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Muslim-Friendly Tourism Development in Taiwan: Tourist Needs, Halal Certification, and Stakeholder Readiness

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – This study aims to examine the development of Muslim-friendly tourism in Taiwan by synthesizing existing evidence on tourist needs, halal certification, destination image, and stakeholder readiness. As a non-Muslim destination actively targeting the growing Muslim travel market, Taiwan provides an important context for understanding how religiously sensitive tourism services can be developed within a multicultural environment.

Design/methodology/approach – The study employs a systematic literature review approach guided by the PRISMA framework. Relevant publications were retrieved from the Scopus database using the keywords “Halal Tourism Taiwan,” “Islamic Tourism Taiwan,” and “Religious Tourism Taiwan.” The review focused on English-language journal articles and book chapters published between 2021 and 2026. Data were extracted through a structured summary table and analyzed using qualitative descriptive synthesis.

Findings – The review reveals that Muslim tourists visiting Taiwan primarily expect access to halal food, prayer facilities, Islamic-compliant amenities, reliable halal information, and a welcoming social environment. Halal certification plays a critical role in building trust by reducing uncertainty and signaling compliance with Islamic requirements. Muslim-friendly attributes significantly strengthen both cognitive and affective destination image, although they do not directly determine travel decisions. The findings further indicate that Taiwan has demonstrated substantial stakeholder commitment through government initiatives, halal certification programs, and industry engagement. Nevertheless, challenges remain regarding the uneven availability of Muslim-friendly facilities, service standardization, and stakeholder coordination.

Research implications – The findings provide practical insights for policymakers, tourism operators, and halal certification bodies seeking to strengthen Taiwan’s competitiveness in the Muslim tourism market through integrated destination management.

Originality/value – This study contributes to the literature by integrating fragmented discussions on tourist needs, halal certification, destination image, and stakeholder readiness into a comprehensive framework for understanding Muslim-friendly tourism development in Taiwan.

Keywords Muslim-Friendly Tourism, Halal Certification, Stakeholder Readiness, Taiwan, Systematic Literature Review.

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1. Introduction

The rapid growth of the global Muslim population has shifted the landscape of international tourism from simple leisure toward a search for spiritual meaning. Travel is increasingly understood not only as recreation, but also as a way to express faith,

identity, and religious values. According to the Pew Research Center (2023), the world's Muslim population is approaching 2 billion, or nearly one-third of the global population, and its growth rate is about twice the global average. This demographic expansion has widened the international market for Muslim travelers. The Mastercard-CrescentRating (2025) Global Muslim Travel Index estimated approximately 176 million international Muslim trips in 2024, with spending projected to reach USD 230 billion in 2025. Recent studies also show that spiritual considerations strongly shape Muslim travel behavior and destination preferences. In response, non-Muslim destinations have expanded Muslim-friendly facilities, including halal-certified food and prayer spaces, to attract this growing segment (Khoirunnisa et al., 2025; Royanow et al., 2024). This trend has broad implications for tourism economies and policy agendas across regions. It also underscores the need to understand Muslim-friendly tourism as a major global phenomenon.

Despite the rapid expansion of Muslim-friendly tourism worldwide, translating this growing demand into effective tourism services remains a significant challenge for many non-Muslim destinations. Taiwan, which has actively promoted itself as a Muslim-friendly destination in recent years, continues to face several practical constraints in accommodating the needs of Muslim travelers. Recent qualitative evidence indicates that three essential attributes remain insufficiently developed, namely the availability of halal food, adequate prayer facilities, and Islamic-compliant toilet facilities (Khoirunnisa et al., 2025). In several major cities, the availability of certified halal food remains limited, making it difficult for Muslim visitors to access suitable dining options during their stay. Royanow et al. (2024) further observed that most Muslim-friendly restaurants in Taiwan primarily offer foreign cuisines, such as Middle Eastern, Indian, and Indonesian food, while only a limited number provide halal-certified local Taiwanese dishes. As a result, many Muslim travelers prepare their own religious necessities, including prayer mats and food supplies, before visiting Taiwan. These service limitations reduce the attractiveness of Taiwan as a Muslim-friendly destination and may negatively affect its halal destination image among prospective visitors. Such conditions highlight the need for a more comprehensive examination of the infrastructural and service-related challenges that continue to shape the development of Muslim-friendly tourism in Taiwan.

