Halal culinary and tourism marketing strategies on government websites: A preliminary analysis

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ABSTRACT

In the present study, the use of the internet to promote Halal cuisines and culinary tourism is compared and contrasted through content analysis method of investigation of the national tourism bureaus of China, South Korea, Japan and Thailand on their official websites. It was found that Japan, South Korea and Thailand attempted to strategize their country's potential as a preferred Halal tourism destination for Muslim tourists by introducing and promoting Halal cuisines, Halal food culture, Halal food restaurants and general Halal services of interest for Muslims. However, the same was not observed in the case of China, which dealt with the issue of religion as an ethnic issue in its culinary tourism strategies. The findings furnished by the present study accommodate both the perspectives of the industry and the research by providing a framework for essential website dimensions for the promotion of Halal culinary tourism and additional Halal services.

1. Introduction

Food is considered to be one of the significant aspects that influence visitors' satisfaction with a destination, as it allows for a more fulfilling sensory experience by utilizing all of a tourist's senses (Hall, 2003). Expenditure on food is a major item in the tourist budget accounting for one-third of tourism expenditures and a primary source of earning tourism revenue (Meler & Cerovic, 2003). Local cuisines provide tourists with genuine cultural experiences of the host destination and serve as a core manifestation of its intangible heritage (Okumus, Okumus, & McKercher, 2007), thus providing marketable images of the destination (Henderson, 2009; Quan & Wang, 2004). Historically, services and facilities frequented by Muslim tourists are different from those of conventional tourists with the availability of Halal cuisine being the most pertinent and sought-after choice for them (Dinar standard, 2012). This has led to an increased interest in Halal tourism, an emerging trend in the tourism and hospitality domain, which primarily focuses on the development and provision of different tourism products and services to fulfill the distinctive requirements of Muslim tourists in conformance with their religious teachings (Battour & Ismail, 2016; El-Gohary, 2016).

The global Muslim population is overall large and growing. It was estimated to be 1.8 billion in 2015, making up approximately 24.1% of the world's population, a proportion that is projected to increase to 31.1% with 3 billion inhabitants in the year 2060 (Pew Research Center, 2017). The Muslim travel market is emerging as the fastest growing segment in the global travel industry and generates impressive statistics. In the year 2015, international Muslim travelers were estimated to be 117 million, a figure that is projected to ascend to 168 million by the year 2020, with tourism receipts in excess of USD 200 billion (Global Muslim Travel Index, 2016). To put this into perspective, in the year 2013, the largest source destinations for outbound tourism in the world, i.e., China and the USA, generated tourism receipts of USD 131.3 million and USD 121.3 million, respectively, while the revenues spawned by Muslim travelers amounted to USD 140 million alone, representing 11.6% of global market share (Mayock, 2015). The Muslim travel market is relatively young, and it is becoming increasingly affluent (Reuters & Standard, 2013). The commercial aspects of the Muslim travel market, coupled with Muslim tourists' adherence to the complete code of conduct levied by their religion, demand appreciation of the distinctive characteristics and preferences of Muslim tourists by tourism bureaus and destination marketing organizations (Henderson, 2010).

Overall, there is notably limited research on Muslim tourism (Kim, Im, & King, 2015). The existing research on Muslim tourists is predominantly atheoretical and descriptive in nature (Oktadiana, Pierce & Chon, 2016), articulating the knowledge related to Islamic perspectives on tourism (El-Gohary, 2016) and deliberating the features of Muslim tourist behavior that comply with the Islamic teachings (Ryan, 2016). There is a lacuna of research on strategizing the underlying marketing

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frameworks for Halal culinary and tourism promotion. Therefore, the current research aims to analyze the marketing strategies related to Halal culinary demands in particular and other Halal tourism and hospitality aspects in general, as described by the four popular non-Muslim Asian destinations for Muslim tourists, i.e., China, Japan, South Korea, and Thailand, on their official tourism bureaus websites by applying content analysis method of investigation determined by Neumann (2003) and Finn, Elliot-White, and Walton (2000). One of the largest source regions of inbound tourism to these countries is South East Asia, which is home to a Muslim population of approximately 240 million, including Muslim majority countries such as Malaysia, Brunei, and Indonesia and other countries that have sizable Muslim contingencies such as Singapore, Thailand, and the Philippines (Yusof, 2015).

The limited research on Halal tourism is largely confined to the development of Halal tourism in the Muslim majority countries, e.g., Malaysia (Henderson, 2016a; Zailani, Omar, & Kopong, 2011), Indonesia (Mohsin, Ramli, & Alkhulayfi, 2016) Turkey (Duman, 2012) Iran and Saudi Arabia (Zamani-Farahani & Henderson, 2010). The research in non-Muslim destinations is still in the preliminary phase. Moreover, we chose government-backed tourism bureau websites, as they are the most extensively used mediums to search for tourist-related information (Beldona & Cai, 2006; Heung, 2003). The content of the government-sponsored tourism websites is most likely to be consulted by the potential tourists to seek out relevant information regarding the destination of interest and activities, facilities and services provided (Boyne & Hall, 2004). A destination's tourism bureau website is the starting point of information dissemination. Such sites are designed to direct online visitors' attention to tourist attractions and value-added resources, such as restaurants and hotels (Beldona & Cai, 2006). Therefore, the manner in which information regarding Halal cuisine and related Halal services is presented and promoted on such sites can prove to be pivotal in addressing the concerns of Muslim tourists before choosing a destination of their interest.

The rest of this paper is organized in the following manner. First, the literature review section entails the relevant scholarship on food tourism, Halal tourism and culinary marketing strategies. Next, the methodology section introduces the overall state of culinary and Halal tourism in the destinations of interest in this study, i.e., China, Japan, South Korea, and Thailand, and the content analysis portion conceptualizes the evaluation framework of Halal culinary and tourism marketing strategies. The findings section appraises the use of different marketing strategies by the tourism bureau websites to promote Halal cuisines and additional Halal facilities to attract Muslim tourists. The findings are supported by representative texts, graphics, and images from the concerned websites. This is followed by a discussion of the results with implications for destination marketers, policymakers, and scholars. Lastly, the study's limitations are stated with potential directions for future researchers.

2. Literature review

2.1. Food tourism

Local cuisines are regarded as an important source for creating competitive differentiation for a destination, as they provide a necessary cultural expression when other aspects of a destination are essentially generic in nature such as climate, buildings and shopping malls (Hjalanger & Richards, 2002; du Rand & Heath, 2006). Studies on food tourism marketing predominantly focus on the destination's food image as a unique culinary asset and a building block in the promotion of tourism of those destinations (Boyne & Hall, 2004; Horng & Tsai, 2010; Okumus et al., 2007).

Food-based tourism has been referred to with different terms, including culinary tourism, gastronomic tourism and gourmet tourism. Hall and Sharples (2003) assert that this classification is largely based

on the tourist's level of interest in food when travelling. For instance, gourmet tourism, gastronomic tourism, and cuisine tourism are high-interest food tourism typologies that are usually employed when the primary motive for travelling is food, i.e., visiting restaurants, wineries or markets. Moderate interest in food, which is termed culinary tourism, is not demarcated only to food and drink, but it extends to the overall tourist experiences that revolve around food as part of a wider range of other lifestyle activities. Low interest in food, which is referred to as rural/urban tourism, involves a tourist's participation in food-related activities merely to experience something different. Lastly, no interest in food implies that a tourist engages in food-related activity only to meet basic survival needs. To categorize a tourist as travelling for food tourism, Hall and Sharples (2003) reasoned that he or she must possess the minimum threshold of maintaining a low interest in food. Because Muslim tourists are required by their faith to follow certain religious stipulations in their food consumption, all Muslims, to some extent, are culinary tourists. This is the reason that product developments and marketing efforts designed for and directed toward Muslim tourists are distinct from other forms of tourism; they are based on Islamic values and teachings (Mohsin et al., 2016).

To develop an effective marketing strategy to promote culinary tourism, host destinations require a robust understanding of local culinary culture and proficiency to identify and make good use of the core resources of culinary tourism (Horng & Tsai, 2012). Culinary tourism resources are categorized into four different classes by Ignatov and Smith (2006) and Smith and Xiao (2008). First, the facilities category refers to the building and land use that is connected with food preparation, production, and distribution. Second, the activities category involves food consumption such as dining at restaurants, touring through food districts and educational opportunities such as cooking classes. Third, the events category, which is considered to be the most visible aspect of culinary tourism, includes food shows and food festivals. Lastly, the organizations category is comprised of those that serve culinary tourists and support the development of the culinary tourism market. This category includes restaurants, certification systems, quality assurance classification systems and culinary tourism associations. Destinations should base their culinary tourism marketing campaigns on their core culinary resources (Horng & Tsai, 2012).

It has been noted that Muslims are becoming increasingly sensitive to consuming products and services that adhere to the Islamic teachings (Battour, Ismail, & Battor, 2011; Jafari & Scott, 2014). Therefore, culinary marketing strategies targeted at Muslim tourists need to incorporate the religious constrictions of their faith.

2.2. Halal tourism

Muslims are encouraged by their religion to travel. Contrary to popular belief, travelling in Islam is not only confined to Hajj or Umrah, a pilgrimage to the sacred city of Muslims in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. Travelling has also been encouraged in Islam for fulfilling other purposes such as leisure, socialization, enhancement of well-being, knowledge seeking and learning and appreciating the magnificence of the creations of God (Oktadiana, Pearce, & Chon, 2016; Sanad, Kassem, & Scott, 2010). For Muslims, there are certain obligations stipulated by Islam to follow while travelling (or otherwise in their daily lives). For instance, in the context of food there is an unequivocal categorization between Haraam (literally meaning non-permissible) and Halal (meaning permissible) food. Haraam food products are prohibited for Muslims to consume and constitute items such as carrion, pork, alcohol and the meat of an animal not slaughtered in an Islamic way (Yousaf, 2016). Halal is a term designated by Islam that encompasses all those products that are permissible, lawful and unexceptionable for Muslims to consume (El-Gohary, 2016). However, in Islam Halal (or Haraam) is not only confined to dietary habits; this term has broader implications for Muslims to attain spiritual status by internalizing the complete way of life fostered by Islamic teachings.

The most significant aspect of travelling for Muslims is the availability of Halal cuisine (Dinar standard, 2012); however, most of Muslim travelers report difficulties in obtaining Halal food, especially in the non-Muslim countries (Bon & Hussain, 2010). Therefore, having food outlets with appropriate Halal affirmation that are conveniently identifiable is a sought-after choice of Muslim tourists. Of all the foods, meat is a subject of particular attention for Muslims. This is because Islamic teachings of meat slaughter vary significantly compared to the traditional way (Henderson, 2016a, 2016b). The practice includes 'severing jugular veins, carotid arteries and windpipe by a razor-sharp blade in a single swipe' concurrently uttering the phrase Bismillah-Al-lahu-Akbar, which means in the name of Allah Almighty, draining all the blood from the animal carcass (Harvey, 2010, p. 11).

Although terms such as Islamic tourism and Halal tourism are used interchangeably by academicians and practitioners when referring to the Muslim travel market, several studies have made distinctions between them and prefer the use of the term Halal tourism to refer to the Muslim travel market (Battour & Ismail, 2016; El-Gohary, 2016; Henderson, 2010). The two concepts share the same basis of religious dimensionality by agreeing that all tourism related activities undertaken by Muslims in a state of travel should be in accordance with the Islamic teachings. However, Islamic tourism has confined travel motivation to be religious in nature and tourists to be largely interested in the Islamic culture of the host destination. Meanwhile, Halal tourism encompasses a wider range of tourism activities of Muslim tourists, as the travelling motivation may not be entirely religious and the destination could also be a non-Muslim country. For the purpose of this research, and its relevance to the tourism sector, we will discuss Muslim travel in the context of Halal tourism. Further, the discussion surrounding Halal tourism is focused on cuisine with peripheral references to other Halal tourism and hospitality services.

