

Symbiosis between Caravanserai in Islamic Civilisation and Tourism in Modern Era: A Reference to Malaysia

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Abstract

Caravanserai refers to the accommodation for travelers to rest and enjoy the services provided there. Initially, it was known as *ribat* and *khanqah*. Its construction in Islamic civilisation is linked to tourism, which in turn generates the national economy. Besides that, its construction is made up of specific architecture. Thus, it is useful to promote the uniqueness of the country's art, culture, and heritage as the main catalyst for the growth of the country's tourism and cultural sector. The objective of this study was to examine the relationship between caravanserais in Islamic civilisation and the tourism industry, and how it can be used to promote art, cultural, and national heritage tourism in Malaysia. The study presented a qualitative research design using historical study and content analysis approach. The sampling of the study was done in two stages, namely article search based on the use of keywords such as caravanserai, Islamic tourism, art tourism, cultural tourism, and Islamic civilisation, and review of the reference list at the end of the articles that were referred to in the early stages. Meanwhile, data analysis was also conducted in stages, i.e., the analysis of the written content followed by the implied content. The research findings showed that caravanserai has a significant relationship with the tourism industry in Islamic civilisation based on three things. First, its position is on the Silk Road, which was a trade and tourism route at that time. Second, the caravanserai is a tourist attraction because it has historical places and functions as a commercial center. Third, the caravanserai contributes to the economic growth of the country as it successfully attracts many tourists to visit the place. The research findings also indicated that the caravanserai can be used to promote art, cultural, and national heritage tourism in Malaysia based on its construction as a historical monument that displays certain arts and becomes a tourist destination for local history and cultural exploration. This finding is also supported by previous studies which agreed that culture and art can be used to promote tourism. Thus, the concept of caravanserai construction in Islamic civilisation can be utilised towards promoting the tourism industry in Malaysia in line with the National Tourism Policy (NTP) 2030, which, among other things, focuses on the keystones to improve the experience and satisfaction of tourists.

Keywords: Caravanserai; Islamic Civilisation; Islamic Tourism; Malaysia; Tourism

Introduction

Caravanserai refers to the accommodation for travelers to take a break and enjoy the services provided there.¹ In the beginning, it was known by different terms such as *ribat* and *khanqah*. *Ribat* is a warehouse or building, i.e., a place to keep animals such as horses in preparation for war. According to the history of Islamic civilisation, the first *ribat* was constructed by 'Uqbah Ibn Nafi' during the reign of Caliph 'Umar ibn al-Khattab. In Central Asia and North Africa, *ribat* is often built by the government. This term was later changed to *khanqah* in the early 10th century. *Khanqah* refers to facilities designed by Sufis as assembly complexes or military deployments for conquest. The *khanqah* was later developed into a caravanserai (inn or motel).

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¹ Paulina Raeva, Karel Pavelka and Karel Pavelka jr. (2022), "Geodata for HBIM and Analysis on Preserving a Caravanserai in Koysenjaq," *International Archives of the Photogrammetry, Remote Sensing and Spatial Information Sciences*, Vol. XLVI-5/W1, pp. 185-192.

Basically, caravanserai is a free facility developed by the government for merchants, travellers, and people who want to perform the pilgrimage. It is for them to recharge before continuing their journey. Many facilities are provided here such as lodging, food, shelter, storage, and entertainment. They can be freely used for three days. For some modern caravanserai, they are also equipped with other facilities, including pharmacies and vehicle repair shops.² In addition, it provides benches, shelves, areas to dispose rubbish, holes, pots, bowls, and so on.³ Water supply sources and shops selling necessities are also found around the caravanserais. This is based on the records of Ibn Batutah,⁴ who saw for himself the existence of water sources during his journey to Salihyyah, where he had rested at several stops such as Sawadah, Warradah, Mutaylib, 'Arish, and Kharrubah. Each stop has an inn or hostel known as a *khan* and this is where travelers stop to rest with their mounts.

Studies on the relationship between caravanserai and tourism have been extensively conducted. Overall, these past studies can be summarised into three forms. First, there are studies which focused on the function of a caravanserai. Scholars such as Stevens (1889), Evans (1928), Kiani (1970), Vryonis (1971), Sims (1995), Saoud (2004), Hathaway and Barbir (2004), Della (2005), Sussley (2007), Blue, Cooper, Thomas and Whitewright (2008), O'Gorman and Prentice (2008), Lally (2009), Karluk and Karaman (2014), Floor (2015), and Swarbrooke (2018) revealed through their research findings that caravanserai functions as a lodge for sailors, merchants, people who are going to perform the Hajj, as well as a place for travellers to take a break and store goods.⁵ The personal experience of Ibn Batutah⁶ who went through his own journey from Baghdad to Mecca confirmed the existence of caravanserais as a stopover. He was referring to the caravanserai built in the 8th century founded by the wife of Caliph Harun al-Rashid in the Abbasid period and also the caravanserai built by Sultan 'Ala' al-Din Kayqubad (1200–1237AD); that is, the Saljuk Sultan, which connected Anatolian cities with the trade route.

