

Does Hospitality Drive Halal Tourism, or Vice Versa? Dynamic Panel Evidence from OIC and Non-OIC Destinations

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship among halal tourism, hospitality services, and Muslim-friendly travel experiences across the selected sample of OIC and non-OIC countries from 2010 to 2025, incorporating the latest observations for 2025. Using a quantitative design, the analysis applies Dynamic Panel Vector Autoregression to identify reciprocal causal relationships and System Generalized Method of Moments estimation to address endogeneity and test robustness based on first-differenced stationary variables. The PVAR results indicate bidirectional causality between halal tourism and both hospitality services and Muslim-friendly travel experiences. In addition, the System GMM estimates show that hospitality services significantly improve halal tourism ($\beta = 0.274$, $p = 0.003$), while Muslim-friendly travel experiences produce an even larger impact ($\beta = 0.351$, $p < 0.001$). The model also satisfies diagnostic tests, as the Hansen J-test confirms instrument validity ($p = 0.290$) and no second-order serial correlation is detected ($p > 0.10$). Taken together, these findings reinforce the tourism-led growth hypothesis and endogenous growth theory by demonstrating dynamic links among these sectors. Thus, OIC and non-OIC state authorities must defend Islamic-oriented hospitality, devise Muslim/halal-friendly tourism standards and branding within a framework of destination inclusivity in balance with real and sustainable halal certification.

Keywords: Bidirectional causality; Halal certification; Islamic hospitality; OIC countries; Tourism-led growth hypothesis

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Introduction

One of the world's fastest-expanding halal sectors is halal tourism, which illustrates the global populace's need for halal and sustainably developmental services (Hasan, 2025). Within Islamic tourism, halal hospitality is the most rapidly growing and commercially successful market (Heckscher, 2025). The proliferation of Muslim customers of halal services, combined with the increased availability of halal services, has generated a great deal of interest for research and the formulation of public policies. Halal tourism has attained global status as a commercially integrated tourism industry, which has generated a need for policy modifications and innovations in simultaneously diverse locales (Ghani, 2025). Integrated within the framework of the Islamic economy, halal tourism is more than a commercial niche. It is an important building block of an ecosystem of ethical consumption, social equity, and sustainability (Elmahgop et al., 2025). Halal tourism contains the elements of *Maqasid al-Shari'ah*. They are: the provision of halal services and the provision of prayer spaces (*hifz al-din*); the operated services remain safe and morally made (*hifz al-nafs*); and the investments are safe and of a legitimate nature (*hifz al-mal*). According to Ismail et al. (2025), halal tourism is one of the social and economic objectives of the Islamic economy, and this must be the focus, rather than the potential for commercial gain.

Halal tourism is predominantly the provision of tourism and hospitality services that comply with Islamic teachings. These services consist of halal food, prayer facilities, family-friendly environments, and halal-friendly hospitality. This concept has further developed to include Muslim-friendly travel services (Battour & Ismail, 2016; Hasan, 2021). In this regard, travel services that develop Muslim tourists' satisfaction, comfort, and loyalty are considered. The provision of services that include cultural, religious, and ethical security is the basis for competitive differentiation (El-Gohary, 2016; Stephenson, 2014). Halal tourism is also the focus of the global halal value chain. The value chain integrates hospitality, halal food supply, and logistics, as well as Sharia-compliant Islamic finance services (Adinda et al., 2024; Jabeen et al., 2025). In this context, effective halal tourism governance developed through credible halal tourism certification is a solution to the concerns of halal tourism clients. Halal tourism certification will provide clients of the halal tourism industry with assurance that services have been rendered in compliance with Sharia. Halal tourism certification will assure clients regarding the halal integrity of the services rendered (Lahuri et al., 2025; Sodawan & Hsu, 2022).

Adding to the significance of this market is the economic impact of Muslim travel. The Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) estimates that in 2019, Muslim travelers' spending was about USD 225 billion, with the total spending expected to reach USD 300 billion by 2030 (Mastercard, 2019). Halal tourism is among the fastest developing sectors in global tourism. The expanding purchasing power of the middle class in Muslim-majority countries, increasing global integration, and awareness of halal lifestyles support its growth (Razzaq et al., 2016). Additionally, Japan, South Korea, the United Kingdom, and Thailand, among non-Muslim majority countries, have acknowledged the market's capability and have adopted strategies and developed services to lure Muslim tourists. This broad occurrence proves that halal principles are not specific to the hospitality market, but can influence the general market and the market's growth dynamism (DinarStandard, 2023). From a socio-economic perspective, these opportunities for halal tourism support job creation, sustained economic growth, and improved cultural relations. Halal tourism can achieve positive economic outcomes and promote social cohesion and positive relationships between Muslim tourists and the local community. The halal tourism industry in Muslim-majority countries is closely integrated into the broader Islamic economy, alongside sectors such as halal food, Islamic finance, and modest fashion (Sunarmo et al., 2024). These relationships demonstrate the integrated nature of the Islamic economy, whereby Sharia-compliant financing invested in halal tourism facilitates infrastructure development and promotes ethical and sustainable economic growth and development. In countries with a non-Muslim majority, halal services can enhance the competitiveness of a tourism destination and create a broader tourism market (Stephenson, 2014).

