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## Culinary Service Adaptation Strategies for Muslim Tourists: A Case Study of Hotel Yamamoto, Japan

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### Abstract

The recent surge in Muslim tourists visiting Japan has necessitated adaptations within the hospitality industry to cater to specific *halal* culinary requirements. This study explores the adaptive strategies implemented by Japan's hospitality sector, particularly examining how Hotel Yamamoto has responded to the demand for *halal* culinary options. This research employs a qualitative method, leveraging in-depth interviews with hotel management and observation of operational protocols. By applying Anthony Giddens' Theory of Structuration, the analysis underscores how the agency of Muslim tourists has instigated structural changes at Hotel Yamamoto. The hotel's initiatives to secure *halal* certification and expand its *halal* menu offerings are viewed as a proactive response to this specific tourist demographic's evolving preferences and demands. These modifications are progressively institutionalized through standardized practices, establishing new benchmarks for inclusivity and service diversity within the industry. Furthermore, the study reveals a dynamic interplay between the individual actions of tourists and the systemic adaptations by the hotel, illustrating the dual nature of structure as both enabling and constraining. While these adaptations have allowed Hotel Yamamoto to penetrate a new market segment, they also impose constraints related to the consistent delivery of services and the maintenance of *halal* standards.

**Keywords:** *Halal Tourism; Japan; Culinary Adaptation; Muslim Tourists*

*Lonjakan jumlah turis Muslim yang berkunjung ke Jepang telah mendorong industri perhotelan untuk menyesuaikan layanan mereka agar sesuai dengan kebutuhan kuliner halal. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi strategi adaptasi yang diimplementasikan oleh sektor perhotelan Jepang, dengan fokus khusus pada bagaimana Hotel Yamamoto merespons permintaan akan opsi kuliner halal. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan studi kasus pada Hotel Yamamoto, Jepang. Data didapatkan melalui wawancara mendalam dengan manajemen hotel dan observasi komprehensif terhadap praktik operasional hotel untuk memperoleh informasi tentang implementasi layanan halal. Melalui penerapan Teori Strukturasi Anthony Giddens, analisis ini menekankan bagaimana agensi dari turis Muslim telah memicu perubahan struktural di Hotel Yamamoto. Inisiatif hotel untuk mendapatkan sertifikasi halal dan memperluas penawaran menu halalnya dilihat sebagai respons proaktif terhadap preferensi dan tuntutan yang berkembang dari segmen turis ini. Modifikasi ini secara bertahap diinstitutionalisasi melalui praktik yang distandarisasi, menetapkan standar baru untuk inklusivitas dan keragaman layanan dalam industri. Lebih lanjut, studi ini mengungkapkan interaksi dinamis antara tindakan individu dari turis dan adaptasi sistemik oleh hotel, mengilustrasikan sifat ganda struktur sebagai sesuatu yang memungkinkan sekaligus membatasi. Sementara adaptasi ini memungkinkan Hotel Yamamoto untuk menjangkau segmen pasar baru, mereka juga mengalami kendala terkait layanan yang konsisten dan pemeliharaan standar halal.*

## A. INTRODUCTION

The increasing influx of Muslim tourists to Japan reflects a significant global trend in the travel market. According to the 2023 Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI), Japan is ranked sixth among non-Muslim countries friendly to Muslim tourists, experiencing a 19% increase in Muslim tourist visits compared to the previous year. This trend not only signifies Japan's successful efforts in catering to the specific needs of Muslim tourists, particularly in providing *halal* culinary options, but also illustrates the transformative impact on the local market dynamics and the emerging economic opportunities for Japan's tourism and hospitality industries.

The availability of *halal* culinary options plays a critical role in shaping destination choices for Muslim tourists. Certified and accessible *halal* food at travel destinations offers comfort and security, ensuring that dietary needs are met Islamic law. This underscores the importance of the tourism and culinary industries adapting and responding to these evolving needs, aiming to attract more visitors and to create inclusive and enjoyable experiences for all travelers.

