

Halal-Friendly Hospitality Services: A Bibliometric Study of Industry Practices

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ABSTRACT

This study presents a bibliometric analysis of the scholarly landscape surrounding Halal-friendly hospitality services, with a particular focus on industry practices. The rising demand for tourism services aligned with Islamic principles often referred to as Halal tourism, Islamic tourism, Muslim-friendly tourism, Halal travel, and Shariah-compliant tourism reflects a growing global awareness of the needs and expectations of Muslim travelers. Despite this surge in interest, there remains a lack of consolidated academic mapping of the field's development, collaboration trends, and thematic directions. To address this gap, we conducted a comprehensive search using five targeted keywords across the Scopus database, yielding a total of 620 relevant documents published between 2004 and 2024. Data cleaning and refinement were performed using OpenRefine, while publication trends, subject areas, prolific authors, institutions, and countries were analyzed through the Scopus Analyzer. VOSviewer software was employed to visualize co-authorship networks, keyword co-occurrence patterns, and citation linkages, offering insights into the structure and evolution of the field. The results reveal a steady increase in research output over the last decade, with significant contributions from Southeast Asia and the Middle East. Keyword clustering analysis highlights dominant research themes such as Muslim traveler satisfaction, destination marketing, service quality, and religious compliance. Despite growing scholarly attention, collaboration among authors and countries remains relatively low, indicating a need for more integrated and interdisciplinary research. This study provides valuable insights for academics, policymakers, and industry practitioners seeking to understand current trends and future directions in Halal-friendly hospitality. It also highlights research gaps and opportunities to foster greater innovation and global engagement in this emerging tourism sector.

Keywords: Halal, Islamic tourism, Muslim-friendly, Halal travel, and Shariah-compliant

INTRODUCTION

The concept of halal-friendly hospitality services has gained significant traction in the global tourism industry, driven by the increasing demand from Muslim travelers seeking services that align with their religious beliefs. This sector, often referred to as Muslim-friendly or Shariah-compliant hospitality, encompasses a wide range of services including halal food, alcohol-free environments, prayer facilities, and accommodations that adhere to Islamic principles (Abas et al., 2017; Zawawi & Raml, 2017; Marzuki et al., 2019). The growth of this market is not only evident in predominantly Muslim countries but also in non-Muslim majority regions that aim to attract Muslim tourists by offering tailored services (Razzaq et al., 2016; Jung et al., 2024). This bibliometric study aims to explore the industry practices within halal-friendly hospitality services, highlighting the key attributes, challenges, and emerging trends in this evolving sector.

Halal-friendly hospitality services are characterized by several key attributes that cater to the needs of Muslim travelers. These include the provision of halal food, alcohol-free policies, prayer facilities, and the availability

of Qibla direction in hotel rooms (Jung et al., 2024; Duman, 2019). Hotels often use Islamic symbols and images in their marketing to emphasize their compliance with halal standards, although many prefer to maintain a neutral impression to appeal to a broader audience (Muharam & Asutay, 2022). The implementation of these attributes is guided by standards such as the Malaysian Standard MS 2610:2015, which outlines the requirements for Muslim-friendly hospitality services (Abas et al., 2017; Zawawi & Raml, 2017).

Despite the growing demand, the halal-friendly hospitality sector faces several challenges. One major issue is the lack of standardized guidelines and certification processes, which can lead to confusion among service providers and consumers (Zawawi & Raml, 2017; Karim et al., 2022). Additionally, the high cost of transitioning to Shariah-compliant operations and the scarcity of trained personnel knowledgeable in Islamic principles pose significant barriers (Junaidi, 2020). However, the potential for growth in this market is substantial, with countries like Malaysia and Indonesia making concerted efforts to position themselves as leading halal tourism destinations (Marzuki et al., 2019; Trishananto et al., 2024). The integration of halal principles with sustainable economic models also presents an opportunity for the industry to appeal to environmentally conscious consumers while adhering to Islamic ethical standards (Raimi, 2025).