However, there is an increasing disparity in among studies focusing on halal tourism and hospitality, and their positioning within the broader Islamic economic context, especially from the perspective of *Maqasid al-Shari'ah*, value chain management, consumer trust, business ethics, and *Shari'ah* compliance in finance (Battour & Ismail, 2016; Eid & El-Gohary, 2015). Inevitably, this led to a deficiency in terms of academic contributions in this field, which mainly relied on cross-sectional survey studies, were scattered, or were only descriptive in nature. Existing studies considered tourist satisfaction, service quality, and destination competitiveness by using simple regression analysis or structural equation modeling approaches (El-Gohary, 2016; Han et al., 2019). Nonetheless, the suggested approaches did not consider the complicated and intertwined dynamics and dependencies of halal tourism and hospitality development and the Muslim

travel experience ([Kurniawan et al, 2025](#)). Thus, there remains more paucity of empirical evidence in this particular field, such as whether the growth in halal hospitality will bring about the growth in halal tourism or vice versa, or whether both of these phenomena happen concurrently. To make sound policies in the area of halal tourism, the latter will require such data ([Lestari & Hidayah, 2025](#)).

It is worth noting that there seems to be a lack of integration between the Islamic economic theory and macro-panel econometric models. Whereas research has been conducted regarding tourist satisfaction and service quality as well as halal certification, no efforts have been made concerning the use of macro-panel econometrics in analyzing the dynamics of halal tourism, hospitality, and Muslim friendly travel in the Islamic economic context. In other words, the dynamics of these sectors are yet to be explored and so are the implications of the dynamics of these areas on the sustainable development of halal tourism. In order to solve these problems, this paper employs Dynamic Panel Vector Autoregression as well as the System Generalized Method of Moments. Dynamic Panel Vector Autoregression helps explore the reciprocal dynamics, and the System Generalized Method of Moments provides a solution to the problem of endogeneity and unobserved heterogeneity in order to provide accurate estimations. Beyond the aforementioned methodological contributions, the findings of this study are analyzed within the frameworks of Islamic economics to demonstrate the importance of Sharia Compliance, trust, and ethical governance for sustainable growth.

The time period of 2010 to 2025 captures the different phases of the development of halal tourism, from the years before, during, and following major global disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic. This allows the analysis to be extended temporally and to examine the changing relationships among the phenomena that are the focus of this study, without being limited to the impacts of specific global disruptions.

To define the boundaries of the problem under consideration, this study seeks to address the following research questions:

- RQ₁. To what degree do hospitality services affect the growth of halal tourism in selected OIC and non-OIC nations?
- RQ₂. How do Muslim-friendly travel experiences shape the expansion of halal tourism within selected OIC and non-OIC countries?

RQ₃. Does a Dynamic Panel VAR framework reveal dynamic reciprocal relationships between halal tourism, hospitality services, and Muslim-friendly travel experiences?

The primary goal of this study is to define the growth nexus of halal tourism and hospitality and Muslim-friendly travel services using modern econometric tools. This study attempts to quantify how hospitality services impact the growth of halal tourism. It attempts to identify how Muslim-oriented travel services promote the development of tourism and hospitality, and utilizes Panel VAR to characterize the feedback loops and interplay of these systems and other connected variables. It also demonstrates how generalized method of moments (GMM) contributes to the analysis of tourism and hospitality development policies.

This research contribution has great academic and practical importance. In the first instance, it develops an area of scholarship that has been lacking in research and, in particular, the application of advanced econometric techniques. For the tourist and hospitality stakeholders, along with the destination policy framers, the research has great practical significance. From a global perspective, the research provides insights to gain a competitive edge in the global tourism market that is rapidly shifting toward ethical and inclusive tourism. The remaining sections of this document follow this structure. In Section 2, the halal tourism and hospitality and Muslim-friendly travel services literature are synthesized. In Section 3, the documentation of the variables and the econometrics of this research are presented. In Section 4, the dynamic and robust empirical estimations are presented. Section 5 is devoted to interpreting the empirical findings within the theory and world praxis. Finally, Section 6 presents the research findings and provides the boundaries and future research directions of this work. The past 10-20 years have strengthened the position of halal tourism in both research and policy, and this is directly related to the growing travel spending of the global Muslim population and the increase in their mobility.

Literature Review

Conceptualizing Halal Tourism and Hospitality

Halal tourism has proliferated in scholarly literature and policy discourse following the uptick in the global Muslim population and their travel-related spending. Halal tourism comprises tourism that includes halal (Islamically permissible) food, the absence of alcohol, spaces designated for prayer, dress code,

and recreational activities that are family-centered and are adhered to modestly (Hasan, 2021; Liberato et al., 2020). At the same time, halal tourism includes the consumption of halal products (Battour & Ismail, 2016). assert that it seeks to offer Muslim clientele a seamless opportunity to fulfill their religious requirements at their destinations. El-Gohary (2016) argues that halal tourism is a lifestyle of choice and is part of the Islamic economy; it should be understood in the context of other economic activities of halal food, Islamic finance, and modest fashion, and not merely as a tourism segment of the Islamic economy.

Hospitality services are the backbone of halal tourism and comprise the alteration of hotels, restaurants, and recreational businesses to the needs of Muslim clientele. Adinda et al. (2024) highlight that the hospitality sector is halal-friendly not only in Muslim-majority countries, but in every country that recognizes the value of Muslim clientele. Meeting the basic needs of Muslim clientele is a dimension of the halal tourism experience that is culturally and emotionally complete and extends far beyond tangible services. This is similar to the view of CrescentRating and Mastercard's Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI), which assesses travel destinations for their Cultural and Emotional Halal Travel dimensions (i.e., satisfaction of basic services, communications, and environmental factors) (Mastercard, 2019).

The Growth of Halal Tourism in the Global Context

The expansion of halal tourism is occurring due to various demographic, economic, and cultural factors. The State of the Global Islamic Economy Report (2023) estimates the total global Muslim travel spending will reach USD 300 billion by 2030 (DinarStandard, 2023). According to GMTI rankings, the most popular Muslim tourist destinations are Malaysia, Indonesia, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia. Investments from Japan, South Korea, and Singapore, countries with predominantly non-Muslim populations, aimed at developing the tourism infrastructure, are efforts to attract Muslim travelers. According to Razzaq et al. (2016), halal tourism helps diversify the economy. It is important to the economic development of countries that seek to reduce their reliance on traditional tourism or oil revenues.

