



The COVID-19 Pandemic and Its Impact on Islamic Tourism in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT - Malaysia possesses all the characteristics that make it an ideal Islamic tourism destination and adequately cater to the demands of Muslim tourists with an abundance of halal cuisine, prayer facilities, and Islamic attractions from places to festivals. With advantages including an extensive and well-developed halal network, good infrastructure, consistent economic growth rate, government-backed business incentives as well as political and economic stability, Malaysia is an ideal Muslim-friendly destination that also appeals to non-Muslims. Unfortunately, an epidemic outbreak emerged in December 2019 from Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China, which sparked the COVID-19 virus to significantly impact the world including Malaysia and paralyzed the tourism sector. Thus, this study aims to analyse the impacts of the pandemic on Islamic tourism in Malaysia and refine Malaysia's recovery plan towards this outbreak. This study is qualitative research by using documents analysis to achieve the objectives. The finding indicates the impact of COVID-19 can be monitored from two factors, first is based on statistical numbers of tourists entering Malaysia from arrival and expenditure before and after Malaysia closed the border, and second, the declining number of growth projections from the tourism sector that was affected from this pandemic. Hence, a recovery plan under the Ministry of Tourism and Culture (MOTAC) and Standard Operational Procedures from Malaysia National Security Council (MKN), has been established to overcome the impacts and fresh start for Islamic Tourism in Malaysia.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received: 3rd September 2021

Revised: 21st March 2022

Accepted: 25th April 2022

Published: 31st May 2022

KEYWORDS

Islamic tourism, impact, recovery plan, COVID-19

INTRODUCTION

Islamic tourism may be simply defined as tourism by Muslims (Zamani-Farahani & Henderson, 2010). Traditionally, Islamic tourism means religious travel such as Hajj and Umrah pilgrimage (Henderson, 2009). However, this term has expanded to include Muslims who have traveled for business and leisure over the years. The terms 'halal hospitality', 'sharia tourism', 'Islamic tourism' or 'Muslim tourism' are often used interchangeably with that of 'halal tourism'. However, these terms should be treated slightly different as noted in the study later on. In reflecting on the social and relational nature of tourism and religion, halal or Islamic tourism is defined by Razzaq et al. (2016) as tourism and hospitality co-created by consumers and producers following the teachings of Islam. Islamic tourism also could be defined as any activities, events, and experiences undertaken in a state of travel according to Islam (Halal Mini Symposium 2.0, 2020).

Islamic tourism's growth potential is increasingly recognized worldwide. It represents the largest and most lucrative untapped niche market in global tourism for Muslim travelers. This new development in Islamic tourism has given rise to the need for industry players, which includes restaurants, airlines, hotels, and tour operators, to adjust their products and services to cater to the needs of this growing market segment. With a market potential of more than 50 Muslim countries within the OIC organization and no less than 1.9 billion Muslims, tremendous opportunities await those who are willing to meet the demands for Muslim-friendly tourism products and services. Malaysia, already a leader in Islamic finance, halal food, halal pharmaceuticals, and cosmetics in the halal industry, Malaysia is in a pole position to drive the Islamic tourism sector (Dinar Standard, 2020). With advantages including an extensive and well-developed halal network, good infrastructure, consistent economic growth rate, government-backed business incentives, and political and economic stability, Malaysia is an ideal Muslim-friendly destination that appeals to non-Muslims.

Since the end of 2019, the world has faced an unprecedented global health, social and economic emergency with the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 crippled the travel and tourism industry in completely unforeseen ways. The mainstays of the Muslim travel business, the hajj, and umrah were cancelled or curtailed, further compounding losses. Muslims' spending on travel increased by 2.7% in 2019 to \$194 billion from \$189 billion in 2018. With the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Muslims' spending on travel is expected to fall to \$58 billion in 2020 and make a recovery to the 2019 level by 2023 (Dinar Standard, 2020).

