

Marketing islamic travel destinations a religious perspective tourism essay



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Literature on tourism and destination marketing research is rich with key themes which seek to explain why people travel and select specific destinations. Many of the studies are based on the theory of pull and push motivations. The theory posits that tourists are pushed by internal desires or emotional factors to travel as well as pulled by external factors in the form of the attributes of various destinations. While many studies have been conducted to investigate the various types of destination attributes, there has been a lack of research on the religious attributes of the destination and its impact on tourist's choice as well as satisfaction. Moreover, when it comes to Islamic religious attributes, the lack of study is more noticeable and profound. The objective of this study is to investigate whether there exists a basis for segmenting the tourism market by Islamic religious attributes through studying the views and opinions of tourists visiting Malaysia.

2. Significance of the Study

The Muslim tourism segment may consider a target for destination marketers. Assuming religion represents one of important factors in the decision-making process in regards to travel destinations(Collins & Tisdell, 2002), it is important to ensure that Islamic religious attributes are available in those destinations. This may lead to tourist satisfaction as well as encourage multiple return visits. Muslims are well-ordered to follow Islamic teachings which directly and indirectly impact on their decisions concerning leisure and travel plans (Hamira & Henderson, 2009). In this regard plans to market destinations for Muslim tourists should be guided by Shariah (Islamic code of life) rules specifically those that pertain to tourism activities.

In recent years, it has been observed that there is a growing interest in new tourism concepts such as “ Islamic tourism.” Another concept is “ Halal hospitality” which is akin to the concept of “ Halal food”, a concept already recognized in many countries including those in the Middle East(WTM, 2007). Newspaper articles consider this to be a new phenomenon in the United Arab Emirates and Middle Eastern countries. Halal tourism has attracted many tour packages entirely based on what they term ‘ Islamic culture’ (Javed, 2007) which is defined as a type of religious tourism which is in conformity with Islamic teachings regarding behaviours, dress, conduct and diet (WTM, 2007). Heyer’s (2008) elaboration on the rapid large-scale development of ‘ Shariah-compliant hotels’ is but another expression of the existing trends towards increased Islamisation of activities which in the past focused more on banking, insurance and finance. Thus, tourism is generally encouraged by Islamic law as following the religion entails etiquettes, mannerisms, rules and regulations regarding conduct, dress, food, and prayer(Hamira & Henderson, 2009).

Halal tourism operators target families from the Gulf region known for their conservative interpretation of the teachings of Islamic Shariah. The World Travel Market Report (2007) shows that Halal tourism has the potential to develop into a resilient market. Promising market potentialities cause it to be targeted by industry operators and market researchers. Focus on this market is further increased by a forecasted increase in growth whereby tourist income for the Middle East is expected to grow 108% to a staggering US\$ 51 billion while domestic tourism is expected to grow by 82% to reach US\$24 Billion by 2011. Much of the forecasted growth is due to increased numbers

of Middle Eastern tourists which underlines the need for tailored Halal tourist packages offering services catering to Muslim needs.

The negative side of western tourism causing Halal tourism to be increasingly popular among Muslims is issues which have a negative impact on the Muslim community such as the consumption of alcohol, prostitution, inappropriate dressing, kissing in public and open affection between sexes in public (Sindiga, 1996). However, non-Muslim countries continue to attract Muslim families, including those from the Gulf region interested in visiting attractions such as nature parks as these comply with Islamic Shariah. In response to this the current study is an attempt to greater understand the new concept of ' Halal tourism'.

Muslims constitute a global market of 1. 82 billion potential customers (Muslim population worldwide, 2009). Islamic religious attributes are bound to be very important considerations when a Muslim decides to travel abroad. Given the potential problems expected from non-Halal tourism, the Muslim tourist may decide not to travel to a particular destination due to the absence of these attributes. According to Uysal et al. (2008, p. 413) a study of a the particular attributes of any given destination would provide clues and/or insights that destination marketers could use in developing and promoting their tourism destinations. Bogari et al.(2004) claim that destination attributes and issues pertaining to Islamic culture were not sufficiently covered by researchers. In effect, the study focuses in the Islamic attributes of destinations which could be used as a base to attract Muslim tourists in destination marketing programs.