Halal tourism helps diversify economies and has cultural and diplomatic value. Stephenson (2014) contends that halal tourism positively impacts cultural relations and the leisure and global Islamic community. The industry is growing, but not uniformly. The lack of universal halal certification processes, inconsistent policies, and fragmented views on Islamic requirements are barriers to the development of

halal tourism. According to [Ghani \(2019\)](#), inconsistent service and a lack of standards negatively influence Muslim tourists' trust and overall satisfaction.

Muslim-Friendly Travel Experiences and Consumer Behavior

Central in this literature is the connection between Muslim-friendly travel and the consumer behavior they exhibit. Many have adopted survey methods to study tourist satisfaction, loyalty, and the intention to revisit halal destinations. For instance [Han et al. \(2019\)](#) reported that the provision of halal food, prayer spaces, and Islamic entertainment has an impact on Muslim travelers' choice of destination. Likewise, [Eid and El-Gohary \(2015\)](#) showed that features catering for Muslims increase emotional attachment and loyalty and show the need for cultural and religious features in travel experiences.

Some of this literature describes the perception of Muslim-friendly travel in terms of destination image and branding in the context of destination marketing. [Hennida et al. \(2024\)](#) and [Maulana \(2026\)](#) claimed that to brand halal tourism, a combination of marketing and religious branding is required that is acceptable to both Muslim and non-Muslim travelers. Trust and reliance then become a function of the destination's marketing and branding. [Slamet et al. \(2022\)](#) and [Moufakkir \(2026\)](#) noted, however, that most studies have remained at the micro-level and have adopted Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) or regression to study the data. While these methods are helpful to understand phenomena at the consumer level, they fail to address the dynamics of growth across various regions and over time. The available literature has come to the agreement that Muslim-friendly travel services have a positive impact on tourist satisfaction, loyalty, and revisit intentions. However, the pathways to these outcomes remain largely unsolved.

Most studies agree that Muslim-friendly travel services can strengthen tourist satisfaction, loyalty, and the intention to revisit a destination. However, scholars differ in explaining how these outcomes are formed. Some emphasize the importance of tangible facilities, including prayer spaces and halal food. In contrast, others give greater attention to less visible factors such as destination image, cultural openness, and psychological comfort ([Sodawan, 2022](#)). This variation suggests that a single element does not shape Muslim-friendly travel. Rather, it reflects a combination of physical, cultural, and emotional factors whose influence may differ across destinations and over time ([El-Gohary, 2016](#)).

Hospitality Services and the Halal Economy Nexus

Halal hospitality remains a largely unexplored area when considering hospitality services in Islamic economies despite considerable research on hospitality services, service quality, and Islamic economies. [Samori et al. \(2016\)](#) argue that halal hospitality is about compliance with the Shariah and the ability to develop a unique value proposition for a service that strengthens an organization's competitive advantage. According to [Liu et al. \(2018\)](#), hotel and restaurant halal certification enhances consumer confidence and consequently increases the competitiveness of a destination.

Some of the available literature has noted that halal hospitality services promote Islamic economies through the provision of employment, investment, and innovation. In countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia, halal tourism policies are intentionally incorporated into the country's economic blueprints, suggesting that the role of hospitality services is of great concern to these countries' economies for sustained economic growth ([Battour et al., 2018](#)). However, there is a lack of adequate research to empirically validate the roles of hospitality services on the growth of halal tourism. Most research in this area has been case- or survey-based, limiting the generalizability of the results and the ability to establish the roles of hospitality services in the growth of halal tourism.

Although there is agreement in the literature on the role of halal hospitality in enhancing consumer confidence and destination competitiveness, the role of hospitality services in halal tourism is not as clear ([Slamet et al., 2022](#)). Several studies purport that quality hospitality services attract halal tourism through consumer confidence, whereas some studies state that increased tourism demand drives the provision of halal hospitality services. This contradictory research has, in most cases, not been able to adequately identify the relationship between halal tourism services and hospitality services ([Supriyadi & Rahman, 2024](#)).

Methodological Approaches in Existing Studies

Most halal tourism studies are cross-sectional and qualitative. [Battour & Ismail \(2016\)](#) and [Eid and El-Gohary \(2015\)](#) use surveys and interviews complemented by descriptive statistics. Their studies examine the motivations, perceptions, and experiences of Muslim tourists and yield excellent insights into the consumers. However, the studies lack the methodological sophistication required for modeling dynamic causal relationships. Most studies on consumer behavior and service satisfaction in halal tourism use SEM, logistic regression, and factor analysis.

Unlike tourism studies that employ sophisticated research techniques to model the impact of tourism on the economy and the effect of tourism on social and environmental sustainability (Sequeira & Maças Nunes, 2008; Suban et al., 2023). Halal tourism studies do not employ the sophisticated research techniques used to study the economy. In the study of halal tourism, techniques such as panel data analysis, VAR, GMM, and cointegration have yet to be applied. Despite extensive research in hospitality and halal tourism, few studies assess the relationships among halal tourism, hospitality, and Muslim-friendly travel experiences using contemporary theories and dynamic systems research techniques. Halal tourism and hospitality, and Muslim-friendly travel have a dynamic interrelationship. Most models of these systems erroneously assume unidirectional causality. In this case, a dynamic macro-panel approach is the superior theory. It accounts for interdependence, reciprocal impacts, and time lags.

Research Gap and Theoretical Implications

Current literature agrees on the importance of halal tourism for economies and cultures, but it is still fragmented in some areas. First, micro-level studies are reliant. These provide valuable information for understanding individual micro-level preferences, but do not capture the macro-level phenomena associated with tourism growth. Second, many studies focus on hospitality services. However, most consider service quality and satisfaction, with few considering the role of these services in the development of halal tourism. Third, studies on halal-friendly travel experiences have incorporated consumer behavior, but most have not focused on tourism and hospitality development. Finally, despite the presence of most of these studies, there is a lack of sophisticated research on the topic, including the use and integration of advanced macro-panel econometric techniques.

