



EXPLORING CRITICAL FACTORS FOR TOURIST
SATISFACTION: AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION
ON MALAYSIA AS AN ISLAMIC TOURIST
DESTINATION

BY

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for the degree of Master of Science in Marketing

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ABSTRACT

This research is intent to identify the factors that are influencing tourist satisfaction in Islamic tourist destination in Malaysia. Data were collected through distributing self-structured questionnaire among the Muslim tourists in significant Islamic tourist destinations in Malaysia. This research proposed a conceptual framework to examine the relationship among religious motivation, destination selection, destination image, perceived value, service quality on tourist satisfaction. Factor Analysis was used to test the factorial validity of constructs and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to test the goodness of the proposed hypothesized model. The empirical results of this research provide justifiable evidence that the proposed conceptual framework of tourist satisfaction is acceptable. The findings of this research indicated that Malaysian Islamic destination has acceptance to the Muslim tourists all around the world. The results depict that religious motivation, destination image, service quality are the important antecedents to tourist satisfaction in Islamic tourist destination. Interestingly the result shows that perceived value is negatively related with tourist satisfaction. In addition religious motivation is not significantly related with destination selection as well as destination selection is not significantly related with destination image. The findings of this research are valuable asset for travel and tour business companies and tourism Malaysia. Academician, researchers, tourism policy makers can also benefit from this research and its findings.

خلاصة البحث

قصد هذه البحث الإستطلاعية والكمية لتمييز العوامل الذي يؤثر على الرضاء السياحي في الإتجاه السياحي الإسلامي في ماليزيا. البيانات جُمعت خلال التوزيع الإستفتاء المُنظَّم الذي بين السائح المسلم في الإتجاه السياحي الإسلامي في ماليزيا. هذا البحث يُطوِّر نموذج رضاء سياحي لفحص العلاقات بين الحافز الديني، إختيار إتجاه، صورة إتجاه، قيمة محسوسة، يُصلح رضاء ممتازاً وسياحي. تحليل عامل كان يُستعمل لإختيار الصلاحية العاملة للتركيبات والمعادلة الهيكلية يُشكّلان (إس إي إم) كان يُستعمل لإختيار طيبة النموذج المُفترض المقترح. تُزوّد النتائج التجريبية هذا البحث دليل مبرر بأنّ نموذج الرضاء السياحي المقترح مقبول. نتائج هذا البحث أشار بأنّ الإتجاه الإسلامي الماليزي له قبول إلى السياح المسلمين في كافة أنحاء العالم. تُصوّر النتائج ذلك الحافز الديني، صورة إتجاه، يُصلح النوعية الأسبقية المهمة إلى الرضاء السياحي في الإتجاه السياحي الإسلامي. من الناحية الأخرى معرض نتيجة الذي أدرك قيمة تعلقت سلبياً بالرضاء السياحي. الحافز الديني يُتعلقُ أيضاً سلبياً بإختيار الإتجاه بالإضافة إلى إختيار الإتجاه يُتعلقُ سلبياً بصورة الإتجاه..

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Science in Marketing.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

Abdul Highe Khan

Signature

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**EXPLORING CRITICAL FACTORS FOR TOURIST SATISFACTION: AN
EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION ON MALAYSIA AS AN ISLAMIC
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
AMOS	Analysis of Moment Structure
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling
MI	Modification Indices
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
CR	Construct Reliability
CFI	Comparative Fix Index
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
df	Degree of Freedom
GFI	Goodness-Of-Fit Indices
NFI	Normal Fit Index
TLI	Tucker-Lewis Index
i.e.	(<i>id est.</i>): that is
et al.	(<i>et alia</i>): and others
e.g.	(<i>exempligratia</i>): for example

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Since the first of tourism in the 19th century, it has quickly become one of the world's most lucrative economic sectors. Tourism is evidently a large international industry with huge potential for growth. It is becoming an increasingly global and complex phenomenon with sociological, behavioural, economic, political, cultural, environmental, and educational dimensions (Duman, 2011). According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO), Tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited. For many countries, tourism is an increasingly important source of income, employment and wealth. Robinson (1998) considered tourism to be the 'largest of multi-national activities' which accounts for a larger share of foreign exchange receipts, and export earnings than any other industry. Sheller and Urry (2004) added that tourism is the largest industry in the world, and emphasized the mobility produced by tourism in that it affects almost everyone everywhere.

The tourism industry is the biggest and fastest growing service industry in this world. It is expanding day by day (Jones & Haven-Tang, 2005; Rosentraub and Joo, 2009; Vu and Turner, 2009; Cohen, 2008). The tourism industry makes considerable contributions in regards to earning foreign currency in both developed and developing countries (Sinclair, 1998,). It helps increase economic growth, provides greater employment opportunities for locals, and injects significant wealth into the economy.

