

THE REGULATION OF HALAL TOURISM UNDER ISLAMIC LAW: A COMPARATIVE LEGAL ANALYSIS OF NIGERIA AND UGANDA

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Abstract

Originating in Islamic commercial jurisprudence (fiqh al-mu 'āmalāt), halal tourism has grown to be a substantial part of international travel, encouraging moral behaviour, social responsibility, and lawful consumption in the travel and hotel industries. The administrative and regulatory framework for halal travel is still inadequate in a number of African countries, despite its increasing significance on a worldwide scale. Thus, this study intends to investigate and compare the legal frameworks governing halal travel in Nigeria and Uganda, with particular emphasis on whether the Tourism Act (UTA) 2008 in Uganda and the Nigerian Tourism Development Authority (NTDA) Act 2022 appropriately acknowledge and regulate faith-based travel. The paper examines the laws, regulations, and policy tools of both nations using a comparative doctrinal research methodology. It also draws comparisons between Malaysia and the norms of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). The results show notable deficiencies in certification procedures, legal recognition, and interagency collaboration, all of which work against the organized growth of halal-compliant travel. The sector's economic potential is undermined, and investor trust is restricted by the lack of standardized certification procedures and clear regulatory norms. Halal tourism is an ethical, consumer-focused regulatory innovation that is compatible with international development frameworks and constitutional secularism, according to the study's findings. In order to align the growth of halal tourism with the Sustainable Development Goals and Africa's Agenda 2063, it suggests establishing clear halal tourism standards, enhancing cooperation between tourism authorities and Islamic certification bodies, integrating Islamic finance instruments, and implementing specific policy changes.

Keywords: Halal Tourism, Islamic Commercial Law, Sustainable Development, Shariah, Nigeria, Uganda.

1. Introduction

Islamic jurisprudence, or *fiqh al-mu'āmalāt*, is the source of the notion of halal (lawful), which governs acceptable business dealings, moral behaviour, and permissible consumption.¹ During the late 20th century, halal governance, which was previously linked to dietary regulations, grew into organised certification programs that covered logistics, pharmaceuticals, food production, and banking. Through extensive regulatory frameworks managed by public bodies, Malaysia is largely seen as a pioneer in institutionalizing state-backed halal certification and incorporating halal compliance into national economic planning.² Half of the other Muslim-majority countries, such as Indonesia, the United Arab Emirates, and Turkey, were subsequently impacted by this institutional model and integrated halal requirements into more comprehensive economic and tourism plans.

Muslim-friendly or halal tourism emerged in the early 2000s when the halal framework expanded beyond food control into lifestyle domains. This approach includes minimal recreational amenities, prayer facilities, halal-certified catering, and shariah-compliant hospitality management.³ Muslim-friendly travel has been recognised by international agencies like the UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) as a valid element of inclusive and sustainable tourism development.⁴ Since then, the Muslim travel industry has expanded significantly worldwide, making halal travel a big part of the global travel business.⁵ However, there is still little official regulatory recognition of halal travel in Africa. Although Muslims travel in large numbers to nations like Egypt and Morocco, it is rare for halal tourism norms to be explicitly included in laws. There is a regulatory gap in Nigeria and Uganda, two countries with sizable Muslim populations and well-established tourism governance systems, because their main tourism legislation lacks halal-specific provisions.⁶ Practical ramifications of this absence include diminished investor confidence in certified halal hospitality services, diminished consumer protection for Muslim travellers, and restricted access to the growing worldwide Muslim travel market. Considering Nigeria's several legal systems and the socioeconomic significance of Islamic business practices in several northern regions,⁷ the disparity is especially noticeable.

For Uganda, the exclusion limits diversification in a growing tourism industry that is looking for new markets. The lack of explicit legal recognition in both situations represents an untapped potential for innovative regulations, moral market expansion, and inclusive economic progress rather than a lack of consistency with constitutional secularism.