In fact, before the 19th century, it emerged as the main resting area. It resembled a temporary accommodation, yet was equipped with various facilities such as rooms, pavilions, bathrooms, squares, markets, mosques, pharmacies, barbershops, and animal enclosures (open stables). There were also private lounges. Typically, it was constructed to at most two floors and could accommodate up to 1000 people at a time. Playing a role as a stopping place for the merchants, caravanserai then developed into a commercial area. A space in the caravanserai was utilised as a place to conduct business and commercial activities. The group of merchants often carried merchandise such as jewelry, cosmetics, amulets, and so on with them.⁷

According to Sussely, the shift of the caravanserai function from accommodation to commercial area is feasible because some of the spaces in the caravanserai have a temporary function.⁸ Certain spaces can be used by merchants to trade in the morning and then lodging at night. This function is expanding to the point that caravanserai is deemed as a commercial base that is often used as a wholesale centre to sell various types of goods. For instance, Ipek Hani built by Mehmed I is a wholesale silk cloth centre

² Eleanor Sims (1995), "Trade and Travel: Markets and Caravanserai," in George Michell and Ernst J. Grube (eds.), *Architecture of the Islamic World its History and Social Meaning*, London: Hudson Ltd, p. 102; Marouti Andreh (2021), "Infrastructure for Trade Routes in Western Azerbaijan, Iran: Caravanserais, Bridges, and Fortresses," in Maurizio Boriani and Mariacristina Giamburini (eds.), *Architectural Heritage in the Western Azerbaijan Province of Iran: Evidence of an Intertwining of Culture*, New York: Springer Champp. pp. 229-258.

³ Yifat Thareani-Sussely (2007), "Ancient Caravanserais: An Archaeological View from 'Aroer,'" *Levant*, Vol. 39, No. 1, p. 124.

⁴ Ibn Batutah (1964), *Rihlah Ibn Batutah al-Musammah Tuhfat al-Nuzzar fi Ghara'ib al-Amsar wa 'Aja'ib al-Asfar*, Kaherah: al-Maktabat al-Tijariyyah al-Kubra.

⁵ Thomas Stevens (1889), *Around the World on a Bicycle*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons; Arthur Evans (1928), *The Palace of Minos: A Comparative Account of the Successive Stages of the early Cretan Civilization as Illustrated by the Discoveries at Knossos*, Vol. 1, London: Macmillan and Co; Mohammad Yousef Kiani (1970), "The Iranian Caravanserais during the Safavid Period," PhD thesis, The University of London; Seros Vryonis (1971), *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor: And the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh Through the Fifteenth Century*, California: University of California Press; Eleanor Sims (1995), "Trade and Travel,"; Rabah Saoud (2004), "Muslim Architecture under Ottoman Patronage (1326-1924)," *FSTC Limited*, July, pp. 1-26; Jane Hathaway and Karl K. Barbir (2004), *The Arab Lands under Ottoman Rule: 1516-1800*, London: Routledge; Pietro Della Valle (2005), *Della Valle's Travelogue*, Transl. Vol 1, Tehran: Ghatre, pp. 107-108; Yifat Thareani-Sussely (2007), "Ancient Caravanserais,"; Lucy Blue, John Cooper, Ross Thomas and Julian Whitewright (2008), "Connected Hinterlands," Proceedings of Red Sea Project IV, pp. 179-186; Kevin D. O'Gorman and Richard C. Prentice (2008), "Iranian Hospitality: From Caravanserai to Bazaar to Reporting Symbolic Experience," EuroCHRIE 2008 Congress, University of Strathclyde, Dubai, 11-14 October 2008; Jagjeet Lally (2009), "The Pattern of Trade in Seventeenth-Century Mughal India: Towards an Economic Explanation," Economic History Working Paper No.120/09; Sadik Ridvan Karluk and Suleyman Cem Karaman (2014), "Bridging Civilizations from Asia to Europe: The Silk Road," *Chinese Business Review*, Vol. 13, No. 1, pp. 730-739; Willem Floor (2015), "Hotels in Iran, 1870-1940," *Studia Iranica*, Vol. 44, No. 2, pp. 277-314; John Swarbrooke (2018), *The Meaning of Luxury in Tourism, Hospitality and Events*, Oxford: Goodfellow Publishers.

⁶ Ibn Batutah (1964), *Rihlah Ibn Batutah al-Musammah Tuhfat al-Nuzzar fi Ghara'ib al-Amsar wa 'Aja'ib al-Asfar*.

⁷ Paulette M. Michèle Daviau (1993), *Houses and their Furnishings in Bronze Age Palestine: Domestic Activity Areas and Artifact Distribution in the Middle and Late Bronze Ages*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

⁸ Yifat Thareani-Sussely (2007), "Ancient Caravanserais."