Non-Muslim countries have increasingly recognized the growing demand for *halal* food as a key factor in attracting Muslim tourists. Studies reveal that nations like Japan, South Korea, and Thailand have made strides in promoting *halal*-certified restaurants and Muslim-friendly culinary experiences. However, these efforts often focus on marketing rather than a comprehensive approach to supply chain readiness and certification consistency (Adel et al., 2021), (Yousaf & Xiucheng 2018). For instance, Japan has introduced *halal*-certified dining establishments in major cities, yet gaps persist in addressing nuanced *halal* requirements such as traditional dishes and accompanying religious services (Hariani 2017). Moreover, differences in *halal* food regulation and implementation across Asian countries have created uncertainties for Muslim travelers (Nuraini & Sucipto 2021).

The readiness of non-Muslim countries to adapt to *halal* food requirements remains an underexplored area in the literature. While countries such as New Zealand and Singapore have utilized official government platforms to promote *halal* products, their efforts often address only selected dimensions of *halal* standards (Adel et al., 2021). Research from Indonesia highlights the critical need for education and outreach to raise awareness about the importance of *halal* certification among food producers (Subagiyo & Syaichoni 2023; Putra et al. 2023). Despite the rising number of Muslim tourists, few studies investigate how non-Muslim countries can holistically prepare their ecosystems, including supply chain integration and cross-sector collaboration, to meet *halal* requirements (Wibawa et al. 2021).

While existing studies focus on implementing *halal*-friendly initiatives, there is a notable lack of research on the strategic readiness of non-Muslim countries to provide *halal* food comprehensively. Future research should explore the internal mechanisms, required to develop a sustainable *halal* food ecosystem, including supply chain adaptability, workforce training, and regulatory alignment. Addressing this gap will contribute significantly to the global discourse on *halal* industry integration and offer actionable insights for policymakers and practitioners.

This research aims to explore and understand the adaptation strategies employed by Japan in providing *halal* culinary options to meet the needs of Muslim tourists. Specifically, the study will focus on Hotel Yamamoto, which has demonstrated its capability to adapt to *halal* culinary trends. This research is anticipated to offer new insights into innovative ways to meet *halal* culinary needs in hotels and restaurants and identify factors influencing the successful implementation of *halal* culinary practices in Japan. The choice of Hotel Yamamoto as the subject of this study is based on strategic and substantive considerations. Its strategic location and popularity among Muslim tourists make it an ideal site to examine the

hospitality industry's adaptation to *halal* culinary demands. This study is expected to reveal how Hotel Yamamoto implements *halal* menus and how they holistically integrate understanding and operational adaptations to meet Muslim customers' expectations and needs. This approach, which combines menu adaptation and cultural understanding, has the potential to significantly enhance customer satisfaction and strengthen Hotel Yamamoto's competitive position in the global tourism industry.

## **B. METHODOLOGY**

The method used in this study is qualitative with a case study approach. The case study approach is part of the qualitative method used to explore a case more deeply by collecting data from various sources (Raco 2018). Baxter and Jack define a case study as an approach conducted intensively, thoroughly, and in-depth on the subject being studied, whether a program, event, activity, or others, to gain comprehensive knowledge and information on the subject (Fadli 2021).

This method is employed to analyze and explore in-depth how the management policies of Awakanko Hotel respond to the halal culinary trend in Japan. This method facilitates researchers in obtaining relevant results and data directly from the location, while also providing opportunities to explore conditions, social and cultural events, or complex phenomena firsthand (Alaslan et al. 2023).

Researchers will describe the complexity and diversity at the research location, which can provide deep insights into patterns, conditions, relationships, and concepts that are not yet known (Hayoko et al. 2020). Furthermore, data collection techniques in this study include direct observation at Yamamomo Restaurant at Awakanko Hotel, interviews with staff and chefs, and direct documentation. The selection of informants in this study uses purposive sampling techniques, where informants are

chosen based on specific characteristics to be more targeted and to make the data and research results more representative (Ardyansyah 2022).

### *Theoretical Framework*

Anthony Giddens' Structuration Theory offers a comprehensive lens to analyze how non-Muslim countries adapt to the demand for *halal* food. The theory's emphasis on the duality of structure—where societal norms (structures) and individual agency coexist—provides insights into the evolving interplay between global Muslim tourist needs and local adaptation efforts. Structures such as legal frameworks, cultural practices, and economic incentives shape how *halal* food systems are integrated. Simultaneously, individual and organizational agency, including consumer behavior, business initiatives, and government policies, drive changes in these structures (Giddens 1984).