In Nigeria and Uganda, the lack of specific halal tourist regulations has both regulatory and financial repercussions. Because halal-compliant hospitality services lack explicit legal requirements or enforceable control under their respective tourism laws, the omission legally erodes consumer protection.⁸ Halal regulations are mostly limited to food certification programs run by standards organizations in both jurisdictions; they are not included in larger tourism governance.⁹ This disarray hinders consistency, responsibility, and regulatory assurance. Institutionally, the gap results in uneven execution and diminished investor confidence by fostering poor cooperation between national standards organizations and tourism authorities. In terms of economics, it limits both nations' ability to strategically place themselves in the growing Muslim travel industry worldwide.¹⁰

More generally, rather than being a result of constitutional incompatibility, the gap is the result of legislative inattention. In keeping with the goals of sustainable development, impartial and well-crafted regulatory reforms could boost institutional coherence, promote competitiveness, and improve consumer protection.¹¹ Although the Nigerian Tourism Development Authority Act 2022 represents a significant reform in tourism governance¹² There are many obstacles to its implementation.

First, because Nigeria's constitutional system requires both federal and state agencies to regulate tourism, tensions between federal and state jurisdictions breed uncertainty.¹³ Second, the NTDA's ability to carry out its enlarged mandate has been hampered by institutional and financial limitations. Third, cohesive enforcement is impacted by regulation overlap and poor interagency collaboration, especially with organizations like the Nigerian Standards Organization and state tourism agencies.¹⁴ Lastly, operators and investors now have less regulatory clarity in some sectors due to the lack of comprehensive subsidiary regulations. These difficulties show that better institutional capability, more transparent implementation procedures, and improved collaboration are required.

1.2 Conceptualizing Halal Tourism

Halal tourism, also known as Shariah-compliant tourism or faith-based hospitality, refers to tourism services and experiences that are designed in accordance with Islamic law (Shariah)¹⁵. It encompasses facilities and practices that accommodate the religious needs of Muslim travelers while ensuring compliance with ethical and legal principles derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah.¹⁶ In practical terms, halal tourism covers services across the hospitality and travel sector that comply with Islamic law (Shariah). Hotels, resorts and airlines typically provide halal-certified food, remove alcohol and gambling-related activities, indicate prayer directions, provide access to prayer facilities, and in some cases offer gender-segregated or privacy-sensitive recreational services.¹⁷ Tour operators may also design itineraries that accommodate prayer times and culturally appropriate entertainment. Beyond physical compliance, halal tourism reflects a broader ethical business framework grounded in *fiqh al-mu'āmalāt*. It emphasizes lawful conduct, transparency, fairness and social responsibility, incorporating the principles *amanah* (trust) and *'adl* (justice).¹⁸

As argued by Battour and Ismail, halal tourism must not only fulfil Muslim travelers' faith-based needs but also promote fairness, transparency and community benefit.¹⁹ Thus, halal tourism operates as both a regulatory and ethical model, integrating spirituality with consumer protection and responsible commerce

1.3 Islamic Law and the Ethics of Tourism

Under Islamic law, commercial activities, including tourism, are governed by *fiqh al-mu'āmalāt* (jurisprudence of transactions). This framework requires lawful (halal) and wholesome (*tayyib*) dealings grounded in *amanah* (trust) and *'adl* (justice), while prohibiting *riba* (interest), *gharar* (excessive uncertainty) and *maysir* (gambling).²⁰ In all of these concepts, ethical conduct is central. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) praised truthful and trustworthy merchants, linking commercial integrity to moral accountability.²¹ Applied to tourism, these principles require transparency, fair contracting, avoidance of deceptive practices (*tadlīs*), and respect for moral boundaries.

Fiqh al-mu'āmalāt provides the normative foundation for Islamic business ethics, emphasizing lawful earning (*kasb halal*), contractual justice, and public welfare (*maslahah*).²² Transactions must avoid exploitative or speculative elements to preserve fairness and market integrity.²³

Contemporary Islamic commercial scholarship extends these principles to service industries, including tourism and hospitality, positioning halal tourism as a form of ethical corporate governance aligned with both Shariah compliance and modern consumer protection standards.²⁴ Accordingly, halal-compliant hotels, resorts and travel operators must ensure that food, finance, entertainment and service environments conform to Islamic ethical standards, while regulatory authorities bear responsibility for preventing misrepresentation and exploitation in the marketplace.²⁵

Despite the rapid growth of the global halal tourism market, Nigeria and Uganda lack unified legal frameworks for the recognition and enforcement of halal tourism. Key challenges include fragmented halal certification systems, weak regulatory coordination, limited consumer awareness, reduced investor confidence and inadequate access to Islamic finance for tourism infrastructure.²⁶ This paper, therefore, examines how principles of *fiqh al-mu'āmalāt* can complement national tourism legislation to strengthen regulatory coherence and consumer protection. It addresses three questions: (i) the extent to which existing tourism laws in Nigeria and Uganda accommodate halal-compliant services; (ii) how Islamic commercial principles may be integrated into domestic regulatory systems; and (iii) what comparative reforms may support a harmonised African model. A comparative doctrinal methodology is adopted, analysing statutes, policy instruments and Shariah sources.