Symbiosis between Caravanserai in Islamic Civilisation and Tourism in Modern Era: A Reference to Malaysia while Pirinc Hani, Fidan Hani, and Koza Hani located in Bursa are the main markets that offer wheat and rice for purchase.⁹

Second, there are studies that focused on the orders for the caravanserai construction, such as the one done by Heyd and al-Tabari. The orders for the caravanserai construction usually come from the government, such as the governor of Damascus. The construction of a caravanserai was ordered to assure the safety of travellers and merchants, including by the government of Samarkand, Uzbekistan, Egypt, and even Iran.¹⁰

Third, there are studies that accounted for accommodation costs. Although there are many facilities available in a caravanserai, a study by Brosnahan revealed that the offer of free accommodation is set for at most three days.¹¹ However, Della Valle reported that one can stay in a caravanserai freely for a year.¹² Because it is provided free of charge, caravanserai is also associated as an accommodation facility for the poor.¹³

This present study focused on how caravanserai can be utilised in promoting tourism related to art, cultural, and national heritage in Malaysia. This study examined two things. First, the form of relationship that exists between caravanserai and tourism. Second, how the concept applied in caravanserai can help Malaysia promote tourism in the form of art, cultural, and national heritage.

The Relationship between Caravanserai and Tourism in Islamic Civilisation

Caravanserai in Islamic civilisation is linked to tourism. The relationship between these two has been highlighted in the previous studies. A review of past studies related to caravanserai found three forms of research focus. Firstly, a specific study of caravanserai linked to tourism. Soroush Hashemi, Talebian, and Taleqni studied the Ahovan caravanserai in Iran and its relationship with the development of the tourism industry. The position of the caravanserai on the Silk Road can help to restore and conserve the historical relics that belonged to the Ahovan caravanserai.¹⁴

Apart from that, a study by Ghasemi and Gholamalizadeh argued on the function of caravanserai and its contribution to the tourism sector and the Iranian economy. Caravanserai which functions as a stopover for merchants has a high potential to boost the country's economy. The initiatives to upgrade the caravanserai to a hotel can help attract the tourists' attention, as well as conserve the historical relics. Moreover, several caravanserais have been gazetted by UNESCO as tourism spots, including Akhan, Ertokus Han, and Saadettin Han.¹⁵ According to Polat, all of these caravanserais in Turkey are personally selected by UNESCO to be commercialised.¹⁶

Secondly, there has been research related to the topic of caravanserai and tourism. For example, the presentation delivered by the Islamic Republic of Iran on "Tourism Product Development" focused on the caravanserai located in Iran, which is described as one of the tourism products that shall be developed and given due attention.¹⁷ Furthermore, a study by Erdem emphasised the contribution of caravanserai to the tourism sector. The Mahperi Hatum Caravanserai built in Anatolia during the Seljuk period is one of the caravanserais that provides professional services and becomes a tourist attraction nowadays.¹⁸

⁹ Rabah Saoud (2004), "Muslim Architecture."

¹⁰ Uriel Heyd (1960), *Ottoman Documents on Palestine 1552-1615*, Oxford: Clarendon Press; Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari (1989), *Tarikh al-rusul wa al-muluk*, Albany: State University of New York Press.

¹¹ Tom Brosnahan (2005), *Turkey: Bright Sun, Strong Tea: On the Road with a Travel Writer*, London: Travel Info Exchange.

¹² Pietro Della Valle (2005), *Della Valle's Travelogue*, pp. 107-108.

¹³ Shaifali Johar and Kapil Chopra (2017), "A Survey of Mughal Caravanserais in Eastern Punjab (India)," The International Conference on Land Transportation, Locomotive Heritage and Road Culture, pp. 35-42.

¹⁴ Soroush Hashemi, Mohammad Hassan Talebian and Eskandar Mokhtari Taleqni (2012), "Determining the Position of Ahovan Caravanserais in Silk Road Route," *Journal of Basic and Applied Scientific Research*, Vol. 2, No. 2, pp. 1479-1489.

¹⁵ Farid Ghasemi and Hamzeh Gholamalizadeh (2015), "The Principles of Designing the "Silk Road Hotel-Faculty" Inspired by the Usage of Caravanserais in this International Road," *European Online Journal of Natural and Social Sciences*, Vol. 3, No. 3, pp. 969-987.

¹⁶ Naci Polat (2018), "Creating New Touristic Fashion Routes with Caravanserais on the Ancient Silk Road in Turkey," *Journal of Tourism, Culture and Territorial Development*, Special Issue, No. 9, pp. 213-224.

¹⁷ Islamic Republic of Iran's Presentation on "Tourism Product Development" (2013), Slaid, Ankara: Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicraft and Tourism Organization.