The marketing of Islamic destinations is certainly not an easy task (Henderson, 2008b) because of the variance between the demands of western tourists and the Islamic teachings. Therefore, exploring Islamic attributes may help destination marketers to tailor products and services that satisfy Muslim tourists in addition to using them in promotional programs. In addition, this study attempts to offer insights into the tourism expectations and experiences of followers of the Islamic religion. Muslim tourists could be influenced by religious aspects in their destination choice. Thus, the objective of this study is to explore which Islamic attributes of destinations such as worship facilities and Halal food that may be important to the Muslim tourist; especially in the Muslim world.

3. Literature review:

Religion plays a large influence on many people's behaviour as customers (Essoo & Dibb, 2004). In the context of tourism, religion may influence the choice of destination and tourists' product preferences (Adi & Ron, 2008). According to Poria et al. (2003), the effects of religious belief on behaviour come from two main sources. First, there are the yes and no's, do's and don'ts of a person's religion which are to be observed. Examples consist of the religious rules prohibiting Muslims from consuming pork, or Hindus from consuming beef. The second means by which behaviour is influenced is the fact that religion shapes the culture, attitudes and values of society. This is supported by Grigg (1995) whose research provides evidence on the influence of religion and religiosity on dietary habits. Further support is found in Essoo and Dibb (2004) who demonstrated the influence of religion on

consumer behaviour by identifying the differences in consumer spending between Muslims and Hindus.

Although the relationship between tourism and religion has been addressed in the literature on tourism, there remains a shortage of theoretical publications in the area of tourism in the context of Islam. Religion and religiosity are acknowledged factors influencing behaviour according to various social settings. In spite of this widely acknowledged fact, research that explores relationships between religion, behaviour and tourist destination choice remains highly limited (Adi, 2006; Adi & Ron, 2008; Din, 1989; Fleischer, 2000; Howe, 2001; Poria et al., 2003; Rinschede, 1992). Din (1989) argues that social scientists have tended to overlook the importance of religion in tourism studies. Its importance is emphasized by Adi and Ron (2008) who underline the general importance of the relationship between tourism and religion. For this reason Heo et al. (2004) recommend more related studies that identify and discuss special tourist requirements and preferences. Although neglecting to mention religion specifically, Fang et al. (2008) conclude that tourists are more likely to choose destinations believed to best satisfy tourist 'push' needs and preferred destination attributes.

Studies conducted in this area include Adi (2006) which investigates the religious needs of Christian tourist in the hospitality industry and Fleischer and Nitzav (1995) which investigates the religious needs of Christian pilgrims in the tourism industry. Likewise Hoffmann (1994 Cited in Adi 2006) conducts research on Jewish ultra-orthodox tourism segment. In addition to this, some papers complement the aforementioned research by discussing the religious requirements in the tourism food sector. For example, Dugan <https://assignbuster.com/marketing-islamic-travel-destinations-a-religious-perspective-tourism-essay/>

(1994) presents the religious necessities in food supply for Muslim, Christian, Jews, Hindus and Buddhists.

When it comes to the relationship between tourism and religion, particularly Islam, the lack of literature is more obvious especially regarding Islamic religious attributes and their impact on tourist needs in general and Muslim tourists in particular. The only studies available typically focus only on the needs of Muslim pilgrims' (when they visit Makkah for the Haj) rather than the needs of tourists. However, Adi and Ron (2008) forecast increased number of religiously-minded tourists who join dynamic multipurpose packages especially from developing countries many of which are Muslim countries.

