

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

Tourism industries are always searching for new customer segments. In this context, however, it has been the practice of the tourism industry to inhibit a competitive relationship where tourists of some beliefs or backgrounds feel that they have no other choice but to compromise their religious beliefs to enjoy tourism. Therefore, tourism and religion should work in a harmonious manner and foster a continual relationship. Weidenfeld and Ron (2008) addressed this issue and argued that catering to the religious needs of any faith in this expanding industry is essential. Concerning this issue, the tourism market during the last decade has witnessed many examples of catering to the needs of special groups such as elderly tourists, disabled tourists and even gay tourists (Weidenfeld, 2006). Equally, followers of the Islamic faith, as one of the market segments that have special religious needs should be catered for, not only during pilgrimage but also anywhere and anytime. To achieve competitive advantage in catering for this segment, key tourism industry players should strive to satisfy the religious needs of Muslim tourists to gain better destination loyalty.

Religion influences our behaviour as customers (Essoo & Dibb, 2004). Evidence in this context is seen in our life like parental attachment, fashion styles, foods and drinking, cosmetics use, social and political visions, and sexual behaviour (Hood & Morris, 1985; Levin, 1979; Ronald et al., 1998). According to Poria et al. (2003), the impact of religious beliefs on behaviour come from two major sources. First, the taboos and obligations in

religion that have to be practiced. For example, in the Islamic teachings, Muslim believers are prohibited from consuming pork and similarly Hindu teachings strictly prohibit the consumption of beef among its followers. Second, behaviour is also affected by the fact that religion shapes culture, attitudes and values in society. Grigg (1995) also gives confirmation that people's religion affect their food consumption.

Religion is associated with tourism, in terms of consumer (tourist) behaviour and the supplier (host), as well as the relationship between them (Poria et al., 2003). However, limited research studying this relationship is available (Howe, 2001; Rinschede, 1992). Furthermore, in the current competition amongst the destination marketers, as well as the saturated marketplace, destination marketing objectives should be guided by an investigation of tourist motivation and its interaction with tourist satisfaction and loyalty (Devesa et al., 2010; Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Zabkar et al., 2010). Therefore, the destination marketers should observe tourist satisfaction, which is considered a key element to maintain competitive advantage. In response to that, the supply of religious attributes for Muslim tourists may lead to increased satisfaction and revisit intention. It is known that Muslim customers constitute a broad market which is around 1.82 billion around the world (Muslim population worldwide, 2009). In addition, the Muslim market has its special requirements and its culture, which cannot be ignored. Thus, satisfying religious needs for Muslim tourists may encourage them to travel to a specific destination.

## **1.2 Theoretical Background**

A review of literature revealed some key themes in destination marketing research. Most discussions in tourism and destination marketing literature have tended to go around

the theory of push and pull motivation when they want to explain why people travel and select a specific destination. Researchers generally agree that people travel and select their destinations according to different push and pull motivational factors (Baloglu & Uysal, 1996; Oh et al., 1995; Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1981; Iso-Ahola, 1982; Jang & Cai, 2002; Kim & Lee, 2002; Kozak, 2002b; Mansfeld, 1992; Uysal & Jurowski, 1994; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). The theory assumes that people are first of all pushed by internal desires or emotional factors to travel and then they are pulled by external or tangible factors (Destination attributes). Moreover, it assumes that these two sets of forces might be independent and interdependent.

Push factors represent the internal stimulations of tourists to travel (Crompton, 1979; Goossens, 2000; Kozak, 2002b). Klenosky (2002) argued that “*Push factors refer to the specific forces in our lives that lead to the decision to take a vacation (i.e., to travel outside of our normal daily environment)*”. Most push factors involve socio-psychological concerns and inherent desires such as escape, relaxation, adventure, prestige, family and friend togetherness, sport, and enjoying natural resources. Pull factors present external attributes, which result from the attractiveness of a destination. They attract tourists and make them desire to visit such a destination (Baloglu & Uysal, 1996; Iso-Ahola, 1982). Klenosky (2002) argued that “*Pull factors refer to those that lead an individual to select one destination over another once the decision to travel has been made*”. They are reflected in attractions such as the natural environment, weather attraction, historical attractions, low travel cost, and expenditure.