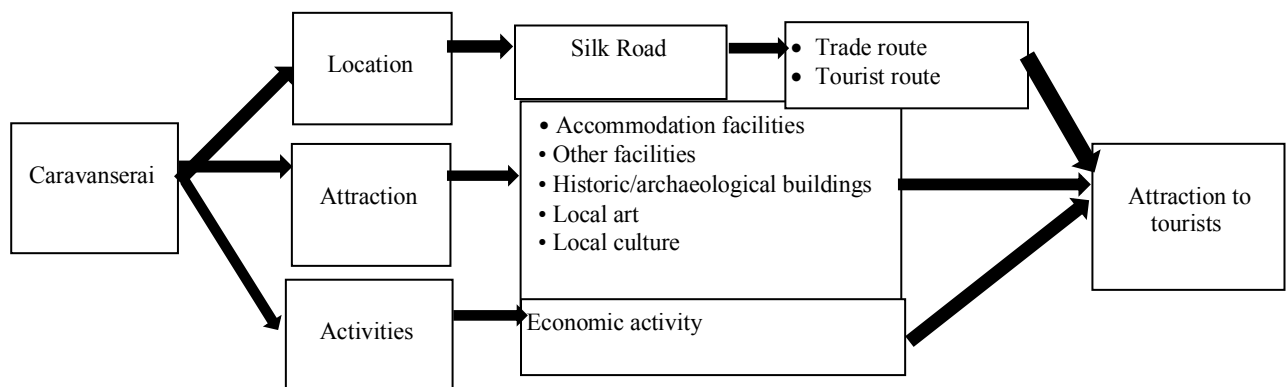
¹⁸ Büşra Erdem (2015), "Contribution of the Tourism on Economy: Tokat Sample," *Journal of International Management, Educational and Economics Perspectives*, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 29-38.

Furthermore, Yazarlou asserted the approaches of upgrading caravanserai as a cultural tourism and ecotourism centre. One of them is to organise the sales of handicrafts and souvenirs in caravanserais located in Mazandaran. Somehow, this is useful to boost the economy while attracting tourists to visit the historical places.¹⁹ The issue of caravanserai upgrade was also discussed by Bakhtiari and Allahyari. They analysed the experience of Isfahan in revamping the caravanserai as a tourism destination. Such efforts to restore and refurbish caravanserais in Iran are carried out to make them tourist attractions.²⁰ Meanwhile, Ahunbay analysed the conservation of buildings in Turkey. It is carried out to upgrade the tourism stages, such as refurbishing the caravanserai complex as one of the commercial centres.²¹ Zeinizadeh, on the other hand, focused his research on analysing markets as a domestic tourism tool in Tabriz, Iran. Its connection with caravanserai is reflected in terms of the caravanserai function that has the potential to be developed into a market that becomes a tourist spot.²²

Thirdly, there are studies that examined the relationship between caravanserai and tourism as a contributor to the country's economic growth. A study by Khaleh, Hadavi, and Zamani analysed the relationship between the development of the tourism industry and economic growth in the Zanzan region. Caravanserai is a historical monument that can attract tourists, as well as help increase the rate of economic growth due to an influx of visitors to the area.²³ A study dedicated to certain caravanserais as tourism destinations was also carried out. Medina for instance, studied the Orkney Caravanserai as a tourist destination. Orkney Caravanserai is a destination for tourists to observe archaeological, geographical, historical, and cultural aspects found in the area.²⁴

In summary, the relationship between caravanserai and tourism in Islamic civilisation can be described as in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1: The relationship between caravanserai and tourism in Islamic civilisation



Islamic Tourism in Malaysia

Islamic tourism refers to any travel activities, events, experiences, or relaxations carried out under conditions that comply with Islamic teachings, which is aimed at experiencing the Islamic way of life and exploring Islamic history, art, culture, and heritage. The tourism concept is oriented toward economic, cultural, and religious aspects. From an economic point of view, Islamic tourism is deemed as a medium capable of establishing close cooperation between government institutions worldwide, as well as being able to increase tourism activities among Muslims besides contributing to the existence of new tourism product destinations. From the cultural point of view, Islamic tourism can help to preserve and conserve Islamic heritage products that are increasingly being forgotten while creating

¹⁹ Mohaddese Yazarlou (2015), "Thinking Relatively on Nature Concept with Creating "Modern Tourism Space" at Mazandaran Through Tourism Approach," *Current World Environment*, Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 967-978.

²⁰ Somayeh Bakhtiari and Fereydoun Allahyari (2018), "Investigation and Analysis of the Experience of Isfahan in the Re-Functionalization of Caravanserais as Tourist Facilities," *The Journal of Social Science Institute (IWACT' 18 Special Issue)*, pp. 23-44.

²¹ Zeynep Ahunbay (2019), "Giving New Life to Historic Buildings," International Civil Engineering and Architecture Conference 2019, Trabzon, Turkey, 17-20 April 2019.

²² Habib Zeinizadeh (2016), "Urban Tourism in Tabriz, Iran: An Analysis of the Domestic Tourism Market," PhD thesis, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur.

²³ Esmael Nasiri Hende Khaleh, Faramarz Hadavi and Mahdi Zamani (2016), "Identification of the Relationship between Tourism Industry Development and Economic Growth of Zanzan Province," *Quarterly Journal of Urban Economics and Management*, Vol. 3, No. 15, pp. 75-93.

