1	12	Sustainability	2	10
Decision making	1	12	Tourism	2	132
Halal food	1	37	Tourism development	2	54
Halal tourism	1	95	Tourist satisfaction	2	17
Hotel industry	1	10	Islamic destination	3	10
Islamic attributes	1	16	Perception	3	18
Islamic tourism	1	51	Questionnaire survey	3	11
Marketing	1	11	Terrorism	3	17
Muslim friendly	1	10	Travel behavior	3	17
Muslim tourist	1	52	Culture	4	15
perceived value	1	15	Muslim	4	35
Religiosity	1	17	Female	5	18
Satisfaction	1	28	Human	5	43
Service quality	1	11	Islam	5	70
Tourist destination	1	44	Male	5	13
Architecture	2	11	Medical tourism	5	12
Conceptual framework	2	10	Motivation	5	16
Conservation	2	10	Gender	6	16
Cultural heritage	2	19	Middle east	6	21
Heritage	2	14	Minority group	6	10
Heritage tourism	2	32	Religion	6	56
Islamism	2	60	Tourist behavior	6	21

The systematic literature review articles appeared exclusively in Cluster 1, ‘Halal tourism and hospitality for Muslims’, although only six systematic reviews were found. They are all concerned with defining and clarifying the notion of halal tourism and halal tourism facilities’ availability. Accordingly, this indicates that the research field is yet to reach maturity. Apparently, no studies have included a rigorous literature review to enrich the picture of how Islam has contributed to the tourism and hospitality industry. Meanwhile, the unique version of Islamic legislation-based tourism has not been comprehensively examined.

**Discussion and conclusion**

A software tool was employed for constructing and visualising the bibliometric networks, creating a map of the Islamic tourism and hospitality literature throughout the social sciences. Several topic categories emerged from the co-appearance of terms in titles and abstracts of scholarly articles. To the best of our knowledge, this paper is the first scientifically supported taxonomy of studies on Islamic issues with an emphasis on the tourism context. Six clusters

were identified within scientific articles: Halal tourism and hospitality for Muslims; Tourism and Islamic heritage for non-Muslims; Travel behaviour; Developing countries and politics; Islam, genderism and legislation; Religion, host community and product development.

The majority of tourism studies have seemingly focused on ‘halal tourism and hospitality for Muslims’, as well as ‘tourism and Islamic heritage for non-Muslims’. Notably, few tourism studies appear to have concentrated on subjects pertaining to developing countries and politics, suggesting that academics should consider these issues in this field. Regarding size (Figure 3) and the publication numbers (Table 2), the developing countries and politics cluster is the least researched of the six observed clusters. The study of developing countries and political issues is typically centred on political stability issues and regimes exploiting Islamic tourism for political purposes.

This taxonomy provides a framework for revealing Islamic research’s complexities, in addition to related activities’ social and political consequences, for example adapting tourism to Muslim tourists’ values, enticing non-Muslim tourists to visit Islamic attractions, as well as exploiting religion tourism for political purposes. Furthermore, the findings present a clear picture to tourism stakeholders regarding the complexities of the Islamic tourism and hospitality field. Such knowledge is remarkably beneficial for researchers and practitioners who are working to develop novel types of tourism, alongside hospitality goods and services that are compatible with the Islamic faith. Furthermore, such maps may enable scholars from several disciplines to fill gaps in the literature linked to Islamic and halal tourism.

A principal objective of the current study was to provide a clue from the wide literature base that may be applied to the tourism and hospitality industry. As Figure 3 illustrates, there were interrelationships between the six clusters. For example, genderism is significantly linked to Islamic tourism. Meanwhile, halal facilities are mindful of the differences between male and female service providers. In the first cluster, genderism is clear in halal tourism facilities; the third cluster explores gender difference in travel behaviour from an Islamic perspective, while the sixth cluster is concerned with gender’s role in the Islamic host community.

Finally, there are indicators that Islamic culture and legislation could assist with developing a unique type of tourism (Bafadhal, 2022). Nevertheless, Islamic tourism remains underdeveloped. Ultimately, researchers and practitioners need to investigate tourism from an Islamic perspective as opposed to attempting to adapt tourism to Islamic values. Such attempts can identify the congruence and contradiction between Islam and the capitalist Western version of tourism, although they are unable to develop tourism from an authentic Islamic perspective. The Islamic and halal tourism map conveys numerous principles that researchers in tourism and associated disciplines could successfully implement with an emphasis on the Islamic perspective of tourism and hospitality. Moreover, industry and academia should pay greater attention to Islamic tourism. Future research findings could potentially reveal new characteristics for developing unique tourism types that could fulfil various unmet needs.

### **Research limitations**

Although the current study has presented a systematic literature review on Islamic and halal tourism, several limitations should be considered during future research. First, the literature collection was only carried out using the Scopus database. Furthermore, given that only English-language keywords, abstracts and titles were included in the sample, the linguistic bias is evident. Consequently, certain crucial studies published in other languages, especially Arabic, might have been omitted. Accordingly, further systematic reviews should include articles published in other languages, particularly Arabic language studies, as well as drawing on other databases.

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