The halal-friendly hospitality industry is evolving with new trends and practices. For instance, the use of digital platforms to market halal attributes and the development of mobile applications to locate halal eateries and services are becoming increasingly common (Hashim et al., 2025). Moreover, the concept of Shariah-compliant hotels is expanding beyond food and accommodation to include holistic services such as halal-friendly transportation and recreational activities (Abas et al., 2017; Marzuki et al., 2019). These developments indicate a broader acceptance and integration of halal principles in the global tourism industry, paving the way for more inclusive and diverse travel experiences for Muslim tourists. In conclusion, the halal-friendly hospitality sector is poised for significant growth, driven by the increasing demand for services that align with Islamic principles. While challenges remain, the industry's ability to adapt and innovate will be crucial in meeting the needs of Muslim travelers and capitalizing on the opportunities in this burgeoning market.

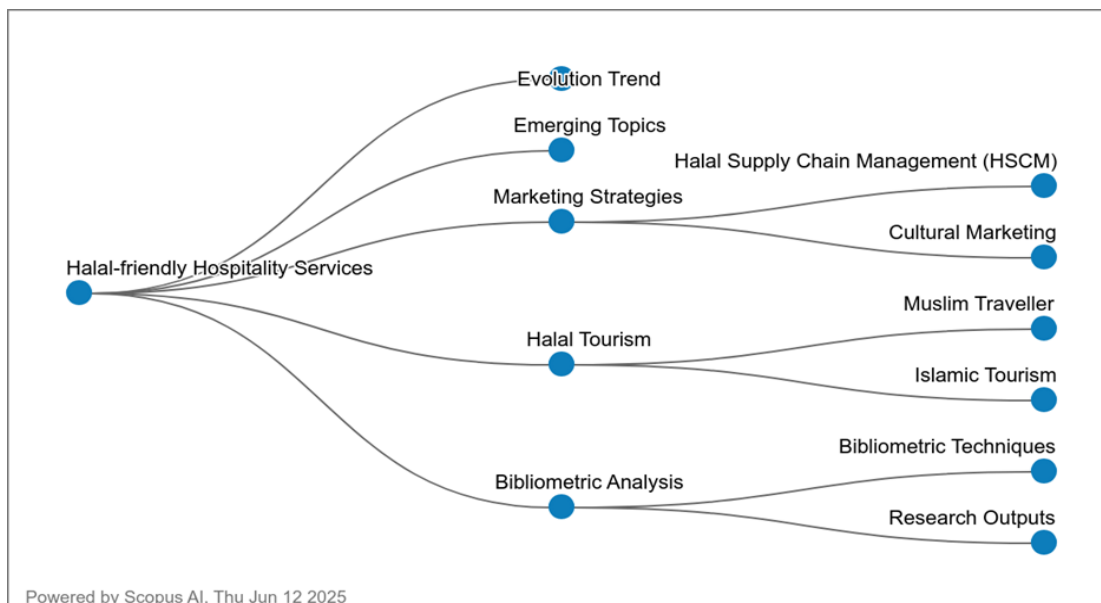


Figure 1: Overview of Literature

Research Question

- What are the trend / What are the research trends in halal-friendly hospitality services according to the year of publication?
- What are the most cited articles?
- Where are the top ten countries contributing to the publication?
- What are the popular keywords related to the study?
- What are the most co-authorship countries based on collaboration?

METHODOLOGY

Bibliometrics refers to the process of collecting, organizing, and analyzing bibliographic information from scientific literature (Alves et al., 2021; Assyakur & Rosa, 2022; Verbeek et al., 2002). It goes beyond basic metrics such as identifying key journals, publication dates, and prominent authors (Wu & Wu, 2017) by employing advanced methods like document co-citation analysis. A robust literature review requires a systematic and iterative process that involves selecting appropriate keywords, retrieving relevant literature, and conducting thorough evaluations. This methodology enables the development of a well-rounded bibliography and ensures dependable findings (Fahimnia et al., 2015).

In line with this, the present study concentrated on highly cited works, as they offer valuable perspectives on the theoretical foundations of the research domain. To guarantee data reliability, SCOPUS was used as the primary database for sourcing publications (Al-Khoury et al., 2022; di Stefano et al., 2010; Khiste & Paithankar, 2017). For quality control, only peer-reviewed journal articles were included in the analysis, while materials such as books and conference proceedings were excluded (Gu et al., 2019). The dataset, derived from Elsevier's Scopus database recognized for its extensive coverage comprises publications from the year 2004 up to December 2025 for in-depth examination.