Mansfeld (1992) proposes that analysis of the motivational stage is useful to explain how individuals set objectives for their destination selection and how these objectives are

then reflected in their travel behaviour and selection. It could also offer tourism operators, and tourism planners a deeper understanding of the real expectations, requirements and objectives of the tourist, thus, enabling them to meet these expectations and requirements more effectively. Tourism marketers need to ascertain the motives behind certain types of travel behaviour including the selection of a destination and the attributes found in the choice vacation spot (Yoon & Uysal, 2005).

According to Uysal et al. (2008), destination is a consumer product and tourists are consumers who buy diverse tourism products and services. For effective destination marketing, marketers must comprehend what motivates individuals to travel and what attributes are essential for an individual to travel to a destination. If destination marketers have a clear awareness of why their products are in demand for a given market segment or group, they will be able to tailor products more exactly to customer needs with the right advertising and sales messages. When several destinations or hotels have the same attraction attributes and amenities, the favoured choice is likely to be the one that is most likely to match the push motivations with pull attributes. Thus, understanding the common denominator found between push and pull factors of motivations would enable destination managers and marketers to better match major destination attributes and physical amenities to travellers' varied physical needs. Hence, the framework of pull and push motivation factors should steer future management and marketing strategies.

Undoubtedly, satisfaction is a crucial key in marketing research. Tourist satisfaction is important to market destinations successfully (Devesa et al., 2010; Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Zabkar et al., 2010) because it is linked directly to destination choice, products/services consumption, and repeat visits (Metin & Mike, 2000). Fang et al. (2008) reported that

measuring tourist satisfaction presents information related to how well a destination matches the tourists' needs, which may help destination marketers to improve the quality of products and services that interest tourists. Yoon and Uysal (2005) found a significant relationship between overall tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty as well as between destination attributes and overall tourist satisfaction. By using structural equation modelling, Um et al. (2006) supported that destination loyalty is influenced by satisfaction, perceived quality of service, perceived attractiveness, and perceived value for money; they also provided empirical evidence that repeat visitations are influenced more by perceived attractiveness than by satisfaction.

The linkage between religion and consumer behaviour has been recognized theoretically. Prior studies show the impact of religion on behaviour and purchasing decisions (Delener, 1990; Hirschman, 1981). Furthermore, a range of studies have investigated religion's impact on habits, attitudes, people's values, and behaviour. Peterson and Roy (1985) claim that religion offers a root of sense and purpose for people; it makes life reasonable and interpretable. Essoo and Dibb (2004) in their study give substantial affirmation for presenting religion as an important variable in the study of consumer behaviour and they found that religion influences how people shop. According to Greeley (1963), there are three models to explain the relationship between religion and behaviour. In the first model, religion influences religious group members, who then influence the social system organization according to their religious values. The second model presumes that the social system generates 'need dispositions' in the participants, which then create certain types of religious activity and belief. The third model considers religion as an evaluator of behaviour.

Tourism and religion may affect tourist behaviour; for example, religion influences the destination choice, tourist product favourites, and selection of religious opportunities and facilities offered (Weidenfeld & Ron, 2008). Fang et al. (2008) supported that tourists almost certainly select destinations that are supposed to best fulfil their internal desires or preferred destination attributes. Religion emerges as a distinct type of attraction in the tourism literature, as it is often included in the analyses of the supply factors by social scientists (Din, 1989). Therefore, the Islamic attributes of destination in which catering to the religious needs of Muslim tourists may play an important role between the travel motivations (push and pull) and overall tourist satisfaction, which may impact on destination loyalty. Religious attributes of destinations should be recognized more in the context of the current competitive tourism market (Weidenfeld & Ron, 2008).