3. 1 Religious Attributes

What does the term 'religious attributes' of destinations really mean? There are many aspects that can constitute 'religious attributes' of destinations.

The following sections present the literature on the matter:

3. 1. 1 Hotels Meeting the Religious Needs of Patrons

Additional religious services and provisions in hotels may result in attracting new markets and improved hotel rates (Adi, 2006). A study in Israel conducted by Mansfeld et al. (2000) recommended placing 'Makkah stickers' or 'Qibla stickers' (stickers with ornamented arrows pointing towards the city of Makkah in Saudi Arabia for prayer directions) as well as placing a copy of the Quran in every room occupied by Muslim visitors. Din (1989) found that hotels in Kuantan, Malaysia catered to Muslim needs in the hospitality industry by requiring first class hotels to provide prayer rooms

fully equipped with prayer mats, the Quran, Suruh Yasin, and Tasbih, plus Qibla stickers.

Adi (2006) presented a number of suggestions to improve the religion-friendliness of hotels. The suggestions begin by simply providing a bible in hotel rooms along with providing information on religious activities and institutions. This keeps religiously-minded tourists in direct contact with scripture and informed of available services. Employment of Christian workers creates a religious atmosphere in the hotel. The hotel may choose to organize its own religious activities. It should provide a place of worship within the hotel itself or be in close proximity to a church. Christian symbols within a hotel such as a cross and images of the Virgin Mary help to provide a religious environment and décor.

Religious values play a role in catering to religious needs. For example, Collins-Kreiner & Klot (2000) hypothesizes the Protestants' need for a bible in hotel rooms based on their belief in direct communication with God. Fleischer (2000) compares between Catholic and Protestant pilgrims in terms of the peculiarities of their tourist needs. The study reveals that Protestants appreciate religious symbols and opt for religious-sensitive tourist packages more so than Catholics. Moreover, Adi (2006) recommended catering to such Christian needs in the hotel room as that may increase the satisfaction of Christian tourists

Empirical studies on the impact of catering to Islamic religious needs and the level of satisfaction of Muslim tourists are very few. Some of the studies discuss services of this nature which may include Muslim religious

restrictions such as activities of vice and forbidden entry for unmarried couples (Din, 1989; Hamira & Henderson, 2009; Henderson, 2003) . They also found that hotels may provide religious information such as the location of nearby mosques or prayer times and nearby Halal restaurants (Henderson, 2003). Furthermore, as Muslims avoid free mixing between the sexes, hotels could offer separate swimming pools and recreational facilities (Al-hamarneh & steiner, 2004; Henderson, 2003; Timothy & Iverson, 2006). Hashim et al. (2007) suggest that providing Halal food on the hotel menu or information on nearby Halal restaurants would enhance the holiday experience. Timothy and Iverson (2006) also suggest that hotels should educate their staff on cross-cultural communication to allow them to treat Muslim tourists with respect and consider recruiting religious staff.

3. 1. 2 Places of worship

The five daily prayers are of great importance to practicing Muslims. Therefore, the mosque (a Muslim house of worship) or prayer room is considered to be one of the most crucial facilities for Muslims (Al-hamarneh & steiner, 2004; Syed, 2001). Adi (2006) suggests that proximity to a mosque may influence Muslim tourist preferences when making hotel reservations. Mohsin (2005) conducted a study to assess Peninsular Malaysians attitude towards choosing the Northern Territory of Australia for a holiday as a tourism destination and found that Muslim respondents were concerned about the availability of mosques.

Mohsin and Ryan (1997) recommend that the ease of access to Islamic services are important when they explored the attitudes of Malaysian and Indonesian business people towards the possibility of holidaying in Australia. <https://assignbuster.com/marketing-islamic-travel-destinations-a-religious-perspective-tourism-essay/>

It is also suggested that Middle Eastern countries take concrete steps to develop Halal tourism internally by having prayer rooms at tourism sites (WTM, 2007). Syed (2001) also suggested that the availability of mosques at tourist destinations may increase satisfaction levels. The mosque itself may be considered as a tourist attraction if they are unique and outstanding (Henderson, 2003).