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) estimated that the industry lost \$320 billion in just five months between January and May 2020. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has forecasted \$2.2 trillion in losses for the industry in 2020 (Badri et al., 2020). Travel and tourism are among the most affected sectors, with airplanes on the ground, hotels closed, and travel restrictions in virtually all countries worldwide. In an unprecedented blow to the tourism sector, the COVID-19 pandemic has cut international tourist arrivals in the first quarter of 2020 to a fraction of what they were a year ago. Destinations worldwide welcomed 1 billion fewer international arrivals in 2020 than in the previous year due to an unprecedented fall in demand and widespread travel restrictions. This compares with the 4% decline recorded during the 2009 global economic crisis (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2021).

Malaysia was rated the world's top Muslim-friendly destination with more prominent Muslim countries, namely Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Indonesia, and Turkey. Malaysia has been occupying the number one spot in the same survey for three consecutive years. In this survey, countries were ranked on how well they cater to Muslim travellers' needs, including readily available halal food and prayer facilities, hotels catering to the needs of Muslim guests, and level of safety. Among the 50 countries listed in this study, Malaysia came out on top with a score of 8.3 over 10 (Islamic Tourism Centre, 2021a). Thus, this research will analyse the impacts of this pandemic on Islamic tourism in Malaysia and its recovery plans in regard to the halal tourism industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

SARS 2003: Impacts and Malaysian Control Measures on the Tourism Industry

Tourism crisis can merely be considered, with the condition that the related term "security" should not be isolated (Hall, 2010). Hall et al. (2003) even consider including the issue of security in socio-economic and environmental landscapes when discussing tourism crises. In other words, tourism crises are the crises that could endanger the safety of tourists when travelling to a destination, as well as the crises that could constitute the inability of tourists to travel, for instance, economic or financial downturn. Looking into the personal crisis event, for the case of 2003 SARS outbreaks, it has significantly affected tourism in the majority of the countries in Asia, including Malaysia.

SARS control in Malaysia focused on early case detection, screening activities, contact surveillance, and isolation in designated SARS hospitals. These are seven (7) control measures that have been implemented in Malaysia based on the guidelines provided by the World Health Organizations, which are (1) Organizational and administrative measures, (2) Case detection and contact tracing, (3) Quarantine, (4) Hospital and community containment measures, (5) Infection control measures for the protection of healthcare workers, (6) Travel-related measures and (7) Guidance and information to the public (WHO, 2007).

From the above list, focusing on the travel-related measures, according to WHO (2007) in the Report of Control Measures Implemented by the Non-European SARS Affected Countries 2007, the Malaysian authorities had briefly prohibited the entry of tourists from China, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Taiwan, and Canada in early April 2003, but lifted the ban a week later. Before visitors from China and Vietnam may apply for a visa, they are required to submit medical reports certifying that they did not have symptoms of SARS in the past seven days. Other control measures imposed were the entry screening using thermal scanners that were carried out at all international entry points for passengers coming from SARS-affected areas. If a passenger having SARS symptoms was reported on board, the passenger was to be referred to the airport health authorities on arrival, the other passengers and crew informed, and their contact details of the subsequent 14 days obtained.

The Ministry of Health of Malaysia also required airlines coming from affected countries to ensure that all passengers undergo pre-departure screening before boarding the flight. In addition, announcements were to be made onboard and passengers would be informed that they would be subjected to health screening upon arrival. All arriving passengers must complete health declaration cards, which include questions regarding the place of origin and the existence of SARS symptoms. People who had recently travelled to SARS-affected areas and developed flu-like symptoms or fever were encouraged to seek medical help and tell their doctor about their travel history. SARS prevention and control guidelines for airlines and shipping lines were then developed (WHO, 2007)

Based on the control measures that have been carried out during SARS 2003, the control measures established by the government are almost identical towards the pandemic COVID-19 that happened recently, with improvement on the control measures such as the standard operating procedures and the introduction of the MySejahtera system.

Role of Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC)

To ensure that Islamic tourism prospers, the Malaysian government has established the Islamic Tourism Centre Malaysia in 2008 (Ab Rahman et al., 2018) and placed it under the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture and officially launched it on 16th March 2009. ITC operations follow the office manual, are approved, and supervised by a Board of Trustees, and chaired by the Secretary General of the Ministry of Tourism, Arts & Culture (MOTAC).