### **1.3 Background of the Study**

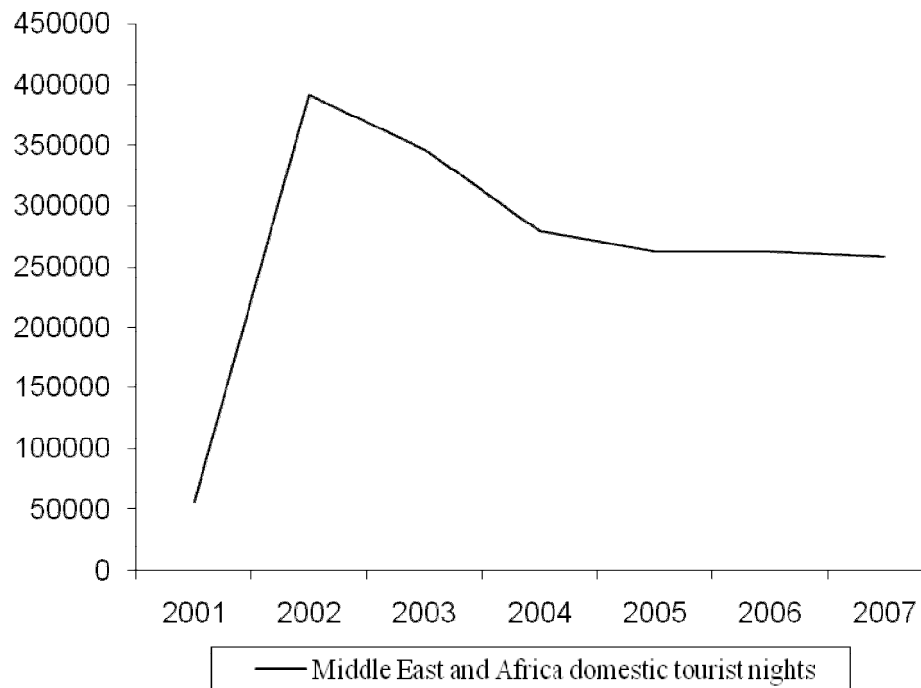
The global economy, including world tourism, has been negatively affected by poor relations between Muslim and Western nations, especially after the September 11 attacks in the United States (Henderson, 2003). These harmful effects were exacerbated even further with the U.S. war on terrorism. The effect of this in the Middle East has emerged in the form of preventing Arab and Muslim tourists from travelling to Europe and the United States on the grounds that these attacks were of Muslim and Arab origin. Images of Arab Muslims have become the archetypal image of Islam among the American people, which has led to Muslims of Arab origin being unwelcome in the United States.

The traditional Arab and Muslim choice of the USA and Europe as destinations has changed since the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks with Middle Eastern and Muslim countries

becoming increasingly popular destinations for Muslim tourists (Henderson, 2003). As a result, intra-tourism in the Middle East and Muslim countries has boomed remarkably (Al-Hamarneh & Steiner, 2004), as shown in Figure 1.1. There is no doubt that Muslim tourists constitute a broad tourist market with special religious and cultural requirements which, as a target market, can no longer be ignored by decision makers in the international tourism market as well as the intra-Islamic tourism market.

In recent years, it has been observed that there is a growing interest in new concepts such as 'Islamic (Halal) tourism', 'Islamic hospitality', and 'Halal friendly travel' similar to the Halal food concept in many countries including the Middle East (WTM, 2007). Newspaper articles considered it as a new phenomenon in the United Arab Emirates and Middle Eastern countries, which began to highlight the importance of intra-regional tourism (Al-Hamarneh & Steiner, 2004; Henderson, 2003). Islamic tourism attracted many tourists entirely based on the Islamic culture (Javed, 2007).

Halal tourism has emerged as a new concept that means tourism based on the Islamic teachings and ethical codes. Jeffery, Chairman of World Travel Market, defined Halal tourism as a type of religious tourism that represents allowable activities under the Islamic teachings in terms of behaviour, dress, conduct and diet (WTM, 2007). Heyer (2008) elaborates on the massive and rapid development of 'Shariah-compliant hotels', which follow the existing trend of Shariah-compliant banking, insurance, and more.



Source: Euromonitor International from World Tourism Organisation (2008)

**Figure 1.1: Middle East and Africa Domestic Tourist Nights.**

Halal tourism operators target families from the Arab Gulf region who are 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 the increased number of Middle Eastern Muslim tourists, which underlines the need for tailored Halal tourist packages offering services catering to Muslim needs.



One of the reasons marketers have targeted the Muslim tourist market as profitable is that Muslim tourists have purchasing power. Given the significant potential that this market represents, it would be useful to examine the reasons why Muslims travel with a focus on the religious attractions in the destination.

#### **1.4 Problem Statement**

Facts show that Muslims constitute a global market of approximately two billion potential customers. Assuming that religion plays an important part in their decision-making process with regard to travel destinations (Delener, 1990; Essoo & Dibb, 2004), Islamic religious attributes are bound to be very important considerations when a Muslim decides to travel abroad (WTM, 2007). The Muslim tourists may decide not to travel to a particular destination due to the absence of these attributes (WTM, 2007). In addition, the absence of Islamic attributes in the destination may be a source of worry to themselves and those with whom they interact (Syed, 2001). Besides the push and pull motivations that can be a means of influencing tourist behaviour, it is important to understand the Islamic attributes that may lead to tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty for Muslims. This study attempts to address this problem by empirically testing the relationship between Islamic attributes of destination, travel motivations, overall tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty.