Data Analysis

VOSviewer is an intuitive bibliometric analysis tool created by Nees Jan van Eck and Ludo Waltman at Leiden University in the Netherlands (van Eck & Waltman, 2010, 2017). It is widely recognized for its effectiveness in visualizing and exploring scientific literature, particularly through the development of network diagrams, item clustering, and density visualization. Its functionality supports analysis of co-authorship patterns, citation links, and keyword co-occurrence, offering comprehensive insights into scholarly trends. With a user-friendly interface and regular software enhancements, VOSviewer enables seamless navigation of extensive datasets. Its capabilities to compute bibliometric indicators, adapt visual outputs, and integrate data from various sources make it a preferred choice among researchers examining complex academic domains.

A defining strength of VOSviewer is its ability to convert large and complex bibliometric data into clear, visual representations such as maps and charts. Emphasizing network visualization, the software efficiently identifies and groups related items, detects patterns of keyword occurrence, and generates density-based visuals. Both beginners and experienced users benefit from its accessible interface. Ongoing development ensures that VOSviewer remains a cutting-edge tool for bibliometric exploration, offering advanced customization and analytical features. Its flexibility in handling diverse bibliometric structures including citation, co-authorship, and keyword networks establishes VOSviewer as an essential tool for scholars seeking rich and detailed research insights.

For this study, bibliometric data covering the period from 2004 to December 2025 were extracted in PlainText format from the Scopus database. These data included publication year, titles, authors, journals, citation counts, and keywords. The analysis was conducted using VOSviewer version 1.6.19. Leveraging VOS clustering and mapping algorithms, the software facilitated the construction of visual maps. Unlike the Multidimensional Scaling (MDS) technique, which it nonetheless resembles in spatial representation (van Eck & Waltman, 2010) (Appio et al., 2014). VOSviewer adopts an alternative method for mapping that places items in a low-dimensional space in a way that their distances reflect the degree of relatedness. Instead of using similarity measures like cosine or Jaccard indices, VOSviewer employs the association strength (AS_{ij}), calculated as follows (Van Eck & Waltman, 2007):

This formula represents the ratio of the actual number of co-occurrences between items i and j to the expected number of co-occurrences assuming statistical independence. This approach allows for a more accurate and meaningful normalization of co-occurrence data (Van Eck & Waltman, 2007).

$$AS_{ij} = \frac{C_{ij}}{w_i w_j}$$

Data Search Strategy

For this bibliometric analysis on Halal-Friendly Hospitality Services, data was extracted from the Scopus database using a refined advanced search strategy to ensure the relevance and specificity of the dataset. The search string applied was: TITLE ("Halal tourism" OR "Islamic tourism" OR "Muslim-friendly tourism" OR "Halal travel" OR "Shariah-compliant tourism") as refer Table 1. This query focused exclusively on titles, which is a deliberate approach to capture only those documents where halal-related tourism themes are the central focus of the study. By targeting these specific and synonymous terms, the search ensured comprehensive coverage of the core concepts underpinning halal hospitality research.

The final search yielded 620 documents, forming the foundation for the bibliometric analysis. This dataset reflects the scope of scholarly work spanning multiple disciplines, such as business, social sciences, tourism studies, and religious studies. The use of title-only filtering may exclude peripheral studies where halal tourism is a secondary theme; however, it enhances precision by prioritizing works with primary relevance. This focused strategy supports the reliability and validity of the bibliometric indicators analyzed later in the study such as publication trends, keyword co-occurrence, author collaboration, and geographical contributions—ensuring that the analysis remains concentrated on the key developments within halal-friendly hospitality services.

Table 1: The Search String.