1.3 Gaps and Challenges in the Regulation of Halal Tourism

Notwithstanding their well-established frameworks for regulating tourism, Nigeria and Uganda do not explicitly incorporate halal travel into their national tourist systems through law or policy. That is to say, that Halal or faith-based tourism is not specifically recognised by the Uganda Tourism Act 2008 or the Nigerian Tourism Development Authority (NTDA) Act 2022, indicating a legislative misalignment with international trends in Muslim-friendly travel.²⁷ This necessitates a brief look at the regulation of Halal Tourism in each of the jurisdictions showcased in this paper.

1.3.1 Nigeria

The primary shortcoming in Nigeria is the lack of a national structure or plan for halal tourism. The NTDA Act of 2022 does not define halal tourism or set up procedures for compliance and

certification, despite giving the Authority the power to create standards and encourage sustainable travel.²⁸ Similar to this, the Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON) has the legal right to create standards, but it hasn't released any thorough rules for halal hospitality.²⁹ There are multiple reasons for this void.

First, regulatory coordination has been hampered by the institutional division among the National Tourism Development Authority (NTDA), Standard Organization of Nigeria (SON), State Tourism Boards, and religious organizations. Second, policy prudence in adopting faith-specific regulation wording has been influenced by constitutional sensitivity regarding religion, given Nigeria's secular character under section 10 of the 1999 Constitution.³⁰ Third, there is still little focus on ethical or religious market niches in tourism development, which is still primarily driven by culture and profit. As a result, halal tourism projects continue to be mostly led by the private sector and subject to uneven regulation.

1.3.2 Uganda

Uganda's shortcomings are comparable to those of Nigeria with respect to the adoption and regulation of halal Tourism because Halal tourism requirements are neither included under the Tourism Act of 2008 nor the National Tourism Policy of 2014, which instead encourage cultural and sustainable travel.³¹ The Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS) and the Uganda Halal Bureau (UHB) certify halal food; they do not have authority over hospitality or tourism services.³² Investor trust and uniform regulation are weakened by this institutional compartmentalization.

Development is further hampered in both nations by low industry awareness, a lack of financial incentives, and a lack of interagency cooperation. In the end, the problem is conceptual: halal tourism is frequently viewed as religious rather than as an ethical and consumer-protective framework that aligns with inclusive growth and the Sustainable Development Goals.³³

1.3.3 A Comparative Study of Ugandan and Nigerian Halal Tourism Regulations

In contrast, Nigeria and Uganda both uphold formal institutional and statutory structures for the management of tourism. The Nigerian Tourism Development Authority (NTDA) Act 2022 governs Nigeria.³⁴ Whilst the Tourism Act 2008 and the National Tourism Policy 2014 serve as the foundation for Uganda's system. Licensing, quality control, destination promotion, and sustainable

tourist development are all covered by these frameworks. But in terms of its main tourism laws, neither country specifically acknowledges halal or faith-based travel. For Muslim tourists looking for clarification on compliance requirements in lodging, catering, entertainment, and associated services, in particular, this exclusion presents a normative and consumer protection gap. Halal regulation is still mostly limited to food certification processes run by religious organizations or standards organizations in both nations; it has not been included in laws governing travel and hospitality.³⁵

The lack of statutory harmonization jeopardizes international competitiveness, investor confidence, and regulatory predictability in the growing Muslim tourism industry. Regulatory coherence and service dependability would be strengthened by incorporating halal certification into current tourism quality assurance systems through organised inter-agency cooperation between national standards organizations and tourism agencies. Both jurisdictions would be in line with more general international frameworks as a result of this integration, such as the guidelines and standards for Muslim-friendly travel and inclusive tourism supported by the UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).³⁶

This paper emphasises that, while much African scholarship has focused on Islamic finance, little attention has been given to faith-based tourism regulation. It also offers policy relevance by supporting Nigeria's and Uganda's economic diversification goals through highlighting halal tourism as a means of attracting regional and international Muslim travelers. Malaysia and Indonesia demonstrate that integrating halal certification with tourism promotion enhances investor confidence and global competitiveness. While promoting religious freedom and ethical governance, it aligns with constitutional protections and international norms such as the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981) and the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism.