Throughout the years, ITC has been consistently and continuously working with industry players to build their capacity in Islamic tourism, thus ensuring that the welfare of Muslim travellers is in the best condition (Wahyono & Razak, 2020). The roles and responsibilities of ITC are to research market intelligence for policy formulation by producing several publications, journals, reports, and articles within the tourism corridor in Malaysia. In addition, ITC has also taken the task as an internationally-recognised centre of excellence and point of reference in Islamic tourism and Muslim-friendly tourism and hospitality through strategic research, training, capacity building, standard and certification, and industry development; leveraging on destination diversity, an inclusive ecosystem, and technology advancement (Islamic Tourism Centre, 20201b).

ITC mission is to be the prime mover and a leader in positioning Malaysia as an Islamic tourism and Muslim-friendly tourism and hospitality hub of global standards and recognitions (Idris et al., 2018). Besides that, it aims to empower human tourism resources by running

seminars, conferences, and courses domestically and internationally. In advance, ITC collaborates with strategic partnerships with government (G2G), Intra-GOVs, and NGOs to spearhead the Islamic tourism sector across the nation and at the global level (Islamic Tourism Centre, 2021b).

Overview Islamic Tourism Industry in Malaysia

Malaysia, one of the players in Islamic tourism, also moulded its branding by creating a unique identity value suitable for multicultural and multiracial communities living harmoniously and respecting other religions and celebrations. However, it always bears a subtle approach compared to Shariah-compliant principles in practice. United Nations World Tourism Organization (2019) declared that there were 1.4 billion international travelers in 2018, and from this figure, 140 million were international Muslim travelers (Masted Card & Cresentrating, 2018). It shows that the potential in the Islamic tourism industry keeps growing and gives a favorable potential market for this industry.

The development of the Islamic tourism industry is based on the contribution of the Muslim community across the globe. The current Muslim population recorded is reaching up to 1.8 billion worldwide. From the 1.8 billion, the Organization Islamic Country (OIC) has 1.1 billion, and when narrowing down to ASEAN level, Malaysia is part of the organization's members have 255 Million Muslim population. As a result, the Asian region became the first ranked from another region and total estimated Muslim tourist as stated in Table 1

Table 1: Estimated Muslim Tourist Arrival

| No | Region | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|--------------|------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1 | Asean | 4,788,335 | 4,539,671 | 4,541,819 |
| 2 | East Asia | 42,765 | 54,744 | 57,920 |
| 3 | South Asia | 238,434 | 293,298 | 368,026 |
| 4 | West Asia | 240,491 | 265,834 | 258,733 |
| 5 | Europe | 54,713 | 63,345 | 64,270 |
| 6 | Others | 19,270 | 35,004 | 39,018 |
| Total | | 5,384,008 | 5,251,927 | 5,329,786 |

There are two categories to show on the arrival of tourists to Malaysia. The top ten tourist arrivals in Malaysia from OIC and non-OIC countries are Singapore, Indonesia, China, Thailand, Brunei, South Korea, India, Philippines, Australia, and Japan. Meanwhile, the top five tourists from OIC countries are Indonesia, Brunei, Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan. Refer Table 2.

Table 2: Top 5 Tourist Arrival from OIC Countries to Malaysia in 2019

| No | Country | Number of Tourist |
|----|--------------|-------------------|
| 1 | Indonesia | 3,632,277 |
| 2 | Brunei | 1,216,123 |
| 3 | Bangladesh | 179,000 |
| 4 | Saudi Arabia | 121,444 |
| 5 | Pakistan | 105,757 |