The literature on halal tourism, hospitality services, and Muslim-friendly travel services has cited the importance of all three areas, but three persistent issues remain. First, most research has focused on micro-level studies, and most of these studies have used static techniques. As a result, the included studies are unable to capture the macro-dynamics of the tourism and hospitality industries. Second, while it is acknowledged that hospitality and Muslim-friendly services influence halal tourism, there is a lack of evidence explaining this relationship on a reciprocal basis. Third, the integration of Islamic economic theory and advanced macro-panel econometric techniques is lacking. This combination of theoretical and methodological gaps is the main reason Dynamic Panel VAR and System GMM

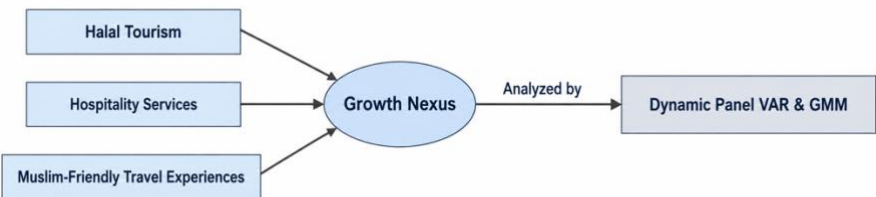
techniques are utilized in this research to investigate the relationships among halal tourism, hospitality services, and Muslim-friendly travel services on a dynamic basis.

Methods

Research Design

The current study utilizes methodological framework of quantitative research design using sophisticated econometric modeling that is meant for the examination of dynamic relationships between the development of halal tourism industry, hospitality sector, and friendly experience of Muslim tourists. As opposed to the traditional approach that uses regression and survey-based methods, this study uses such econometric tools as Dynamic Panel Vector Autoregression (Panel VAR) and Generalized Method of Moments (GMM).

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study



Data Sources and Sample

Panel VAR methodology is especially applicable to this study since it takes into account endogenous interrelationships between several variables over time across different countries. Halal tourism growth, hospitality services, and Muslim-friendly tourism experience will be considered as jointly endogenous variables due to the fact that each of them can affect other variables and vice versa. The use of the GMM technique enhances the model’s validity due to the consideration of problems such as endogeneity, omitted variable problem, and unobserved heterogeneity. Such issues often appear in case of panel data. The empirical analysis will be conducted using a balanced panel dataset gathered from different secondary sources. The total number of countries included in the sample equals 20 and includes 13 countries-

members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and 7 non-OIC countries with a development of halal tourism.

In order to guarantee consistency of comparisons across countries over time, indicators of halal tourism have been identified and harmonized from various international databases. The indicators of halal tourism performance such as Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) and Muslim visitor arrivals have been gathered from CrescentRating, Mastercard, the United Nations World Tourism Organization, and the World Development Indicators from World Bank. As some years lacked GMTI data, the database has been harmonized through interpolation in accordance with methodology used in previous index tourism studies.

Other measures of hospitality facilities that include capacity of hotels, occupancy rates, income, and halal stock have been sourced from the UNWTO, World Bank, the State of the Global Islamic Economy Reports, and various tourism bodies of nations, especially the Ministry of Tourism in Indonesia and the Islamic Tourism Centre of Malaysia. Measures for Muslim-friendly travel have been made based on sub-indices in the GMTI that pertain to accessibility, communication, environment, and service delivery. All these composite measures have been standardized using the min-max technique to eliminate measurement error and enhance comparability. The resultant balanced panel dataset is for the period 2010 to 2025 with 320 observations. The data sample presents adequate variation in institutional structures and policy settings to enable estimation using Dynamic Panel VAR and System GMM models.

Table 1. Variable Definition and Data Sources

Variable	Proxy / Indicator	Data Source
Halal Tourism Index (HT)	Overall Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) score	CrescentRating & Mastercard
	Muslim tourist arrivals	United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)
Hospitality Services (HS)	Hotel capacity and occupancy rates	UNWTO; World Bank – World Development Indicators (WDI)
	Number of halal-certified hotels	State of the Global Islamic Economy (SGIE); National halal and tourism authorities
Muslim-Friendly Travel Experiences (MFTE)	Accessibility, communication, environment, and service delivery	Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) sub-indices

Econometric Model

The baseline model is specified as a Panel VAR of order p :

$$Y_{it} = A_1 Y_{i,t-1} + A_2 Y_{i,t-2} + \dots + A_p Y_{i,t-p} + \mu_i + \lambda_t + \varepsilon_{it}$$

Y_{it} refers to the vector of endogenous variables, which include halal tourism growth, hospitality services, and travel experience of Muslims in country i at time t ; A_j refers to the coefficient matrices that measure the effects of the lags of the variables. μ_i is the unobservable country-specific effect; λ_t measures the time effects; and ε_{it} is the idiosyncratic error term. The use of Panel VAR model can be extended to the development of impulse response functions (IRFs) and variance decomposition analysis. They demonstrate how a disturbance in one variable influences the whole system and how much each variable explains the variance of the forecast errors of the other variables. Hence, the model provides an improved understanding of the dynamic interaction among the variables in the halal tourism system. The possible endogeneity in the model is controlled by using System GMM estimator, where the lagged levels and first difference of endogenous variables are used as instrumental variables. The procedure eliminates the simultaneity problem and provides consistent estimates of the parameters. The difference GMM is conducted for robustness analysis, whereas Hansen J-test and Arellano-Bond autocorrelation tests are done for checking the validity of instruments and serial correlation, respectively.

