What Makes Tourists Satisfied? An Empirical
Study on Malaysian Islamic Tourist Destination

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Abstract: The main objective of this study is to explore influential factors that lead to tourist's satisfaction in destination based Islamic tourist destinations in Malaysia. This research is necessary to provide a better understanding of the Muslim tourist satisfaction in Malaysian Islamic tourist destination in the different facets. The identification of influencing factors that make Muslim tourist satisfied help Islamic destination marketer to make strategic marketing plans. Multiple Regressions was employed to identify the relationship among the variables. From the analysis it was found that destination image, religious motivation and service quality have a positive relationship with tourist satisfaction on islamic tourist destination in Malaysia.

Key words: Destination Image · Religious Motivation · Service Quality · Islamic Tourism · Tourist Satisfaction · Malaysia

INTRODUCTION

Tourism industry is evidently a large international industry with huge potential for growth. It is becoming an increasingly global and complex phenomenon with sociological, behavioral, economic, political, cultural, environmental and educational dimensions. For many countries, tourism is an increasingly important source of income, employment and wealth. Robinson [1] 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 [2] added that tourism is the largest industry in the world and emphasized the mobility produced by tourism in that it affects almost everyone everywhere.

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.In

previous time many research conducted in Islamic tourim in many countries such as Malaysia, Palestine, Iran and Saudi Arabia [3, 4] and 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 a little research gap to identifies the factors that influence Muslim tourists and their choice of Islamic tourism destinations.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Destination Image: Destination image is an essential factor to encourage tourists towards any destination [5]. If any destination management can create positive images of the destination, number of tourists will increase [6]. A strong destination image gives a competitive advantage over competitors [7, 8]. Destination image influences the

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decision making process of the tourist. If the tourist has a positive perception of the destination then they are likely to visit [9-11].

Destination image plays an important role in choosing the tourist destination. A positive destination image enhances the probability of greater tourist numbers [12, 13]. According to Baloglu and McCleary [14], destination image in tourist industry has three categories (1) cognitive factors: the estimation of site selection of the tourist, (2) affective factors: perception and attitude towards the destinations and finally (3) conative factors: the selected destination.

Religious Motivation: Motivation plays a significant role in travelling. Travelling motivation refers a set of interests that influence a tourist to travel. Tourists may travel for recreation, social status, culture, spiritual purposes [15]. Two motivational factors influence tourists to visit any destination, pull motivational factors and push motivational factors [16, 17]. Push motivational factors are related to internal aspects of the tourist, for instance economic condition, social status, demographic factors such as education level, age, occupation, gender and income [18]. On the other hand, pull motivational factors are external aspects of tourism that attract tourists to travel such as travelling time and cost [19, 20].

There is a close relationship between tourism and religious motivation. Henderson [21] found that some tourists are religiously motivated to visit religious destinations. Religious destinations refer to any event, religious festival, or memorable place. He also found that religious tourism gives tourist mental and spiritual benefits. In Islamic tourism, Muslims do not just visit places; rather they seek the mercy of Allah S. W. T. For instance, during the Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages, Muslims are satisfying one pillar of the five pillars of Islam. During traveling of their pilgrimage, Muslims tourists often visit Islamic historical places [22]. Visiting such places can be a form of relaxation and educate Muslims of the history of Islam [23].

Service Quality: According to Zeithaml and Bitner [24], service quality is the customer's judgment of the standard or quality of the service. Service quality is the heart of the business prosperity of the service industry [25]. Better service quality brings more customers and generates more revenue. It is in the interest of the managers of every tourist destination to be concerned with improving the quality of their services. By improving their service, managers can satisfy their tourist and make tourist loyal to the destination [26]. According to Sparks and Westgate [27], poor service quality hampers the potentiality of that business and influences customers to switch service providers. This premise is applicable to the tourism industry. If any particular tourist destination fails to provide quality services then customers will choose other destinations [27].