The increasing number of arrival of Muslim visitors to Malaysia due to the four attributes offered by tourism Malaysia. These attributes are divided into four categories which are (1) services, (2) facilities, (3) attraction, and (4) events (Daud, 2019). Each attribute has its strength to ensure that every tourist gets good affections in all sectors during traveling in Malaysia. More than one thousand islands are part of Malaysia, with some 38 designated as marine parks. Parts of the primaeval rainforest are more than 100 million years old with a dazzling selection of birds

and wildlife. Malaysia has wonderful golden beaches, lush vegetation, mountains, and fabulous shopping centres associated with some magnificent hotels. Malaysia also offers a fascinating cultural mix with colourful festivals, unique arts and crafts, architecture, food, and various dance forms (Alam et al., 2015). In addition, Malaysia provides many Halal-certified food and restaurants, Muslim-friendly hotels, and Muslim-friendly tour packages for the services sectors. Malaysia also serves good facilities and provides an accessible prayer room in many places such as petrol stations, rest and treatment areas on highways (RnR), shopping malls, or recreation parks. Gender segregation in medical centres and hotel accommodation, and Islamic tertiary courses are also provided

Malaysia has tons of places of attraction to Islamic values such as historic mosques, Islamic museums, Islamic parks and gardens, Islamic astronomy, and family-friendly theme parks such as LEGOLAND, Sunway Lagoon Water Theme Park, Lost World of Tambun and others. Moreover, there are continuous celebration of Islamic events at the international level, for instance, World Halal Islamic Forum, World Islamic Economics and Finance Conference, International Al-Quran Recital Memorisation Assembly, religious events such as Celebration of Maulidur Rasul, Isra & Mi'raj, Ma'al Hijrah and Ramadhan buffet or Bazar during the month of Ramadan.

These attributes have given Malaysia several awards from the international recognition body such as Mastercard-Crescent Rating, Thomson Reuters, and Traveller Choice Awards. In addition, Malaysia has been awarded as Number One Destination for Muslim Travellers from 2011-2014, Number One Destination in The Global Muslim Traveller Index 2015-2019, Best Holiday Destination in The Month of Ramadhan 2016-2026, and Top 10 Best Shopping Destination Muslim Traveller Shopping Index 2016. Furthermore, Malaysia has become the most developed Islamic economy ecosystem for halal travel in 2014-2018, and the Islamic art Museum of Malaysia is recognized as Top Museum in Malaysia 8th in Asia (Halal Mini Symposium 2.0, 2020)

Chaos Theory: COVID-19 Impact in Malaysia Tourism Industry

COVID-19 has posed such a destructive effect on the tourism business that it has caused a significant and severe decline in the tourism and hospitality industries (Zubair & Shamsudin, 2021). Furthermore, due to the COVID-19 spreading amongst communities and to curb the panic situation for a long time, the government cancelled all trip packages for 2020, which significantly impacted tourism, hotels, and the aviation industry.

The Chaos Theory is explained in the context of physical science. According to previous scholars, "chaos" is defined as a condition, while "Chaos Theory" is explained as a combination of useful methods to scrutinise unforeseen problems (Cambel, 1993). Chaos Theory guarantees effectiveness in a nonlinear dynamic system, which classifies with the emergence of a specific pattern in an indeterminate industry situation (Levy, 1994). The disastrous and unpredictable events in the tourism and hospitality industry have affected tourism mobility, which is considerably intertwined with the country's economy. The tourism crisis is a combination of economic and socio-political crises (Zenker & Kock, 2020). The Chaos Theory provides clarification regarding the unforeseen consequences for tourism and hospitality businesses by focusing on small changes and creating fundamental alternatives in their operations.

The Malaysian tourism sector has already entered the short-term recovery strategy with the conditional, progressive reopening of F&B outlets and domestic travels since June 2020. Nonetheless, to fully contain COVID-19 is still hard to predict. To step into the long-term recovery phase, many small businesses sought financial aid from the Malaysian government, applying a self-save strategy to monitor their cash flow and minimising non-essential costs (Abhari et al., 2021).

METHODOLOGY

This research used a qualitative method through the content analysis from the previous literature to achieve the research objective. Data analysis was conducted through the content analysis method. Content analysis is a method for summarising any type of content by considering a range of factors, and it is a widely used method for qualitative research (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

This method is chosen due to the need for in-depth research about the Islamic tourism industry. Articles and documents related to the tourism industry and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic that hit Malaysia were selected for the content analysis. Analysis was done based on discussion topics and keyword searches that meet the scope of the study consisting of the Islamic tourism industry, impact, and recovery strategies.