Previous research on Muslim-friendly tourism development in Taiwan readiness remains incomplete. Said et al. (2021) show that Muslim travelers mainly seek halal food, daily prayer facilities, and pre-trip information, which confirms that the demand side is relatively well identified. Royanow et al. (2024) further demonstrate that Muslim-friendly attributes shape cognitive and affective destination image, although they do not directly translate into a visit decision. On the supply side, Hsu et al. (2021) emphasize customer orientation, partnership management, and staff preparedness, while Hanafiah et al. (2022) highlight governance problems, branding inconsistency, and the need to recognize different Muslim traveler segments. Evidence from Khoirunnisa et al. (2025) and Setiawan et al. (2024) also shows that halal certification and halal labels influence trust, food access, and purchase intention in Taiwan. Wardhani et al. (2021) add that halal tourism carries wider diplomatic and economic significance through Taiwan's ties with Southeast Asia. Yet these strands have not been integrated into one framework that links tourist needs, halal certification, and stakeholder readiness, which is the gap this study addresses.

Based on the identified gap, this study is necessary to clarify how Muslim-friendly tourism in Taiwan can be developed more coherently and sustainably. Its main purpose is to synthesize existing evidence on tourist needs, halal certification, destination image, and stakeholder readiness into one integrated discussion. The article uses a library research approach, drawing on published studies rather than primary field data. This is important because recent studies still show practical limitations in Taiwan, especially the uneven availability of halal food, prayer facilities, and Islamic-compliant toilets, along with incomplete service readiness and

inconsistent halal certification practices. Academically, the article contributes by connecting fragmented findings on consumer needs, trust formation through halal labels, tourism image, and stakeholder coordination into a single analytical framework. Guided by this synthesis, the study answers four questions about tourist needs, halal certification, destination image, and stakeholder readiness. The resulting analysis offers a tighter scholarly basis for understanding Muslim-friendly tourism development in Taiwan.

2. Method

2.1 Research Design

This study employs a systematic literature review (SLR) approach to map the development of Muslim-friendly tourism in Taiwan, focusing on tourist needs, halal certification, and stakeholder readiness. The PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework was adopted to guide the identification, screening, and selection of relevant literature in a transparent and replicable manner. PRISMA 2020 was specifically designed to improve the completeness, transparency, and methodological rigor of systematic review reporting, making it one of the most widely accepted protocols for evidence synthesis (Page et al., 2021; Moher et al., 2009). The scope of this review was limited to publications that directly examine Taiwan as a non-Muslim destination and address the three core dimensions of Muslim-friendly tourism development: tourist needs, halal certification, and stakeholder readiness. Such a focused scope enables the study to synthesize fragmented evidence into a more comprehensive analytical framework for understanding the development of Muslim-friendly tourism in Taiwan.

2.2 Literature Search Strategy

The literature search was conducted through the Scopus electronic database using the keywords. Scopus was selected because it is one of the largest bibliographic databases, providing extensive coverage of high-quality scholarly publications and is widely recognized in systematic literature reviews and bibliometric studies (Baas et al., 2020). In addition, Scopus applies rigorous indexing standards, ensuring the quality, credibility, and traceability of the sources included in the literature synthesis (Mongeon & Paul-Hus, 2016). The use of Scopus also enabled the identification of multidisciplinary studies relevant to the topic, including tourism, management, marketing, and Islamic studies related to Muslim-friendly tourism development. The search was limited to articles published between 2021 and 2026 and written in English to ensure the relevance and currency of the findings. As an additional procedure, a manual examination of the reference lists of selected articles was conducted to identify other relevant publications that could contribute to the analysis.