3. 1. 3 Availability of Halal food

Dugan (1994) presented findings on food service requirements by Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Christians. Evidence from Brown's (1996) ethnographic study shows the influence of religious prohibitions on determining their expectations regarding services provided by a hotel such as appropriate ingredient choice and preparation. This is further supported by Williams (2002) who identified the role of the Jewish Kashrus (Jewish religious requirements) in prohibiting certain foods and regulating compliance procedures for food preparation.

For Muslims, the issue is centred on the concept of Halalness. Halal food refers to food that can be lawfully consumed when conditions for Islamic food preparation are met. Food that is unlawful to Muslims includes pork, pork-derived foods including lard and bacon and meat and other products from carnivorous animals or those that feed on carrion. Consumption of any food or drinks with alcoholic content is also prohibited (Dugan, 1994). One important distinguishing feature of the Halal label is that animals must be slaughtered in the name of Allah (God).

There are many studies that show the importance of the availability of Halal food to Muslims in choosing their tourist destinations (Adi, 2006; Adi & Ron, 2008; Mohsin, 2005; Mohsin & Ryan, 1997; Syed, 2001). The importance of this to some Muslims is reflected by the fact that even when served halal food, many are still concerned over whether the food is genuinely halal. Henderson (2003) found that some firms in the Western tourism industry are concerned over this issue. Some Muslims ask about the ingredients the meal is made up of because pork and alcohol in all its many forms are forbidden. Therefore, meals which are provided to Muslim have to be alcohol and pork-free and the utensils have to be uncontaminated by these two elements (Dugan, 1994).

Catering to Muslim tourists' needs in terms of providing Halal food in any particular destination may increase their overall satisfaction and loyalty. Mansfeld et al. (2000) gives explicit recommendations for providing food which complies with Shariah laws. Therefore, a caterer who is aware on how to satisfy Muslims or who offers religious groups' dietary needs will attract more Muslim customers (Dugan, 1994).

3. 1. 4 Banning of Alcohol Consumption and Gambling

According to Islamic Shariah, it is completely forbidden for Muslims to drink or sell alcohol. Muslims are also prohibited from gambling and being involved in the gambling industry. It is stated in Al-Quran: " O ye who believe! Intoxicants and gambling, (dedication of) stones, and (divination by) arrows, are an abomination,- of Satan's handwork: eschew such (abomination), that ye may prosper." (Al-Quran, 5: 90). Moreover the Prophet of Islam,

Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: " Alcohol is the mother of all evils and <https://assignbuster.com/marketing-islamic-travel-destinations-a-religious-perspective-tourism-essay/>

it is the most shameful of evils.” (Ibn Majah, 2004). It is also not permissible for Muslims to visit places where alcohol is consumed and gambling is practiced (Al-hamarneh & steiner, 2004; Din, 1989; Hamira & Henderson, 2009; Hashim et al., 2007; Henderson, 2003, 2008a).

Muslim countries like Saudi Arabia implement very restrictive policies related to gambling and the sale of alcohol. Other countries are not so restrictive. For example, in most states in Malaysia alcohol is freely available although Muslims can be punished for drinking in public.

3. 1. 5 Sexual permissiveness

The Shariah expressly forbids Muslims from engaging in fornication or adultery. Activities deemed conducive to sexual permissiveness are not allowed to take place in public. This is based on many verses in The Holy Quran including like: “ Nor come nigh to adultery: for it is a shameful (deed) and an evil, opening the road (to other evils).” (Al-Quran, 17: 32).

Many Muslim scholars take the view that it is Haram or not permissible to visit, for the sake of tourism, places where sexual permissiveness is rampant. Their opinion is based on the principle that Islam came to impede all roads leading to evil. If some tourist activities result in the facilitation or the commission of sins then it is not permissible for Muslims to be involved in such tourist activities (Rasma, 2008).