#### **1.5 The Significance of the Study**

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. When it comes to the relationship between tourism and

religion, particularly Islam, the lack of literature is more obvious, especially regarding religious attributes and their impact on tourist needs, in general, and Muslim tourists, in particular. The very few studies available typically focus on the needs of Muslim pilgrims' (when they visit Makkah for the Hajj) (such as Ahmed et al., 2006; Memish, 2007; Shafi et al., 2008) rather than the needs of tourists.

Although religion is a recognized factor for influencing behaviour, very limited research has investigated the associations between it and the visitation prototypes of tourists (Din, 1989; Fleischer, 2000; Howe, 2001; Poria et al., 2003; Rinschede, 1992; Weidenfeld, 2006; Weidenfeld & Ron, 2008). Din (1989) argued that there has not been enough effort by researchers to consider the religious aspect in tourism studies. Moreover, the tourism and destination marketing literature is marked by a complete lack of publication in the areas of religious attributes of destination and destination loyalty. Weidenfeld and Ron (2008) suggest that the relationship between tourism and religion constitutes a valid and important area of research in general. However, Heo et al. (2004) recommend more studies related to satisfy the special requirements and preferences of any specific group of tourists in particular.

There are needs for future research in the area of religion and tourism. Joseph et al. (2001) suggest addressing the relation between religion and tourism from the perspective of the tourists and their mediation of local religious spaces. Mehmet (2005) argued that the destination marketers who are willing to target the specialist market should amend their products and services in line with the market's needs and preferences. In other words, the tourism product should be differentiated and personified to respond to the specific requirements of various tourism segments (Mehmet, 2005; Weidenfeld & Ron, 2008).

Therefore, additional research is also recommended to explore and understand the particular religious needs of tourists at a multi-religion destination, which could be a real challenge (Weidenfeld & Ron, 2008).

If the destination marketers understand and are aware of the reasons of Muslim tourists travel for tourism, the destination marketers may be able to launch successful marketing campaigns that are developed based on tourism motivations. Bogari et al. (2004) claim that destination attributes and issues pertaining to Islamic culture were not sufficiently covered by researchers. Chiang and Jogaratnam (2006) claim that travel motivation studies frequently gave more attention to the general population. Thus, instead of heterogeneous marketing by focusing on specific groups, researchers can discover the desires of smaller homogeneous groups. However, research into Muslim travel motivations has not received the same level of attention given to identifying western travel motives, even though the Muslim population has emerged as a global market in recent years. This may be demonstrated by empirical studies conducted in relation to the religious needs of Muslim tourists.

Previous tourism research only focussed on tourism motivation constructs (pull/push) to understand the interrelationships and neglected their impact on other constructs (Baloglu & Uysal, 1996; Bogari et al., 2004; Oh et al., 1995; Kim & Lee, 2002; Kim et al., 2003; Klenosky, 2002; Pyo et al., 1989; Uysal & Jurowski, 1994). Thus, Devesa et al. (2010) suggested that a more in depth study of the relationship between tourism motivation and satisfaction is needed, with emphasis on the segmentation of tourists' motives. Fang et al. (2008) also argue that only limited research addressed the interrelationship between tourist

motivation and satisfaction and recommend that future studies evaluate the impact of travel motivation and destination attributes on overall tourist satisfaction.

Future research is recommended to understand tourist motivation for purchasing ethical holidays (Clare, 2002). Furthermore, the need for additional study on the relationship between overall satisfaction and revisiting is recommended by Oppermann (1998). Moreover, the study of the loyalty concept and its application to tourism products or services has been limited (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Kim and Prideaux (2005) recommended future research to investigate the role of religious affiliation in determining tourists' attitude and behaviours. It is also recommended to study the effect of catering to the religious needs of tourists to gain a high level of satisfaction, which may affect their future behaviour (Fleischer, 2000; Weidenfeld & Ron, 2008).

To sum up, the research gaps that will be filled up by this research are:

1. Very few empirical studies examine the travel motivation for Muslim tourists only.
2. No research has been done to investigate tourism motivations for Muslim tourists from different nationalities.
3. Very limited research has focused on empirically testing the overall tourist satisfaction relationship with tourism motivations and destination loyalty.
4. No research has been done to examine the relationship between tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty in the context of Muslim countries.
5. No research has been done to explore the Islamic attributes of destinations, which may be important to the Muslim tourist and may help destination

marketers to understand future decisions of Muslims when they travel overseas.