2.3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To ensure a systematic and transparent review process, this study established explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria prior to the literature selection stage. Defining these criteria is essential for maintaining the relevance, consistency, and methodological rigor of the review while minimizing selection bias in accordance with PRISMA guidelines (Page et al., 2021). The inclusion criteria comprised publications containing the keywords "*Halal Tourism Taiwan*," "*Islamic Tourism Taiwan*," or "*Religious Tourism Taiwan*," published as journal articles or book chapters, and released between 2021 and 2026. The exclusion criteria involved the removal of duplicate records identified during the search process, publications written in languages that could not be adequately interpreted by the researchers, and non-academic documents such as opinion pieces, editorials, news articles, and other sources that did not meet scholarly publication standards. These criteria ensured that only relevant, credible, and academically rigorous studies were included in the final review.

2.4 Data Extraction and Analysis

Important information from each article, including the research context and key findings, was extracted into a summary table. The extracted variables focused

primarily on the study results, while also capturing essential descriptive details needed to compare the articles consistently. This table-based extraction procedure helped organize the literature in a structured and traceable format, following established systematic review practices (Page et al., 2021; Snyder, 2019). The collected evidence was then synthesized through qualitative description, allowing the study to identify recurring patterns, similarities, and differences across the selected articles without forcing the findings into an overly rigid coding scheme (Popay et al., 2006; Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Primary Needs and Expectations of Muslim Tourists Visiting Taiwan

This section examines the primary needs and expectations that shape Muslim tourists' experiences when visiting Taiwan as a non-Muslim destination. Across the reviewed studies, access to halal food consistently emerges as the most fundamental requirement of Muslim travelers. Muslim tourists seek assurance that food products comply with Islamic dietary regulations and expect halal options to be available at the point of need rather than only in selected locations. Said et al. (2021) found that the search for halal food constitutes a central concern before and during travel, while Khoirunnisa et al. (2025) reported that many Muslim visitors perceive the availability of halal-certified food in Taiwan as still insufficient, particularly outside major urban centers. Similar observations were noted by Hsu et al. (2021), who emphasized that halal food remains one of the primary considerations influencing destination competitiveness in the Muslim tourism market.

A second dominant need concerns the availability of facilities that enable the performance of religious obligations. Muslim travelers expect convenient access to prayer spaces and supporting facilities that allow them to maintain daily religious practices while traveling. Said et al. (2021) identified daily prayer requirements as equally important as food-related needs. Likewise, Khoirunnisa et al. (2025) highlighted the limited availability of proper prayer rooms as one of the most significant shortcomings reported by Muslim visitors in Taiwan. These findings indicate that the ability to practice religion comfortably remains a core component of the Muslim travel experience.

The reviewed literature further reveals growing expectations regarding supporting Muslim-friendly infrastructure. Beyond halal food and prayer facilities, Muslim travelers increasingly expect Islamic-compliant toilets, clear halal information, and a welcoming environment that recognizes their religious identity. Khoirunnisa et al. (2025) identified Islamic toilet facilities as one of the three most important yet underdeveloped attributes in Taiwan. Hsu et al. (2021) similarly noted that destinations seeking to attract Muslim visitors must provide service systems that accommodate these practical religious requirements.

Another recurring theme concerns information accessibility and trust. Muslim travelers often conduct extensive pre-trip research to identify halal restaurants, mosques, prayer rooms, and certified products before departure. Said et al. (2021) observed that travelers are willing to invest considerable effort in gathering destination information to reduce uncertainty. In Taiwan, halal certification and halal labels play an important role in strengthening consumer confidence because they provide visible evidence that products comply with Islamic requirements. Setiawan et al. (2024) demonstrated a strong positive relationship between halal labels and purchase intention among foreign Muslim consumers in Taiwan, suggesting that certification functions not only as a religious indicator but also as a signal of quality and reliability. Although the studies generally agree on the importance of halal food and religious facilities, they differ slightly in emphasis. Consumer-oriented studies focus on immediate functional needs, whereas destination and stakeholder-oriented studies place greater attention on service quality, destination image, and institutional support. Royanow et al. (2024) found that Muslim-friendly attributes significantly influence both cognitive and affective destination image, indicating that travelers evaluate not only the existence of facilities but also the overall atmosphere of inclusiveness and comfort.