In the model, Y_{it} denotes a vector of endogenous variables comprising halal tourism growth, hospitality services, and Muslim-friendly travel experiences for country i at time t . The coefficient matrices A_j capture the effects of lagged variables, while μ_i represents unobserved country-specific effects, λ_t denotes time effects, and ε_{it} is the idiosyncratic error term. The Panel VAR framework also allows for the estimation of impulse response functions and variance decompositions. Impulse response functions trace how a shock to one variable is transmitted throughout the system over time. In contrast, variance decompositions indicate the extent to which each variable contributes to the forecast error variance of the others. Together, these analyses clarify the temporal structure of the relationships within the halal tourism nexus. To account for potential endogeneity, the model is estimated using the System GMM estimator, which uses lagged levels and lagged differences of the endogenous variables as instruments. This procedure addresses simultaneity bias,

controls for unobserved heterogeneity, and supports consistent parameter estimation. Robustness is further assessed using the Difference GMM estimator. Instrument validity and model specification are evaluated through the Hansen J-test and the Arellano–Bond autocorrelation tests.

More specifically, System GMM is used because the central relationships in the model are likely to be bidirectional. Halal tourism may respond to changes in hospitality services and Muslim-friendly travel experiences, while tourism growth may itself stimulate further service development. Although System GMM is commonly applied to panels with many cross-sectional units and relatively short time dimensions, its use here remains consistent with the study's objectives and model structure. By treating all three variables as endogenous within the Dynamic Panel VAR framework, the estimator addresses simultaneity and country-specific effects while generating consistent estimates. Unlike fixed-effects models, which are generally less capable of representing reciprocal dynamic adjustments, System GMM is better suited to feedback relationships among endogenous variables. Panel ARDL and Panel VECM, by comparison, are primarily designed to examine long-run equilibrium and cointegration. The present study instead focuses on dynamic interdependence, reciprocal causality, and short- to medium-term adjustment. Integrating Dynamic Panel VAR with System GMM therefore provides an appropriate framework for examining endogenous interactions among the variables. Difference GMM is subsequently used for sensitivity analysis, and the Hansen J-test and Arellano–Bond tests are employed to assess instrument validity and serial correlation.

Estimation Procedure

The estimation proceeds in four stages. First, panel unit-root tests, including the Levin–Lin–Chu (LLC) and Im–Pesaran–Shin (IPS) tests, are used to evaluate variable stationarity. Second, the optimal lag length for the VAR specification is selected using the Akaike and Bayesian information criteria. Third, the Panel VAR is estimated through System GMM, with careful control of instrument proliferation to preserve model efficiency and reliability. Finally, impulse response functions and variance decompositions are calculated to examine dynamic interactions and longer-term adjustment patterns. All estimations are conducted in Stata and R, both of which provide established procedures for panel-data and dynamic-model analysis. Additional diagnostic tests examine heteroskedasticity, autocorrelation, and multicollinearity to confirm the robustness of the results.

Results and Discussion

Descriptive Analysis

From the above-mentioned descriptive analysis, it follows that all three core concepts – halal tourism, hospitality services, and Muslim-friendly travel experiences – have positive trends during the studied time period. Halal tourism has demonstrated steady growth, especially in such destinations that have successfully developed Sharia-compliant infrastructure. On the other hand, hospitality services, which can be measured by service quality, certification level, and customer satisfaction, have been improving significantly in countries where Islamic finance and tourism are strongly integrated. At the same time, Muslim-friendly travel experiences, measured by accessibility, halal food availability, and prayer facilities, continue to be one of the critical factors that affect tourist loyalty and revisit intention.

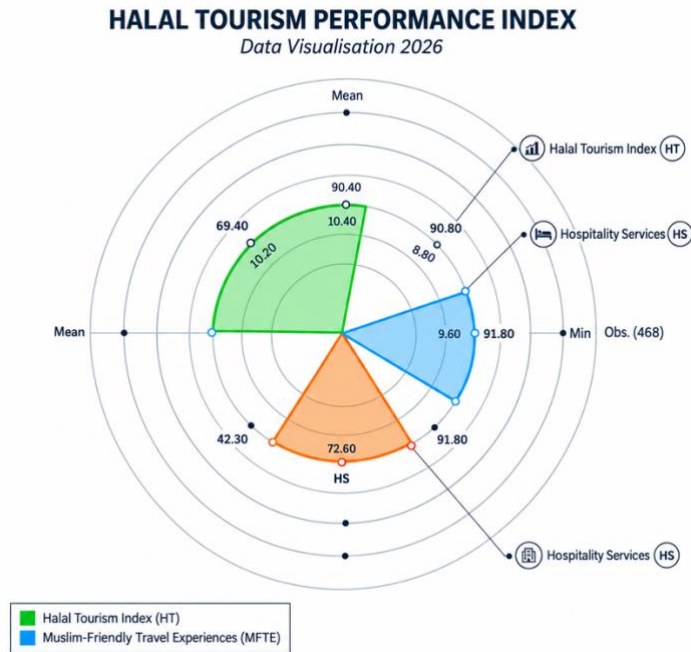
Tabel 2. Descriptive Statistics of Main Variables (2010–2025)

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Halal Tourism Index (HT)	320	69.40	10.40	42.30	90.80
Hospitality Services (HS)	320	72.60	9.60	48.20	91.80
Muslim-Friendly Travel Experiences (MFTE)	320	75.20	8.90	50.12	93.20

Table 2 displays descriptive statistics of the core variables from 2010 to 2025. According to the table, there is a steady increase in the mean values of Halal Tourism Index, Hospitality Services, and Muslim-Friendly Travel Experiences, which means steady development of sectors related to halal tourism. In addition, the stability of standard deviations shows low dispersion and increasing convergence across countries. Moreover, the stability of minimums and moderate growth of maximums suggest that a long observation period accounts for improved performance without additional volatility. The Halal Tourism Index (HT) has an average value of 69.40 with a minimum value of 42.30 and a maximum of 90.80. This means that, on average, the halal tourism sector in the studied countries has a medium development level, although there is quite high variance. The high dispersion (Std. Dev. = 10.40) shows that there are quite different levels of *halal* tourism development across destinations, including both emerging markets with low *halal* tourism development levels and highly developed destinations with

institutionalized Sharia-compliant facilities. This is also evident in Figure 2, where the HT sector shows the widest distance between its minimum and maximum arcs among the three variables.