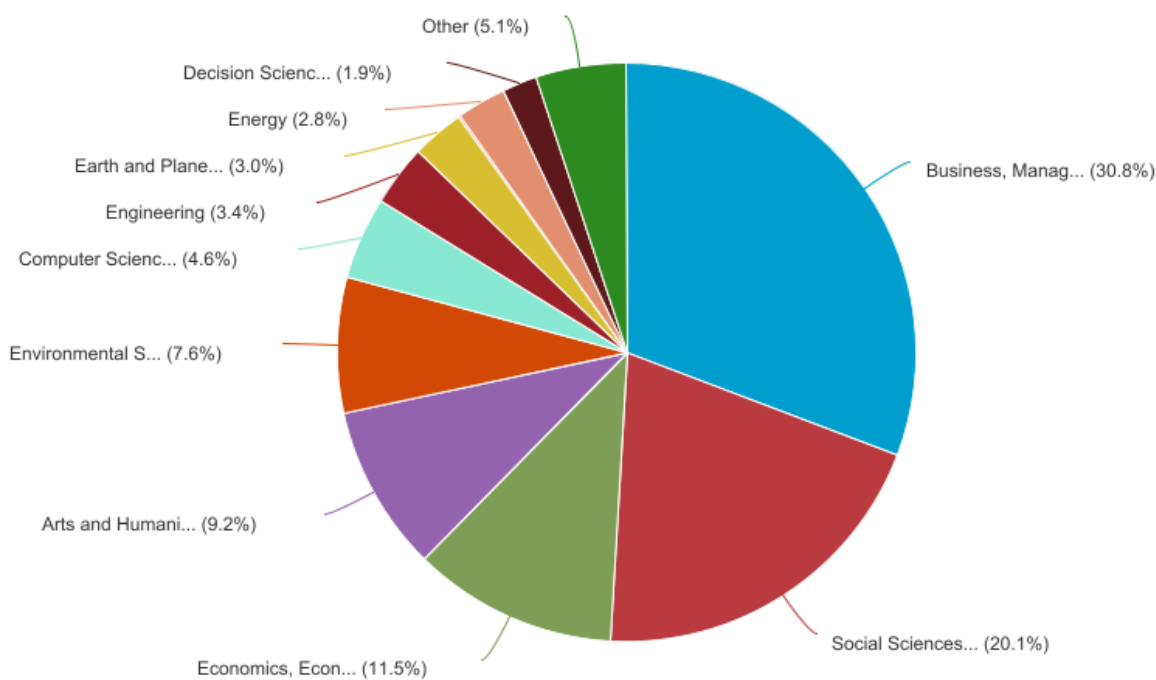
Scopus	TITLE (("Halal tourism" OR "Islamic tourism" OR "Muslim-friendly tourism" OR "Halal travel" OR "Shariah-compliant tourism"))
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FINDINGS

What Are The Trend / What Are The Research Trends In Halal-Friendly Hospitality Services According To The Year Of Publication?

Documents by subject area

Scopus



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Figure 2: Are The Research Trends In Halal-Friendly Hospitality Services

Table 2: Are The Research Trends In Halal-Friendly Hospitality Services

Subject Area	No. of Document	Percentage
Business, Management and Accounting	207	30.8
Social Sciences	135	20.1
Economics, Econometrics and Finance	77	11.5
Arts and Humanities	62	9.2
Environmental Science	51	7.6
Computer Science	31	4.6
Engineering	23	3.4
Earth and Planetary Sciences	20	3
Energy	19	2.8
Decision Sciences	13	1.9

The distribution of documents by subject area for "Halal-Friendly Hospitality Services" between 2004 and 2025 reveals a significant focus on interdisciplinary research (refer Figure 2 and Table 2). The most prominent contributions emerge from Business, Management, and Accounting, comprising 207 documents (30.8%), highlighting the industry's heavy reliance on managerial strategies, consumer behavior studies, and marketing tactics within halal hospitality. This is followed by Social Sciences, accounting for 135 documents (20.1%), underscoring the societal impacts and cultural integration of halal principles within hospitality practices. Additionally, Economics, Econometrics, and Finance represent the third-largest cluster, with 77 documents (11.5%), indicating substantial economic analysis and financial viability assessments in halal hospitality services.

Meanwhile, the involvement of other fields such as Arts and Humanities (62 documents, 9.2%) and Environmental Science (51 documents, 7.6%) suggests an increasing awareness and integration of ethical, cultural, and sustainability considerations. However, subject areas like Computer Science (31 documents, 4.6%), Engineering (23 documents, 3.4%), and Decision Sciences (13 documents, 1.9%) have received comparatively limited attention, indicating potential research gaps or emerging opportunities for technological innovation, engineering solutions, and data-driven decision-making in halal-friendly hospitality services. This diversified but uneven distribution emphasizes both the multidisciplinary nature and areas for future growth within halal hospitality research.

What Are The Most Cited Articles?