2.3. Website tourism marketing and theoretical taxonomy of food tourists

Tourism in general is considered more suitable for marketing on the web due to its heterogeneity, intangibility and dependence on the visual manifestation of tourism products (Morgan, Pritchard & Piggott, 2003). The distinctive features of the internet such as easy access, low cost, global reach and information profusion has made it the ultimate communication channel for online travelers and destination-marketing organizations (Heung, 2003). Today, potential tourists can easily decipher the perceived value of different destinations and their tourism products using the internet (Tso & Law, 2005). This is why the internet is considered to be the first point of embarkation for tourists (Buhalis & Licata, 2002).

The content of government tourism websites is central to the promotion of culinary tourism and pertinent in constituting the perceived culinary image of the destination (Horng & Tsai, 2010). Websites have the capacity to address senses in a way that far surpasses that of any other media (Newhagen & Rafaeli, 1996). This capacity allows websites to captivate more attention by using appealing culinary visuals that involve images of food, food texture characteristics, food content, cooking methods and the physical and social environment around food establishments. As all tourists navigate through the same host destination's government tourism website, Boyne, Halls, & Williams (2003) indicated that the manner in which tourism websites are designed has a critical bearing on the breadth of people who find relevant information in them. Boyne, Hall, and Williams (2003) introduced a theoretical taxonomy of tourists according to the degree of emphasis they place on the cuisines in their destination decision-making processes based on the theory of internet marketing. Using this taxonomy, information regarding food-related initiatives could be provided on tourism bureau websites in such a way to enhance the ease with which potential tourists could access and use it.

Type one: Food plays a significant role in tourist experiences. Type one tourists actively seek information about local culinary heritage, featured food, and high-quality cuisines.

Type two: Food is also important for these tourists; however, they do not actively search for culinary-related information in a tourism context; nevertheless, they appreciate it and may act upon it when furnished to them.

Type three: These tourists do not attach much importance to culinary aspects as part of the overall tourism experience, but that may change in future trips if they have a delightful culinary experience during their trip.

Type four: These tourists have no interest in good cuisine and will continue to remain indifferent to cuisine and culinary aspects of tourism even if presented with food-tourism promotion materials.

The major contention purported by this taxonomy is that exposure to local tourism products on tourism bureau websites for type one, two, and three tourists is a key dimension to attracting their attention, arousing their interest, and achieving subsequent sales. Muslim tourists are bound by their religion to follow certain dietary requirements; therefore, they cannot remain indifferent in their food choices. A certain level of interest to ensure that their food adheres to the prerequisites stipulated by Islam makes Muslim tourists type one and two tourists to a large extent and much less likely type three tourists. The seminal work on Halal tourism to date suggests that the destinations that strive to attract Muslim tourists should attend to the multiple aspects of the Halal lifestyle, which include food (Halal restaurants), accommodation (Sharia-compliant hotels), transportation practices (Halal trips), shopping, fashion, finance, and medical needs (Battour & Ismail, 2016; El-Gohary, 2016; Mayock, 2015; Oktadiana et al., 2016). Therefore, positioning information related to Halal culinary promotion and additional Halal services and facilities in such a way is pivotal to catering to Muslim tourists who articulate more interest in the culinary offerings of the destination compared to regular tourists.

For the purpose of this research, the use of the internet for promoting Halal culinary tourism was compared and contrasted through content analysis of the national tourism bureaus of mainland China (China National Tourism Organization: CNTO), South Korea (Korea Tourism Organization: KTO), Japan (Japan National Tourism Organization: JNTO) and Thailand (Tourism Authority of Thailand: TAT).

3. Method

3.1. Context of the study

Mainland China, Japan, Thailand, and South Korea were selected and compared in this study as these destinations share several features, the most important of which is that they continue to experience increased inbound arrivals from the South East Asian Muslim majority countries (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2017). China is among the leading travel destinations for inbound Muslim tourists globally (Salam Standard, 2016). In 2015, China attracted approximately 1.98 million tourists from four majority-Muslim countries of Asia alone, i.e., Malaysia, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, and Pakistan, comprising 7.6% of China's total inbound tourism (CNTA, 2016). China is a large country, and its contrasting geographical environment, climate differences and numerous ethnic groups have cultivated different tastes in food throughout China (Huang, 2009). The introduction and dissemination of Islam in China has led to a localized version of the religion, blended with ethnic folk customs, beliefs and festivals; and, as a result, 10 ethnic minority groups have emerged that constitute the majority of the Muslim population, including Hui, Uyghur, Kazakh, Dongxiang, Khalkhas, Sala, Tajik, Uzbek, Bao'an and Tartar (Xu & Yu, 2009). Each of these ethnic minorities has their own distinguished culinary heritage (Sai, 2014).

Japanese culture emphasizes the authentic culinary experience of a variety of cuisines in relation to their place of origin (Tussyadiah, 2005). The tourism industry in Japan complements this culinary culture

by marketing famous local food products known as Meibutsu (Hashimoto & Telfer, 2008). Halal has recently been a trending topic in the Japanese business world, which has led to an enhanced understanding of Muslim tourist needs in the Japanese tourism and hospitality industries (Mohsin et al., 2016). In 2013, 300,000 Muslim tourists visited Japan, a figure that is expected to reach 1 million by the year 2020 or 5% of total visitors to Japan (Crescent ratings, 2014). Japan is experiencing a rapid increase in inbound tourism, especially from South East Asian Muslim majority countries like Indonesia and Malaysia, with the tourist influx having more than doubled between 2010 and 2015 (JNTO, 2016).

Thailand is building its reputation as the 'kitchen of the world" through the internationalization of Thai cuisines and by using them as a marketable product to attract culinary tourists. Thai food is considered to be one of the main destination attractions and a travel motivation for tourists (Rittichainuwat, Qu, & Mongkhonvanit, 2008). Thailand has a sizable indigenous Muslim contingency of approximately 3 million, constituting 4.3% of the total population (The World Fact Book, 2017). A Muslim tourist influx in Thailand is witnessing a sharp increase in recent years from 2.63 million in 2006 to 6.03 million in 2016, making a substantial 18.5% of total inbound tourism (Malay Mail Online, 2017). Given the recent boost in the global travel trends of Muslim tourists, the tourist authority of Thailand (TAT) is adopting a strategy to position Thailand as a Muslim-friendly destination through the provision of Muslim-friendly facilities and services.

South Korea is a country that has been vigorously campaigning to turn its traditional food into a tourism product for domestic and international tourists (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2012). 'Kimchi,' a traditional Korean side dish, has become an internationally recognized marker of Korean national identity. Through food, Korea aims to export its culinary heritage in an effort to boost the nation's brand-awareness, exports and tourism (Pham, 2013). South Korea is experiencing an increased tourist influx from Muslim-majority countries annually, with a growth rate of 20%, outpacing its overall inbound tourism growth (The Korea Times, 2016). In 2017, Korea aims to attract 1.2 million Muslim tourists, making up nearly 6% of total inbound tourists, a surge of 22% from 986,000 in 2016 (Yonhap News, 2017). Therefore, the country is making a strong push to cater to the requirements of Muslim tourists through the 'Muslim-friendly Korea' project (KBS World Radio, 2017).

3.2. Content analysis

The present study is a preliminary investigation to perform a content analysis of the intersection between Halal tourism promotion and a destination's culinary image on government tourism websites. Okumus et al. (2007) content analyzed government brochures and web pages to determine how food is used in the destination marketing of Turkey and Hong Kong. Boyne and Hall (2004) applied content analysis technique to examine food tourism initiatives on the World Wide Web in rural areas of the UK. Horng and Tsai (2010) content analyzed governmental websites of six East Asian countries to identify the marketing strategies that are used to promote those tourist destinations' cuisines and food culture. Thus, the previous studies have employed the content analysis method of investigation to examine a destination's culinary image as a building block of promoting inbound tourism. In view of the fact that provision of Halal food and Halal facilities and services are pivotal for Muslim tourists, we analyze the extent to which these concerns have been sufficiently addressed on government websites, which are generally the primary source of information for tourists. This study focused on 1) developing a framework of destination's culinary marketing strategies, on internet, specific to Halal cuisines and Halal tourism services, 2) analyzing the range and the diversity of Halal cuisines and Halal tourism services promoted by the destination, and 3) evaluating the extent to which Halal food as a Muslim dietary requirement is acknowledged by the destination.

Traditionally, content analysis is based on written or visual materials including web pages, brochures, advertisements, booklets, magazines, newspapers, films, videotapes, photographs and official documents (Jenkins, 1999). The five-step content analysis model identified by Neumann (2003) and Finn et al. (2000) was employed to conduct content analysis. The reliability and the validity of the content analysis was ensured by inviting three research associates with a Halal tourism, culinary tourism and hospitality background, who worked together with the authors of this research paper. In the first stage of the content analysis, the aims and objectives of the research were determined, and a coding scheme was contrived consulting three main reference sources, which includes a) seminal work on the Halal tourism, food tourism and culinary tourism marketing strategies on websites, b) tourism reports and publications on Halal tourism like Salam Standard (2016), Dinar Standard (2011, 2012) and Global Muslim Travel Index (2016,2017) and c) tourism bureau websites of the countries regarded as a benchmark of Halal tourism by GMTI (2017) i.e., Malaysia http://www.tourism.gov.my/, Indonesia http://www.indonesia.travel/en and Turkey http://www.goturkeytourism.com/. This first step of content analysis occurred over multiple phases. After both authors and research associates had the opportunity to examine all the sources, the notes were exchanged and preliminary observations were discussed in an effort to triangulate themes that had been independently found important (Pizarro Milian & Davidson, 2016). This process went on several times in order to ensure that the academic literature, marketing practices on benchmark websites and researchers' observations are constantly compared.

In the second stage, the 'content' was compiled from the up-to-date English versions of the official web pages of the China National Tourism Organization (CNTO), Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO), Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) and the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT). Furthermore, the official links to the regional or the supporting food-related or travel information websites suggesting additional information to the visitors concerning Halal tourism products and services were also included if they were in the English language. All the meanwhile, the researchers remained open to the emerging themes not identified in the earlier step, since it did not entirely take into account the Halal culinary and tourism marketing strategies employed by non-Muslim destinations. The researchers repeatedly turned to the coding scheme and engaged in further discussion of the trends observed in this second step to verify observations. This highly iterative process allowed authors to identify website marketing tactics central to Halal tourism. With revision, rewording and changes from the above steps the agreed upon framework consisted of 38 statements grouped into 8 factors as exhibited in Table 1.

In the third stage, the content was analyzed on the basis of frequency, intensity and space allocation to the Halal dimensionality of overall culinary tourism marketing on a destination's web pages. In the context of the present study, the content refers to words, symbols, audio, visuals, pictures, themes, documents, news clips, podcasts and ideas on web pages that can provide information regarding the destination's tourism with regard to Halal dimensions. On average, 150 pages of documents per destination were analyzed. The goal was to carefully a) review the content of a website, whether it takes into account the internet marketing strategies in practice for Halal culinary and tourism services, and b) categorize the information related to Halal culinary, tourism and hospitality services into the designated categories with a yes/no response based on the website's content. Next, the initial results were compared; and when disagreements emerged, those aspects that produced differences of opinion were examined until a consensus was reached. Lastly, the results were refined, and the findings were concluded. Throughout this process, the point of the differences between the evaluations was compared, contrasted and conferred among the researchers until all the categories were finalized and agreement was reached. The results of the reviews of the authors and those of the research associates achieved 90% consistency signifying

Table 1
The eight marketing dimensions of Halal tourism as identified by researchers. RO* stands for researchers observations.