Most Muslim countries including Malaysia prohibit adultery. The Malaysian licensing policy prohibits prostitution and behaviours such as public or indecent displays of affection (Din, 1989; Hamira & Henderson, 2009;

Henderson, 2003, 2008a). Moreover, in some Malaysian towns municipal <https://assignbuster.com/marketing-islamic-travel-destinations-a-religious-perspective-tourism-essay/>

enactments for lodging establishments explicitly forbid unmarried couples from being in close proximity (Din, 1989). Many Muslim authorities frown on tourism in general due to the perception that tourism is associated with sexual permissiveness (Din, 1989). Therefore, some Muslim scholars prohibit sex tourism as practiced by some Arab Muslims from the Middle East in travelling to Europe or Bangkok (Din, 1989).

What is more, using sexually provocative images in marketing tourist destinations to Muslim customers is also frowned upon. According to Shariah, promotion techniques must not use sexual appeal in international marketing (Mohammad et al., 2001). Female images are therefore not featured in tourism promotion in some Malaysian states like Terengganu (Henderson, 2003). Mohsin (2005) is of the opinion that the use of sexually provocative images of bikini-clad girls to promote a destination will not attract Muslim tourists.

3. 1. 6 Dress code

According to Shariah Muslim women must not expose their hair and body. The Holy Quran states: “ O Prophet, tell your wives and daughters and the believing women to draw their outer garments around them (when they go out or are among men). That is better in order that they may be known (to be Muslims) and not annoyed...” (Al-Quran, , 33: 59) Men are supposed to cover their thighs (Timothy & Iverson, 2006).

In deciding tour destinations, Muslims look at the local dress codes in that particular region of the world being considered. Such considerations are to gauge the level of conformity to Islamic dress norms in order to determine if

they will or will not be comfortable visiting that particular destination. This is particularly so for Arab tourists who have to observe strict dress codes in their native countries and prefer not to expose themselves and families to environments that may threaten their sense of proper dressing.

Hashim et al (2007) demonstrates the Malaysian Tourist Board's awareness of Islamic dress sensitivities by restricting their marketing campaigns to present only traditional Malay Muslim dress codes. Women with headscarves and men wearing Songkoks-a black rimless hat worn by Malay men usually for praying-were depicted on advertising billboards and home pages. Some conservative Malaysian states enforce appropriate dress norms prohibiting people from disturbing cultural norms by wearing revealing clothes such as bikinis. Furthermore, western tourists are expected to adorn the Islamic attire when visiting religious places like mosques (Henderson, 2003).

Hamira and Henderson (2009) claim that Shariah laws prohibit improper dressing. Al-Hamarneh and Seiner (2004) assert that considerations of the religious conservatism of any particular region including prescribed dress codes should be respected. Such cultural considerations are expected more so of tourism operators in all aspects of the tourism industry as they are interacting directly and regularly with foreign tourists (Adi & Ron, 2008).

4. Methodology

The objective of this study is to explore Islamic religious attributes which may be important to Muslim travellers. In order to achieve this objective, focus group discussions (FGD) were conducted and were followed up with interviews to explore opinions and travel experiences in more depth. This

combination of the FGD and the interviews has its advantages. Firstly, in identifying a range of Islamic religious attributes from the FGD. Secondly, to explore in depth, by conducting interviews using a relatively wide range of participants in order to discover more Islamic attributes and to check the conclusions with the FGD (Morgan, 1996). The FGD and the interviews are research techniques pertaining to qualitative research (Myers, 2009, p. 121). The aim of the FGD is to collect information through group interaction but the interview is considered an opportunity to discover new information from individuals (Cavana, Delahaye, & Sekaran, 2008, p. 138). Semi-structured questions were designed in this study for the purpose of conducting interviews and focus group discussions.