6. No study currently exists that provides a model that includes Islamic attributes of destination, tourism motivation, and tourist satisfaction.

## **1.6 Research Questions and Objectives**

Building on the previous research gaps, the main problem to be addressed in this study can be summarized in the following research question:

**“To what extent do Islamic attributes of destination affect the relationship between travel motivation, overall tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty?”**

The answering of this question may help marketers of tourism destinations in determining the most successful travel motivation factors (push/pull), which can be used as a tool to satisfy Muslim tourists and encourage them to repeat the visit. From the main research question, there are several research sub-questions as follows:

**RQ1** What type of Islamic attributes of destination satisfy Muslim tourists?

**RQ2** What push factors of travel motivations are important to Muslim tourists and what is the effect of these factors on overall tourist satisfaction?

**RQ3** What pull factors of travel motivations are important to Muslim tourists and what is the effect of these factors on overall tourist satisfaction?

**RQ4** To what extent do the Islamic attributes of destination affect the relationship between tourism motivations (pull/push) and tourist satisfaction?

**RQ5** What is the effect of overall tourist satisfaction on the destination loyalty?

The research questions imply an investigation of two main sets of constructs; one set is composed of the pre and post-visit perception, and the other set of future behavioural intentions towards the destination. Thus, it is necessary to develop and test a theoretical model that captures the interrelationship of these different constructs. Therefore, the main research question provides a research umbrella that covers the main research objective, which is:

**“To propose a model to understand Muslim tourists’ behaviour with a focus on Islamic attributes of destination”**

The proposed model may be called the ‘Halal Tourism Model’ and could be used as a planning tool to help in the formulation of marketing plans to attract Muslim tourists. From the main objective to propose a model, there are several objectives to be addressed in this study. To achieve these objectives, the quantitative and qualitative approach will be used.

The research objectives are:

1. To explore the Islamic attributes of destination that satisfy the religious needs of Muslim tourists.
2. To determine the important push factors of travel motivations and investigate the possible direct causal effect of these push motivations on Muslim tourist satisfaction.
3. To determine the important pull factors of travel motivations and investigate the possible direct causal effect of these pull motivations on Muslim tourist satisfaction.

4. To investigate the moderating effect of the Islamic attributes of destination on the relationship between tourism motivations and tourist satisfaction.
5. To investigate the effect of Muslim tourist satisfaction on destination loyalty.

## **1.7 Contributions of this Research**

The contributions of this study are discussed in detail in section 5.4, Chapter Five. However, the main contributions of this research are summarized as follows:

### **1.7.1 Knowledge**

This study will empirically investigate a new area of research, which is religious attributes of destination. Therefore, the researcher will develop measures for the Islamic attributes of destination, which may help in future research. Moreover, this study will develop the theoretical model based on the theory of pull and push motivation by adding the Islamic attributes of destination construct as a moderating variable. Adding the Islamic attributes of destination to the theory may be considered a contribution that will open a new area of future research. The PLS, as a method of analysis for this study, is not employed enough in tourism motive and destination marketing studies. Therefore, the applications of this technique in this study may provide some guidelines for its use in this context.

### **1.7.2 Managerial and Practitioner Perspectives**

This study will offer some useful and practical guidelines for tourism organizations and other types of business wishing to successfully satisfy Muslim customers. In addition, destination marketers and managers may be able to devise more effective strategies by appreciating how concepts like travel motivation, Islamic attributes of destination, tourist

satisfaction and destination loyalty are distinct from, but related to each other. Moreover, studies such as this may help them understand the way that these constructs interact, and which may be different in the case of Islamic attributes of destination.

It is known that there is a growing interest in new concepts such as Halal tourism and Halal hospitality, as mentioned earlier. Therefore, this study may enhance our understanding about the Halal tourism industry. In turn, managers might be encouraged to design creative programmes that harness the unique characteristics of tourism products so that tourists are satisfied and delighted.

The thesis is organized into five chapters, starting with the introduction chapter, second the chapter on literature review. Next, methodology and research design, afterwards the chapter on data analysis, followed by a chapter on discussion of the research results, the conclusion, recommendations, and suggested future research.