Marketing of Halal Dimensions	Main source of adaptation
1. Halal Searchability	
Is link/reference to Muslim travel/Halal tourism present on the home page?	Pan & Fesenmaier, 2006; Herrero & San Martín, 2012.
Is there a sub-category of 'Halal food' in the overall food category?	Kim & Fesenmaier, 2008; WTOBC, 1999.
2. Halal Appraisal & Certification	
Defining the meaning of Halal, what constitutes Halal or non-halal	Henderson, 2010, 2016a; Yousaf, 2016; GMTI, 2016, 2017; El-Gohary, 2016.
Acknowledging Muslim travelers requirement of Halal cuisine	Battour et al., 2011; Dinar Standard, 2012; Bon & Hussain, 2010; Salam Standard, 2016.
Assurances of Halal standards being levied by the government	Lada et al., 2009; Aziz & Chok, 2013; El-Gohary, 2016.
Certification of Halal food restaurants	Horng & Tsai, 2010; GMTI, 2017; Salam Standard, 2016.
Halal food authorities being mentioned.	Mohsin et al., 2016.
3. Halal Cuisine Features	
Categorization of 'Halalness' of food	Battour et al., 2017.
Recipes of representative Halal cuisine	Horng & Tsai, 2010.
Description of Halal food menu	Omar & Jaafar, 2011.
Images of representative Halal cuisine	Kim & Eves, 2012; Spence et al., 2016; Okumus et al., 2007; Zhang & Seo, 2015.
Additional food related attributes of Halal cuisine	Jang et al., 2009; Peštek & Činjarević, 2014; Crouch & Ritchie, 1999.
4. Recommended Halal food Restaurants	
Recommended Halal food restaurants	Horng & Tsai, 2010; Baker et al., 2013; du Rand et al., 2003.
Promotion of restaurants offering international cuisines in Halal form	RO
Promotion of restaurants offering local cuisines in Halal form	Horng & Tsai, 2010; Hjalager, 2002; Okumus et al., 2007.
Information of Halal restaurants surrounding Tourist spots	RO
Links/addresses of the Halal food restaurants	Huang, 2009.
Links/addresses of Halal shops	Henderson, 2016b.
Promotion of certified Halal brands	RO
Restaurant guidebook for Muslim travelers	Horng & Tsai, 2010.
5. Enhancement of Halal experiences	
Providing a dialogue sheet that enable Muslims to ensure Halalness	Pratt & Tarlow, 2014.
Testimonials/blogs reports of Muslim travelers	Pan et al., 2007; Morgan, Pritchard & Piggott, 2003.
Highlighting Halal food chef and/or chef's expertise	Okumus et al., 2013; Kim & Eves, 2012; Fischer, 2011, pp. 1–30.
Promoting Halal food cooking classes	RO
Introduction to Muslim festivals and special occasion cuisines	RO
Links to Muslim friendly application	Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2007.
6. Halal as a Symbol of Culinary Diversity	
Culinary culture diverse enough to serve Muslim tourists	Salam Standard, 2016; Henderson, 2016b; Hjalager, 2002; Crouch & Ritchie, 1999.
Promoting a Halal food event as a regular cultural event in the country	Mohsin et al., 2016; Cohen & Neal, 2012; Quan & Wang, 2004.
Halal culinary routes	Croce & Perri, 2010.
Locally designed souvenirs for Muslim tourists	Swanson & Horridge, 2006; Sthapit & Björk, 2017; Snepenger, Murphy, O'Connell, & Gregg, 2003; Sriprasert et al., 2014.
7. Halal at Airport	
Availability of Halal food at airports	Battour & Ismail, 2016
Availability of Halal services at airports	Battour & Ismail, 2016
Availability of Halal food & services at national airlines	Rashid, 2007; Bogicevic et al., 2013; Oktadiana et al., 2016.
8. Additional Halal Services and Facilities	
Information regarding prayer rooms or Mosques (Worship place for Muslims)	Mohsin et al., 2016; Battour & Ismail, 2016.
Special site seeing spots of interest of Muslim tourists	Musa et al., 2016; Kessler, 2015
Availability of Washroom facilities/ritual washing area (Wuddu)	Henderson, 2010; Salam Standard, 2016.
Halal leisure facilities (gender segregation)	Henderson, 2010; Salam Standard, 2016; Mohsin et al., 2016.
Hotels rooms with Halal facilities for Muslim tourists (e.g., Qibla sign, prayer mats, Holy book etc)	El-Gohary, 2016; Battour & Ismail, 2016; Mayock, 2015; Dinar Standard, 2011

sufficient reliability (Davis & Cosenza, 1993). The time period during which the websites were content analyzed ranged from April 2017 to September 2017.

4. Findings

This section reports the findings of the study, summarized in Table 2, along with a brief account of the 8 factors that inform the theoretical background of this research.

4.1. Halal searchability

The homepage of a tourism website is the first contact point with an online visitor. Therefore, the first impression cast by the website's appearance and the preliminary information regarding a destination is central to invigorating a potential tourist's interest (World Tourism Organization Business Council, 1999, 82). The absence of relevant content on the tourism website adversely affects the tourism prospects of that destination (Pan & Fesenmaier, 2006). A good tourism website allows visitors to quickly locate the information they are seeking and

skip sections they do not desire (WTOBC 1999, 83). In fact, the ease of acquiring information of interest in tourism website navigation is one of the most important evaluative criteria influencing visitors' perceptions (Herrero & San Martín, 2012). Boyne at al. (2003) also emphasized that exposure to food-related information is a key dimension in generating interest and sales of tourists with minimal interest in food. For Muslim visitors, apart from the places of attraction that a destination website promotes, an important concern is the availability of Halal food and an appreciation of accompanying Muslim tourists' needs. This makes Halal searchability an important constituent of the marketing of the tourism websites to Muslim tourists.

Halal searchability was highly discernible in the KTO website. Halal food was appropriately covered in the foods category; the link to 'Halal restaurant week' was present on the homepage of the KTO website, which is referred to in Fig. 1. The Halal restaurant week is an annual event held by KTO to promote the Muslim-friendly restaurants and experience Korean and international cuisine in Halal format, as well as offer promotional coupons for various cultural activities and attractions. JNTO designed a separate website portal (muslimguide.jnto.go.jp/eng/) dedicated to Muslim travelers containing information

Table 2
Comparison of the Halal culinary and tourism marketing dimensions of 4 countries.

Marketing of Halal Dimensions	CNTO	KTO	JNTO	TAT
1. Halal Searchability				
Is link/reference to Muslim travel/Halal tourism present on the home page?	–	Y	Y	–
Is there a sub-category of 'Halal food' in the overall food category?	–	Y	Y	–
2. Halal Appraisal & Certification				
Defining the meaning of Halal, what constitutes Halal or non-halal	–	Y	Y	Y
Acknowledging Muslim travelers requirement of Halal cuisine	–	Y	Y	Y
Assurances of Halal standards being levied by the government	–	Y	Y	Y
Certification of Halal food restaurants	–	Y	Y	Y
Halal food authorities being mentioned.	–	Y	Y	Y
3. Halal Cuisine Features				
Categorization of 'Halalness' of food	–	Y	Y	–
Recipes of representative Halal cuisine	Y	Y	–	Y
Description of Halal food menu	Y	Y	Y	Y
Images of representative Halal cuisine	–	Y	Y	Y
Additional food related attributes of Halal cuisine	–	–	–	–
4. Recommended Halal food Restaurants				
Recommended Halal food restaurants	Y	Y	Y	Y
Promotion of restaurants offering international cuisines in Halal form	–	Y	Y	Y
Promotion of restaurants offering local cuisines in Halal form	Y	Y	Y	Y
Information of Halal restaurants surrounding Tourist spots	–	–	Y	Y
Links/addresses of the Halal food restaurants	–	Y	Y	Y
Links/addresses of Halal shops	–	Y	Y	–
Promotion of certified Halal brands	–	Y	–	–
Restaurant guidebook for Muslim travelers	–	Y	Y	Y
5. Enhancement of Halal experiences				
Providing a dialogue sheet that enable Muslims to ensure Halalness	–	Y	Y	–
Testimonials/blogs reports of Muslim travelers	–	Y	Y	–
Highlighting Halal food chef and/or chef's expertise	–	–	–	Y
Promoting Halal food cooking classes	–	–	–	Y
Introduction to Muslim festivals and special occasion cuisines	Y	–	–	Y
Links to Muslim friendly application	–	Y	Y	Y
6. Halal as a Symbol of Culinary Diversity				
Culinary culture diverse enough to serve Muslim tourists	Y	Y	Y	Y
Promoting a Halal food event as a regular cultural event in the country	–	Y	–	Y
Halal culinary routes	–	Y	–	Y
Locally designed souvenirs for Muslim tourists	–	–	Y	Y
7. Halal at Airport				
Availability of Halal food at airports	–	–	Y	–
Availability of Halal services at airports	–	–	Y	–
Availability of Halal food & services at national airlines	–	–	–	–
8. Additional Halal Services and Facilities				
Information regarding prayer rooms or Mosques (Worship place for Muslims)	–	Y	Y	Y
Special site seeing spots of interest of Muslim tourists	Y	Y	Y	Y
Availability of Washroom facilities/ritual washing area (Wuddu)	–	–	Y	–
Halal leisure facilities (gender segregation)	–	–	–	Y
Hotels rooms with Halal facilities for Muslim tourists (e.g., Qibla sign, prayer mats, Holy book etc)	–	–	Y	Y

regarding restaurants, hotels, prayer rooms, and mosques segregated into seven regions of Japan. This web portal, exhibited in Fig. 2, also allows Muslim visitors to search tourist spots as well as shopping centers with prayer room facilities. It is interesting to note that the Halal searchability in the tourism websites of mainland China and Thailand, countries with sizable Muslim ethnic populations, was relatively more

difficult. Visitors to these two website portals needed to seek out information pertaining to the requirements of Muslim tourists instead of the other way around. This was especially true in the case of CNTO where terms such as 'Muslim food' and 'Halal' were used interchangeably. As tourists tend to make quick evaluations of tourism websites (Kim & Fesenmaier, 2008), this implies that the home pages of the tourism websites should be attractive and contain relevant information that is easily accessible and navigable to conjure an approving first impression of the websites.

4.2. Halal appraisal and certification

Generally, in a non-Muslim country, not all food establishments are patronized by Muslim tourists, but only those that bear Halal certification, i.e., an assurance that the food being offered is in compliance with the teachings of Islam. Halal certification is one of the most important tourism resources to attract Muslim tourists. This guarantee is provided by a government-controlled agency or a credible Islamic organization which certifies that a company's product can be lawfully consumed by Muslims. Those who fulfil the criteria are issued a certificate and they are qualified to use the Halal logo on their products and promotional campaigns. Destinations that aspire to attract Muslim tourists must develop familiarity with Muslim food habits as well as other values and norms, and ensure the proper provision of same (Battour et al., 2011). An authentic Halal certification is advantageous in enhancing the marketability of the products to Muslims as it signifies authenticity, quality assurance, and trustworthiness and accordingly has a significant positive relationship with intention to purchase (Lada, Tanakinjal, & Amin, 2009; Aziz & Chok, 2013).

The results of the content analysis revealed that Japan, Thailand and Korea all frequently referred to the local and the international Halal food authorities to alleviate the concerns of Muslim tourists. TAT provided a detailed account of what is considered Halal in Islam along with the assurances of Halal levied by the Thai government through its own Halal authentication bodies:

> "Halal" in Arabic means any production, services or distributions that follow Islamic Law. Thus, "Halal food" refers to food that is prepared, mixed, or processed as prescribed in Islamic Law. Chefs must be a Muslim, keep kitchen appliances clean and not jointly use them with anything unlawful in Islam. Food ingredients must not be contaminated with any forbidden items. Meat must not come from forbidden animals; such as swine, dogs, monkeys; carnivorous animals including lions, tigers, bears; poisonous animals (and plants) and pests like rats, centipedes, scorpions; animals forbidden to be killed in Islam, e.g. ants, bees, and woodpeckers; repulsive animals like flies, worms; mules and domesticated and the like and; animals not slaughtered according to Islamic Law, i.e. the slaughter must be a Muslim and not torment the animals. The animals must be dead before being cooked. Animal blood and alcohol are also forbidden. With this rigidity, the Muslim will notice Halal logo at the restaurants and products in Arabic as in a rhombus frame. "The Central Islamic Council of Thailand" is displayed under the frame. The logo is granted by the Islamic Affairs Committee of the Central Islamic Council of Thailand or the provincial Committee to the entrepreneurs to show it on any labels, products or business (Source: Page 182 Thailand Gourmet Guide)

JNTO and KTO accommodated restaurants and hotels to employ a 'self-certified' Halal category, if the owner or chef was a Muslim. It was assumed that if operations are being run by a Muslim, then the Halal certified logo can be used by the restaurants without being formally validated by the authorities who oversee Halal production. This strategy may motivate Muslim entrepreneurs to enter into the hospitality industry without incurring the costs and meeting the strict criteria of Halal authorization; however, this approach can also backfire and undermine consumer trust if the proper adherence to Halal is not

Fig. 1. Promotional campaign of Halal restaurant on homepage of KTO.