RESULTS

Impact on Tourism Activity

One of the impacts on tourism activity in Malaysia is the cancellation of the Visit Malaysia Year 2020 (VM2020) campaign. This is because 64% of Malaysia's tourists comes from China, Singapore, and Indonesia, which were also severely impacted by the pandemic, and this led to the decline and cancellation of a substantial number of tourism trips to Malaysia (Khan & Hashim, 2020 as cited in Foo et al., 2020). This is supported by Zubair and Shamsudin (2021) that the discontinuation of the campaign had a massive influence on the government's initial goal of attracting around 30 million tourists.

Impact on Hotel Industry

According to Kaur (2020), the Malaysian Association of Hotels (MAH) mentioned that as of March 16th, right before the first movement control order (MCO) was imposed, a total of 170,085 hotel room bookings valued at RM 68 million had been cancelled. The losses were expected to double by the end of the year. This was due to people starting to stop all social and outdoor activities as the positive cases of COVID-19 were increasing rapidly, showing the seriousness of the COVID-19 spreading among the community. Besides that, MAH also predicted that 30% of 4,888 hotels registered under the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture (MOTAC) were expected to close down (Ahmad, 2020). Therefore, as seen in Table 3 below, 170,085 hotel room bookings from 11 January 2020 until 16 March 2020 had been cancelled which caused a loss of revenue amounting to RM68,190,364 (Ying, 2020).

Table 3: Severity of Hotel Cancellations

| Ranking | State | Room cancellations | Losses due to room cancellations (RM) |
|---------|-----------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 | Kuala Lumpur | 55,050 | 23,021,301 |
| 2 | Sabah | 32,392 | 11,550,605 |
| 3 | Pulau pinang | 17,753 | 8,908,000 |
| 4 | Selangor | 22,929 | 7,212,048 |
| 5 | Negeri Sembilan | 13,534 | 6,690,500 |
| 6 | Johor | 18,455 | 5,636,470 |
| 7 | Kedah | 3229 | 3,291,500 |
| 8 | Perak | 2403 | 1,022,289 |
| 9 | Melaka | 4074 | 690,499 |
| 10 | Pahang | 180 | 144,628 |
| 11 | Sarawak | 76 | 22,525 |
| | Total | 170,085 | 68,190,364 |

Despite the brief window of domestic travel between June and September 2020, the tourist and hotel industry has lost over 80% of its business since March 18, 2020. For 2020, the

hotel industry alone lost about RM6.53 billion, with a projected loss of RM300 million for every two weeks of MCO (Malaysian Association of Hotels, 2020). In 2021, the hotel business has already lost RM5 billion in income, which is significantly higher than last year (Malaysian Association of Hotels, 2021). With the worsening and extended crisis, the industry requires further government aid, without which hotels and stakeholders would be forced to close.

Impact on Aviation Industry

The impact of COVID-19 on the aviation or airline business was the worst because travel was utterly prohibited, and all airlines were forced to close for an extended period. Not only has the hotel business seen significant changes, but so has the Malaysian aviation industry. The International Air Transport Association (IATA) said the pandemic dealt a severe blow to the aviation industry not only here in Malaysia but also globally, resulting in a battle for survival in a year dubbed “the worst year in aviation history” (Li, 2020). The aviation industry is even at the risk of bankruptcy. According to IATA, passenger air transport measured as revenue passenger kilometres was down 90% year-on-year in April 2020 and still down 75% in August. In addition, the drop in economic activity and commerce impacted freight, which was about 30% lower year over year in April and was still around 12% lower in August (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2020).