Figure 2. Descriptive Statistics Comparison of Halal Tourism Variables



In a similar vein, Hospitality Services (HS) reveal an average of 72.60, barely surpassing the HT index, signifying consistent emphasis on service quality, certification criteria, and customer satisfaction. A narrower standard deviation (Std. Dev. = 9.60) than HT indicates that hospitality services in OIC destinations share more similarities, particularly regarding the establishment of uniform quality criteria, where the presence of international halal certification agencies and Islamic financial institutions has helped to standardize the delivery of services. In addition, the minimum score (48.20) highlights persisting deficiencies in several regions, mostly where the institutional base is underdeveloped or where service delivery is fragmented. On the other hand, Muslim-Friendly Travel Experiences (MFTE) have the highest average value (75.20) among the three indicators, with moderate

consistency (Std. Dev. = 8.90). It suggests that access to halal food, mosques, and travel arrangements suitable for Muslims is widely distributed in the selected destinations. Small variance between the minimum (50.12) and maximum (93.20) scores indicates increased recognition of Muslim-friendly criteria in OIC and non-OIC destinations, trying to draw Muslim tourists. These results corroborate the conclusions made in previous studies (Battour & Ismail, 2016), which identified Muslim-friendly travel experiences as one of the important factors for tourist loyalty and revisit intentions.

Panel Unit Root and Stationarity Tests

The Levin-Lin-Chu test and Im-Pesaran-Shin test suggest that all variables become stationary after first-differencing, which means that the assumptions for the Panel VAR are met. The condition allows the model to estimate relationships between the variables effectively.

Table 3. Panel Unit Root Test Results

Variable	LLC (Level)	IPS (Level)	Fisher- ADF (Level)	Fisher- PP (Level)	Levin- Lin- Chu (LLC)	IPS	Fisher- ADF	Fisher- PP	Station- arity
HT	-1.24 (0.108)	-0.95 (0.171)	28.63 (0.184)	31.72 (0.126)	-5.68*** (0.000)	-4.45*** (0.000)	59.20*** (0.000)	61.32*** (0.000)	I(1)
HS	-1.16 (0.100)	-0.70 (0.163)	35.43 (0.198)	37.04 (0.138)	-6.45*** (0.000)	-4.25*** (0.000)	60.19*** (0.000)	63.0*** (0.000)	I(1)
MFTE	-1.02 (0.113)	-0.56 (0.147)	41.02 (0.203)	32.35 (0.119)	-6.35*** (0.000)	-4.80*** (0.000)	58.63*** (0.000)	62.5*** (0.000)	I(1)

To investigate whether Halal Tourism, Hospitality Services, and Muslim-Friendly Travels are stationary, four panel unit-root tests are used in the analysis: Levin-Lin-Chu, Im-Pesaran-Shin, Fisher-ADF, and Fisher-PP. From Table 3, it can be seen that at the level of data, no variable is stationary because the test statistic value is statistically insignificant for all four tests. Thus, there is evidence of unit roots in the series, and the series does not meet the stationarity condition for dynamic panel regression at the beginning stage. However, all four tests become significant at 1% after first differencing. The LLC statistics for HT, HS, and MFTE are -5.68, -6.45, and -6.35, while the corresponding IPS values are -4.45, -4.25, and -4.80. The Fisher-ADF and Fisher-PP results provide further confirmation that the three variables become stationary after first differencing. Accordingly, each series is integrated of

order one, or $I(1)$. The agreement among the tests provides strong evidence of the integration order. Confirming all variables as $I(1)$ satisfies the statistical condition for estimating Dynamic Panel VAR and System GMM. On this basis, the analysis proceeds to examine the evolving relationships among halal tourism, hospitality services, and Muslim-friendly travel experiences.

Panel VAR Estimation

The Panel VAR findings reveal a bidirectional causal relationship between halal tourism growth and hospitality services. Improvements in hospitality provision, including Sharia-compliant hotels, halal-certified restaurants, and professionally trained staff, significantly accelerate the development of halal tourism. At the same time, growth in halal tourism encourages further investment and innovation in hospitality services. The relationship is therefore mutually reinforcing. Muslim-friendly travel experiences likewise emerge as both a driver and an outcome of halal tourism development. Countries that provide comprehensive facilities, including airport prayer rooms, gender-sensitive travel arrangements, and credible halal assurance systems, tend to attract larger numbers of Muslim visitors. In turn, rising demand encourages policymakers and businesses to improve Muslim-friendly travel infrastructure.