Fig. 2. Homepage of JNTO Muslim web portal.

employed by the restaurants. However, the CNTO essentially focused on the strong culinary heritage of Hui and Uyghur Muslim ethnic communities rather than providing assurances of Halal standards. The reason for this approach is that the issue of religion has largely remained an ethnic issue in China (Wang, Ding, Scott, & Fan, 2010) as Islam embodies a more localized version through integration with local customs and native cultures (Xu & Yu, 2009). Similarly, the food of the Muslim ethnic minorities in China has embraced culinary traits from the majority Han Chinese, which has resulted in the formation of unique ethnic cuisines. Consequently, this ethnic component obtains more prominence in the culinary tourism attractions of China.

4.3. Halal cuisine features

The commonalities of Islamic faith allow host destinations to identify homogenous Muslim tourist needs across different Islamic countries (Oktadiana et al., 2016). However, an important matter of concern is that it may not be cost effective to standardize whole facilities to Halal because certain attributes that are necessary to lure Muslim tourists may not appeal to non-Muslim tourists (Battour, Ismail, Battor, &

Awais, 2017). Therefore, restaurants find it more pragmatic to categorize 'Halalness' to attract a diverse group of tourists. For this purpose, the KTO and JNTO categorized 'Halalness' to indicate the extent to which Halal standards are being adhered to by a food facility. For instance, the KTO introduced a Muslim-friendly grading system ranging from 'pork-free' to 'Halal certified' restaurants. In Halal certified, there is a strict adherence to Halal standards validated by an authority on Halal regulations, i.e., the Korea Muslim Federation after an internal audit of the kitchen. Similarly, the JNTO made a clear distinction between a Muslim-friendly menu and a Halal menu by referring to the former as a facility where there are concurrent non-halal operations such as the provision of alcohol or pork in the same facility that offers Halal and/or vegetarian food but the use of different sets of cooking and serving equipment. Figs. 3 and 4 demonstrate the Muslim menu classification by the JNTO and the KTO, respectively.

However, both the KTO and the JNTO emphasized that Muslim tourists should make a clear distinction in the Halal categorization of food before choosing a place.

There are many restaurants, cafés and retail shops around Seoul that serve or sell halal food. You'll find a large concentration of halal

Fig. 3. JNTO Menu classification Source: Muslim-friendly travel guide.

establishments in Itaewon, Seoul's best-known multicultural neighborhood. As halal food becomes increasingly popular with the number of Muslims visiting Korea on the rise, there is no doubt that more and more restaurants in Korea will offer halal options in the near future. However, distinction should be made between an establishment serving halal food and a halal-certified establishment. For Muslims, you may wish to inquire whether or not the establishment is certified by the Korea Muslim Federation before visiting (Source: Religious concerns; Halal restaurants in Korea)

Some souvenirs contain lard, gelatin or emulsifier (shortening) with a pig-derived ingredient. When buying souvenirs, show the Muslim support card at the end of this book to the store staff to make sure your purchases do not contain prohibited ingredients. (Source: Shoryudo Central Japan for Muslim visitors travel guide).

However, the TAT and the CNTO did not adhere to the Halal categorization. This may be attributed to the sizable contingency of indigenous Muslims concentrated in the particular geographic regions of both countries. The Halal restaurants in both countries offer local cuisines and are usually run by indigenous Muslim ethnic groups and have a target market of their own to which to cater. In addition, the food has an ethnic touch to it as it represents the ethnic tastes of particular regions and is popular among the non-Muslim population of the respective countries. Therefore, eating establishments that offer only Halal menus have better prospects in these two countries. Halal cuisines
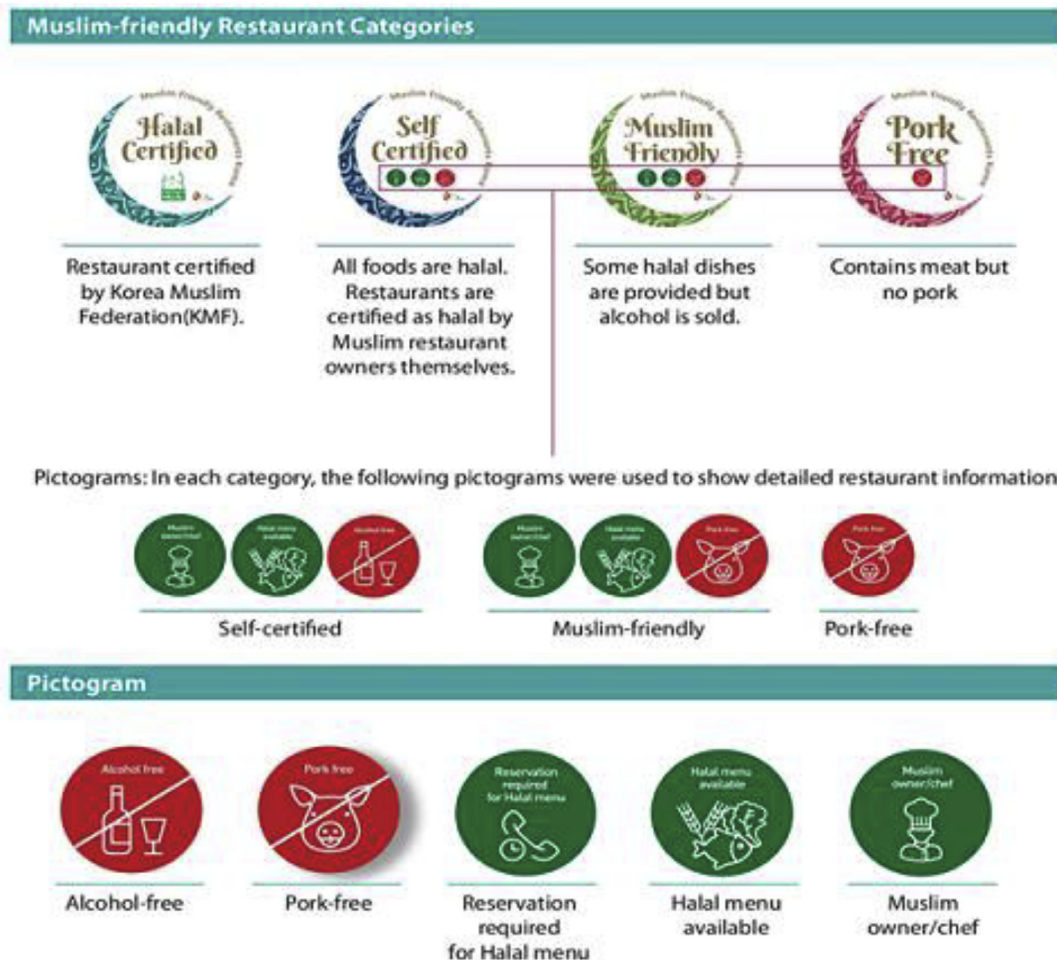
Fig. 4. KTO menu classification. Source: Muslim-friendly restaurants in Korea.

were promoted on the unidimensional attribute of being Halal. However, other food-related attributes that are discussed in the food tourism research that encompass local cuisine such as health and nutrition, food quality and price (Peštek & Činjarević, 2014), food presentation (Chi, Chua, Othman & Karim, 2013) and uniqueness (Jang, Ha, & Silkes, 2009) were less emphasized by all of the tourism websites. This may be attributed to the comprehensive nature of the term Halal, which promotes beliefs such as it is cleaner, more trustworthy, healthier, tastier, and of high quality (Burgmann, 2007; Lada et al., 2009; Aziz & Chok, 2013).

The sight of food tends to comprise a salient visual stimulus and involuntarily captures the attention of the online visitors (Kim & Eves, 2012; Spence, Okajima, Cheok, Petit, & Michel, 2016). Marketing the culinary tourism online is a highly visual experience. The photos of cuisines on the websites can make content more accessible to users because visual cues can influence the sensory perceptions and pleasurable views of food (Okumus et al., 2007; Zhang & Seo, 2015). Therefore, images of Halal cuisines not only serve to illustrate the type of cuisines offered, but they also ease the concerns of Muslim tourists regarding Halal food offerings. While describing Muslim food menus and recipes, there was an excess of verbosity on the CNTO, without accompanying images to complement the culinary offerings, and therefore leaving much to the imagination of potential tourists. In comparison, the JNTO, TAT and KTO provided brochures and Halal food guidebooks for Muslims featuring cuisines and information about menus and restaurants. The JNTO reassured Muslim travelers to try traditional Japanese food even if it may not be Halal certified because it does not violate their religious concerns. For instance, Muslim travelers were motivated to try dishes without being worried about the traditional Japanese seasoning Mirin, which is an alcohol, because it evaporates while cooking. As individual Muslims may associate different intensities to religious devoutness and physical manifestations of Islam (Henderson, 2010), Muslim travelers with high religiosity may not be sufficiently convinced to try such foods. Nonetheless, the provision of complete information to facilitate informed decision-making was attempted by the JNTO.

Promoting menu diversification by incorporating Halal menus and their features is valued for its ability to ensure food choices for Muslims (Omar & Jaafar, 2011). The KTO broadened the culinary options that it offers to Muslim tourists by promoting its local cuisines as a suitable consumption option for them. For instance, the popular Korean cuisines with ingredients comprising vegetables and seafood, i.e., kimchi, gangjeong and kong-guksu were promoted to Muslims as comparable alternatives as they presumably do not violate Halal standards. The cooking methods and core ingredients with appealing visuals of the dishes were explained in detail to address concerns, if any and to help Muslim tourists make informed dietary choices. To make Korean food more accessible and facilitate informed dietary choices, the KTO made a Muslim-friendly menu classification of 36 types of popular Korean food into four levels, i.e., vegetables only, seafood-based food, vegetable- or seafood-based food and meat-based food without pork.

The *'Thailand gourmet guide'* published by the TAT introduced potential tourists to food ingredients, menus and Thai culinary culture in various communities and localities of the country reflecting their lifestyle, ways of eating and distinctive identities. While promoting the regional food culture of Thai Muslim communities, the TAT positioned Thailand as a mixed cultural country where the Islamic way of life is not foreign due to the sizable Thai Muslim population that resides across the country. However, the availability of Halal cuisines, in the other parts of the country with scant Muslim populations, was also stressed. For instance, while referring to Pattaya, one of the most popular tourist attractions along the East cost of Thailand, the availability of Halal food was emphasized in the following manner:

"Pattaya", a colourful tourist city in Eastern Thailand, always arranges unique and novel experience to cater to tourists. Recently, it

has had more than 10 Halal restaurants around the city to offer but the most thrilling things is a Halal buffet service by a well-recognised hotel in Pattaya which no one has done before. The dishes are prepared by chefs who have had extensive experience in Halal cooking for decades. In addition, Halal food here has been accredited Halal food services standard for tourism by the Department of Tourism, Ministry of Tourism and Sports, in cooperation with the Central Islamic Council of Thailand. Thus, the restaurant is in accordance with the Halal practices. Recommended menus include Sup Hang Wua (oxtail soup), Nuea Phat Phrik Thai Dam (fried beef with black pepper) and Si Khrong Kae Op (roast lamb cutlets), another vibrant option of Pattaya you shouldn't miss. (Source: Page 186, Thailand Gourmet Guide)

The CNTO gave prominence to the eight major regional cuisines of China as representative of the culinary traditions of the country. These eight distinct cuisines include Shandong cuisine, Anhui cuisine, Guangdong cuisine, Jiangsu cuisine, Sichuan cuisine, Hunan cuisine, Zhejiang cuisine, and Fujian cuisine. However, very little information could be specifically located with regard to Halal cuisine or 'Muslim food.' A study by Singh and Bhatia (2016) concerning the local version of the official Chinese tourism website ((www.travelchina.gov.cn) revealed that it failed to provide food-related information, local cuisine menus and their recipes, the promotion of food trails, celebrity chefs, and other aspects of Chinese culinary culture. The same inadequacy of promotional material related to Halal tourism could also be observed in the English version. Overall, the information regarding Halal food was predominantly linked to the historical and cultural heritage of China and ethnic influences as illustrated in the following excerpt:

Yinchuan, as a main cultural center for the Hui people in China, offers a variety of unique Muslim food as well as traditional Chinese fare. The dishes most representative of Yinchuan are steamed lamb, mutton eaten with hands, shredded cake in mutton and beef soup, and spiced crisp chicken. The traditional Gaiwan Tea, which is said to have originated during the Tang Dynasty, is also of Hui origin. The tea comes in a variety of flavors due to the type of sweeteners or fruit essence added. Additionally, various kinds of fish from around the†Sand Lake Scenic Resort will whet visitors' appetites (Source: Dining, Yinchuan).