1.5 Global Evolution and Regulatory Model

Globally, halal tourism has evolved into a multibillion-dollar industry, with leading models in Malaysia, Indonesia, the United Arab Emirates, and Turkey.³⁷ These countries have institutionalised national halal certification systems that incorporate both religious and administrative oversight.

- The modern institutionalization of halal tourism began in Southeast Asia and the Gulf region, where governments deliberately integrated Shariah-compliant standards into national tourism and trade frameworks. Malaysia is widely regarded as the pioneer of structured halal governance. Beginning in the 1990s, Malaysia developed state-backed halal certification under the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM), later strengthened through the Trade Descriptions Act 2011.³⁸ Halal standards were extended beyond food to hospitality, logistics and tourism services. Malaysia consistently ranks among the top destinations in the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI), reflecting its integrated regulatory, branding and certification approach.³⁹ Indonesia followed with a more centralized statutory model. The enactment of the Halal Product Assurance Law 2014 (Law No 33 of 2014) institutionalized mandatory halal certification under a state⁴⁰ authority (BPJPH), incorporating tourism-related services within broader halal governance. Indonesia has since promoted “Muslim-friendly tourism” across destinations such as Lombok and Aceh, aligning regulatory policy with destination branding.

In the United Arab Emirates (UAE), halal tourism developed within a luxury and global hub model. Dubai and Abu Dhabi integrated halal hospitality standards within broader tourism diversification strategies, supported by national standardization frameworks under the Emirates Authority for Standardization and Metrology (ESMA).⁴¹ Rather than creating separate religious legislation, the UAE embedded halal compliance within quality assurance, positioning itself as a global Muslim-friendly transit and leisure hub.

Turkey adopted a market-driven approach, with the growth of halal-certified resorts and “alcohol-free hotels” particularly in Antalya. Certification is largely administered through private or semi-public bodies, such as the Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC), headquartered in Istanbul.⁴² Turkey’s model demonstrates how halal tourism can flourish within a constitutionally secular system through industry-led standardization.

Beyond these countries, similar trends are evident in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Morocco and Brunei, where Muslim-friendly tourism is integrated into national diversification agendas. Non-Muslim majority countries, including Japan, South Korea and Thailand, have also introduced halal

certification schemes and prayer-friendly infrastructure to attract Muslim travelers, indicating the global commercialization of the sector.⁴³

Overall, the development trajectory across these jurisdictions shows three patterns: (i) state-led statutory integration (Malaysia, Indonesia); (ii) market-driven regulatory accommodation within secular systems (Turkey, UAE); and (iii) strategic adaptation by non-Muslim majority destinations. These models collectively demonstrate that halal tourism regulation is administratively adaptable and economically viable across diverse constitutional and cultural contexts.

The General Requirements standard for Halal Food serves as a global benchmark and is implemented under the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM).⁴⁴ Similarly, Indonesia's Halal Product Assurance Law No. 33 of 2014 mandates certification across various service sectors, including tourism.⁴⁵ These frameworks demonstrate a pragmatic synthesis of Shariah principles and statutory law. The regulatory models typically combine the supervisory roles of religious councils with ministerial enforcement powers, ensuring transparency, consumer trust, and international recognition.⁴⁶

In contrast, African countries have been slower to adopt similar structures. A few, such as Kenya and South Africa, have initiated private halal certification bodies, but comprehensive statutory regulation is still limited.⁴⁷ Nigeria and Uganda, despite their large Muslim populations, lack formal halal tourism standards, though the legal frameworks under the Nigerian Tourism Development Authority Act of 2022⁴⁸ and Uganda Tourism Act 2008 provide the administrative foundation for possible integration.⁴⁹

1.6 Halal Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals

Halal tourism should not be viewed solely through a religious lens; it represents a value-driven model of tourism capable of advancing broader sustainable development objectives. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) recognizes tourism as a key driver of inclusive economic growth, cultural dialogue and poverty reduction, particularly within developing economies.⁵⁰ Faith-based tourism, including Muslim-friendly travel, contributes to these goals by fostering cultural exchange, diversifying tourism products and expanding access to emerging global markets.