Table 4. Panel VAR – Wald Granger Causality Test Results

Null Hypothesis	Wald χ^2 Statistic	Prob. Value	Decision (5% level)	Causality Conclusion
Hospitality services do not Granger-cause Halal Tourism	6.87	0.001	Reject H_0	Hospitality $\rightarrow$ Halal Tourism
Halal Tourism does not Granger-cause Hospitality services	6.00	0.003	Reject H_0	Halal Tourism $\rightarrow$ Hospitality
Muslim-friendly travel does not Granger-cause Halal Tourism	7.50	0.000	Reject H_0	Muslim-friendly travel $\rightarrow$ Halal Tourism
Halal Tourism does not Granger-cause Muslim-friendly travel	6.70	0.002	Reject H_0	Halal Tourism $\rightarrow$ Muslim-friendly Travel
Hospitality services do not Granger-cause Muslim-friendly travel	2.80	0.095	Fail to Reject H_0	No direct causality
Muslim-friendly travel does not Granger-cause Hospitality services	4.20	0.022	Reject H_0	Muslim-friendly Travel $\rightarrow$ Hospitality Services

The outcomes of the Panel VAR Wald Granger causality test are depicted in Table 4. It is revealed that bidirectional causality exists between halal tourism and hospitality services as well as between halal tourism and Muslim-friendly travel experience. Thus, the dynamic feedback mechanisms are present in both sectors. According to Wald χ^2 test statistics, hospitality services and Muslim-friendly travel experience have a significant impact on halal tourism. Furthermore, halal tourism is found to have a significant influence on both indicators. On the other hand, unidirectional causality is found between Muslim-friendly travel experience and hospitality services, which means that the development of Muslim-friendly travel experience promotes hospitality services development. At the same time, there is no causality relationship between hospitality services and Muslim-friendly travel experience.

System GMM Estimation Results

To mitigate problems arising from endogeneity, unobserved heterogeneity, and dynamic persistence, the System Generalized Method of Moments (System GMM) was utilized.

Table 5. System GMM Estimation Results

Dependent Variable: Halal Tourism (HT)	Coefficient	Std. Error	z-Statistic	Prob.
HT(-1)	0.312	0.081	3.84	0.000
HS	0.274	0.092	2.97	0.003
MFTE	0.351	0.088	3.98	0.000
GDP per capita (control)	0.116	0.054	2.14	0.032
Political stability (control)	0.091	0.047	1.94	0.053
Model Diagnostics				
Arellano-Bond AR(1) test (p-value)	0.001			
Arellano-Bond AR(2) test (p-value)	0.184			
Hansen J-test (p-value)	0.290			
Number of Countries	20			
Observations	320			

Empirical results can be found in Table 5 and depict the dynamic nature of Halal Tourism along with other variables. Diagnostics for the validity of the estimation are found in Table 5 as well. Consistent with the model's dynamic structure, the

Arellano-Bond test shows first-order serial correlation, whereas there is no second-order serial correlation. Additionally, the Hansen J-test does not reject the null hypothesis, suggesting the validity of the instruments used.

Discussion of Findings

The findings from the dynamic panel VAR and GMM estimations clarify the complicated and interrelated relationship between halal tourism, hospitality services, and Muslim-friendly travel experiences. The bidirectional relationship that halal tourism and hospitality services share affirms the theory that both the supply and demand sides of the halal tourism ecosystem are interdependent. Muslim travelers are drawn to halal tourism, hospitality, and Muslim-friendly services through the increased availability of *Sharia*-compliant hospitality services, halal food services, and trained personnel. Hospitality service challenges and concerns are resolved, and Muslim traveler confidence is improved. The availability of halal hospitality services enables Islamic norms and practices of hospitality to be accommodated. Consequently, this makes the halal tourism destination more attractive and increases the duration of Muslim travelers' visits and, thus, halal tourism's economic benefits. In turn, hospitality services are influenced and improved by the increased demand for halal tourism and Muslim traveler services.

There exists a two-way relationship between halal tourism and Muslim-friendly tourism that highlights the importance of cultural and religious inclusivity as the bases for competitiveness in destinations. These findings support the research by [Eid & El-Gohary \(2015\)](#) and [Han et al. \(2019\)](#), who argue that Muslim-friendly features such as availability of halal foods, places of prayer, and gender-sensitive travel options have direct impacts on satisfaction, loyalty, and revisitation of tourists. In addition to increasing satisfaction, these variables have other impacts through unique processes. The availability of places for prayer makes it easy for Muslims to perform their religious activities, while certified halal food options address concerns about dietary issues. Additionally, Muslim-friendly marketing and adequate online information help improve the destination's credibility by reducing information asymmetry before the trip. All these elements result in increased tourist visits, higher spending, brand loyalty, and revisiting.

Asynchronous causality involves an important consideration with respect to hospitality and the Muslim-friendly travel experience. The absence of a direct relationship between hospitality and the Muslim-friendly travel experience indicates that general enhancements to hospitality services, while important, might

not be enough to provide Muslim travelers with culturally enriching experiences. Rather, the relationship from the Muslim-friendly travel experience to hospitality services suggests that hospitality services will be influenced by Muslim travelers' expectations, which are linked to their religious and cultural identity. This contributes to the debate by shifting the focus to the demand side of halal hospitality services, suggesting that Muslim travelers' culturally specific demands are the drivers, not halal service enhancements in hospitality. The results indicate that hospitality service providers are no longer concerned with service enhancements, but with hospitality services that meet travelers' culturally specific demands, such as family-friendly services, halal-certified services, religious services in different languages, and digital halal travel services.

From an Islamic economics perspective, the results illustrate that the growth of halal tourism is in line with the objectives of Maqasid al-Shari'ah. Accessible halal services, prayer availability, and considerate hospitality allow practicing Muslims to fulfill their religious obligations during their travels. Also, strong halal engagement and ethical practices build and maintain visitors' trust while protecting wealth (*hifz al-mal*) by eliminating information gaps and fraudulent acts, and protecting dignity (*hifz al-'ird*) by providing considerate and respectful services. Therefore, sustainable halal tourism in this context requires credible halal certification, combined with consistent and transparent monitoring and ethical practices, to develop an adequate level of trust in the halal tourism industry and promote welfare (*maslahah*) in the long term. The results make a strong theoretical contribution to the study of tourism growth, because they allow the empirical bounding of the dynamic bidirectional relations in the frameworks of tourism-led growth (TLG) and supply-driven growth (SDG). While mainstream tourism economics discusses the role of hospitality and infrastructure as the main antecedents of tourism expansion (Balaguer & Cantavella-Jordá, 2002), this research shows that demand-driven, culturally based constraints also shape halal tourism and thus create a dual channel of growth causality. The results also support the broader framework of Islamic economics and tourism by demonstrating that growth in the tourism industry is not only the accumulation of wealth but rather an ethical and trustworthy framework to create halal value. Therefore, tourism can increase a destination's attractiveness while ensuring that halal tourism sustains growth that is both equitable and consistent with the Islamic economic paradigm.