Tourist Satisfaction: Tourist satisfaction is related to the mental state of the tourist rather than the physical state. Tourists can notice their satisfaction when he or she visits their favorite destination [17, 28-30]. Tourist satisfaction refers to the pleasure of the tourist after visiting any particular tourist destination. Tourist measure satisfaction by comparing the expected service with the actual service of the destination [31, 32]. Tourist satisfaction leads to repeat visits and a positive image spread through word of mouth. A positive image shared through word of mouth between tourists increases the number of tourists visiting a certain destination [17, 33].

Destination Image and Tourist Satisfaction: Destination image has a positive influence on tourist satisfaction. If tourists perceive positive image for any destination in their mind, then they will be satisfied easily. A better destination image provides mental satisfaction of a given destination [32, 34, 35]. Mohamad *et al*. [36] conducted a research In Malaysia and found that destination image is one of the important antecedents for tourist satisfaction. During the 2002 world cup football, Lee *et al*. [37] led a research on destination image of Korea. Based on the study, they concluded that destination image was one of the essential antecedents of tourist satisfaction on Korean tourist destination.

The main success of any destination depends upon the level of satisfaction of tourists [35, 38]. Chen and Tsai [32] and found a close relationship between tourist destination image and tourist satisfaction. Research has proven that the main attraction of a tourist service is the destination. Chi and Qu, [34] confirmed that there are many factors that lead to tourist satisfaction but tourist destination image is a significant factor. Without building a positive destination image on tourist mind, it is difficult to make any single tourist satisfied. Based on the literature, this study proposed that:

H1: There is a positive relationship between Destination image and Tourist Satisfaction

Religious Motivations and Tourist Satisfaction

There is a close relation between tourist motivation and satisfaction. Beerli and Martín [10] mentioned that motivation is the need that drives an individual to act in a certain way to achieve the desired satisfaction. According to Yoon and Uysal [17], tourist satisfaction works as a mediator between travel motivation and tourist destination loyalty. Valle *et al*, [39] also found a similar result. In the context of Islamic tourism, it is obserbed that thousands of Muslim tourists visit Islamic tourist destination in Malaysia. Based on that it can assume if tourists have religious motivation to visit Islamic tourist destination, then there is a chance to be satisfied. For this reason this study proposed that:

H2: There is a positive relationship between Religious Motivation and Tourist Satisfaction
Service Quality and Tourist Satisfaction

Service quality has been associated with customer satisfaction. Service quality is the overall valuation of service. Not only are core products or services evaluated but all supporting services as well [40-43]. Customers with positive views of service quality are likely to be more satisfied compared to other customers [44-46].

Better service quality of destination attracts tourists and leads to greater tourist satisfaction. According to Kumra, [47], tourist satisfaction is the final outcome of better service quality. Kumar's study of rural tourism in India led him to assume that service quality of Indian tourist destinations satisfied both local and international tourist. Lee [48] directed research in Taiwanese tourist destinations and stated that the Taiwanese tourist department satisfied tourists by offering excellent service quality. The study of Olsen [49] indicated that superior service quality brings about customer satisfaction which results in customer loyalty. It is not easy to achieve customer satisfaction and loyalty. Better service quality enhances the chances to achieve customer satisfaction and loyalty. This study like to test following hypothesis:

H3: There is a positive relationship between Service Quality and Tourist Satisfaction

Research Methodology: To accomplish research, we generated 22 items from three independent variable (Destination Image, Religious Motivation and Service Quality) and dependent variable Tourist Satisfaction. We used pilot study with 30 respondents from different Islamic tourist destination in Malaysia. During pilot testing, some mistakes were observed in the

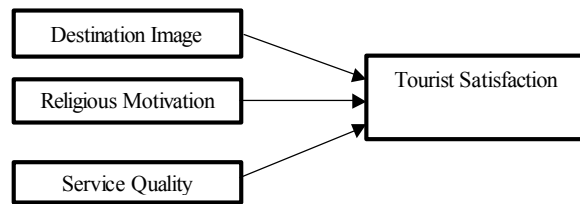The conceptual research model of this study:

Figure 1: The Proposed model of Tourist Satisfaction

questionnaire. After modifying questionnaire we distributed 300 questionnaires at various Islamic tourist destinations in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur, This research were employed a survey via convenient sampling procedure. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the research before distributing the questionnaire. Data collected from different Islamic tourist destination in Malaysia in June 2012 to August 2012. In addition, each of the named items was measured using a five point rating scale (1= strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3= neutral; 4 = agree; and 5 = strongly agree). After examining the questionnaires, this research kept only those questionnaires that were fully completed by the respondents. For the successful completion of this research this study has rejected 44 questionnaires and has kept 256 questionnaires for analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

To analyze the data, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 18 version software was used. Descriptive analysis was conducted to find out the demographic background of the tourists. The demographic part comprises of gender, age, marital status, country, academic qualification, profession, monthly income, number of visitation in Malaysia, name of destination visited. In terms of respondent's gender, Table 1 shows that 58% of respondents were male and 42% were female. The classification of samples in terms of their marital status presents that 43% of respondents were single, 57% respondents were married. In case of respondents age huge number of respondents are between 25 to 34 years old. Their percentages are 38 percent. The second highest percentage of respondents belong to age are 35 and above. This group represents 34percent.

Almost half of the respondents (48 percent) monthly income is $ 1000 to $ 2999, followed by 34 percent respondents monthly income is between $3000 to $4999. Whereas 12 percent respondents' monthly income is

Table1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Descriptions	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative (%)
Gender:			
Male	148	58	58
Female	108	42	100.0
Age:			
Below 15	31	12	12
15-24	41	16	28
25-34	97	38	66
35 and above	87	34	100.0
Marital Status:			
Single	111	43	43
Married	146	57	100.0
Country:			
Middle East	154	60	60
Asia	67	26	86
Europe	7	3	89
Africa	18	7	96
America	10	4	100.0

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Descriptions	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative (%)
Profession:			
Student	20	08	08
Job Holder	87	34	42
Business Owner	108	42	84
Academician	15	06	90
Home Maker (Housewife)	26	10	100.0
Income:			
Below $ 1000	15	06	06
$ 1000-$ 2999	123	48	54
$ 3000-$ 4999	87	34	88
$ 5000 and Above	31	12	100.0
Number of Visitation in Malaysia			
1st time	138	54	54
2nd time	72	28	82
3rd time	31	12	94
4th time and above	15	06	100.0

Table 2: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Parameters	Value
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	.706
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity:	
Approx. Chi-Square	4475.920
Df	120
Sig	.000

Table 3: Reliability Analysis and Factor Loading

Factors	Loading	Cronbach's Alpha
Destination Image		.897
DI3	.950	
DI6	.941	
DI2	.935	
DI5	.876	
DI4	.591	
Religious Motivation		.766
RM2	.777	
RM6	.709	
RM1	.694	
RM5	.688	
Service Quality		.876
REL2	.843	
RES1	.839	
RES2	.830	
Emp1	.821	
REL1	.801	
Emp2	.786	
TAN1	.634	

Table 4: Coefficients

Hypothesis	Standardized coefficient (Beta)	Significance (p value)	Remarks
Destination image	.524	.000	Supported
Religious Motivation	.179	.000	Supported
Service Quality	.606	.000	Supported