From an Islamic legal perspective, sustainability is not an external addition but an intrinsic normative principle. Islamic commercial law is grounded in the concept of *khalifah* (stewardship), which views human beings as trustees responsible for managing resources ethically and sustainably.⁵¹ The prohibition of *isrāf* (wastefulness) and the promotion of public welfare (*maslahah*) further reinforce environmental moderation, responsible consumption and social accountability.⁵² These principles closely align with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), and 16 (Institutions, Justice and Strong Governance).⁵³

In practical terms, a halal-compliant tourism framework can enhance sustainability in three interrelated dimensions. Economically, it promotes market diversification and stimulates small- and medium-scale enterprises, particularly in sectors such as halal catering, modest fashion, local handicrafts and Shariah-compliant accommodation services. Socially, it strengthens inclusivity by recognising the needs of Muslim travellers while encouraging ethical labour standards and community participation. Environmentally, the embedded prohibition of waste and emphasis on moderation support responsible resource management within hospitality operations.

For Nigeria and Uganda, integrating Shariah-compliant standards into tourism regulation could produce multiplier effects. Both countries possess sizeable Muslim populations and culturally diverse tourism assets. By formally incorporating halal tourism within regulatory frameworks, they can expand access to the growing global Muslim travel market while simultaneously promoting ethical entrepreneurship and local value chains. Such integration may also appeal to non-Muslim tourists who increasingly prioritizes ethical consumption, transparency and socially responsible travel experiences.

Moreover, embedding halal standards within national tourism law could strengthen institutional accountability. Structured certification, transparent representation of services, and regulatory oversight would reinforce consumer trust and reduce market informality. In this sense, halal tourism aligns not only with faith-based compliance but with governance reform and sustainable economic transformation. Ultimately, halal tourism provides a convergence point between Islamic commercial ethics and global sustainable development policy.

The comparative nexus between Islamic law and secular tourism regulation highlights both challenges and opportunities. On the one hand, constitutional secularism in Nigeria and Uganda constrains the explicit incorporation of religious criteria in state law. On the other hand, both jurisdictions recognise freedom of religion and consumer protection, which can justify halal regulation as a matter of equity and market standardization rather than religious favoritism.

From a jurisprudential standpoint, halal tourism regulation does not impose religion but ensures transparency and that consumers' choices and values are consistent with both *fiqh al-mu'āmalāt* and modern administrative law. The challenge, therefore, is not religious conflict but legislative innovation. Developing mechanisms that balance religious compliance with secular oversight, ultimately, integrating Islamic commercial ethics within tourism regulation, offers Nigeria and Uganda an opportunity to advance inclusive growth, cultural respect and environmental responsibility within a coherent and constitutionally neutral tourism framework.

1.7 Shared Challenges and Divergent Approaches

It is important to note that both Nigeria and Uganda face similar regulatory and structural challenges regarding halal tourism implementation. These include the fact that

1. Neither the NTDA Act 2022 nor the Tourism Act 2008 provides a legal basis for classifying halal or Muslim-friendly establishments.⁵⁴
2. Multiple agencies (tourism, standards, and consumer protection bodies) operate without coordinated frameworks for religiously compliant services.⁵⁵ Tourism operators lack knowledge of halal requirements, while consumers face uncertainty regarding certification authenticity.⁵⁶
3. Absence of Islamic finance mechanisms limits investment in halal tourism infrastructure.

However, there are contextual distinctions. Nigeria's federal structure and dual legal system (civil and Sharia) offer greater scope for regional experimentation—northern states could establish Sharia-compliant hospitality codes under concurrent legislative powers.⁵⁷ Uganda's unitary system, while more centralized, provides a simpler route for nationwide policy integration once a framework is legislated.⁵⁸ In both countries, the policy vacuum contrasts with global best practices. Malaysia's Halal Tourism Standards (MS 2610:2015), Indonesia's

Halal Tourism Decree No. 2/2014, and the UAE's Halal National Mark serve as models for comprehensive regulation integrating religious, consumer, and administrative dimensions.⁵⁹

1.8 Harmonizing Islamic Commercial Principles with National Tourism Law

The harmonization of *fiqh al-mu'āmalāt* with national tourism legislation is both legally feasible and institutionally practicable when approached through structured regulatory integration rather than religious codification. Islamic commercial law emphasizes transparency, contractual fairness, consumer protection and prohibition of exploitative practices, principles that substantially mirror modern tourism regulatory objectives.⁶⁰ The functional equivalence between prohibitions of *gharar* (uncertainty), *riba* (usury) and *tadlīs* (deception) and contemporary doctrines on unfair trade practices demonstrates that harmonization can occur within secular legal systems without constitutional conflict.⁶¹