4.4. Recommended halal restaurants

Tourists' most noteworthy experiences with a place are usually connected with the food and the restaurants of that destination (Baker, Murrmann, & Green, 2013). Therefore, the promotion of specialty restaurants and eating places is a key to culinary tourism marketing campaigns (du Rand, Heath, & Alberts, 2003). Due to the dietary requirements specified by their faith, Muslims cannot patronize all of the restaurants and food choices that are provided by a destination. Therefore, the host destinations should design a fulfilling culinary experience for Muslim tourists within Islamic parameters. The KTO, JNTO and TAT websites promoted specially designed restaurant guidebooks for Muslim travelers furnishing details about recommended Halal food restaurants with their addresses to assist Muslim tourists design their itineraries. The KTO's *'Muslim friendly restaurants in Korea'* guidebook introduces 138 restaurants across the country. Thailand's *'Halal Check-in Guidebook'* was published specifically for Muslim tourists to help them locate recommended Halal food restaurants across the 5 regions of Thailand, i.e., Central, Northern, East Cost, North Eastern and Southern. Japan's *'Welcome guide for Muslim Visitors'* contains comprehensive information about Halal food facilities and tourist spots of interest for Muslim visitors. The Muslim travel guide of the JNTO focused on tourist attractions related to cultural and historical heritage, temples, mosques, natural resorts and shopping areas, consciously avoiding tourist attractions for conventional tourists such as night life, bars and

Fig. 5. KTO Restaurant guidebook for Muslim visitors, 2014

clubs.

The use of Halal cuisine in tourism marketing is significantly different from general culinary marketing strategies. This is because the latter relies on authentic local cuisines to enhance a destination's attractiveness to tourists (Horng & Tsai, 2010). Halal cuisines cannot be marketed in the same manner in the countries without sizable Muslim ethnic groups because they lack the Muslim culinary heritage, and most Halal restaurants are owned by migrants from Muslim countries and thus offer their native cuisines. Although this limits the destination's options in terms of indigenous Halal cuisines, it also provides an advantage to position the destination as a multi-cultural society, attracting Muslim tourists towards Halal restaurants not merely due to their Halal offerings but also the unique ambience, diverse culture and tastes they offered. In particular, in the case of the JNTO and the KTO, the majority of the international Halal cuisines include Indian, Pakistani, Turkish, Malaysian, Western and Middle Eastern flavors. The narrative descriptions of Halal cuisine restaurants by the KTO illustrated the multiculturalism of the country as shown in Fig. 5. In addition, the KTO and the JNTO promoted links to Halal markets and shops, and the KTO specifically listed certified Halal brands including chips, cookies, yogurt and frozen food, thus comprehensively covering all of the available Halal food options for Muslim tourists.

Meanwhile, the TAT extensively promoted Halal restaurants offering both local and international cuisines, and the CNTO exclusively focused on ethnic cuisines with Muslim influences. Moreover, the CNTO did not consistently provide specific links or addresses to the restaurants that offer Muslim food. In general, the roads and locations with a concentration of restaurants offering ethnic cuisines with 'Muslim influence' were mentioned. This finding has previously been endorsed by Huang (2009) in her studies that regional Chinese tourism websites promoted prominent eating places and specialty foods in that region but notably failed to provide valued information regarding where to

find these food products. The same issue was observed in the English web portals of the Chinese tourism bureau. Moreover, the cultural heritage associated with the ethnic cuisines was emphasized to highlight unique culinary images of places such as Beijing as demonstrated below:

> Autumn is the season for meat eaters and it is especially so in the northern parts of China, where the weather is rapidly cooling and bitter cold is approaching and preparing to settle in for the winter months. In Beijing, the tradition of barbecued meats is long established, with shops which are hundreds of years old still doing a bustling trade selling this old-time favorite. But barbecue here is very different from the Western concept of large pieces of meat or whole racks of ribs, slathered with thick sauces, roasting over an open fire. Beijing's traditional barbecue is more influenced by Muslim chefs, who first entered the capital with caravans that had traveled east along the Silk Road. This is true even now. There are two time-tested halal restaurants famous for barbecue in Beijing. One is Kaorou Wan, in the southern part of the city at Xuanwumen; the other is Kaorou Ji, near Shishahai in Beihai. Kaorou simply means barbecued meats, and Wan and Ji are the names of the original founders. (Source: Old Peking flavors, Beijing's barbecue)

4.5. Enhancement of halal experiences

The communication issues, contrary customs and lack of awareness of local etiquettes and cultural backgrounds may prevent tourists from experiencing quality service in the host destination (Pratt & Tarlow, 2014). Additionally, the communication issues involving a revered religious practice that makes Muslim tourists sensitive to what they consume may prove to be frustrating. Anticipating this, the KTO provided Muslim tourists with a finger conversation tool to help them assuage their concerns. For instance, if they feel uncertain about the acceptability of any dish they could point to one of the translated dialogues to the restaurant staff and get the answer. A representative Halal support card was also provided by the JNTO with information written in Japanese and English. It consisted of 12 questions with yes or no responses to allow Muslim tourists to judge for themselves whether the restaurant or hotel followed Halal standards. These finger conversation tools and Halal support card by the KTO and the JNTO are presented in Figs. 6 and 7, respectively.

Highlighting the expertise of local chefs is an important marketing strategy to promote local cuisines (Kim & Eves, 2012; Okumus, Kock, Scantlebury, & Okumus, 2013). However, in the case of Halal cuisine, the chef being Muslim is one of the quintessential features to establish the Halal standardization of an eating facility compared to their cooking or culinary skills (Fischer, 2011, pp. 1–30). Therefore, the chef's being Muslim was used as an asymptotic representation of the chef's 'expertise' by all the tourism bureaus in general, while only the TAT made reference to the culinary related skills of Halal food chefs, and it promoted Halal Thai food cooking classes.

> Learn how to make Halal Thai food in a private cooking class at the "Blue Elephant Cooking School and Restaurant", which is only available by appointment (233 Sathon Tai, Sathon district, Bangkok, Tel. +66 (0) 2673 9353-8 www.blueelephant.com). At this elegant whitewashed colonial-style building more than 100 years old located along Sathon Road, people have learnt to associate it as the home to the famous Halal-certified restaurant known throughout Europe. As the taste of its Halal-certified cuisine gained global acceptance, the chain has grown to 12 international outlets in Europe and the Middle East. The menu has a wide selection of ancient Thai dishes and fusion-Thai food. The private cooking lessons are taught by founder & master chef Nooror Somany-Steppe who generously shares all her tips and tricks in making each dish taste its best. The course starts off early in the morning by taking a walk to the fresh

market to purchase fresh produce. Learn tips on how to select fresh quality produce that are at its prime. Students bring back their shopping and start preparing each dish and then partake the full-course lunch they spent the morning preparing. Of course, foodies should not miss supplementing their own efforts with meals from the menu with rare ancient dishes and royal cuisine using authentic recipes from the royal court. Recommended dishes include lamb Matsaman curry, Tom Yam Kung, Kaeng Khiao Wan Kai Dam (green curry made with black chicken), and Kung Thot Sauce Makham (deep fried prawns with tamarind sauce). (Source: Page 183, Thailand Gourmet Guide)

A tourism product is essentially an experience product, and it is difficult to assess such a product prior to purchase (McIntosh, 1972). In this case, travel blogs and tourists testimonials reflect the kaleidoscopic aspects of a visitor's experience of a destination (Pan, MacLaurin, & Crotts, 2007; Morgan et al., 2003). The use of travel blogs by Muslim tourists as a promotional tool could serve as a preferred choice of pre-purchase information and influence the travel decision-making of Muslim tourists. Integrating tourist testimonials and opinions with destination marketing campaigns is specifically relevant when there are uncertainties associated with tourism products like the availability of Halal cuisines and other Halal services in traditionally non-Muslim destinations, and thus offers pertinent competitive advantages in an intensely competitive tourism and hospitality industry. The JNTO published travel blogs by collaborating with Muslim bloggers to inspire other Muslim tourists through their travel experiences to Japan with regard to Halal food, prayer facilities and the historical and cultural offerings of the country. For instance, the personal account of a Muslim tourist describing her trip to Osaka and Kyoto presented information that was not convincingly covered by the tourism bureau of Japan (JNTO). Stating her pleasant experience of finding a Muslim restaurant in an unexpected place (an airport), images of Halal certification and Halal assurance messages were also included, as shown in Fig. 8:

> The bus reaches Kansai Airport exactly within 1 hour's time. Oh, my stomach's growling. Come, let's have something to eat. What's best about Kansai Airport is the halal restaurants that it provides. So if you happen to be at Kansai Airport, don't miss this opportunity to eat at The U-don Sanuki. You can enjoy a sumptuous meal of Japanese food without having any doubts that it is halal … I like the hotel's effort in preparing halal food and making Muslims like me feel most welcome here … Don't worry, guys. Kansai Airport has a variety of restaurants that serve halal Japanese food. (Source: http://muslimguide.jnto.go.jp/eng/blog/fadilla03/)

The KTO also incorporated the testimonials of Muslims; however, contrary to the JNTO's template of travel blogs, it emphasized the presentation of celebrity endorsements from ambassadors of Oman and Indonesia and provided the shared living experiences of students studying in Korea, as exhibited in Fig. 9.

The digitization of the tourist environment mediates tourist experiences by enhancing and/or re-interpreting the spatial and temporal nature of tourist activities. For instance, mobile applications assist tourists in acquiring rich information delivered in a personalized manner (Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2007). The KTO provided Muslim tourists with a Muslim-friendly Korean map that entails the whereabouts of Halal restaurants and other Halal facilities such as prayer rooms and mosques. The Muslim-friendly destination application by the TAT provides a mobile searching tool for Halal-food restaurants, mosques and hotels selected for Muslims by utilizing functions such as map navigation and searching locations in proximity. Similarly, the JNTO promoted a Muslim-friendly app to search for Muslim restaurants and hotels; however, this was only confined to Kansai prefecture. The location-based and the context-based information provided by information and communication technologies is critical for Halal tourism as services frequented by Muslim tourists in a non-Muslim destination may

Fig. 6. The finger conversation tool by KTO for Muslim tourists to communicate with restaurant staff.

be scattered and not be in abundance, which has led to the call for a digital space that integrates all the Muslim-friendly limited resources in a user-friendly manner. Thailand is already working on the development of such an application called 'Halal routes'; however, it is in its testing phase, and it is available only in the Thai language for domestic travelers.

The CNTO offered little to provide promotional information regarding products and services that can enhance Muslim tourists' travel experiences. The CNTO made reference to Muslim festivals with their indigenous names, e.g., 'Bairam,' instead of alluding to them using more commonly used Arabic terms among Muslims, i.e., 'eid,' meaning festivity. There was also inconsistency in information provision in references to the two large Muslim ethnicities. For instance, while elucidating the life style attractions of the Hui Muslims in Yinchuan, popular Islamic festivals and practices such as 'Lesser Bairam' that fall on the first day of the tenth Islamic month, and the month of 'Ramadan,' when Muslims fast from dawn until sunset were referred to. However, the same was precluded from the attractions of the Uyghur Muslim ethnic group in Xinjiang who share the same festivals and celebrations. The TAT also highlighted the lifestyle of Muslim communities through their festivals and rituals and integrated it with tourist interests. The indigenous communities of Thai Muslims were promoted as a tourist attraction in itself due to their distinctive identities, including Bon Thon and Ya Kang, traditional Thai Muslim fishing villages, with special emphasis for tourists to plan their trips on days other than Friday, due to its significance as a Muslim holiday.