According to Lee and Kwon (1995), the tourism industry sometimes generates more foreign currency than exports. Aquayo et al. (2001) asserted that the tourism sector exerted a positive overall influence over the services industry of any country. The growth and development of the tourism industry leads to the growth and development of other segments of the service industry. Travel and tour agencies, the hotel industry, the restaurant industry, banks, insurance agencies, transportation, cultural product and services are all closely related to the tourism industry.

As more and more aspects of life and human existence are slowly absorbed into the breadth of tourism, and given that many religious and spiritual beliefs identify certain places and monuments as religiously significant, it should come as no surprise that religious tourism is on the rise (Andriotis, 2009; Cochrane, 2009; Finney et al., 2009; Geary, 2008; Tilson, 2005). The significant developments in travel technologies and the decreasing costs of air travel facilitate the emergence of this new dimension to international tourism. Within the category of religious tourism is Islamic tourism as a relatively new concept aimed at encouraging Muslims to travel not only for the purpose of discovering the Muslim heritage, but also on the basis that their religious sensibilities will be met, namely that, among other things, their food and worship requirements will be met. In today's tourism industry, Islamic tourism plays an important role. Islam emphasizes contemplation and reflection by marvelling over the many natural beauties that are signs of Allah's existence and greatness. In addition, there are many historical sites that commemorate important historical events that lend to contemplation and a better understanding of human history. Allah S. W. T revealed many verses in the holy Qur'ān regarding the contemplation of nature as a means to strengthen the faith and mind of mankind. Among such examples are, Āl-'Imrān: 137; Al-An'ām: 11; Al-Naḥl: 36; Al-Naml: 69; Al-'Ankabūt: 20; Al-Rūm: 42/9; Saba'

(Sheba): 18; Yūsuf: 109; Al-Ḥajj: 46; Fāter: 44; Ghāfir: 82/21; Muḥammad: 10; Yūnus: 22; and Al-Mulk: 15’ (Pickthall, 1976; Ali, 2005; Farahani, and Henderson, 2010). Allah S.W.T said in the Holy Qur’ān. “Travel in the land and see how Allah originated the creation, and then Allah will bring forth the creation of the Hereafter” (Al-’Ankabūt : 29). In another verse Allah S.W.T said “Tell them to explore the earth and see what caused (the fall) and what happened against mankind” (An-Naml: 69).

There are 57 Islamic countries with many tourist destinations. The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) is the governing body charged with maintaining relations between Muslim countries. Among its agendas is to promote Islamic tourism among Muslim countries. Previously research on Islamic tourism in countries such as Malaysia, Palestine, Iran, and Saudi Arabia (Bhuiyan et al, 2011; Farahani, and Henderson, 2010) found that Islamic tourism is popular among Muslim tourists. The purpose of this research is to identify the factors that influence Muslim tourists to opt for Islamic tourism. There are many Islamic tourist destinations in Malaysia and every year thousands of Muslim tourists come to Malaysia to visit those destinations. Despite this, there remains little research that identifies the factors that influence Muslim tourists and their choice of Islamic tourism destinations.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Malaysia is a naturally beautiful country. It has many world recognized tourist destinations. Tourism is one of the largest service industries in Malaysia. Malaysia earns huge amounts of foreign currency from the tourism industry. The Ministry of Tourism, Malaysia, is taking steps towards promoting Malaysia as an attractive tourist

destination. Day by day numbers of tourists are increasing in Malaysian tourist destination. Table 1.1 are given tourist arrivals in Malaysia Since 2000 to 2012.

Table 1.1:
The Number of Tourist Arrivals in Malaysia Since 2000 to 2012

Years	Arrivals (Millions)	Receipts (RM Billions)
2012	25.3 Millions	60.6 Billions
2011	24.7 Millions	58.3 Billions
2010	24.6 Millions	56.5 Billions
2009	23.6 Millions	53.4 Billions
2008	22.0 Millions	49.6 Billions
2007	20.9 Millions	46.1 Billions
2006	17.4 Millions	36.3 Billions
2005	16.4 Millions	32.0 Billions
2004	15.7 Millions	29.7 Billions
2003	10.5 Millions	21.3 Billions
2002	13.2 Millions	25.8 Billions
2001	12.7 Millions	24.2 Billions
2000	10.2 Millions	17.3 Billions

Source: Tourism Malaysia, 2012

Malaysia is a country with a Muslim majority and Islam is the official religion. Muslim travellers can enjoy their time in Malaysia because nearly all establishments offer halal food and services for Muslim tourists. It is also obligatory for every hotel and shopping mall to have a mosque or musolla (Surau in Malay). In Malaysia there are many Islamic tourist spots for Muslim tourists such as its wide selection of

beautiful mosques, Islamic museums, Islamic school, and Islamic university. List of Islamic tourist destination in Malaysia are given at table 1.2.