In practice, non-Muslim countries like Japan have taken steps to incorporate *halal* standards in response to Muslim travelers' expectations. These adaptations illustrate the interaction between global trends (e.g., increasing Muslim tourism) and localized responses (e.g., *halal*-certified restaurants and promotional campaigns). For instance, Japan has leveraged tourism agencies to incorporate *halal*-friendly services, yet structural gaps like inconsistent certification and limited *halal* supply chains remain obstacles (Yousaf and Xiucheng 2018; Nuraini and Sucipto 2021). These examples highlight how agency—such as businesses advocating for certification—can reshape structural limitations to better align with global *halal* norms.

### C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The growth of the Muslim population in Japan shows an increasing trend, although the numbers are still relatively small compared to other countries. According to *Halal Media Japan.co*, in recent years, the Muslim population in Japan has grown significantly. As of 2020, approximately 230,000 Muslims were living in Japan, a major increase from around 120,000 in 2016. This figure includes around 47,000 Japanese Muslims. The rise in the Muslim population has also led to constructing more mosques, with 113 mosques operating across Japan in 2021, compared to just 15 in 1999 (Aziz 2019).

Alongside the Muslim resident population growth, Japan has seen a notable rise in Muslim tourists. The number of Muslim tourists visiting Japan increased steadily in the years leading up to the pandemic. For example, in 2019, Japan welcomed over 500,000 Muslim tourists, largely from countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia. This growth is driven by Japan's efforts to cater to Muslim-friendly tourism through *halal*-certified restaurants, prayer spaces, and other amenities (Tanada 2019).

Most Muslim communities reside in major metropolitan areas such as Tokyo, Osaka, and Nagoya. This growth has been driven by the migration of foreign workers, international students, people who converted through marriage or personal choice and the rising number of Muslim tourists visiting Japan (Terano et al. 2022). In recent decades, Japan has seen a surge in Muslim tourists, particularly from Southeast Asian countries like Indonesia and Malaysia. These Muslim tourists have become an important segment of Japan's tourism industry. To meet their needs, Japan has actively introduced Muslim-friendly services, including providing *halal* food, prayer rooms, and Muslim-friendly travel guides in various tourist areas (Muslim Traveler 2020).

The increase in Muslim tourists has also spurred the development of Muslim-friendly infrastructure in Japan. Several cities, such as Tokyo, Osaka, and Kyoto, now have *halal* restaurants, mosques, and other facilities designed to accommodate Muslim tourists. In rural areas, local governments have made efforts to create Muslim-friendly tourism experiences, including homestay accommodations and farming activities that align with *halal* principles (Terano et al. 2022).

Although most Muslim-friendly facilities are still concentrated in major cities, other regions in Japan, including Hokkaido and Kyushu, have begun introducing similar services to attract more Muslim tourists. The Japanese government, and various local tourism organizations, are working together to raise awareness and understanding of Muslim tourists' needs, ensuring that they feel more welcome and comfortable (Tanada 2017).

With this trend, Japan is expected to enhance its appeal as a Muslim-friendly tourist destination, by providing basic necessities such as *halal* food and prayer rooms and by promoting deeper cultural interactions between Muslim tourists and the local community. This growth also presents significant economic opportunities for Japan's tourism sector in accommodating the expanding Muslim travel market. One of the hotels that has adopted the *halal* trend in its services for Muslim customers and tourists is Hotel Awakanko in Tokushima.

### ***1. Cultural Adaptation in Providing Halal Services at Hotel Awakanko***

With the growth in the number of Muslim tourists traveling worldwide, expected to reach 230 million by 2026, Japan's hospitality and tourism industry is increasingly aware of the need to adjust their services to meet the needs of Muslim travelers (Osman et al. 2023).

Hotel Awakankou is one of the hotels that has adapted to the *halal* trend in its services for guests and tourists. Awakanko Hotel is at 3 Chome-16-3 Ichibancho, Tokushima, 770-0833, Japan. It is a 3-star hotel and one of

the oldest hotels in the Tokushima area, aged approximately 75 years. Awakanko Hotel is one of the hotels in Japan that was established and operational in November 1949. Before becoming a hotel, the building was the home of the Okada family, the grandmother of Noriko Okada, the current owner. Awakanko offers a traditional Japanese stay experience with modern comforts as one of the oldest hotels.