²⁴ Lucia Medina (2018), "Orkney Caravanserai," in Calcum Dalgetty, Stuart Dilley, Sophie Houston, Alexandra Leask, Fiona Logie, Neil Mair, Katie Rice and Danny Whitelaw (eds.), *Scott Sutherland Yearbook 2018*, UK: Robert Gordon University.

new tourism products that feature Islamic attributes. Meanwhile, from the religious point of view, tourism is carried through to understand the religion of Islam. Therefore, the cultural life of the Muslim community can be featured due to the existence of Islamic tourism.

The initiative to develop religious tourism in Malaysia or specifically Islamic Tourism is entrusted to the Islamic Tourism Center (ITC) which is an agency under the Malaysian Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture. This responsibility has been undertaken since the establishment of ITC in 2009. This agency supports the development of Islamic Tourism, as well as the branding of Muslim-Friendly Tourism through the services offered. This includes market research and intelligence, training, industry development consultancy, standards and certification of Muslim-Friendly Tourism and hospitality services, and information sharing. In order to ensure that the tourism agenda is on the right track, Malaysia will soon launch the National Tourism Policy (NTP) 2030. This policy will focus on efforts to increase national income, encourage cooperation and investment, empower local communities, and strengthen the resilience of the tourism industry. The six main keystones that will be focused on are transformation of governance, creation of tourism investment zones, digitalisation of tourism, improvement of tourist experience and satisfaction, strengthening of commitment to sustainable tourism, and increment of human capital capacity. The fourth keystone, which is to improve the experience and satisfaction of tourists, is seen to be closely related to the concept of culture in Islamic tourism. In this context, Islamic tourism can help preserve and conserve Islamic heritage products that are progressively being forgotten, as well as create new tourism products that are themed with Islamic characteristics that can improve experience and provide satisfaction to tourists.

One of the Islamic tourism products being introduced is Mosque Tourism which has potential as a tourist attraction at the domestic and international levels. This approach can open up new opportunities to restore and revitalise the tourism industry because it is closely related to Malaysia's socio-culture. This initiative is carried out in a joint effort by the ITC, the Islamic Development Department of Malaysia (JAKIM), as well as the State Islamic Religious Department and Council. In fact, ITC conducted a study in 2018 through Profiling of Mosques with Tourism-related attractions within Tourism Corridors in Malaysia. The findings of the study revealed that a total of 80 mosques across the country have been identified to have great potential to be developed under the Mosque Tourism programme.²⁵

The debate on Islamic tourism has been frequently raised in past studies. These past studies are generally directed towards certain themes. Studies by Norlida, Redzuan, Abu Hassan Ashari, and Mohd Safar, for example, examined whether the incident on September 11 in 2001 contributed to the influx of Middle Eastern visitors to Malaysia from the statistical aspect. It was considered as one of the factors aside from tourist spending in Malaysia, tourist income, travel expenditure for alternative tourism, and the impact of the September 11 tragedy. They used a panel analysis method to estimate the significance of these factors.²⁶ A study by Lina Munirah and Hairul Nizam was linked to the strategy and the issue of culturalisation of Islamic tourism in Malaysia. Among the strategies drafted and carried out by various parties to develop and succeed in tourism products include the organisation of Islamic tourism events at the national and international levels, the development of Islamic tourism products and heritage that have the potential to be marketed, as well as the inculcation of fundamental values and culture among the Malaysian community. Nevertheless, there are still issues in the planning and implementation of this tourism such as the terms for Islamic tourism products. Such issues to some extent take hold of the smooth development and implementation of Islamic tourism in Malaysia.²⁷

A study by Noor Fiteri looked at the Islamic tourism concept in general, including the elements such as activities, destinations, products, and motivation-based values according to the Islamic teachings that involve all parties, either operators or tourists. This concept was coined as a result of a review of various

²⁵ Islamic Tourism Centre (2021), "Masjid – Produk Pelancongan Islam yang Berpotensi bagi Pembangunan Sosio-Ekonomi Sarawak," accessed on 31 December 2022, <https://itc.gov.my/masjid-produk-pelancongan-islam-yang-berpotensi-bagi-pembangunan-sosio-ekonomi-sarawak/>.

²⁶ Norlida Hanim, Redzuan Osman, Abu Hassan Ashari Mohd Noor and Mohd Safar Hasim (2010), "Malaysian Tourism Demand from the Middle East Market: A Preliminary Analysis," *International Journal of West Asian Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 37-52.