Dependent Variable: Tourist Satisfaction

Reliability Analysis: To test the goodness of all variables in the test reliability analysis using the Chronbach's alpha coefficient. Cronbach's Alpha was chosen to analyze the degree of consistency among the items in a construct. Hair *et al*., [50] mentioned that the cronbach alpha should be at least 0.70 for the results to be deemed as reliable. In this study the value for each variable is above 0.70 and it indicates that the variables are reliable. The result of reliability analysis is given below.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA): Generally a higher factor loading specifies the stronger affiliation of items to a specific factor. The findings of this research indicate that items of each of the three (3) variables namely, destination image, religious motivation and service quality were homogeneous. One item is close to another item. On the other hand the reliability coefficients of those three factors are: destination image (.897), religious motivation. (766), service quality (. 876), respectively. On the other hand KMO index and Bartlett's test of sphericity weighed the suitability of the data. According to [50], the KMO value should be higher than 0.5. For this reason the factor loading for all items

above $5000. 42 percent tourists are business owner, followed by 34 percent job holder, 19.2 and 6 percent respondents were academician. It was the first time visitation for most of the respondents (54percent) and 28 percent respondents visit for the second time. Among the popular Islamic tourist destination of Malaysia, most of the respondents (37.3 percent) visited National Mosque of Malaysia (Masjid Negara), located in Kuala Lumpur. Second most visited destinations were Putrajaya Mosque in Federal Territory Putrajaya with 16.9 percent.

exceeding the minimum value of 0.50 were considered in this study. From the analysis we found our KMO value is .706. Beside that the results of Bartlett's test of sphericity are all significant (p= 0.000). Factor analysis also confirmed that the construct validity of the scales could be performed adequately. Those items that did not meet the requirement and that were dropped are Destination Image 1, Religious Motivation 3, Religious Motivation 4, Tangibility 1, Assurance 1 and Assurance 2 of Service Quality.

Hypothesis Testing: The causal relationship of the constructs was assessed using regression analysis as summarized below.

Hypothesis 1: Destination Image has a positive relationship with Tourist Satisfaction

The results of this study show that the association between Destination Image and Tourist Satisfaction is supported. The multiple regression result shows Destination Image has a beta of .524 and significant p value is .000. The significant value is less than alpha at 0.05 and hypothesis is accepted. Therefore proposed hypothesis is supported. This findings supports the previous similar study [32, 34, 51-56].

Hypothesis 2: Religious Motivation has a positive relationship with Tourist Satisfaction

The association between Religious Motivation and Tourist Satisfaction is supported in this study. The multiple regression result shows Religious Motivation has beta of .179 and significant p value is .000. The significant value is less than alpha at 0.05 and hypothesis is accepted. Previously some researchers also found close relation between tourist travel motivation and satisfaction. Beerli and Martín [10] recommend that motivation is the need that drives an individual to act in a certain way to achieve the desired satisfaction. According to Yoon and Uysal [17], tourist satisfaction work as mediator between travel motivation and tourist destination loyalty.

Hypothesis 3: Service Quality has a positive relationship with Tourist Satisfaction

The relationship between service quality and tourist satisfaction of Islamic tourist destination is also positive. The multiple regression result shows service quality has a beta of .606 and significant p value is .000.

The significant value is smaller than alpha at 0.05 and hypothesis is accepted. Result of this study supported similar study in other countries, confirm a positive relationship between service quality and satisfaction in tourism industry [57-60].

Conclusion And Direction of Further Study: This empirical study provides evidence that destination image, religious motivation and service quality of tourist destination is closely associated with satisfaction of the tourist towards the destination. As tourism contributes economy of Malaysia, it can be say that major findings of this study have significance for policy and managerial implications for the country's core Islamic tourist destinations and support services in tourism. These are fundamental in extending length of stay, increasing satisfaction and enhancing destination loyalty of foreign Muslim tourists. In future, research can be conducted on importance of religion motivation to choosing tourist destinations; especially its relation with destination image and destination loyalty.

The study suffers from a number of limitations. Even though the results are interesting and support previous studies, there were some limitations. Hence, the results cannot be easily generalized. First of all, this study used convenience sampling procedure which is a limitation. Future studies can utilize the stratified random sampling procedure with more samples. On the other hand the EFA is difficult to generalize to a larger audience and there was a lack of experimental control for the questionnaire investigation, so the quality of questionnaire cannot be ensured.

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