Semi-structured questions were designed in this study for the purpose of conducting interviews and focus group discussions. The participants were asked about the Islamic attributes they would require when traveling in a Muslim country or a non Muslim country. They were then asked specifically about these attributes when visiting Muslim countries. This was followed by probing questions that sought to explore in detail specific attributes generated from FGDs such as access to worship facilities, availability of Halal food, services provided in hotels, and morality.

Two focus group discussions were conducted in June 2009. The participants of these focus groups were international PhD students currently studying in Malaysia in different areas of research. The participants of FGD1 consisted of eight males from Saudi Arabia, Palestine, Mauritania, Oman, Jordan, Yemen, Egypt and Sudan. The duration of FGD1 was one and a half hours. The participants of FGD 2 consisted of seven females from Egypt, Libya, Yemen, <https://assignbuster.com/marketing-islamic-travel-destinations-a-religious-perspective-tourism-essay/>

Nigeria, Oman, Turkey, and Algeria. The duration of FGD 2 was one hour and fifteen minutes and the participants did not agree to record the session digitally. The reason for this may be culturally related. All FGD participants had overseas travel experience for various purposes such as tourism, business, learning, and visiting friends.

A total of 53 interviews were conducted with tourists in Kuala Lumpur, the capital city of Malaysia; 27 interviews in July 2009 and 26 interviews in October 2009. Thirty of the interviewees were males, and twenty three were females. Only those who professed to be Muslims were selected. 38 tourists did not accept to be interviewed. The duration of most interviews was between 35 to 45 minutes. 41 interviews were recorded digitally. The rest were unable to be recorded due to objections from the interviewees who were females from the Middle East. The interviewer transcribed both the FGDs as well as all interviews session. Some interviewees from the Middle East preferred to communicate in Arabic while the rest were conducted in English. The interviewer adopted the probing technique during the session to encourage the participants to provide more details. Some demographic information was also gathered. The digital recording of the interviews was changed into text. The data was organized for easy categorization and systematic data analysis.

5. Findings

Results of the analysis were categorized into two major aspects which are tangible and intangible. The tangible aspect consists of Islamic religious facilities such as, worship facilities, Halal food, and Islamic recreational facilities:

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(A)Prayer facilities:

Mosque: all interviewees were concerned about the availability of Mosques (Masjid) or prayer rooms for their tourist destination. Easy access to a mosque/prayer room is considered a vital aspect for Muslim tourists and should not be ignored by tourism planning but should be considered a necessary service. This can be shown in the following response:

“... Masjid or prayer room must be available in the streets and public places. In other words, a prayer room should be available in all places which I may visit in the destination such as hotels, shopping malls, and airports. Even in the airplane to destination, it should allocate a place for prayer.” (FGD No. 1)

“ Masjid is available in most of the places in the destination during my journey, in shopping malls, highways... and of course in the hotel.” (Int. No. 1, USA)

It is noticed from the previous responses that Muslim tourists expect easy access to a Masjid and/or prayer room to be a primary requirement in Muslim countries. They also highlighted that they expect to find prayer facilities readily accessible during tourist activities.

Islamic call (Azan) for prayer: 31 interviewees were concerned about the need for public calling of the Azan (prayer time). Destination operators should provide information about Muslim prayer times. 17 interviewees recommended a prayer time call during flights or journeys to their destinations, hotels, shopping malls and parks. Some also requested prayer time clocks (which ring with each prayer time) or a prayer timetable in the hotel room.

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“... I need also Prayer time call in the airplane, airport, hotel or at least prayer timetable in hotel room.” (Int. No. 2, Canada)

“... Prayer timetable or Alfajr clock (Prayer time clock brand) should be found in hotel room.” (Int. No. 4, Saudi Arabia).