Taken together, the literature demonstrates that Muslim tourists visiting Taiwan primarily expect reliable halal food, accessible prayer facilities, supportive religious infrastructure, trustworthy halal information, and an inclusive environment that enables them to fulfill their religious obligations comfortably. These needs form the foundation upon which perceptions of destination quality, trust, and travel satisfaction are subsequently built.

3.2 Halal Certification as a Trust-Building Mechanism for Muslim Tourists

Halal certification emerges in the reviewed literature as the most visible mechanism for converting Muslim tourists' uncertainty into trust. In the food context, Setiawan et al. (2024) show that halal labels function as a direct cue of compliance, quality, safety, and ethical production, and this cue strongly increases purchase intention among foreign Muslim consumers in Taiwan. This finding indicates that certification does more than confirm permissibility; it also reduces ambiguity in product selection and strengthens confidence in market offerings.

At the destination level, Royanow et al. (2024) extend this logic by showing that Taiwan has deliberately combined halal certification with a Muslim-friendly environment to attract Muslim travelers. Their study reports that the government has funded halal-related tourism development and certified restaurants and accommodations, suggesting that certification is treated as part of a broader trust infrastructure rather than a standalone label. The same article also notes that many halal restaurants still offer foreign menus and only a limited number provide Chinese or Taiwanese dishes, which implies that certification is helpful but not sufficient to guarantee a fully seamless travel experience.

Khoirunnisa et al. (2025) reinforce this interpretation by showing that Muslim visitors still perceive major gaps in halal food, prayer rooms, and Islamic toilet facilities. In this context, halal certification becomes a practical policy response that signals destination readiness, yet its effectiveness depends on whether it is accompanied by visible facilities and public communication. Their findings also suggest that travelers evaluate trust not only through certification status, but through the consistency between certification claims and actual on-site conditions.

A similar pattern appears in Hsu et al. (2021), where halal tourism development is framed from the service-provider side. The study emphasizes that travel agencies must build long-term collaboration, understand Muslim tourists' requests, and strengthen employee training so that halal-oriented offerings are delivered credibly. This means certification contributes to travel experience most effectively when it is embedded in operational readiness, not treated as a purely symbolic assurance.

Across the studies, the dominant pattern is clear: halal certification contributes to trust by reducing uncertainty, signaling compliance, and legitimizing Taiwan's Muslim-friendly positioning. The strongest evidence comes from product-level purchasing behavior, while destination-level studies show that certification matters most when paired with prayer facilities, halal food access, and service coordination. The literature therefore suggests that halal certification is a necessary trust-building instrument in Taiwan, but its impact on travel experience depends on how well certification is integrated into the wider tourism system.

3.3 Muslim-Friendly Attributes and Taiwan's Destination Image

This section examines the extent to which Muslim-friendly attributes contribute to shaping Taiwan's destination image among Muslim travelers. The reviewed literature consistently indicates that Muslim-friendly attributes play a significant role in forming positive perceptions of Taiwan as a tourism destination. Among the available studies, Royanow et al. (2024) provide the strongest empirical evidence, demonstrating that Muslim-friendly tourism attributes significantly influence both the cognitive and affective dimensions of destination image. Their findings suggest that Muslim travelers evaluate Taiwan not only through tangible tourism products but also through the extent to which the destination accommodates religious needs and provides a comfortable environment for Muslim visitors.