Awakanko Hotel has taken significant steps in adapting its local culture to support the *halal* culinary trend. The hotel management understands the importance of aligning with Muslim tourists' preferences without eliminating traditional Japanese cultural elements. The provision of *halal* menu options at Yamamomo Restaurant is a tangible manifestation of this cultural adaptation, demonstrating openness to cultural diversity and the specific needs of Muslim travelers. In addition to *halal* menus, the management of Hotel Awakanko has also provided special accommodations, including prayer facilities. According to (Battour & Ismail 2016), providing *halal* services that meet international standards enhances the experience for Muslim tourists and broadens the hotel's appeal to a larger global market.

The first steps in social adaptation to providing services for Muslim tourists at Hotel Awakanko include :

- 1) Obtaining *halal* certificate,
- 2) Providing *halal* menus, and
- 3) Providing prayer facilities.

*Halal* certification is obtained from the relevant authorities after ensuring that Hotel Awakanko is ready to provide Muslim-friendly services, in terms of products and services that meet *halal* standards. (Yusof & Shutto 2014), highlight that obtaining *halal* certification enhances Muslim tourists' trust in the services offered and improves the hotel's reputation among non-Muslim tourists seeking high-quality food. This certification also provides a competitive advantage for hotels operating in popular



tourist destinations frequented by Muslim tourists, such as Tokyo and Kyoto.

In addition to *halal* certification, providing additional facilities such as prayer rooms is also an important factor in attracting Muslim tourists. According to Henderson (Henderson 2016), many Muslim travelers feel more comfortable and valued when hotels provide suitable worship facilities. This demonstrates that the hotel not only focuses on culinary aspects but also respects the religious values of its guests. This social adaptation shows that Hotel Awakanko is open to cultural diversity and the specific needs of travelers, which ultimately enhances customer loyalty and expands its business network in the international market.

## **2. *The Adaptation Strategy of Yamamoto Hotel***

### **a. *Obtaining Halal Certificate***

Awakanko Hotel obtained a *halal* certificate on October 28, 2019, from MHC Co. Ltd (Muslim Hospitality Chief Co. Ltd), an organization in Japan that provides *halal* certification for products and services (Figure 1). MHC Co. Ltd is part of the NPO Japan *Halal* Association, which focuses on promoting Muslim-friendly practices, including food, beverages, and other services. The company is actively engaged in providing education and training on Muslim-friendly practices, particularly to tourism industry players in Japan, to support *halal* tourism activities and create a good and comfortable environment for Muslim tourists.

Figure 1.

*Halal Certificate*



Source: Researcher 2024

Although the hotel has obtained a *halal* certificate from MHC Co. Ltd, the availability of *halal* menus is not yet consistent. Based on interviews, it was found that *halal* menus are only available if tourists or visitors make a reservation or request before visiting the hotel. This has led to complaints from tourists who want to order *halal* menus but find them unavailable.

According to the hotel management, the request system for the *halal* menu is also influenced by conditions where *halal* ingredients are difficult to obtain, necessitating early preparation. Therefore, the main problems faced by the hotel's management and Yamamomo Restaurant operators are that the *halal* menu is not always available at all times and the limited availability of *halal* ingredients, which are hard to procure. To address these issues, the restaurant has considered expanding the *halal* menu options and ensuring their availability at all times without requiring reservations.

Regarding the limited availability of main ingredients for the *halal* menu, the restaurant will build a network with local and international suppliers to ensure consistent availability of ingredients. By expanding the supplier network for *halal* ingredients, it will support the consistency

of *halal* menu availability at Yamamomo. This can boost the hotel's reputation and attract more Muslim tourists and visitors to visit Awakanko Hotel.