There are travel bans and low to no demands of passengers who want to travel (Zubair & Shamsudin, 2021). This has also affected the aviation industry regarding restrictions on international flights due to the travel ban. Figure 1 shows how impacted Malaysia is on this matter.

| Country/Territory | Capacity change from originally-planned | Country/Territory | Capacity change from originally-planned |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| United States | -22,976,621 -88% | Malaysia | -4,959,606 -85% |
| United Kingdom | -22,345,210 -90% | Portugal | -4,913,803 -95% |
| Germany | -19,374,444 -92% | Saudi Arabia | -4,193,572 -77% |
| Spain | -18,041,897 -94% | Australia | -4,115,805 -92% |
| China | -16,683,876 -95% | Mexico | -4,104,882 -78% |
| France | -13,480,021 -91% | Austria | -3,812,866 -91% |
| Italy | -12,464,502 -94% | Qatar | -3,760,492 -80% |
| United Arab Emirates | -11,009,896 -89% | Indonesia | -3,723,583 -87% |
| Japan | -9,501,833 -88% | Viet Nam | -3,681,731 -89% |
| Turkey | -8,798,224 -94% | Ireland | -3,595,318 -92% |
| Thailand | -8,441,105 -94% | Poland | -3,449,632 -79% |
| Republic of Korea | -7,960,525 -86% | Denmark | -3,417,729 -93% |
| Hong Kong SAR of China (CN) | -7,122,206 -93% | Belgium | -3,323,135 -87% |
| Netherlands | -6,960,693 -89% | Greece | -3,078,774 -94% |
| Singapore | -6,596,279 -93% | Philippines | -2,993,741 -86% |
| Canada | -6,288,656 -90% | Sweden | -2,941,579 -89% |
| India | -6,286,458 -89% | Norway | -2,476,519 -90% |
| Switzerland | -5,990,424 -93% | Egypt | -2,248,437 -78% |
| Russian Federation | -5,747,918 -87% | Brazil | -2,214,850 -92% |
| Taiwan, Province of China (CN) | -5,400,277 -85% | Israel | -2,196,238 -91% |

Figure 1: The International Passenger Capacity as of April 2020

As seen in Figure 1, Malaysia has seen an 85% reduction in international passenger capacity in April 2020. This is due to the travel ban imposed by the government on 18 March 2020 and other countries that also enforced the ban immediately.

According to Zubair and Shamsudin (2021), Malaysia's three major airlines are Air Asia, Malindo Air, and Malaysian Airlines Bhd (MAS). All three of these airlines were in dire situations where they do not have enough money to stay in business. As a result, they intended to minimize costs by reducing their salaries by 10% to 100%. They have even arranged for forced retirements from the military and unpaid periods of absence for an indeterminate period in 2020.

Malaysia Airports manages 39 airports across the country, making it one of the largest airport operator groups regarding total passengers handled (five international airports, 16

domestic and 18 STOLports). The Group also owns and operates one international airport in Istanbul, Turkey. However, with the pandemic showing no signs of abating, with recovery in some markets and stringent border controls in place for its core markets, MAS said in October that it had contacted its lessors, creditors, and key suppliers as part of an urgent debt restructuring exercise. In the meantime, it has asked its only stakeholder, Khazanah Nasional Bhd, for financial assistance as the talks drag on (Li, 2020).

Tourism Recovery Plan in Malaysia

Based on the National Tourism Policy 2020 - 2030 (2020), Malaysia has developed a rising transformation plan to harness the competitiveness of the Malaysia Tourism Industry by increasing revenue, securing the partnership and investment, empowering local communities, and ensuring sustainability and resilience of the industry. Unfortunately, this plan could not be implemented due to the epidemics of COVID-19 that had hit worldwide, including Malaysia. Thus, to remain competitive in the tourism industry, Malaysia has immediately developed a recovery plan to reinvigorate the national economy through the tourism sector.

Malaysia's Tourism Stimulus Recovery Plan (PRE)

To revive the tourism sector and the national economy, the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture (MOTAC) announced a detailed recovery plan that will provide a much-needed stimulus to Malaysia's tourism industry. MOTAC minister Datuk Seri Nancy Shukri said that the recovery plan would be carried mainly by its agency, Tourism Malaysia, through the Stimulus Recovery Plan, with support from various agencies and industry players (Landau, 2020). Three main goals to restore confidence to travel, revive domestic tourism, and maximize resources under the stimulus recovery plan outlined as part of the "quick win" strategies are estimated to boost the domestic tourism campaign.