Across the reviewed studies, destination image is shaped primarily by the availability of halal food, prayer facilities, halal-certified services, and a supportive social environment. Said et al. (2021) found that Muslim travelers visiting

minority-Muslim countries place considerable importance on the ability to perform religious obligations while traveling, particularly access to halal food and daily prayer facilities. Similarly, Khoirunnisa et al. (2025) identified the availability of halal food, proper prayer rooms, and Islamic-compliant toilet facilities as the most important attributes influencing Muslim travelers' perceptions of Taiwan. When these facilities are available and easily accessible, Taiwan is perceived as a welcoming and accommodating destination. Conversely, shortages in these facilities may weaken tourists' perceptions of destination readiness.

The literature further suggests that destination image is influenced not only by physical facilities but also by institutional commitment toward Muslim-friendly tourism. Taiwan's efforts to introduce halal certification, establish Muslim-friendly tourism programs, and improve tourism services have strengthened its reputation among Muslim travelers. Wardhani et al. (2021) argue that halal tourism has become part of Taiwan's broader strategy to enhance its visibility and engagement with Southeast Asian Muslim communities. This policy orientation contributes to the construction of a positive destination image by signaling openness, inclusiveness, and cultural sensitivity toward Muslim visitors.

However, the reviewed studies also reveal that positive destination image does not automatically translate into travel decisions. Royanow et al. (2024) found that while Muslim-friendly attributes significantly improve cognitive and affective destination image, their direct influence on visit decisions remains statistically insignificant. This finding suggests that destination image operates as an intermediate perception rather than a sole determinant of travel behavior. Factors such as travel costs, accessibility, personal preferences, and broader destination attractiveness may continue to influence final travel decisions alongside religious considerations.

Another recurring pattern concerns the interaction between destination image and trust. Several studies imply that Muslim-friendly attributes help reduce uncertainty associated with traveling to a non-Muslim destination. Halal-certified facilities, visible prayer spaces, and reliable tourism information provide reassurance that religious obligations can be fulfilled throughout the travel experience. This reassurance contributes to a favorable cognitive evaluation of Taiwan and strengthens emotional comfort among Muslim travelers. The findings from Hsu et al. (2021) further suggest that service quality, employee preparedness, and stakeholder collaboration support the credibility of Muslim-friendly initiatives and reinforce positive destination perceptions.

Overall, the dominant pattern across the literature indicates that Muslim-friendly attributes substantially shape Taiwan's destination image by enhancing perceptions of accessibility, comfort, inclusiveness, and religious compatibility. Although these attributes alone may not directly determine travel decisions, they serve as essential components in building favorable cognitive and affective evaluations of Taiwan among Muslim travelers. This relationship highlights the importance of examining how tourism stakeholders translate Muslim-friendly attributes into sustainable tourism development strategies.

3.4 Stakeholder Readiness for Sustainable Tourism Development

This section examines the readiness of Taiwan's stakeholders to support the sustainable development of Muslim-friendly tourism. The reviewed literature indicates that Taiwan has demonstrated a considerable level of stakeholder commitment toward developing Muslim-friendly tourism, particularly through government initiatives, tourism industry engagement, and the gradual expansion of halal-related services. Among the reviewed studies, Khoirunnisa et al. (2025) highlight that Taiwan has actively promoted halal-friendly tourism as part of its efforts to attract Muslim travelers from Southeast Asia and other Muslim-majority regions. The government has supported the expansion of halal certification programs, promoted Muslim-friendly destinations, and encouraged tourism operators to accommodate the needs of Muslim visitors. These initiatives suggest

that stakeholder awareness regarding the economic potential of the Muslim tourism market is relatively high.

A similar pattern emerges from Hsu et al. (2021), who emphasize the strategic role of travel agencies in developing the Muslim tourism market. Their findings suggest that stakeholder readiness extends beyond infrastructure provision and includes organizational capabilities such as customer orientation, partnership management, relationship building, and employee preparedness. Travel agencies increasingly recognize the importance of understanding Muslim travelers' preferences and collaborating with various tourism partners to deliver appropriate services. The study further argues that sustainable development of the Muslim tourism market depends on continuous cooperation among tourism businesses, government institutions, and supporting organizations.