This strategy is expected to have a positive impact on increasing Muslim tourist visits to Awakanko Hotel. As mentioned in the State of the Global Islamic Economy Report 2022, the *halal* food market is projected to continue growing with the increasing number of Muslim tourists and the rising awareness of the *halal* lifestyle among Muslim tourists worldwide. It is also reported that the total spending of Muslim tourists is expected to reach USD 28 trillion by 2025. This figure comes from tourism, *halal* food and beverages, *halal* media and recreation, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and *sharia* finance (Kamiliyah et al. 2024).

Furthermore, the increasing demand from Muslim tourists is not only for *halal* food but also for adequate quality and experience. This is in line with the benchmarks of GMTI (Global Muslim Travel Index) in ranking 138 countries through four main aspects: 40% Service, 30% Environment, 20% Communication, and 10% Access (Andrianto, 2023). The service includes: 1) food *halal* certification; 2) availability of prayer spaces; 3) airport services; 4) heritage sites; 5) cultural attractions; and 6) hotels. The environment includes: 1) climate; 2) security; 3) religious restrictions. The communication includes: 1) smooth communication; 2) tourism destination marketing; and 3) stakeholder awareness. The access Includes: 1) connectivity; 2) infrastructure; 3) transport; and 4) visa requirements.

*b. Halal Menu at Yamamomo Restaurant*

Yamamomo Restaurant at Hotel Awakankou is one of the restaurants that has taken steps to adapt to social changes related to the Muslim-friendly trend by obtaining *halal* menu certification to support the *halal* menu trend in Japan, particularly around Tokushima.

Yamamomo Restaurant at Awakanko Hotel, Tokushima, Japan, is a Japanese-style restaurant offering a variety of food choices, including options friendly to Muslim tourists and visitors. This restaurant is often chosen by Muslim tourists because the dishes prepared meet *halal* standards, as evidenced by the *halal* certificate available at the hotel.

To maintain the comfort and trust of Muslim visitors and tourists, the use of equipment in the kitchen and during food serving has been separated and labeled (Figure 2). This is to ensure and prevent cross-contamination so that Muslim tourists and visitors can dine in peace. The use of *halal* equipment must be a special consideration for any manager who wants to offer *halal* products. This is stated in Law No. 33 of 2014 concerning *Halal* Product Assurance, which specifies that in addition to food and beverages, goods commonly used by the community must also be *halal* (goldendragonhouseware.com 2022).

Figure 2.

*Halal* Label on Hotel Equipment



Source: Researcher, 2024

Regarding the equipment used, an article discussing “Japanese Society's Understanding of *Halal* Tourism” reveals that the Japanese have generally understood the concept of “*halal*” in food and beverages. Thus, the equipment used for preparing *halal* food has also been separated (Ery & Agustina 2019).

The main menu served at Yamamomo Restaurant at Awakanko Hotel includes Japanese cuisine such as Yamamomo Dasimaki, Okosamabento, Handa Soumen Gozen, Shikoku Megurizen, Irimeshi Onigirizen, Sushi, Tempura, Sashimi Kagomori, and many others. Meanwhile, the *halal* dishes offered to visitors and tourists can be listed as follows:

- 1) Rolled omelet
- 2) Japanese salad
- 3) Miso ramen
- 4) Soy sauce ramen
- 5) Tempura bowl with miso soup
- 6) Fried *halal* beef cutlet bowl with miso soup
- 7) *Halal* beef shabu-shabu with rice
- 8) Sushi with miso soup
- 9) Japanese *halal* bento-box
- 10) Teppanyaki with miso soup
- 11) Japanese full-course
- 12) Grilled rice ball lunch
- 13) Grilled ell lunch
- 14) Thinkly slice beef lunch

*c. Enhancing Service and Staff Training*

Recognizing the importance of Muslim-friendly service, Hotel Awakanko conducts special training for staff on how to prepare, store, and serve *halal* food. This training is designed to ensure that each staff member understands the operational standards for handling Muslim guests, including how to provide accurate information and address the worship needs of Muslim guests (Razak 2018). In addition to the specialized staff

training, there are also other steps taken as part of a social response to enhance a more inclusive and culturally aware guest experience.

a. Specialized Staff Training

Training staff on the preparation and handling of *halal* food is one of the important efforts made by Hotel Awakanko. This training ensures that staff understand the operational standards for the preparation, storage, and serving of *halal* food. According to research by (Jeaheng et al. 2020), training focused on developing *halal* skills in the hospitality industry can enhance customer satisfaction and staff confidence in serving Muslim tourists. At Hotel Awakanko, this training also includes understanding the importance of providing accurate information about *halal* menus and worship facilities, such as prayer rooms, to enhance the guest experience.