A total of RM200 million has been allocated under the 2021 budget to invigorate domestic tourism and the arts and culture industry amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Among the plans that have been planned are to carry out strategic collaborations and partnerships with tourism-related agencies and the implementation of the programs will be focusing on the collaboration with non-government organizations (NGOs) such as the Malaysian Association of Hotels (MAH), Malaysia Budget Hotel Association (MyBHA) and e-market platforms to promote holiday and hotel packages (Landau, 2020).

Furthermore, in terms of a campaign to promote this tourism, a collaboration with Malaysia Budget Hotel Association to assist selected budget hotels (3 stars and below) nationwide emphasizes those registered with MOTAC through the 'Jom Nginap' and 'Malaysia Welcomes You' campaigns. A 'Cuti-Cuti Malaysia' campaign with airline companies such as Malaysia Airlines Berhad, Firefly, Air Asia and Malindo Air also increases travel connectivity within the country. A Collaboration with the service and transportation sector such as Prasarana also includes promoting inter and intra travels and improving public transport services (Ministry of Tourism and Culture, 2020).

Moreover, the plan also targets contributing a partnership with Karyaneka to offer discounts on craft products to increase demand for Malaysian crafts and offer vouchers, discounts, and cash rebates while using digital technology through mobile applications and online purchases e-vouchers.

A Green Travel Bubble

MOTAC has also introduced the green travel bubble as a recovery plan toward the tourism industry in promoting domestic tourism during the pandemic. Individuals are allowed to travel within green zones without permission from the police. However, they cannot make any stops during the trip other than in green zones. Furthermore, if travelers from green zones need to cross a red zone, they must obtain police permission before traveling (Koya, 2020).

In addition, this green travel bubble also allowed the three-per-car rule and total capacity in private vehicles and tourist buses. If the tourist followed under travel agencies registered under MOTAC, the travel permission applications could be made in bulk to the police by individuals from travel agencies. Tourists from green zones must register their health status through the MySejahtera mobile application, along with proof of booking accommodation, tickets, travel itinerary or any other document determined by police. Malaysians who are not from the green zones are forbidden from using this domestic tourism to travel without authorization.

A Holistic Framework for the Tourism Recovery Plan

Until June 2021, MOTAC also outlined a holistic framework as an improvement recovery plan to help the government speed up the vaccination program nationwide and make the COVID-19 free from tourism places (Bernama, 2021). This framework is also in line with the National Recovery Plan announced by the Prime Minister of Malaysia. The recovery plan outlined three phases on the different attraction places, such as Langkawi, Kuching, and the most popular resort islands such as Redang, Perhentian, Pangkor, and Tioman.

Islamic Tourism Recovery Plan

In Malaysia, the Islamic tourism development plan is also under the same plan as the tourism recovery plan that has been mentioned. Islamic Tourism in Malaysia is under the Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC) that has embraced engaging with key influencers, deepening the relations with industry players, and strengthening the Islamic Tourism brand locally and internationally. Under the National Tourism Policy, Muslim-friendly tourism has been given priority to embark Malaysia's position as the global leader in an alternative and ethical form of tourism beyond rituals. Towards this end, ITC has been tasked to consolidate Malaysia's position as the world's top destination for Muslim-friendly travel by increasing the depth of Islamic hospitality. Thus, due to this pandemic, apart from the standard recovery plan under the MOTAC, ITC aspires to fulfill these goals through five key actions (Islamic Tourism Centre, 2021c).

First, despite the pandemic, ITC continues to create innovative partnerships with related agencies to establish Malaysia as the global center for Muslim-friendly hotel certification. Second, ITC is the leading repository of market intelligence and reference center for Muslim-friendly tourism and hospitality. Thirdly, branding Malaysia as the top venue for contemporary Islamic lifestyle through conferences, fashion shows, art and calligraphy exhibitions, and gastronomy festivals. Fourth, leveraging Islamic principles as the foundation to raise the service quality of Muslim-friendly hotels. Lastly, ITC continues establishing smart partnerships between ITC and the Ministry of Health and the Malaysia Health Travel Council to turn Malaysia into a front-runner Islamic healthcare.