Table 3: Most Cited Author

Authors	Title	Year	Source title	Cited by
Battour M.; Ismail M.N. (M. Battour & Ismail, 2016)	Halal tourism: Concepts, practises, challenges and future	2016	Tourism Management Perspectives	360
Zamani-Farahani H.; Henderson J.C. (Zamani-Farahani & Henderson, 2010)	Islamic tourism and managing tourism development in islamic societies: The cases of Iran and Saudi Arabia	2010	International Journal of Tourism Research	270
El-Gohary H. (El-Gohary, 2016)	Halal tourism, is it really Halal?	2016	Tourism Management Perspectives	235
Mohsin A.; Ramli N.; Alkhulayfi B.A. (Mohsin et al., 2016)	Halal tourism: Emerging opportunities	2016	Tourism Management Perspectives	200
Battour M.; Ismail M.N.; Battor M.; Awais M. (M. Battour et al., 2017)	Islamic tourism: an empirical examination of travel motivation and satisfaction in Malaysia	2017	Current Issues in Tourism	163

Henderson J.C. (Henderson, 2016)	Halal food, certification and halal tourism: Insights from Malaysia and Singapore	2016	Tourism Management Perspectives	158
Battour M.M.; Ismail M.N.; Battor M. (M. M. Battour et al., 2010)	Toward a halal tourism market	2010	Tourism Analysis	155
Al-Hamarneh A.; Steiner C. (Al-Hamarneh & Steiner, 2004)	Islamic tourism: Rethinking the strategies of tourism development in the Arab world after September 11, 2001	2004	Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East	147
Wardi Y.; Abror A.; Trinanda O. (Wardi et al., 2018)	Halal tourism: antecedent of tourist's satisfaction and word of mouth (WOM)	2018	Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research	124
Samori Z.; Md Salleh N.Z.; Khalid M.M. (Samori et al., 2016)	Current trends on Halal tourism: Cases on selected Asian countries	2016	Tourism Management Perspectives	118

The most cited article (refer Table 3) from the provided list is "Halal tourism: Concepts, practises, challenges and future" by Battour and Ismail (2016), published in Tourism Management Perspectives, which has accumulated 360 citations. This high citation count reflects the paper's substantial influence on the academic discourse surrounding halal tourism, emphasizing its foundational importance. The article comprehensively explores halal tourism by providing clear conceptual definitions, highlighting practical implementations within the hospitality sector, discussing associated challenges, and projecting future developments. Such an integrative approach effectively positioned this paper as an essential reference for researchers investigating theoretical frameworks and practical applications of halal tourism.

Additionally, the significant citation count indicates the article's role as a seminal resource, stimulating further studies and enriching scholarly understanding of halal hospitality and tourism. Its relevance across various subsequent research endeavors including motivation studies, satisfaction analyses, certification processes, and emerging market opportunities underscores its multidisciplinary impact. By addressing foundational concepts alongside pragmatic implications, the authors effectively bridged theoretical perspectives with real-world practices, thereby becoming a pivotal reference point in the evolving discourse on halal-friendly hospitality services.

Where Are The Top Ten Countries Contributing To The Publication?



Figure 3: The Top 10 Country Based on Publications

Table 4: The Top 10 Country Based on Publications

Country/Territory	No. of Documents	Percentage %
Indonesia	176	53%
Malaysia	80	24%
Turkey	16	5%
Egypt	14	4%
New Zealand	14	4%
India	12	4%
Bangladesh	11	3%
Spain	10	3%
United Arab Emirates	9	3%
Oman	8	2%

Figure 3 and Table 4 showed that Indonesia leads as the dominant contributor to the literature on halal-friendly hospitality services, with 176 documents constituting 53% of publications, underscoring its strong emphasis and leadership in halal tourism research. Malaysia follows substantially behind, with 80 documents (24%), highlighting its significant role, particularly in topics related to halal certification and Islamic tourism marketing strategies, leveraging its established halal industry.

Other countries exhibit notably lower publication outputs, led by Turkey (16 documents, 5%), Egypt and New Zealand (each 14 documents, 4%), and India (12 documents, 4%). The presence of Spain, United Arab Emirates, and Oman, although smaller in document numbers, reflects emerging academic interest in halal tourism from both Muslim-majority and non-Muslim-majority contexts, indicating a globalizing trend in halal hospitality scholarship. This diverse yet concentrated geographical representation emphasizes Indonesia and Malaysia's centrality in shaping research trends, while suggesting growing opportunities for future expansion and collaboration internationally.