4.6. Halal as a symbol of culinary cultural diversity

The richness, authenticity and diversity of culinary cultural heritage are features that can add value to the destination's tourism product portfolio (Hjalager, 2002; Crouch & Ritchie, 1999) and could serve diversified needs of inbound tourists from different parts of the world (Henderson, 2016b). The emphasis on promoting Halal food and related Halal facilities and services as a symbolic representation of a country's culinary cultural diversity can act as a powerful marketing tool to attain a sustainable competitive advantage for a destination (Salam Standard, 2016). Both the KTO and the TAT promoted the local food culture to Muslim tourists by positioning their destinations as a multicultural place possessing a rich culinary history, diverse enough to assemble a wide variety of dietary choices and fulfill the dietary constrictions of faith.

Thailand also provides a wide array of gourmet options for travelers from all walks of life. All types of Asian food; such as, Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, and Indian, or non-Asian cuisine; such as, Italian, French, and Mediterranean, are prepared by experienced chefs from the dishes' countries of origin. For Muslim travelers, Halal food is easy to find as many Thai Muslim restaurants are available throughout the country. (Source: Page 81, Amazing Thai taste)

Korea's food scene is evolving thanks to classic international cuisine and modern fusion dishes. The result is a delectable, eclectic and dynamic food culture. Today's Korean food is more accessible than ever before. That is why we are delighted to help Muslim travelers by creating opportunities to experience this country's unique

ムスリムとのコミュニケーションシート
Sheet for communication between Muslim visitors and Japanese

ホテル・レストラン接客係の皆さま
このシートはイスラム教徒（ムスリム）のお客様が食事など宗教上のご希望を伝えるために記入するものです。チェックがついている条件の中で、対応できる事柄があればお客様にご提供をお願い致します。

To hotel and restaurant staff
This sheet is for Muslim visitors to use when indicating their preferences (religious requirements) when ordering food or drink. If the customer has marked any of the conditions with a tick, please serve the customer accordingly.

食事編　For restaurants

この店には、「ノンポーク」メニュー※はありますか？
Please tick here
※豚肉およびベーコン、ソーセージ、ラード、ゼラチン、ショートニング、乳化剤など一切の豚由来成分、アルコールおよびアルコール由来成分を一切使わない料理。

Does this restaurant have a non-pork menu*?
*Food containing absolutely non-pork, bacon, or other pork-derived ingredients, including sausages, lard, gelatin, shortening, or emulsifier, and non-alcohol or alcohol-derived ingredients.

□ はい (Yes)　　□ いいえ (No)

この店は、ベジタリアン向けの料理もしくはシーフード料理を提供できますか？
Can this restaurant provide vegetarian or seafood dishes?

□ はい (Yes)　　□ いいえ (No)

この店は、お酒やみりんを使わない料理を提供できますか？
Can this restaurant provide dishes that are free from alcohol or *mirin*?

□ はい (Yes)　　□ いいえ (No)

この店は、お醤油を使わない料理を提供できますか？
（アルコールが添加されたものでなく、自然発酵ならOKです）
Can this restaurant offer shoyu-free dishes?
(Naturally fermented *shoyu* to which no added alcohol is acceptable.)

□ はい (Yes)　　□ いいえ (No)

この店はイスラム教徒向けメニューと他の料理が混ざらないように、材料の保存場所、調理器具、食器などを分けていますか？
Does this restaurant store ingredients separately so that food for Muslims is not mixed with food for others? And are cooking and eating utensils kept separately?

□ はい (Yes)　　□ いいえ (No)

この店では使い捨ての食器、箸を使わせていただけますか？
Does this restaurant provide disposable plates and chopsticks?

□ はい (Yes)　　□ いいえ (No)

このお店の中では、他のお客様にアルコール飲料が提供されますか？
Are alcoholic drinks served to other customers in this restaurant?

□ はい (Yes)　　□ いいえ (No)

ホテル・施設編　For hotels and facilities

部屋のアルコール類を撤去していただくことはできますか？
Can you ensure rooms are free of alcoholic drinks?

□ はい (Yes)　　□ いいえ (No)

礼拝に使えるスペースはありますか？
Do you have a space that can be used for prayer?

□ はい (Yes)　　□ いいえ (No)

礼拝に必要なアイテム※を貸していただけますか？
※コーラン、礼拝用のマット、メッカの方角を示すコンパス、女性の礼拝用衣服

Do you lend items* necessary for prayer?
*Copies of the Koran, prayer mats, compasses to show the direction of Mecca, clothing for women to pray in

□ はい (Yes)　　□ いいえ (No)

近くにモスクがあったら行き方を教えてください。
If there is a mosque nearby, please tell me how to get there.
□ はい、あるのでお教えします。
(Yes, there is a mosque nearby and we can tell you how to find it.)
□ いいえ、近くにはありません。
(No, there is no mosque in the vicinity.)

この商品には豚肉およびベーコン、ソーセージ、ラード、ゼラチン、ショートニング、乳化剤など豚由来の原材料が入っていますか？
Does this product contain any pork or any other pork-derived items, including bacon, sausages, lard, gelatin, shortening, or emulsifier?

□ はい (Yes)　　□ いいえ (No)

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Fig. 7. Halal support card by JNTO to facilitate communication between Muslim tourists and Japanese restaurant and hotel staff.

Fig. 8. Travel blogs of popular Muslim bloggers. Source: http://muslimguide.jnto.go.jp/eng/blog/fadilla03/.

A Talk with Muslim Students in Korea

Must-try Korean Food & Must-see Places for Muslims.

Kairun, 1996, Malaysia

I have been in Korea since 2014 and I am currently a full-time student at Konkuk University in Korea. My favorite Korean dish is gimbap because of the variety of ingredients that go into it. I like the diversity of flavors from the ingredients.

I have visited many tourist destinations in Korea. So far, my favorite is Jeju island. The many beautiful natural landscapes and other interesting destinations to visit made it a memorable location.
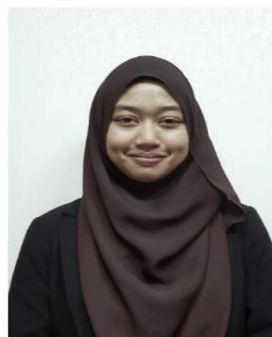
Syahidah, 1994, Malaysia

I am a student studying at Konkuk University in Korea. I like to eat doenjang-jjigae because it has a unique taste and it fits my preference. It's not too salty and it's a healthy dish. The Korean dish that I want to recommend to all the Muslim friends out there is noodles. There are a variety of noodles in Korea, including kal-guksu, naengmyeon, and bibim-guksu, just to name a few, and most of them can be enjoyed by Muslims.

I have visited Suncheon. Compared to Seoul, the natural ecological system is well preserved in Suncheon. I felt quite relaxed when I saw the natural environment in Suncheon, and looking at the sunset in the wetland in the area was a very memorable experience to me.

Muhammad Wajid Saleem, 1989, Pakistan

I have lived in Korea since 2014 and I am currently studying at Hanyang University. Two of my favorite Korean dishes are Kimchi fried rice (bokkeumbap) and pajeon (green onion pancake). They are both very tasty.

I have also visited many tourist places in Korea and among them, I would like to recommend Busan. In my opinion, Busan's environment is very clean and there are many spots to visit and enjoy.

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Fig. 9. Testimonials of Muslim students. Source: Muslim friendly restaurants in Korea 2017

approach to food and dining (Source: Page 5, Muslim-friendly restaurants in Korea)

Furthermore, organizing Halal-themed food events is also regarded as a powerful promotional tool to attract Muslim tourists and to instill an enhanced understanding of the requirements of Muslim tourists in non-Muslim destinations (Mohsin et al., 2016). In particular, Halal-themed events of local culinary traditions, lifestyles and heritage that are associated with Muslims could attract both Muslim and non-Muslim tourists (Cohen & Neal, 2012). In this regard, the KTO promoted *'Halal Restaurant Week'* to highlight the Muslim-friendly dining options throughout the country. Meanwhile, the TAT promoted Halal food events such as *'Halal food Hillal Town'* as a major culinary attraction to its place of origin, i.e., Phuket, to manifest the diverse culinary culture of Thailand and highlight the traditional lifestyle of the local Muslim community. The TAT often referred to the Muslim ethnicities of the different regions promoted on the website to emphasize the multiculturalism of its society and to demonstrate its understanding of Muslim tourists' dietary needs and religious practices, as the country has an indigenous presence of Muslims of its own. For instance, referring to *Kad Baan Ho*, a night market, one of the differentiating features promoted by the TAT was the ethnicity of the sellers being Muslim, which could allow tourists to become familiar with the cultural experience of the cuisines that are rooted in the Muslim heritage:

> Muslim merchants set out long wide stalls offering a variety of goods including noodles, herbs, seasoning, vegetables and CDs. A male merchant fries samosas, while a lady wearing a hijab fries corn pancakes. Kad Ban Ho is named after the community of Muslim Chinese from the Yunnan province of China. Centuries ago, their pony caravans regularly travelled along the trade routes between China and the Lanna kingdom. The market of Kad Ban Ho offers goods that are not available in other ordinary market places like avocado, black chicken, Muslim-style chilli paste, herbs, sun-dried beef and fermented bean curd. (Source: Attraction, Kaad Ban Ho).

The promotion of culinary routes is regarded as a valuable tourism resource by integrating the regional distinctiveness in culinary traditions with other tourism products in the form of tour itineraries (Croce & Perri, 2010). Both the KTO and the TAT promoted short trips of interest for Muslim travelers, emphasizing the availability of Halal meals and being mindful of prayer timings during the course of the trip. However, the CNTO emphasized the country's culinary diversity based on the advanced culinary skills acquired throughout its long history. Halal food, which is known as *Qingzhen* or 清真食品 in the Chinese language and means 'adherence to Islamic teaching,' is usually perceived as a food of ethnic minorities in China, which shows relatively lesser awareness of the culinary image of Qingzhen or Halal food by the non-Muslim Chinese population (Sai, 2014). It receives similar treatment in government policies as is evident in the content analysis of the website of the CNTO, where the culinary image of Qingzhen overlaps with ethnic cuisines. Thus, when reference is made to the food of Uyghur or Hui Muslim ethnicities, it is usually implied that it is Halal food, i.e., Qingzhen. This distinction is difficult for Muslim tourists to comprehend; however, the CNTO made regular references to a strong Muslim ethnic representation in its culinary heritage:

> CNN Travel recently named Xi'an one of "Asia's 10 greatest street food cities," thanks in part to some of the offerings in the city's Muslim Quarter. As the name implies, this area is the hub of the Muslim community in Shaanxi province, serving as home to more than 20,000 muslims, 10 mosques and incredible cuisine and cultural hybrids, which came to Xi'an centuries ago when it served as the starting point of the Silk Road. The market in the Muslim Quarter is located just north of the Drum Tower and an excellent place to sample local cuisine of hand-cut noodles, lamb kebabs, quail eggs, rou jia (a popular street food that is somewhat like a hamburger, though often made with lamb) and fruit dumplings at the array of open-air restaurants and street food stands. Street food

vendors normally set up their stalls at 6 p.m. and run until midnight or later. The architecture and gardens at the mosques also are worthy of exploration. (Source: 72 hours in Xian, Muslim Quarter)

The JNTO highlighted the overall culinary diversity of the country as one of the main attractions to tourists by promoting the different regions of Japan with their indigenous *Meibutsu* blended with the local culture and heritage. The JNTO also promoted Halal-certified traditional Japanese sweets and ramen noodles as a symbolic reminder for Muslim tourists regarding their tourism experiences in Japan, as souvenirs brought back from a destination can prolong and reinforce the travelling experience (Swanson & Horridge, 2006). Moreover, non-food related souvenirs such as Japanese silk hijabs for Muslim female tourists were also accentuated. Muslim tourists have a high tendency to buy souvenirs pertaining to the cultural heritage of a destination due to their inaccessibility to certified Halal food-related souvenirs (Sriprasert, Chainin, & Rahman, 2014). Apart from Japan, no other destination integrated food-related souvenirs for Muslim tourists. That is because food-related souvenirs are a typical representation of a destination's history and culinary cultural heritage (Lin & Mao, 2015), which in the case of non-Muslim majority countries may materialize in the form of products that prevent Muslim tourists from consuming them due to the dietary restrictions of their faith. Nevertheless, souvenirs are indicative of a tourist's re-visit intention (Sthapit & Björk, 2017) and their significance in reliving the tourism experience for a long period of time and their social functions of expressing prestige and pride through the process of sharing and gifting (Snepenger, Murphy, O'Connell & Gregg., 2003) imply that there is a certain amount of space for the development of specially designed souvenirs for Muslim tourists.