In Islam Muslims should pray five times daily but they are permitted to merge and shorten the prayers while travelling according to the length of the journey and other Islamic legal rules and requirements. As such, the participants preferred that they be reminded about prayer times in order that they may choose between praying at the usual times or merge them.

Quran and Qiblah direction pointer: all interviewees emphasized the importance of the provision of Qurans and Qiblah direction pointers in hotel rooms. Some proposed that one or two simple Islamic books to be provided in hotel rooms and in aeroplane seat pockets.

“ ...It will be fine if I find Quran book in hotel room, some Islamic leaflets in the airplane seat pocket, Makkah direction pointer, Sejadda for prayer (prayer mat), simple Islamic book in hotel room ...” (FGD No. 1)

“...I need the Holy Quran book inside the hotel room, some Islamic books which I can read; I don't want any statue or sculpture like a Buddhist. I found that in India when I was there. Also direction of Qibla is important to me...” (Int. No. 15, Djibouti)

The Quran is the Holy book for Muslims. Muslims are requested to read the Holy Quran. Although most of Muslims have a soft copy of the Quran on their hand phones, the hard copy represents the preferable option for reading. <https://assignbuster.com/marketing-islamic-travel-destinations-a-religious-perspective-tourism-essay/>

Moreover, the Makkah direction pointer is a basic demand of Muslims as they perform their prayers elsewhere even though in public places. Some hotel industry practitioners, even some hotels in non Muslim countries, already provide Qiblah pointers inside their hotel rooms but some participants report that they did not find it in some hotels in Muslim countries.

Muslim toilets: 36 interviewees who have travelled to western destinations complained about the bath room because they could not perform ablution (Muslim mandatory washing before performing prayers). There is no such facility inside airport toilets and hotels. Therefore, they requested Muslim toilets to be provided in all airports, hotels and public places.

“ Muslim toilet is very important in airport because the regular toilets provide only tissue. As Muslims, we need water supply inside the toilet. It should be found in public places because in the hotel you can find water but in public it is difficult.” (Int. No. 14, Thailand)

“ I will be very happy if I find ... and Bidet in the bathroom” (Int. No. 2, Canada).

Muslim followers must do ablution before prayers. They are required to clean themselves with water when using the toilet. Some countries adopt modern toilet designs which do not enable users to wash themselves using water; providing only tissue. However, some Muslim countries have modified this style and have adopted a Muslim design for their bathrooms which provide water. From previous participant responses, they find it satisfying when water facilities are made available in toilets.

(B)Halal food: all interviewees reported that the availability of Halal food is a basic need for all destinations. It is noticed that all interviewees need Halal meals in flights to their destination. Moreover, they recommended that hotels and restaurants in the destination should provide Halal meals free from pork and alcohol. Some of them were worried about the preparation of Halal meals. Seven interviewees highlighted that the kitchen should also be Halal which means that Halal and non-Halal foods cannot be cooked together in the same kitchen and with the same utensils.

“... I need Halal food to be available. The mosques and Halal food restaurants, mostly they are close to each other. Last week, I was in Cambodia. Once I was close to the Masjid I found Halal restaurants.” (Int. No. 13, Turkey)

“... Some hotels, in breakfast they provide Halal food and non-Halal food from the same kitchen that means the Halal and non Halal food are cooked together using the same facilities. I need Halal kitchen. Moreover, some Arabian tourists can't read English so they eat non-Halal meat.” (Int. No. 12, Egypt)

The travel experiences of some participants highlighted that easy to find Halal food is one factor in choosing the destination for their vacation. Some are very sensitive regarding Halal issues and go well beyond Halal labels. They want to make sure the meat and ingredients used in cooking are Halal and do this by usually asking the service providers. On top of this they also ask whether the kitchen is Halal or not. In response to this some hotels in Malaysia allocate two kitchens; Halal and non-Halal.

(C)Islamic entertainment: 39 interviewees gave high priority to finding Islamic-oriented recreations s