²⁷ Lina Munirah Kamarudin and Hairul Nizam Ismail (2012), "Membudayakan Pelancongan Islam di Malaysia: Strategi dan Isu," The 9th Regional Symposium of the Malay Archipelago, UiTM Perak, 11 & 12 December 2012.

reference sources.²⁸ Moreover, Jabil Mapjabil, Ratna Roshida Abd Razak, Mazdi Marzuki, and Rosmiza Mohd Zainol conducted a study on a conceptual survey of Islamic tourism and its relevance in Malaysia. According to them, Islamic tourism involves three key components, namely conservative religion, economy, and culture. In the context of its implications for Malaysia, the establishment of the Islamic Tourism Centre in early 2010 became the best platform to empower the development of the country's Islamic tourism sector. These conceptual and theoretical highlights can be leveraged as the fundamental and reference for further studies on issues of Islamic tourism in Malaysia in particular, and on the global scale in general.²⁹

Meanwhile, a study by Haque and Momen also explored the role of religious motivation in the relationship between tourists' choice of destination and their satisfaction, as well as provided guidelines to facilitate tourism professionals in developing and implementing specific Islamic tourism strategies for the advancement of the tourism industry in a country such as Malaysia. In the Malaysian context, the religious motivation of international Muslim tourists is often set as the benchmark that influences them to consider Sharia-compliant tourism.³⁰ A study by Muhammad Hanif, Noorihsan, Gairuzazmi, and Muhammad Irwan examined the gravity model approach for tourism demand in Malaysia. This study was conducted to identify the factors attributing to tourist arrivals in Malaysia and gauge their importance. By understanding the determining factors of tourism demand in Malaysia, the government can formulate strategies and policies to increase Malaysia's competitiveness as a tourism destination. A gravity model was adopted by including factors such as the country of origin's income level, exchange rate, and availability of hotel rooms. Their study found that the population of the country of origin, countries that share a border with Malaysia, the income level of the country of origin, and OIC countries are the main factors that increase the arrival of international tourists.³¹

Lina Munirah's study aimed at Muslim tourism concept from the perspective of tourism operators in Malaysia. The purpose was to identify the concept and characteristics of Muslim tourism services from the perspective of tourism service providers, thus linking them to the motivation of religious or spiritual tourism. The study adopted a qualitative approach through the perspective of tour operators who played the role to introduce and offer packages with the Muslim tourism concept. A total of 21 tour operator representatives, who are registered under the Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents (MATTA), fulfilled the criteria of actively providing online Muslim travel package services (based on the internet), were selected as respondents.³² The data were collected using face-to-face interview method. A thematic analysis method was used in the manual transcription of interviews to develop the relevant sub-themes. This study found that the Muslim tourism system framework, from the perspective of tour operators, was obtained to illustrate the relevance of the Muslim tourism travel concept. This framework includes three phases of the Muslim tourism process, which entail preparing the Muslim tourism packages, throughout the journey of using the package, and while at the tourist destinations. This framework describes certain characteristics to differentiate the definitions and concepts of religious-oriented tourism, especially in the context of Muslim tourism. These definitions include the contexts of 'inclusive' and 'exclusive', which are understood through three components known as tourism characteristics, operations, and activities.

A study by Mohd Hilmee and Muhamad Faisal focused on three parties who carry out efforts to promote and implement tourism via mosque activities, namely a government agency, i.e., the Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC), Islamic NGOs, and the mosque itself. Through ITC, tourism mosques in Malaysia are promoted on the website with training and activities organised to improve the efficiency in the management of the tourism mosques. Meanwhile, the Islamic Outreach ABIM (IOA) is an Islamic NGO that actively implements the Mosque Tour Guide (MTG) programmes at ten mosques across the country. Some mosques manage their own volunteer tour guides and provision of special facilities for

²⁸ Noor Fiteri Abdullah (2014), "Konsep Pelancongan Islam: Satu Pengamatan," Seminar Kebangsaan Penyelidikan dan Pendidikan Islam Politeknik. Institut Tanah dan Ukur Negara (INSTUN), Behrang, Perak.

²⁹ Jabil Mapjabil, Ratna Roshida Abd Razak, Mazdi Marzuki and Rosmiza Mohd Zainol (2015), "Pelancongan Islam: Suatu Tinjauan Konseptual dan Relevannya di Malaysia," *Malaysia Journal of Society and Space*, Vol. 11, No. 1, pp. 172-182.

³⁰ Ahasanul Haque and Abdul Momen (2017), "A Model of Islamic Tourism towards Religious Motivation and Tourist Satisfaction in Malaysia," in Ford Lumban Gaol and Fonny Dameaty Hutagalung (eds.), *Social Interaction and Networking in Cyber Society*, Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd, pp. 153-167.

³¹ Muhammad Hanif Othman, Noorihsan Mohamad, Gairuzazmi Mat Ghani and Muhammad Irwan Ariffin (2018), "Malaysia's Tourism Demand: A Gravity Model Approach," *Journal of Business and Social Development*, Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 39-50.

³² Lina Munirah Kamarudin (2018), "Konsep Pelancongan Muslim daripada Perspektif Operator Pelancongan di Malaysia," PhD thesis, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia.