What Are The Popular Keywords Related To The Study?

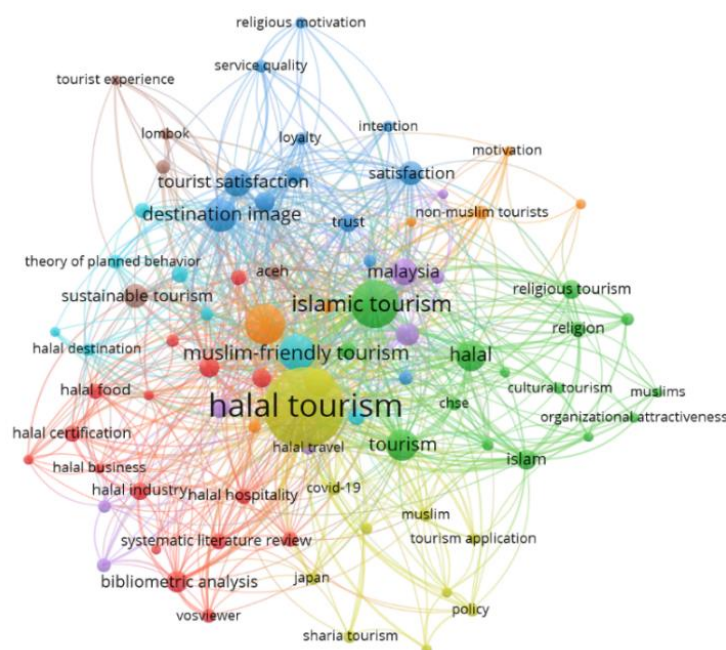


Figure 4: Network Visualization Map Of Keywords' Co-Occurrence

The keyword analysis using VOSviewer software (see Figure 4) highlights that “halal tourism” is the most dominant theme in the field of Halal-Friendly Hospitality Services, with 290 occurrences and the highest total link strength of 559, indicating strong connectivity with other concepts in the research network. Following this are “Islamic tourism” (101 occurrences, 244 link strength) and “Muslim tourists” (72 occurrences, 195 link strength), suggesting that much of the scholarly focus is concentrated on the religious aspects of travel and the behavior of Muslim consumers. Additionally, “Muslim-friendly tourism” and “destination image” also show significant link strengths, reflecting the importance of how destinations present themselves to meet Muslim travel needs. These keywords suggest that the core research themes revolve around conceptual understanding, target consumer groups, and destination branding strategies.

Another prominent cluster emerges around tourist experience and satisfaction, with keywords such as “tourist satisfaction”, “satisfaction”, “perceived value”, and “trust” all showing meaningful presence. This reflects the sector’s growing emphasis on service quality, customer experience, and behavioral responses in halal-friendly hospitality. Geographic identifiers like “Malaysia” and “Indonesia” also appear frequently, reinforcing the leading roles of these countries in halal tourism research and industry development. Furthermore, the presence of “sustainable tourism” and “shariah compliant” indicates increasing attention toward ethical and responsible tourism practices that align with Islamic principles.

In addition to thematic clusters, the appearance of methodological and emerging keywords such as “bibliometric analysis”, “systematic literature review”, “structural equation modelling”, and “artificial intelligence” points to the maturing nature of the field, with scholars increasingly employing quantitative, analytical, and technology-driven approaches. Keywords like “Islamic finance”, “Islamic marketing”, and “halal certification” reveal an interdisciplinary interest that connects tourism with economics, governance, and regulation. The inclusion of recent contextual terms like “COVID-19” and “sentiment analysis” also suggests a responsiveness to global challenges and digital trends, signaling dynamic research development in halal-friendly hospitality services.

What Are The Most Co-Authorship Countries Based On Collaboration?