4.7. Halal at airports

For tourists, the airport is the first physical interaction with the destination. The airports and national airlines could positively influence the preference of Muslim travelers by catering to the integral characteristics of the Muslim travel experience, for example by providing Halal meals and services such as prayer rooms and incorporating religious programs in the in-flight entertainment options (Battour & Ismail, 2016). In this regard, apart from the JNTO, the availability of Halal cuisine at airports was ignored by the other tourism bureaus. The JNTO highlighted two airports, Narita Airport and Kansai International Airport, as sites that support the needs of Muslim visitors.

The vegetarian food that is available on airlines as a convenient alternative to Halal food is unfavorably perceived by Muslim travelers (Rashid, 2007). Tourism bureaus need to take into consideration that airport ground services and in-flight services constitute an important part of a tourist's travel experience and create an overall image of the tourism experience as they are the first point of interaction with the destination (Bogicevic, Yang, Bilgihan, & Bujisic, 2013). Again, this does not imply absence of Halal cuisines and other Halal services at airports or on airlines. It merely highlights the lack of integration between airports, national flag carriers and tourism bureaus to utilize all of the available Halal resources in the country to promote the Halal-friendliness of the destination.

4.8. Promoting additional halal services

Halal tourism is not only limited to cuisines, but they also include additional services such as the availability of prayer rooms or mosques for Muslim tourists and especially designed facilities for washrooms and ritual washing before offering prayers, known as *'Wuddu,'* as Muslims traditionally prefer to use water for their hygiene. Muslim tourists possess a positive disposition towards hotels that take the initiative to fulfill their distinctive needs (Dinar Standard, 2011, pp. 15–24). For instance, hotels that offer prayer rooms, the gender segregation of facilities and even simple practices such as replacing alcohol with

chocolates and soft drinks in the mini bar in customer rooms can make Muslim travelers feel special (Mohsin et al., 2016). Therefore, in addition to providing Halal food, destinations that endeavor to attract Muslim tourists should address multiple facets of Halal lifestyle, including accommodation preferences and places of worship (Battour & Ismail, 2016; El-Gohary, 2016).

Muslims are required by Islam to offer prayers five times a day within a designated time period, and they are not permitted to delay it without a valid reason. Muslims especially prepare themselves for ceremonial Friday prayers, and they to attend the practice with extra effort compared to other daily prayers. A list of facilities that offer Halal services such as restaurants, prayer rooms and mosques, that are located near tourist spots would heighten the interest of Muslim tourists and complement the whole travelling experience for them (Musa, Mohezar, & Moghavvemi, 2016). The JNTO, KTO and TAT devoted a separate section in their travel guide books to promote the provision of additional Halal services such as prayer rooms, hotel facilities and the location of mosques for the Muslim travelers. In the absence of special facilities for *Wuddu*, the JNTO encouraged Muslim travelers to use common washing facilities but also reminded them to be aware of the rights of non-Muslims using the same facilities.

"Since there are few dedicated facilities for Wudu in Japan, it is advisable to perform Wudu before going out.· When performing Wudu in Japan, please be careful not to splash water too much in the washing area. Please take care so that the next person can also use the place comfortably. (Source: Shoryudo Central Japan for Muslim visitors travel guide)

Mosques were usually regarded as a place of attraction for Muslim tourists by all of the tourism boards in general. Mosques personify the spread of Islam and Muslim heritage, and their characterization as a tourist spot amplifies Muslim tourists' travel intentions (Mohsin, 2005). This is the reason why mosques are being transformed as tourist landmarks as the architecture and design of mosques reflect the cultural, architectural and historical aspects of a country (Kessler, 2015). For instance, the women-only mosque in Beijing was promoted as a cultural expression of the intermixture between Chinese and Islamic traditions as having a separate mosque for Muslim women is not a popular practice in most Muslim countries. Based on their understanding of Muslim tourists, the tourism bureaus offer travel packages that comply with Islamic beliefs and involve destination spots that are historically and culturally tied to Islam. It is noted that the CNTO promoted 'silk tour' packages to explore Chinese and Islamic culture and heritage along the land route of the ancient Silk Road. Historically, the introduction of Islam in China can be traced to the ancient Silk Road trade route, which facilitated the religion's adoption through two communication routes, i.e., by land in the northwestern regions of China and through the sea in the southeast (Wang et al., 2010).

The Silk Road is a 2000 year old route between Middle East and China. Traveling the Silk Road is an adventure where the west and Great Wall meets the Gobi Desert, ancient tombs, Lhama Temples and much more. This is an experienced mixture of Chinese and Islamic cultures. (Source: 15 day 14 night ancient Silk Road super value, CNTO)

Begin your travels in the border town of Kashgar, where you will visit the Id Kah Mosque, the largest mosque in the Xinjiang Province. Additional highlights include the Afaq Khoja Mausoleum, one of the best examples of Islamic architecture in China, and Kashgar's Grand Bazaar. (Source: Silk Road sojourn, CNTO)

There is also an increasing commercial interest in Sharia-compliance hotels in destinations that experience a high influx of Muslim tourists. Sharia-compliant hotels accommodate their modes of operations to satisfy Muslim travelers' needs (Salam Standard, 2016). Some of the features of Sharia-compliant hotels delineated by Henderson (2010)

include the provision of Halal food, alcohol prohibition, gender segregation in leisure and living arrangements, prayer rooms, the Quran (The holy book of Muslims), prayer mats, an indicator of Qibla directions towards Mecca in every room, and conservative staff dress. The TAT and the JNTO promoted sharia-compliance services at selected hotels for Muslim tourists. The strict adherence to all features of sharia-compliance where Islam is a minority religion may not be possible; however, a case could be made for international hubs that record a significant number of Muslim tourists to consider providing Muslim-friendly accommodations (Henderson, 2010). Such endeavors indicate that the tourism industry will benefit from obtaining an understanding of the thriving Muslim travel market and attempting to cater to the special needs of Muslim tourists. This is the reason that the GMTI (2017) ranks Thailand and Japan among the top 10 Muslim-friendly destinations with an indigenous Muslim population in the minority.

5. Discussion and conclusion

In the non-Muslim countries, some adjustments in tourism offerings should be integrated with promotional efforts to address the distinctive requirements of Muslims regarding food, daily prayers and travel preferences in general. It was found that the emerging Halal trend was integrated in the destination marketing and was given due consideration by the tourism bureaus of Thailand, Japan and Korea. These three tourism bureau websites published specially designed restaurant guidebooks for Muslim travelers to assuage their concerns regarding the availability of Halal cuisines. Because the most distinguished experiences of tourists are generally associated with local cuisines and restaurants (Baker et al., 2013), a separately designed food guidebook for Muslim travelers is an essential marketing strategy element to create an impression of a destination's Halal friendliness. The tourism bureaus of the TAT, KTO and JNTO largely pursued similar marketing strategies in promoting Halal tourism that were essentially built around easing the concerns of Muslim tourists through the provision of adequate information regarding Halal appraisal and certification, Halal cuisine features, recommended Halal restaurants, and the enhancement of Halal experiences.

In contrast, the CNTO took a different course by focusing on its culinary heritage and the authenticity of its ethnic cuisines without emphasizing the distinct dietary requirements of Muslim tourists. This is surprising given the resources that are possessed by Mainland China, i.e., a large contingency of an indigenous Muslim population of more than 22 million (Xu & Yu, 2009). For instance, if China were a Muslim country it would be the 18th largest Muslim country based on its population. Additionally, it has rich resources such as mosques, Halal cuisines and Muslim culture, all of which are good reasons to attract Muslim tourists. However, this is not reflected in its tourism marketing strategies. Traditionally, the Islamic religion, which is followed by 10 ethnic minorities in China, is deeply integrated with the traditional cultures of these ethnic groups. Therefore, religious tourism is often perceived as ethnic tourism in China, and issues pertaining to religion are perceived as ethnic issues (Wang et al., 2010). This explains the absence of a national Halal food authorizing organization in China to regulate the licensing and certification of Halal food. Consequently, this responsibility is devolved to provincial and autonomous regions' governments, which essentially implies uneven adherence to Halal standards throughout China. Therefore, there is a lack of consistency in the nationwide application of Halal food laws in China, and any attempt to legislate the regulation of Halal food at the national level is met with growing concerns within the country regarding whether a state with no official religion should legislate in conformity to the particular religious laws of Islam (Sile, 2015). Even the Chinese language version of the tourism bureau website fares poorly in providing an adequate description of the food tourism perspectives of China as a culinary destination (Singh & Bhatia, 2016). Huang (2009) also contended that food tourism is considered more of a supportive attraction rather than a key

attraction in China as reflected in the evident absence of the promotional value of food tourism on the Chinese tourism website. Thus, in Quan and Wang (2004), categorization, the attainability of peak touristic experiences, where the food of the host destination is one of the main travel motivations, is not a central part of the culinary promotion communication of the CNTO.

It may not be convenient for countries with a Muslim minority population to show compliance with all aspects of Halal tourism given the substantial infrastructural and operational modifications. Moreover, such modifications may be deemed unattractive by non-Muslim tourists (Mohsin et al., 2016). Additionally, Henderson (2010) also asserted that Muslim travelers should be prepared to allow some deviation from Islamic teachings and therefore lower their religious-related expectations from service-providers on the grounds that Islam allows some concessions to Muslims with regard to their religious obligations while travelling; for example, prayers can be shortened and fasting compulsion is relaxed during the month of Ramadan (Timothy & Iverson, 2006). Therefore, the KTO and the JNTO both found a contemporary solution to market restaurants with respect to their 'Halalness.' This strategy is novel as it allows for the attraction of diverse groups of tourists with varying culinary needs without compromising their unique dietary requirements. However, this also raises the additional risk with respect to Muslim tourists with higher levels of religiosity, as they will be less likely to compartmentalize their dietary routine and will only patronize properly certified Halal restaurants. Additionally, because Muslims are essentially concerned about the dietary constrictions of their faith concerning meat, the local cuisines that constitute seafood and vegetables were regarded as suitable for Muslim consumption by the KTO and JNTO. In this way, both countries expanded the portfolio of Halal cuisines with local flavors. However, Thailand and China both possess a large Muslim population, which essentially implies that they both have a target market that is large enough to cater to without resorting to the Halal classification of restaurants.

Although, compared to China and Thailand, South Korea and Japan lack sufficient reference points to Halal tourism due to a scarce indigenous Muslim ethnic population, the tourism bureaus of both countries tried to make the best use of their limited Halal tourism resources as is evident in the highly notable Halal searchability, and they developed innovative marketing solutions to seek the validation of Muslim travelers. For instance, to overcome communication issues engendered due to varying cultural backgrounds and to ensure the Halalness of the food, the finger conversation tool and the Halal support card were provided by the KTO and JNTO, respectively, with the vital information written in both Korean, Japanese and English to guide Muslim tourists communication with restaurant staffs. In addition, both the JNTO and KTO integrated testimonials and stories of satisfied Muslim tourists to Japan and South Korea with their destination marketing campaigns to convince potential Muslim tourists and alleviate their concerns. The provision of services that enhance the Halal consumption experiences for Muslim tourists is an essential component of marketing strategy to position the destination as Halal friendly. The TAT was particularly proactive in enhancing Halal consumption experiences by promoting Halal food events and the Halal culinary skills of chefs. While in the case of the KTO and JNTO, instead of chefs' Halal culinary skills, being Muslim was considered to be an important qualifying criterion to promote a chef's expertise. This is not surprising given that the faith of the chef being Muslim can influence the decision-making of Muslims in selecting a place at which to dine (GMTI, 2016).