b. Digital Marketing

Promotion through social media is another crucial element in Hotel Awakanko's strategy. Social media allows the hotel to reach a broader market by highlighting its *halal* menu offerings. According to research by (Juliana et al. 2022), digital marketing focused on *halal* tourism is key to attracting Muslim tourists, particularly millennials who frequently use social media to make travel decisions. By showcasing customer reviews and highlighting the *halal* preparation process, Hotel Awakanko aims to build a positive and transparent image while enhancing its competitiveness in the Muslim tourism market.

c. Availability of *Halal* Menus and Suppliers

Consistency in providing *halal* menus depends not only on staff training but also on partnerships with suppliers who can ensure the availability of high-quality *halal* ingredients. For example, a study by (Kamisah et al. 2018), indicates that involvement with reliable and sustainable *halal* suppliers is a key factor in maintaining Muslim customers' trust. In this regard, Hotel Awakanko can strengthen its supplier network to ensure the quality and safety of *halal* food served at Yamamomo Restaurant, which contributes to the hotel's overall positive reputation.

**3. Challenges and Opportunities**

With the increasing demand for *halal*-friendly destinations, hotels that are able to meet the needs of Muslim tourists will have a competitive advantage. In the hospitality industry, the demand for *halal* services has grown rapidly due to the rising awareness among Muslims of the importance of products and services that align with Islamic principles. Research by (Moshid et al. 2020), highlights that *halal* tourism is one of the rapidly growing segments in the global hospitality industry. Muslim tourists seek safe and comfortable travel experiences, where their religious needs, such as the availability of *halal* food and prayer facilities, can be easily met. This makes hotels that are able to provide Muslim-friendly services and facilities more attractive, with the potential to attract more guests from the global Muslim community.

In this context, Hotel Awakanko can leverage the opportunity by differentiating itself through the provision of inclusive services. Offering facilities such as Qibla direction in rooms, ablution areas, and prayer rooms will be an added value for Muslim tourists who wish to continue their religious practices while traveling. These measures not only enhance guest

satisfaction but also expand the hotel's market share by reaching a broader segment of Muslim travelers. Additionally, a commitment to providing *halal*-friendly services can enhance the hotel's reputation as a destination that values diversity and inclusivity, thereby strengthening its competitiveness in the increasingly competitive hospitality industry.

One of the biggest challenges in implementing Muslim-friendly services at the Yamamomo Restaurant in Hotel Awakanko is ensuring consistency across all aspects of hotel operations. This includes everything from providing *halal* food to prayer facilities, which must be strictly managed to maintain *halal* standards. According to (Hariani & Hanafiah 2024), one of the main obstacles is the hotel management's lack of a deep understanding of *halal* certification and its comprehensive implementation. This challenge is often exacerbated by inadequate training for staff, especially in hotels that have not previously catered to a large number of Muslim tourists. Additionally, the extra costs required to obtain *halal* certification and ensure a sustainable supply of *halal* ingredients can also be a barrier for hotels looking to expand their services.

On the other hand, the opportunity to attract Muslim tourists continues to grow along with the global expansion of the *halal* tourism market. According to a report by (Samori et al. 2016), the *halal* tourism segment is expected to keep growing, particularly in Asia and the Middle East, which have large Muslim populations and high mobility. Hotel Awakanko can capitalize on this trend by innovating through the provision of services that cater to the specific needs of Muslim guests, such as *halal* menus, prayer facilities, and staff trained in *halal* standards. Additionally, Muslim tourists tend to be more loyal to brands that offer *halal*-friendly services, meaning that hotels that successfully build a positive reputation in this market have the potential to achieve sustainable occupancy growth. Another opportunity to explore is the use of digital platforms to expand



*halal* marketing reach, which could introduce the hotel to a broader and more specific audience, such as millennial Muslim travelers.