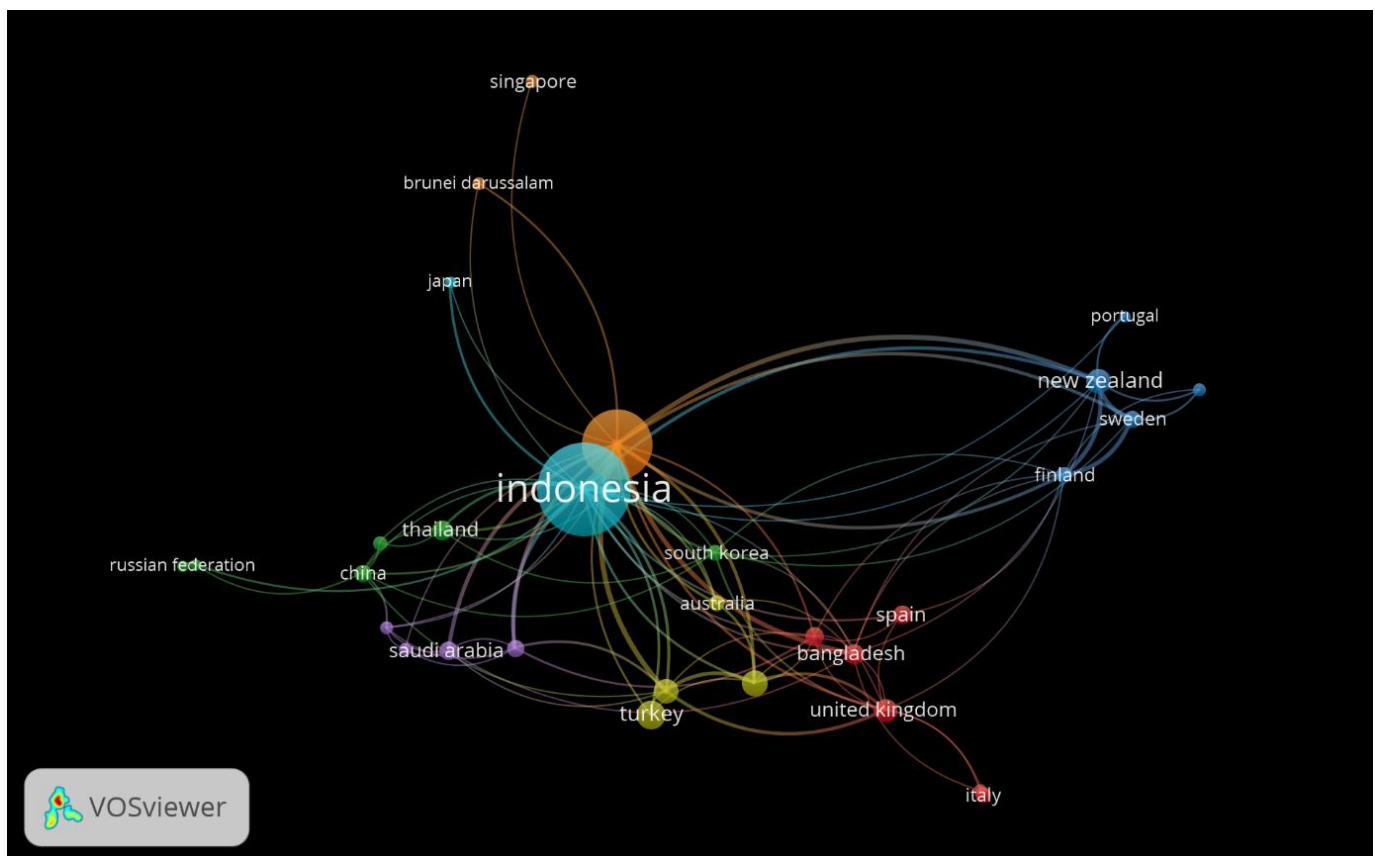


Figure 5: The Most Co-Authorship Countries Based On Collaboration.

Figure 5 showed the co-authorship analysis reveals that Malaysia and Indonesia dominate scholarly output in the field of Halal-Friendly Hospitality Services. Malaysia leads in citation impact with 169 documents receiving 3,714 citations and a total link strength of 123, indicating strong collaborative ties and influential research. Indonesia, while producing the most documents (291), has a lower citation count (2,616) and slightly weaker link strength (90), suggesting that although Indonesia is prolific, Malaysia's research tends to have greater global visibility and impact. These figures reflect both countries' strategic positioning as leaders in the halal tourism industry and their role in shaping the academic discourse on halal hospitality.