The results hold great importance for industry executives and policymakers. First, because halal tourism and hospitality services reinforce each other, a policy

framework will be necessary that offers a holistic approach to service quality and demand. Second, since the services that are Muslim-friendly play such a large role, there is a strong need to consider religious concerns in destination development and in the planning and placement of certification and branding. These will have the greatest impact on the long-term development of tourism and hospitality services. Thus, governments and tourism boards need to invest in Muslim-friendly services such as public prayer facilities, halal food, and sensitive advertising. Third, since hospitality services and Muslim-friendly travel experiences relate asymmetrically, there is a need for continuous attention by certifying bodies, regulators, and industry members toward growing consumer demands. Today's Muslim travelers can use information technology to network, build a global presence, and play a greater role in determining service standards. This will force hospitality services to be more inclusive and offer services that are faith-sensitive. In addition, competitiveness of travel destinations can be enhanced by prioritizing the development of halal-friendly accommodations, halal-integrated digital tourism, family-oriented services, and a global, unified halal certification framework. Implementing these will build traveler confidence to stay longer and return, and will stimulate private investment to develop halal tourism.

The study contributes to scholarship by compiling advanced methods in halal tourism and integrating advanced econometrics, providing focused research, unlike the majority of research in this area, which is mainly descriptive and survey-based. In addition, it provides research-based recommendations for policymakers who want to position their destinations in the emerging global Muslim travel industry. In doing so, the findings not only confirm but also extend the discourse on halal tourism as a driver of sustainable economic growth, cultural diplomacy, and destination competitiveness in the contemporary global economy.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretical Implications

This study has several major contributions worth reflecting on. First, the reciprocal relationship between halal tourism and hospitality services supports the Tourism-Led Growth (TLG) hypothesis, which argues that tourism has catalytic, developmental impacts on the economy. Whilst the example in this study is already evidencing the endogenous nature of tourism's economics, the case herein is of a cumulative relationship replete with circular interactions. Specifically, improvements in hospitality services would generate tourism demand, and in turn,

the increasing demand would require hospitality services to be extended. Hence, this study uses the System GMM estimator to draw consistent parameter estimates on the dynamic panel. The study found that this circular feedback system was true in that higher-quality hospitality services would advance halal tourism and, in return, would require further development of hospitality services.

Second, the feedback circularity system was also evident in the significance of Muslim-friendly travel services for halal tourism, which evidenced the demand side of the tourism market and the cultural elements that would influence the growth of halal tourism. Third, the feedback circularity system and the significance of travel services on halal tourism evidenced the demand side of the tourism market and the cultural elements that would influence the growth of halal tourism. Lastly, in relation to halal tourism, the study's methodology of dynamic panels, VAR, and GMM added to the previous literature, which was limited to descriptive, cross-sectional, or SEM approaches. By employing advanced econometric techniques, this study contributes to building a more rigorous theoretical foundation for analyzing the growth nexus of halal tourism in a global context.

Practical Implications

The data do provide concrete value for policymakers, tourism boards, and stakeholders. First, the significant two-way correlation between halal tourism and hospitality indicates that policies should be holistic, requiring simultaneous development of Sharia-compliant hospitality and the halal tourism offer. Second, the predominant influence of Muslim-friendly travel experiences shows that, in the design and certification process of travel destinations, there should be consideration of including various religious requirements and cultural sensitivity. Competitive advantage in this industry is built on the provision of prayer amenities, halal meals, and services that facilitate gender-sensitive travel.

Third, the imbalance of hospitality and Muslim-friendly travel experience demonstrates that both hospitality improvement and trust-generating halal certification are necessary, and that appropriate laws and certification structures are required. Finally, the study results indicate that integration with halal tourism is an enabler. Sharia-compliant financial tourism products, such as sukuk, would provide the financing for halal tourism infrastructure. Finally, the results offer useful lessons for non-Muslim-majority destinations. Countries such as Japan, South Korea, and the United Kingdom can become more attractive to Muslim travelers by embedding Muslim-friendly practices consistently across tourism services. Such policies can

diversify visitor markets while also strengthening intercultural diplomacy and national soft power.

Conclusion

Dynamic Panel VAR and System GMM were applied in this study to understand the growth dynamics within halal tourism, hospitality services, and Muslim-friendly travel services. The findings show that hospitality services and halal tourism have a bidirectional relationship. Hospitality services grow with the growth of halal tourism. The need for Muslim-friendly services is also a driver of growth in hospitality and travel services in OIC and non-OIC countries, pointing to the greater competitiveness of a tourist destination that can meet both the cultural and religious requirements of its clientele.

Theoretically, this study incorporates the social and cultural aspects of the tourism-led growth hypothesis and the endogenous growth theory. It explains the dynamic interrelations that exist within halal tourism. It shows the versatility that can be offered by applying the Dynamic Panel VAR and System GMM to study interrelated phenomena. Practically, the findings of this study provided evidence to support more comprehensive approaches adopted by the relevant authorities and actors in the tourism and hospitality services sectors. These should be guided by the establishment of Muslim-friendly hospitality services and travel, including effective certification of halal services, rational Sharia governance and management structures, ethical business practices and comprehensive marketing. Such approaches should enhance both competitiveness and the sustainability of halal travel services.

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