Table 1.2:
Islamic Tourist Destinations in Malaysia

States	Muslim Tourist Destinations
Kedah	Zahir Mosque.
Johor	Sultan Abu Bakar Mosque.
Kelantan	Islamic Museum
Melaka	Al-azim Mosque, Melaka Islamic Museum
Negeri Sembilan	State Museum, State Mosque
Pahang	International Islamic University Malaysia, Kuantan Campus
Penang	Keling Mosque, Acheen Street Mosque, Penang Islamic Museum
Perak	Bukit Chandan Mosque, Zahir Mosque, Perak
Perlis	Syed Alwi mosque
Sabah	Sabah State Mosque
Sarawak	The Islamic Museum, Sarawak
Selangor	Shah Alam Blue Mosque, , Selangor Islamic Arts Garden Complex, International Islamic University Malaysia, Gombak Campus, Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah Mosque
Terengganu	Tengku Tengah Zaharah Mosque, Islamic Civilization Park
Wilayah Persekutuan	National Mosque, Jamek Mosque, National Islamic Museum, Islamic Arts Museum Kuala Lumpur

Source: Islamic Tourism Centre, 2012

Every year thousands of Muslim tourists visit Malaysia. In 2009, 2, 94,916 Muslim tourists visited Malaysia and earned RM 2 billion in tourist receipts. Besides offering a friendly environment for the Muslim tourist, Malaysia ensures strict security and liberal travel regulations. This encourages Muslim tourist to visit Malaysia (Gee, 2002; Timothy & Iverson, 2006). Malaysia has successfully established itself as a clean and value for money tourist destination (Dass, 2005). Number of Muslim Tourist Arrivals in Malaysia since 2007 to 2011 are given below:

Table 1.3:
The Number of Muslim Tourist Arrivals in Malaysia since 2007 to 2011

Country	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Middle East	218,087	201,173	183,226	204,121	111,905
Iran	27,215	63,165	101,664	116,252	139,617
Brunei	1,172,154	1,085,115	1,061,357	1,124,406	1,239,404
Indonesia	1,804,535	2,428,605	2,405,360	2,506,509	2,134,381
Singapore	1,364,050	1,430,454	1,655,300	1,695,460	1,872,170
Pakistan	36,073	65,613	69,581	65,101	13,9617
Bangladesh	104,081	47,052	87,443	63,886	65,603
Turkey	9,580	8,152	8,265	9,149	8,557
Uzbekistan	-----	7,336	7,194	6,957	9,252
Total	4,735,775	5,336,665	5,579,390	5,791,814	7,859,910**

** 31.82 % from total tourist arrivals to Malaysia
Source: Tourism Malaysia, 2012

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Tourism is one of the principal earning sources of Malaysia. Tourism industry effects positively on the Malaysian economy for increasing revenue and employment opportunities for the local people. In developing itself into an exciting tourist destination for the foreign tourist, Malaysia should have strong destination image, better service quality. In some recent studies it was found that, Malaysia faces hard competition from several neighboring countries in this region where they have similarities in term of natural beauties, strong tourism infrastructure, culture, traditions and hospitality (Badaruddin, 2009). In other study it was found that, Malaysia required to give special attention to service quality and cleanliness of basic amenities for tourists, for instance rest room (toilets), better food and transportation facilities. In order to be a perfect tourist destination, it is compulsory to provide service quality and the basic amenities to make tourist satisfied. Therefore to address this problem, this present study tries to find the satisfaction level of foreign tourist towards Islamic tourist destination in Malaysia as well as the influential factors that help to satisfied tourist.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1.4.1 General Objective

To date, there is a lack of research on global Islamic tourism and Islamic tourism in Malaysia. For this reason the main purpose of this research is to determine the important factors that lead to Muslim tourist satisfaction with Malaysian tourist destinations. Factors are identified and examined in order to ascertain which factors are most influential and generate greatest satisfaction towards Islamic tourism

destinations in Malaysia. This study also aims to provide a framework for tourist satisfaction in Islamic tourism.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this research are:

1. To explore factors that influence Muslim tourist satisfaction in Malaysian Islamic tourist destinations.
2. To discover the relationship among perceived value, religious motivations, service quality and destination image towards tourist satisfaction in Islamic tourist destinations in Malaysia.
3. To suggest recommendations to attract Muslim tourists to visit Islamic tourist destinations in Malaysia

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To date, no such research has been done to investigate factors that influence Muslim tourists' satisfaction in Islamic tourist destinations in Malaysia and research has yet to explore the relationship among perceived value, religious motivations, and service quality and destination image towards tourist satisfaction in Islamic tourist destinations in Malaysia. Based on the above mentioned gaps, the main problem of this research can be addressed in the following research questions. What are the factors that influence tourist satisfaction in Islamic tourist destinations in Malaysia? Does perceived value, religious motivations, service quality and destination image towards tourist satisfaction in Islamic tourist destinations in Malaysia?

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

There is a close relationship between tourism and religion. This relationship has been amply addressed in many literatures on tourism. However, there remains a shortage of theoretical publications in the area of tourism in the context of Islam. Furthermore, there has been no such empirical research on Islamic Tourism in Malaysia. This study spearheads such efforts by gaining an in-depth understanding of the concept of Islamic tourism. The research is also relevant in regards to the management of Islamic tourism in Malaysia.

This study will be useful particularly in effort to find out necessary factors that leads to tourist satisfaction in Islamic tourism. Identifying the influential factors that attract and satisfy Muslim tourists is crucial for the global promotion of the concept of Islamic tourism, especially to potential Muslim tourists. In addition, marketing Islamic tourism is not only beneficial to Muslim tourist destinations but also helps promote greater awareness of world/Muslim history, civilization, society, lifestyle and culture.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Din (1989) stressed that Muslims are encouraged to achieve physical, social and spiritual goals by travelling. This is supported by Zamani-Farahani and Henderson (2010) in that traveling can improve physical well-being, decrease mental pressure. This messages is supported a number of Qur'ānic verses, among them Al-Ankaboot: 29; An-Naml: 69; Al-Imran: 137; Al-An'am: 11; Al-Hajj: 46 and Al-Mulk: 15. Furthermore, Islamic tourism has the potential to influence non-believers and is a good means to educate people on Islamic history and heritage.

2.2 ISLAMIC TOURISM

Different authors define Islamic tourism differently. According to Shakiry (2006), Islamic tourism is a specific type of tourism for Muslim tourists. Muslim tourism is relatively free and open and is guided by the simple yet comprehensive regulation that it does not violate Islamic values, rules and regulations. In Islamic tourism, tourists must abide by the guidance of the Holy Qur'ān and Sunnah of Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH). According to the Islamic Tourism Centre, Malaysia (ITC), Islamic tourism is "A sphere of interest or activity that is related to travel to explore Islamic history, arts, culture and heritage and/or to experience the Islamic way of life, in conformity with the Islamic faith". Dogan (2010) defined Islamic tourism as visiting Islamic places for reasons of recreation and entertainment. Tourists must always keep in mind that they must abide by Islamic culture and behaviour. The tourist activities of Muslim tourists

and the activities of tourists of other religions differ. Another definition is tourist activities conducted by Muslims, but it is not essential that only Muslim partake in such a form of tourism (Al-Hamarneh, 2008; OIC, 2008b; Henderson, 2009).

From a different perspective, the meaning of Islamic tourism is much broader and should include natural value, ethical issues and other goals. It must adhere to all kinds of tourism that respect religious principals, and at the same time explore civilizations, histories, heritages, and respect and appreciate the natural, social environment, and human values and ethics. Somehow, it can also lead people to appreciate the creation of God (Zamani-Farahani and Henderson, 2010). From this perspective, a proposed definition of Islamic tourism adapted from previous research, which may be applied and accepted in the case of the current environment of Islamic tourism in Malaysia, is, “Tourism activities that originate from Islamic motivations with great emphasis on appreciation of greatness of God and achieve valuable goals through exploring natural, cultural, heritage, history and civilization, social bonding (sillaturrahim), health and well-being, human values, education or business. These activities must be accordance with ‘shariah’ requirements and respect the sensibility of needs of Islam. However, in a particular situation, activities can be extended to non-Muslims who have motivation to get involved as ‘provider’ or ‘traveller’ in travel by Islam, and at least are given choices and freewill to follow minimum demand”.

An increasing number of tourist destinations are absorbed into the global tourism industry creating not only more opportunities but also more competition and potential exploitation (Mowfort and Munt, 1998). The number of world tragedies in recent years and the global financial crisis has disrupted the tourism and hospitality industry. This has further fostered the need for effective global management of tourism (Gurtner, 2005). Consequently, there is still an obvious need and demand for