Beyond Southeast Asia, countries like Egypt (1,866 citations) and New Zealand (653 citations) demonstrate notable scholarly influence relative to their document counts (22 and 21, respectively), suggesting that their publications are well-cited and contribute significantly to the academic conversation. European countries such as Finland, Sweden, and the United Kingdom also show moderate levels of participation and citation, with Finland and Sweden displaying relatively high total link strengths (27 and 26), indicating active international collaboration despite their smaller publication volumes. This underscores the growing global interest in halal tourism beyond Muslim-majority countries, especially in cross-cultural and policy-related research contexts.

In contrast, countries like Singapore, Japan, Uzbekistan, and Brunei Darussalam exhibit low document numbers, citations, and link strengths, indicating limited engagement or emerging interest. Interestingly, Singapore's research shows high citation efficiency (748 citations from 7 documents) despite minimal collaboration (link strength = 1), suggesting high-quality, high-impact contributions. Other regions such as the Middle East (e.g., Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Oman) and South Asia (e.g., Bangladesh, India, Pakistan) demonstrate growing involvement but with relatively lower collaborative reach and citation performance. These insights reveal both established leaders and emerging contributors in the halal hospitality research landscape, presenting opportunities for enhanced international collaboration and capacity building.

CONCLUSION

The primary objective of this study was to map the scholarly landscape of halal-friendly hospitality services through a bibliometric analysis, focusing on industry practices and academic developments from 2004 to 2024. By examining key trends in publication volume, influential authors, collaborative networks, dominant keywords, and subject areas, this study aimed to provide a consolidated overview of research activity in this emerging field. The analysis identified a consistent increase in research output over the past decade, with Indonesia and Malaysia leading in terms of publication volume and influence. Business, management, and social sciences emerged as the dominant subject areas, reflecting a strong focus on consumer behavior, service quality, and policy integration in halal tourism. Key research themes included Muslim tourist satisfaction, Shariah-compliant service standards, destination branding, and ethical tourism practices. Despite growing scholarly attention, the study revealed limited cross-country collaboration, highlighting the need for broader international research networks.

This study contributes to the academic field by offering a structured synthesis of existing literature and visualizing knowledge clusters using bibliometric tools. The findings expand the understanding of how halal tourism is conceptualized, implemented, and studied across regions. Moreover, the research demonstrates the growing relevance of digital tools and interdisciplinary approaches, including artificial intelligence, sentiment analysis, and structural modelling, in advancing halal hospitality research. The insights obtained have practical implications for policymakers, tourism operators, and certification bodies seeking to enhance Muslim-friendly travel experiences. Understanding dominant themes and gaps can help guide strategic decisions, product development, and standard-setting efforts to meet the growing demand for Islamic-compliant hospitality services globally.

Nonetheless, the study is limited by its reliance on a single database (Scopus) and its focus on title-based keyword selection, which may omit peripheral yet relevant studies. This study also has offered a comprehensive bibliometric mapping of Halal-friendly hospitality services, highlighting the evolution of scholarly output, influential contributors, and dominant thematic areas. While the research landscape is rapidly maturing, it remains concentrated within specific disciplinary silos such as business and management. The

lack of interdisciplinary integration and limited global collaboration, particularly with researchers from non-Muslim-majority countries, presents a critical gap in the advancement of the field. Malaysia and Indonesia continue to lead, yet their strategic influence could be amplified through diversified engagement, technology integration, and policy-aligned innovations.

Future research on Halal-friendly hospitality should move beyond its current disciplinary boundaries and embrace a more integrative approach. Scholars are encouraged to explore intersections with information technology, environmental sustainability, and consumer psychology. By incorporating tools such as digital service platforms, sentiment analysis, and behavioural models, researchers can provide richer, more applicable insights into Muslim tourist experiences. Additionally, the development of robust conceptual frameworks that address the links between Halal certification, customer trust, service quality, and destination loyalty is necessary to enhance theoretical grounding. These models can then be tested through rigorous empirical methods to ensure their validity across diverse settings. Moreover, the expansion of international collaboration is crucial for the field's growth. Joint research projects with institutions outside the Muslim world, particularly in Europe, East Asia, and Africa, would bring in comparative perspectives and foster greater academic visibility. These efforts should align with global policy initiatives such as the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which provide valuable benchmarks for ethical and inclusive tourism. By aligning research agendas with both national tourism policies and international standards, Halal hospitality scholarship can make a more significant impact on global tourism development and policy implementation.

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