The literature also demonstrates that Taiwan's readiness is reflected in its institutional efforts to establish a more inclusive tourism environment. Royanow et al. (2024) note that Taiwan has invested in Muslim-friendly tourism programs, expanded halal-certified facilities, and improved destination accessibility for Muslim travelers. These developments have contributed to Taiwan's recognition as one of the leading Muslim-friendly destinations among non-Muslim countries. Likewise, Wardhani et al. (2021) argue that halal tourism has become part of Taiwan's broader diplomatic and economic strategy under the New Southbound Policy, illustrating that support for Muslim-friendly tourism extends beyond the tourism sector and involves national-level policy commitments.

Despite these positive developments, the reviewed studies consistently identify several areas where stakeholder readiness remains incomplete. Khoirunnisa et al. (2025) found that the availability of halal food, prayer facilities, and Islamic-compliant toilet facilities remains uneven across destinations, particularly outside major urban centers. The study also highlights the need for wider publicity, stronger halal certification implementation, and greater attention to Muslim-friendly environments in peripheral tourism areas. These findings suggest that while strategic commitment exists, implementation capacity varies considerably across locations and service providers.

Another recurring issue concerns human resource preparedness and service delivery. Hsu et al. (2021) emphasize that employee training and a deeper understanding of Muslim culture remain essential for delivering credible Muslim-friendly tourism services. Stakeholder readiness therefore involves not only physical infrastructure but also the ability of tourism personnel to communicate effectively with Muslim travelers and respond appropriately to their religious requirements. This observation aligns with findings from Said et al. (2021), which indicate that Muslim travelers expect service providers in non-Muslim destinations to understand their religious needs and facilitate religious practices throughout the travel experience.

Across the reviewed studies, a dominant pattern emerges: Taiwan's stakeholders are generally prepared at the strategic and policy levels, but operational readiness remains uneven across destinations and tourism services. Government agencies, travel businesses, halal certification bodies, and tourism organizations have collectively established an institutional foundation for Muslim-friendly tourism. However, gaps in infrastructure provision, service standardization, staff competency, and regional implementation continue to limit the consistency of the Muslim travel experience. The literature therefore suggests that Taiwan has moved beyond the initial stage of awareness and policy commitment, yet sustainable Muslim-friendly tourism development requires stronger coordination among stakeholders and more comprehensive implementation across the tourism ecosystem.

4. Conclusion

The most important finding of this review is that the development of Muslim-friendly tourism in Taiwan is shaped not only by the availability of halal-certified products and religious facilities but also by the ability of stakeholders to transform these attributes into a coherent and trustworthy tourism ecosystem. A particularly noteworthy finding is that Muslim-friendly attributes significantly contribute to

Taiwan's cognitive and affective destination image, yet they do not necessarily translate directly into visit decisions, suggesting that destination image functions as an intermediate mechanism rather than a sole determinant of travel behavior. This finding highlights that successful Muslim-friendly tourism development requires the integration of tourist needs, halal certification, institutional support, service quality, and stakeholder collaboration rather than relying exclusively on physical infrastructure. At the same time, the literature indicates that Taiwan has made substantial progress in establishing a Muslim-friendly environment, although disparities remain in the availability of halal food, prayer facilities, Islamic-compliant amenities, and service readiness across destinations.

This study is subject to several limitations. The analysis was confined to a limited body of literature indexed within the selected search criteria and focused exclusively on Taiwan, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other non-Muslim destinations. In addition, the review primarily synthesized existing studies and therefore could not capture recent developments or stakeholder perspectives that have not yet been documented in academic publications. Future research should employ empirical approaches involving Muslim tourists, tourism operators, certification bodies, and policymakers to examine how stakeholder interactions influence travel experiences and destination competitiveness. Comparative studies between Taiwan and other Muslim-friendly destinations in East Asia may also provide deeper insights into effective models of halal tourism development. The sustainability of Muslim-friendly tourism ultimately depends on the capacity to align religious accommodation, institutional commitment, and destination governance within an integrated tourism framework.

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