Standard Operation Procedure MKN: Tourism Sectors

MKN is a leading agency that has coordinated security-related policies since its establishment in 1971. The source of authority to MKN is MKN Instruction No. 1, which is based on the Emergency (Essential Powers) Act 1979, which clarifies the formation and responsibilities of the National Security Council. The MKN is responsible for coordinating policies related to national security and the direction of security matters. These security structures and mechanisms are also applied at the state, district, and village levels (Majlis Keselamatan Negara, 2021).

All these recovery plans align with the Standard Operation Procedure (SOP) guideline provided by the National Security Council (MKN) for the tourism sector to start running back the operation with safety precautions and risk evaluations to minimize the threat to tourism and stop COVID-19 from spreading. Currently, 12 SOPs have been issued by the MKN for the tourism sector to control the business operations while facing the pandemic period. In addition, standard activities and protocols have been issued to ensure the tourism sector is safe in offering its services. For example, application of MySejahtera, physical distance, appropriate layout for

waiting for the area and lift elevator service, application of hand sanitizer, employee's health records and wearing face mask. The SOPs are covered in all stages as stated in Table 4.

Table 4: MKN SOPs for Tourism Sectors

| No | MCO Phase | SOPs for Tourism, Art, and Culture Sector | Updated Date |
|----|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1 | CMCO | Tourism Sector - Travel and Outdoor Activities (PKPB) | 16 March 2021 |
| 2 | CMCO | Tourism Sector - Scuba Diving and Snorkelling (PKPB) | 16 March 2021 |
| 3 | CMCO | Tourism Sector - Family Entertainment Centre (PKPB) | 16 March 2021 |
| 4 | CMCO | Tourism Sector - Guidelines for Tourist Guide - (PKPB) | 16 March 2021 |
| 5 | CMCO | Tourism Sector –Tourism Training Institute) -(PKPB) | 16 March 2021 |
| 6 | RMCO | Arts and Culture Sector - Cultural Public Premises and Facilities- (PKPP) | 1 July 2020 |
| 7 | CMCO | Arts and Culture Sector - Cultural Public Premises and Facilities (PKPB) | 18 Dec 2020 |
| 8 | MCO | Health Tourism Sector (PKP) | 29 June 2020 |
| 9 | MCO | Tourism Sector - Mice (PKP) | 1 March 2021 |
| 10 | CMCO | Tourism Sector - Mice (PKPB) | 16 March 2021 |
| 11 | MCO | Tourism Sector - Hotel Accommodation Premises (PKP) | 31 May 2021 |
| 12 | RMCO | (Targeted Domestic Tourism Movement Bubble) (PKPP) | 10 March 2021 |

One SOP that helps the tourism industry to start over is the 'Targeted Domestic Tourism Movement Bubble SOP'. Domestic Travel Bubble SOP aims to revive activities under the Domestic Tourism sector. Movements are allowed but require permission from the local authority from Malaysia Royal Police Department beside the SOPs.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the tourism industry in limiting tourism activity, paralyzing the aviation industry, and inhibiting the hotel industry players. The creative strategies to adapt to the challenges and obstacles during the pandemic are crucial to overcome as soon as possible with an innovative solution. Hence, the recovery and restarting of the tourism industry by following the latest recovery plan under MOTAC during the COVID-19 pandemic will transform the tourism sector into a new global economic challenge. Through the journey to recovery and restart, the tourism industry will focus on new and innovative strategies for long-term sustainable growth besides preparing for tourism revenge by tourists after the pandemic phasing out and the industry is back to a routine. As a recommendation, further research on pre-crisis, mid-crisis, and post-crisis economics is crucial in gathering information for future tourism recovery and development plans. It also has a massive impact on the Islamic tourism industry's development.

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