The current research offers far-reaching implications for academic scholars, destination marketers and policy makers. First, the present study informs the existing research on Halal tourism by developing an integrated framework of website dimensions most essential for the promotion of Halal culinary and tourism, as exhibited in Fig. 10. In this context, the current research extends the government tourism website framework developed by Horng and Tsai (2010) for promoting general culinary tourism to a more focused Halal culinary and tourism

framework for Muslim tourists. Furthermore, it is contended that the theoretical taxonomy of four tourist types put forth by Boyne et al. (2003) is even more relevant in the case of Muslim tourists who are bound by their religion to follow certain regulations in food consumption, and thus, they cannot remain indifferent to the type of foods consumed; these tourists require to be presented with relevant information concerning Halal dimensionalities of food tourism on websites, as well as other promotional avenues. The integrated framework of Halal culinary and tourism marketing strategies proposed by this study informs the theory of internet marketing (Boyne et al., 2003) about communication methods and tourism product development strategies to be targeted to Muslim tourists. In this regard, this research plays an important role in articulating the existing research on Halal tourism from religious scriptures and atheoretical work to a web-based marketing framework for Halal culinary and tourism promotion.

Second, there must be adequate information regarding Halal certification and appraisal on government websites because Muslim tourists, while traveling to other countries, rate the availability of Halal food as the most sought-after issue (Dinar standard, 2012). Information regarding the presence of internationally levied halal standards and the regulation of halal food production at the national level by a standardized certifying authority is essential to cultivating the perception that food is prepared in accordance with Islamic laws. This information should be presented in a user-friendly manner on the websites so that tourists can conveniently search and transfer between web pages. For instance, a link to a separate web portal, on the government tourism websites, designed specifically for Muslim tourists, can facilitate easy navigation. The presence of Halal certification bodies can be persuasive in nurturing not only the hospitality and tourism sectors but also in capturing a piece of the lucrative global Halal food market. For instance, countries such as China, in contrast to its dominance in consumer products, its reach in the global Halal food market is negligible, i.e., merely 0.1% of the market that was valued at USD 795 billion in 2014 and is projected to grow to USD 2.54 trillion by the year 2019 (Gulf news report, 2016).

Third, to promote an optimal Halal experience for Muslim tourists, marketers must have a comprehensive understanding of the teachings of Islam while traveling instead of just confining Halal to a dietary restriction. Therefore, the focus should be broadened to include how Muslims in general can savor the hospitality of a host destination. For instance, a typical Muslim family may not find information regarding the night life of a destination that envisages bars and night clubs to be enticing. Therefore, in addition to restaurant guidebooks, travel guides highlighting tourist spots of interest for Muslims in general should be designed. This, coupled with Halal food guidebooks, can help Muslim travelers design their own itineraries for a host destination. Thus, tourism websites must stress the significance of the availability of authentic Halal cuisine and Halal facilities and services and integrate them with Muslim travel priorities within their tourism infrastructure. Educating academia and industry is pivotal to developing a sustainable culinary tourism product (Horng & Tsai, 2012). Therefore, comprehensive knowledge regarding Halal tourism and the hospitality and tourism service requirements of Muslim tourists should be integrated with the local culinary culture and disseminated in the form of periodical seminars, workshops, and training to industry and make professional talents appreciative of Muslim tourists' needs. This will not only be beneficial in meeting the needs of a tourist segment in a better way, but it may also lead to the creation of a niche industry itself if executed properly in the form of increased inbound Muslim travel. In addition, tourism educational institutions should also embed a detailed understanding of Halal tourism, situated within local culinary culture in their curriculums to enhance the knowledge pool of students to meet future industry needs.

Fourth, marketers must realize that promoting Halal food does not imply a departure from the local culinary heritage of the host country because local cuisines are a diversified tourism resource and hence an
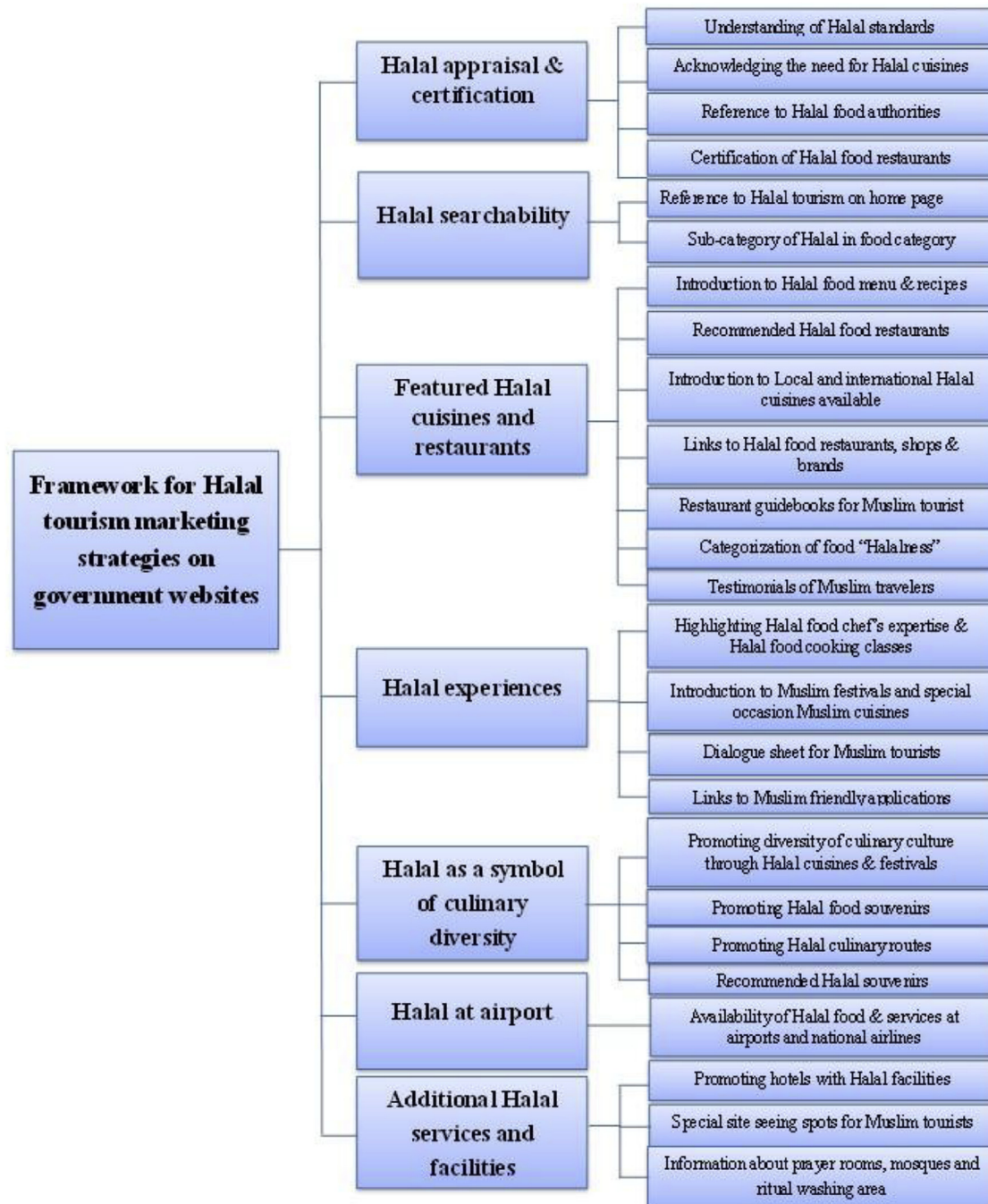
Fig. 10. Conceptual framework for government websites to promote Halal tourism.

authentic and unique culinary asset (Handszuh, 2000; Huang, 2009). Localized versions of Halal cuisine menus could be of interest for Muslim tourists to experiment with a destination's gastronomic culture. For this to materialize, tourism websites must furnish detailed information on Halal menus and ingredients augmented by rich textual and photographic content. Fifth, as far as the provision of Halal services and facilities by hotels is concerned, the implementation of sharia-compliance can be problematic for hotels with Muslim and non-Muslim clientage. The Muslim tourist segment may not be in such a large number that warrants separate hotels and facilities, nor is it in the minority to the extent that it could be ignored. Therefore, incorporating Halal services in existing operations is a practical necessity. Some hotels in the UAE attempt to use a feature such as a smoking and alcohol ban as a selling point, contributing to good health and clean living and

providing a unique opportunity to experience Islam in hotel settings (Rosenberg & Choufany, 2009). A minimum defining characteristics of sharia such as a Halal menu, alcohol prohibition, the availability of prayer mats and directions for Qibla (Mecca) should be integrated in selected hotels at destinations that draw a large Muslim tourist influx (Henderson, 2010).

Sixth, while serving consumers with homogenous needs and concerns across different countries, i.e., Muslim travelers, government departments that are associated with tourism should integrate their promotional strategies. One of the areas that fosters the perception of the destination being Muslim-friendly, and which has traditionally garnered lesser attention by tourism bureaus, and which has been identified by this research, is the level of Halal services provided at airports (Battour & Ismail, 2016) and national flag carriers (Oktadiana

et al., 2016). For instance, airports that cater to Muslim traveler requirements such as prayer rooms and Halal restaurants and national flag carriers, provide a wider selection of in-flight halal meals, and integrate such information on the government tourism websites, may ease the concerns of Muslim tourists towards the overall Muslim friendliness of a destination. Another instance of uncoordinated efforts between government departments is China, where the government tourism website does not back the pursuits of Chinese authorities to turn Yinchuan, the capital of the Ningxia autonomous region, where the majority of the Hui ethnic Muslim majority resides, to a cultural tourism destination for Muslim tourists from the Middle East and South East Asia. Yinchuan also hosted the China-Arab expo and the China-Arab state tour operator conference (CNTA, 2015). The state website for tourism, i.e., the CNTO, had the opportunity to showcase the history and culture of the largest Muslim ethnicity of China, i.e., Hui, and link it with government efforts to transform its tourism infrastructure as a cultural destination; however, it failed to do so.

Lastly, in the Global Muslim Travel Index (2017), Malaysia, Indonesia, the UAE and Turkey occupy the top 4 spots in the same index in terms of religiously compliant facilities provided to Muslim travelers, understandably so, because these countries are the Muslim majority nations. However, this issue also poses a challenge to the tourism authorities of China, Japan, Thailand and South Korea as Malaysia and Indonesia are among the top source destinations for inbound tourism to these countries. Having high standards of Halal tourism facilities in their home countries implies that they would demand the same while traveling to other countries. Promoting Halal or Islamic tourism would help in attracting lucrative Muslim tourist market and embracing the rapidly changing dynamics of global tourism, of which Halal tourism is an integral part.

6. Limitations and future research

The research findings furnished by this study are qualified by certain limitations in the research design. First, the current study predominantly relies on qualitative methods to appraise the evaluation framework of Halal culinary and tourism marketing strategies. Future studies could analyze the marketing capacity of the tourism websites and extend, confirm and/or modify the findings of this study by employing other methods such as focus groups, tourist surveys, interviews and Delphi techniques. Second, this research only consulted the official web pages of four tourism bureaus. Future research should expand to the other non-OIC (Organization of Islamic Countries) members, which are taking newly found interest in Halal tourism such as Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, United Kingdom and South Africa (GMTI, 2017) and compare and contrast the use of Halal culinary and tourism marketing strategies among them. Third, the English versions of the official websites were only explored. Although Huang (2009) asserts that the English versions of the tourism websites focus more upon the promotional information compared to the local versions, future research could be extended to tourism websites in other languages and explore the differences in the planning of marketing strategies with regard to Halal tourism. Lastly, the conceptual framework of government website strategies proposed by this research may have overlooked some subcriteria for the marketing of Halal dimensions. For instance, one such aspect is relaxation of visa requirements for tourists hailing from Muslim-majority countries and promoting this on tourism bureau websites. Extreme vetting and scrutiny of Muslims in some countries has made concerns related to visa issuance vital for Muslim tourists (Mohsin et al., 2016). In this milieu, visa relaxation can prove to be a significant step toward developing preferred Halal tourism destinations for Muslim tourists. Future research should include this additional aspect as a sub-criterion for marketing of Halal dimensions.

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