#### ***4. Examining Structural and Agency Dynamics in Halal Tourism: Giddens' Structuration Theory at Work in Hotel Yamamoto***

Using Anthony Giddens' Theory of Structuration to analyze the dynamics in Japan regarding the adaptation to Muslim tourists and the development of Muslim-friendly tourism infrastructure, we can observe a deep interplay between agency and structure, highlighting how individual actions and institutional practices shape each other.

##### *a. Agency and Structure Interaction*

The choices and behaviors of Muslim tourists visiting Japan exert pressure on local businesses and tourism operators to adapt their services to meet these needs. Individual agency is evident in the decision-making process of Muslim tourists, who choose destinations that cater to their dietary and religious practices. This demand acts as a catalyst for structural changes within the Japanese tourism and hospitality industries.

Structures, in Giddens' terms, refer to the rules and resources organized as properties of social systems. Japan's response to the growing number of Muslim tourists is seen in the structural adaptations such as the increase in *halal*-certified restaurants, development of prayer facilities, and the rise in mosques. These adaptations are not just physical but also involve new regulations, standards, and business practices that accommodate the needs of Muslim tourists.

*b. Reproduction of Social Practices*

As businesses like Hotel Awakanko adopt *halal* standards and create Muslim-friendly environments, these practices become normalized within the local tourism industry. This normalization involves the repetition of actions that align with *halal* certification requirements, thereby reinforcing the structure through a loop where repeated practices by agents (hotel managers, staff) solidify new norms and expectations.

Over time, the continuous interaction between Muslim tourists' needs and the services provided leads to the institutionalization of *halal* tourism in Japan. This is a key aspect of structuration, where the repeated practices (such as obtaining *halal* certifications and offering *halal* menus) become routinized and embedded within the tourism sector's operational frameworks.

*c. Duality of Structure*

While the need to adhere to *halal* standards might initially seem constraining, it also opens up new market opportunities. By accommodating the needs of Muslim tourists, businesses tap into a growing demographic, enhancing their market reach and profitability. This exemplifies the enabling aspect of structures that Giddens emphasizes.

On the flip side, the constraints of maintaining strict *halal* compliance can pose challenges. These include the need for continual education, potential restructuring of supply chains, and regular audits to ensure compliance. Such constraints require businesses to adapt their operations extensively, which can be both a structural challenge and a driver of innovation.

The feedback from Muslim tourists about their experiences influences how services are adapted and refined. This dynamic interaction ensures that the services remain aligned with the tourists' needs and expectations, promoting continuous improvement and adaptation. As these interactions inform business practices, they contribute to the evolution of the industry's structure. Successful adaptations that lead to positive tourist experiences reinforce the business case for maintaining and expanding Muslim-friendly services, leading to a cumulative effect on the industry's overall structure.

Through this detailed exploration using Giddens' Theory of Structuration, we can see how individual actions and institutional responses collectively drive the evolution of Japan's tourism industry. This dynamic interplay between agency and structure facilitates immediate adaptations and sows the seeds for long-term cultural shifts in the hospitality sector, ultimately leading to a more inclusive and accommodating environment for all tourists.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

Key findings indicate that the agency exerted by Muslim tourists, through their specific demands for *halal* services, directly influences the operational norms and practices within the tourism sector. This has led to structural adaptations such as the widespread implementation of *halal* certification and the development of Muslim-friendly amenities, which not only cater to the needs of Muslim tourists but also set new industry standards. These changes are further institutionalized through the routinization of practices, where businesses like Hotel Awakanko routinely provide high-quality *halal* services, thereby embedding these practices into the cultural fabric of Japan's hospitality industry.

However, the analysis also recognizes several limitations. The focus primarily on agency and structure may overlook other socio-economic factors that influence the adaptation processes, such as regional political

dynamics or global economic trends. Additionally, the study largely assumes a uniform acceptance and implementation of *halal* standards across the industry, which may not accurately reflect regional disparities or the varying levels of compliance and enthusiasm among different stakeholders. Future research should explore these dimensions, perhaps by conducting comparative studies across different regions in Japan or by examining the economic impact of these adaptations on the tourism sector. Moreover, deeper investigations into the personal experiences of Muslim tourists and the long-term cultural implications of these adaptations would provide more nuanced insights into the effectiveness and sustainability of these changes in Japan's tourism industry.

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