Comparative jurisdictions illustrate operational viability. Malaysia integrates halal certification within national trade and consumer protection frameworks under the Trade Descriptions Act 2011, administered by JAKIM, thereby embedding halal compliance into state-regulated quality assurance systems rather than treating it as a purely religious regime.⁶² Indonesia similarly institutionalized halal governance through the Halal Product Assurance Law 2014, creating statutory oversight while maintaining constitutional neutrality.⁶³ These models confirm that halal standards can function as technical regulatory classifications within civil law systems.

By contrast, Nigeria and Uganda lack formal integration of halal compliance within their tourism statutes, the Nigerian Tourism Development Authority Act 2022 and the Tourism Act 2008, respectively.⁶⁴ This omission externalizes halal certification to private or religious actors, weakens enforcement coherence, and reduces investor predictability in a globally expanding Muslim travel market.⁶⁵ The barrier is therefore institutional fragmentation and legislative inertia rather than constitutional incompatibility.⁶⁶

Harmonization may occur at three levels. First, interpretive integration: existing statutory concepts such as “ethical service,” “quality assurance,” and “consumer protection” under the NTDA Act and Uganda's tourism framework may be construed to encompass faith-based transparency and voluntary halal compliance.⁶⁷ Second, administrative implementation: regulatory agencies may issue guidelines or codes of practice recognizing halal certification within voluntary licensing or classification schemes. Third, legislative reform: Nigeria could amend the NTDA Act to

incorporate “faith-based tourism standards” within its standard-setting mandate, while Uganda could supplement its Tourism (Licensing) Regulations with a Halal Hospitality Code jointly developed by the Uganda Tourism Board and the Uganda Halal Bureau. Both jurisdictions may draw normative guidance from the Organization of Islamic Cooperation’s Standards, and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC), which provides internationally recognized halal tourism benchmarks adaptable to domestic legal systems.⁶⁸

Accordingly, harmonizing Islamic commercial principles with national tourism law does not entail religious establishment but regulatory refinement. Through interpretive clarification, administrative coordination and targeted legislative reform, Nigeria and Uganda can embed halal tourism within existing governance structures, enhancing consumer protection, market diversification and international competitiveness.

1.9 Towards a Proposed Model Framework on Halal Tourism for Africa

The comparative study underscores the urgent need for a continental model of halal tourism regulation adaptable to plural legal systems. The African Union’s Agenda 2063 and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) framework both recognize tourism as a strategic sector for regional integration.⁶⁹ A harmonized halal tourism code could thus enhance cross-border recognition of certification, promote ethical tourism, and diversify Africa’s tourism offerings. Nigeria and Uganda, as representative Anglophone jurisdictions with mixed legal systems, could pioneer this model through a bilateral memorandum of understanding (MoU) on halal tourism cooperation.⁷⁰ Such an MoU could facilitate standard-setting, capacity building, and knowledge exchange across West and East Africa.

1.9.1 Findings

1. Neither the Nigerian Tourism Development Authority Act 2022 nor the Uganda Tourism Act 2008 expressly recognizes or regulates halal or faith-based tourism. This omission creates a normative gap in consumer protection, certification oversight and regulatory clarity for Muslim-friendly hospitality services.
2. In both jurisdictions, halal-related regulation is largely confined to food certification bodies and standards agencies, without integration into tourism licensing or quality assurance

systems. This institutional fragmentation weakens enforcement coherence and reduces investor predictability.

3. Core principles of *fiqh al-mu'āmalāt*, including transparency, fairness, and prohibition of deceptive practices, are functionally consistent with modern tourism regulatory objectives. Harmonization does not require a religious establishment but regulatory alignment within existing consumer protection frameworks.
4. Countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia have successfully embedded halal certification within secular statutory systems through trade and consumer protection legislation, demonstrating that halal tourism regulation is administratively practicable and constitutionally neutral.
5. The absence of structured halal tourism regulation in Nigeria and Uganda limits market diversification, reduces competitiveness in the global Muslim travel sector, and constrains access to Islamic finance mechanisms for tourism infrastructure development. Addressing this gap would enhance consumer confidence, regulatory certainty and sustainable tourism growth.