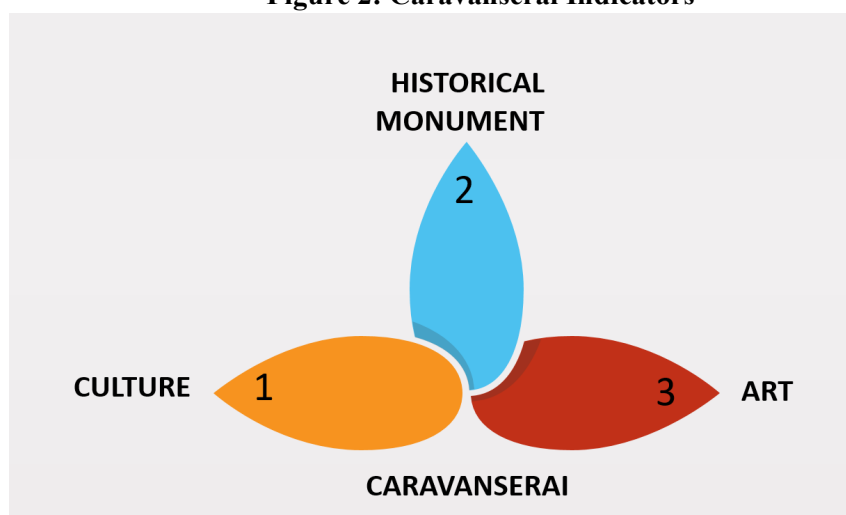
Symbiosis between Caravanserai in Islamic Civilisation and Tourism in Modern Era: A Reference to Malaysia tourists. The study is in line with the National Tourism Policy (DPN) 2030 in which, among others, focused on the core to improve the tourists' experience and satisfaction.³³

How Can Caravanserai be Leveraged to Promote Art, Cultural, and National Heritage Tourism in Malaysia?

Caravanserai in Islamic civilisation is developed with its distinctive architecture. Thus, it is useful to promote the uniqueness of the country's art, cultural, and heritage as the main catalyst for the growth of the country's tourism and cultural sector. A study by Khaleh, Hadavi, and Zamani revealed that the caravanserai is a historical monument that can attract tourists, as well as help to increase the rate of economic growth when there are many visiting tourists. It is built by displaying certain arts according to the era.³⁴ Caravanserai built during the Seljuk period in Turkey, for instance, display carvings and decorations featuring lions on statues and fountains.³⁵ Caravanserai in Anatolia displays inscriptions or scriptures, which are the most prominent architectural elements of the city. In fact, the inscriptions are made of marble that chronicle the sultans and amirs who ruled at that time.³⁶

Therefore, it is not surprising that caravanserais become the main tourist spots. Besides being a temporary stopover, it is also deemed as a tourist destination to explore the history and culture of the area. A study of caravanserai by Medina showed that Orkney Caravanserai becomes a destination for visitors to take a closer look at the archaeology, geography, history, and culture in the region.³⁷ In short, the indicators for caravanserai are depicted in Figure 2 below:

Figure 2: Caravanserai Indicators



Meanwhile, Islamic tourism in Malaysia aims to provide an experience of the Islamic way of life and explore Islamic history, art, culture, and heritage. Islamic tourism can help to preserve and conserve Islamic heritage products that are getting progressively forgotten while also creating new tourism products that are themed with Islamic characteristics. Using the example of Mosque Tourism, the building of this mosque has its own art and also applies local cultural elements. The construction of mosques in the archipelago with meru roofs, for instance, is the identity that forms the background of the community in this region. This type of construction is closely related to the culture that is influenced by the arrival and power of the Chinese community in this region.³⁸

In summary, the indicators for Islamic tourism in Malaysia are depicted in Figure 3 below:

³³ Mohd Hilmee Umar and Muhamad Faisal Ashaari (2019), "Pelaksanaan dan Pengurusan Masjid Pelancongan di Malaysia," *Jurnal Islam dan Masyarakat Kontemporari*, Vol. 20, No. 1, pp. 206-219.

³⁴ Esmael Nasiri Hende Khaleh, Faramarz Hadavi and Mahdi Zamani (2016), "Identification."

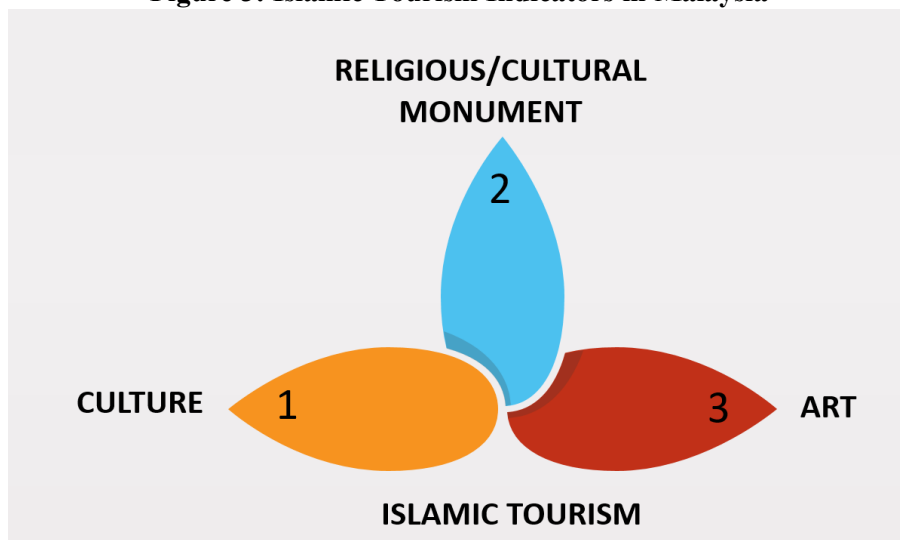
³⁵ Mustafa Önge (2004), "Restoration of Zazadin Han a 13th Century Seljukid Caravanserai Near Konya," Master thesis, The Middle East Technical University.