1.9.2 Conclusion

The intersection between Islamic law and business regulation in tourism offers a strategic opportunity for African nations to diversify their economies and attract ethically conscious travelers. Halal tourism should not be perceived solely as a religious demand but as a regulatory innovation grounded in consumer rights, economic empowerment, and sustainability. For Nigeria and Uganda, adopting halal tourism standards represents a step toward achieving inclusive growth under the African Union's Agenda 2063, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and the broader objectives of Islamic commercial jurisprudence¹⁷. Ultimately, the future of African tourism depends on legal systems that are responsive, inclusive, and ethically grounded. Principles that Islamic law, when appropriately contextualized, can robustly support inclusion¹⁸.

This paper set out to examine whether and to what extent the existing tourism regulatory frameworks in Nigeria and Uganda accommodate halal-compliant tourism within their statutory and institutional architectures. Through a comparative doctrinal analysis of the Nigerian Tourism Development Authority Act 2022 and the Uganda Tourism Act 2008, alongside principles of *fiqh*

al-mu‘āmalāt and selected comparative jurisdictions, the research has demonstrated that both countries exhibit progressive tourism governance structures but lack explicit legal integration of halal or faith-based tourism standards.

The findings reveal that the omission is not rooted in constitutional incompatibility, but rather in legislative inattention and institutional fragmentation. Halal-related oversight in both jurisdictions remains confined largely to food certification bodies and standards agencies, without harmonized incorporation into tourism licensing, quality assurance, or enforcement mechanisms. This regulatory lacuna produces tangible consequences: weakened consumer protection for Muslim travelers, reduced investor confidence due to certification uncertainty, limited access to Islamic finance mechanisms for tourism infrastructure, and diminished competitiveness in the rapidly expanding global Muslim travel market.

Importantly, the paper established that the ethical and commercial principles underpinning *fiqh al-mu‘āmalāt* transparency, fairness, lawful conduct and prohibition of deceptive practices, are functionally aligned with modern consumer protection and tourism regulatory objectives. Comparative experience from jurisdictions such as Malaysia and Indonesia confirm that halal tourism regulation can operate within secular statutory systems through technical standard-setting and administrative coordination, rather than religious establishment.

Accordingly, the paper concludes that harmonizing Islamic commercial principles with national tourism law in Nigeria and Uganda is both legally practicable and economically strategic. By adopting structured interpretive, administrative and legislative reforms, both countries can embed halal tourism within existing regulatory frameworks in a manner consistent with constitutional secularism, inclusive governance and sustainable development. Ultimately, integrating halal tourism is not merely a religious accommodation but a regulatory innovation capable of enhancing ethical compliance, market diversification and long-term economic growth within the African tourism landscape.

1.9.3 Recommendations

1. Nigeria and Uganda should amend their principal tourism statutes or enact subsidiary regulations to expressly recognize halal or faith-based tourism within existing licensing

and quality assurance frameworks. Clear statutory recognition would close the normative gap in consumer protection and provide regulatory certainty for operators and travelers

2. Both countries should create structured inter-agency mechanisms linking tourism authorities, national standards bodies and accredited halal certification institutions. A unified accreditation and supervision system would reduce fragmentation, enhance enforcement coherence and strengthen investor confidence.
3. Regulatory agencies should issue administrative guidelines incorporating principles of transparency, fair contracting and prohibition of deceptive practices into halal tourism compliance standards. This would harmonize Islamic commercial ethics with existing consumer protection and trade regulations without compromising constitutional secularism.
4. Nigeria and Uganda should draw from functional jurisdictions such as Malaysia and Indonesia, as well as OIC/SMIIC halal tourism benchmarks, to develop context-sensitive but internationally recognizable standards. Mutual recognition mechanisms could also enhance cross-border competitiveness within Africa.
5. Governments should support training programs for hospitality operators on halal compliance, cultural sensitivity and certification procedures. Fiscal incentives such as tax reliefs, tourism grants or access to Islamic finance instruments should be introduced to encourage private-sector participation in halal-compliant tourism infrastructure.
6. Both countries should advocate for sub-regional or African Union–level dialogue on harmonised halal tourism standards. Regional cooperation would facilitate standard recognition, boost intra-African tourism flows and position Africa more competitively within the global Muslim travel market.

Collectively, these recommendations aim to transform the current regulatory lacuna into a structured, inclusive and economically beneficial framework for halal tourism governance.

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