³⁶ Scott Redford (2016), "Reading Inscriptions on Seljuk Caravanserais," *Eurasiatica*, Vol. 4, No. 13, pp. 221-233.

³⁷ Lucia Medina (2018), "Orkney Caravanserai."

³⁸ Abdullah Yusof and Syaimak Ismail (2014), "Sumbangan Pertukangan Cina terhadap Reka Bentuk Masjid: Kajian terhadap Komponen Luar Masjid di Melaka Pada Abad Ke-18," *Jurnal al-Tamaddun*, Vol. 9, No. 1, pp. 57-66.

Figure 3: Islamic Tourism Indicators in Malaysia



Based on Figure 2 and Figure 3, caravanserai and Islamic tourism were found to have two indicators in common, namely art and culture. This shows that the caravanserai concept can be used to promote art, cultural, and national heritage tourism in Malaysia. It is also suitable for improving the experience and satisfaction of tourists as outlined in the fourth keystone of the National Tourism Policy. This formulation is supported by previous studies that are related to the role of culture and art in promoting tourism. These include studies by Inskeep, Laws, Crotts, and Erdmann, Norlida Hanim et al., Basri Rashid, as well as New Gaik Ling and Jabil Mapjabil. Inskeep,³⁹ as an instance, listed culture as the second attraction for tourists. He also listed subcategories of culture which, among others, also include art and history. According to Laws,⁴⁰ culture is one of the primary components that affect tourist experience when visiting a destination. Therefore, it should be used to promote tourism. The findings are not very different from the study of Crotts & Erdmann⁴¹ and Norlida Hanim et al.⁴² which also emphasised the cultural factor as an element that affects tourist experience, especially in influencing tourist satisfaction. A similar conclusion was also made by Basri⁴³ who highlighted tourist destinations that are loaded with local cultural elements as attractions that can contribute to the experience of tourists. In addition, New Gaik Ling and Jabil Mapjabil⁴⁴ also highlighted culture as one of the attractions that influence tourist visits to a destination. They also suggested historical factors in addition to other factors such as ease of transportation, friendliness of residents, quality and variety of food, accommodation facilities, safety, price, shopping, and environment.

Conclusion

Caravanserai and Islamic tourism in Malaysia share common indicators which are art and culture. Caravanserais were developed by featuring distinctive architecture according to the reigning period. The application of elements of art and local culture, as well as history makes the caravanserai a tourist destination. How this indicator can help promote art, cultural, and national heritage tourism in Malaysia needs to be seen from the fourth keystone of the NTP, which is to improve the experience and satisfaction of tourists. Many previous studies have proven that tourists get satisfaction from the experience when visiting a destination that has artistic and cultural elements. Therefore, caravanserais that have been identified as possessing these elements, can be used to help promote art, cultural, and national heritage tourism in Malaysia.

³⁹ Edward Inskeep (1991), *Tourism Planning: An Integrated and Sustainable Development Approach*, New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.

⁴⁰ Eric Laws (1995), *Tourism Destination Management: Issues, Analysis and Policies*, London: Routledge.

⁴¹ John C. Crotts and Ron Erdmann (2000), "Does National Culture Influence Customers Evaluation of Travel Service? A Test of Hofstede's Model of Cross-cultural Differences," *Managing Service Quality*, Vol. 10, No. 6, pp. 410-419.

⁴² Norlida Hanim Mohd Salleh, Tamat Sarmidi, Redzuan Othman, Abdul Hamid Jaafar and Raudha Md. Ramli (2011), "Kepuasan dan Kesetiaan Pelancong Domestik Terhadap Destinasi Pelancongan Pulau Kapas," *Journal of Tropical Marine Ecosystem*, Vol. 1, pp. 10-21.

⁴³ Basri Rashid (2013), "Elemen Destinasi dan Kesan Terhadap Pengalaman Percutian," *Malaysian Journal of Society and Space*, Vol. 9, No. 4, pp. 118-127.

⁴⁴ Gaik Ling New and Jabil Mapjabil (2012), "Faktor yang Mempengaruhi Kunjungan Ulangan Pelancong Antarabangsa: Suatu Ulasan," *Malaysia Journal of Society and Space*, Vol. 8, No. 3, pp. 1-11.

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