Degree of Islamic culture adoption in Malaysian SME hospitality industries

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**Abstract**
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**Figures**

![Diagram](image)

Degree of Islamic culture adoption level

Hotel Selection

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Degree of Islamic culture adoption in Malaysian SME hospitality industries

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This study examined the effect of Islamic culture adoption on consumer behaviour. It examined the relationship between Muslim tourists’ commitments to hotel selection behaviour in Malaysian SME hospitality industries and the Islamic cultural moderating effects of participation in their decision-making process. It has two objectives: the first was to determine the relationship between Muslim tourists’ commitments to hotel selection behaviour in Malaysia. The second objective was to investigate the moderating effect of Islamic culture in decision-making and participating effort on hotel selections of these same tourists. It was a descriptive study based on 350 surveys conducted among Muslim tourists in Malaysia. A total of 304 responses were received, representing a response rate of 93%. Of this, only 281 case with no missing values for all the variables were used for data analysis as the others were incomplete. The correlation analysis that resulted from this study confirmed previous researchers’ observations that higher Muslim customers’ commitment was linked with higher adoption in Islamic culture. The results suggested that among the three components of customer behaviour, Islamic culture and hotel attributes were the most important predictors of Muslim tourists in hotel selection behaviour.

Keywords: Hospitality industry; consumer behaviour; Islamic role; SME firms; culture adoption

Introduction

Malaysia has been ranked in the third place in International Tourist Arrivals among the 53 Commonwealth countries in 2005 (Malaysia among top three in tourist arrival, 2005). In 2009, Malaysia entered “The Top 10 Tourism Destination” by being ranked ninth in the world and second in Asia (UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, 2010). In November 2009, Tourism Malaysia reported that the number of arrivals from Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Iran increased, respectively, by 119.5%, 80.3%, and 47.4% compared to the same time in 2008. It is also mentioned that visitors from the Middle East stay twice longer than tourists from other parts of the world and spend nearly three times more money. These positive growths indicate that Malaysia has great potential to be a leader in the world tourism market for Muslims.

In order to succeed, it is important for marketers to understand their target market and how their customers evaluate products and make buying decisions. Knowing customer behaviour according to their individuality helps to shorten the distance from service
provider to consumer, and increases benefit from the market. Considering Malaysia, as a country of tourism, with 60.4% of Muslim population (The World Factbook, 2011), and growing Muslim tourists, understanding consumers’ religious background and its influences on their hotel selection is very essential compared to other countries. This study may help to enhance policy makers’ knowledge about the tourism and hospitality industry, and contribute to attract more Muslims by increasing tourists’ satisfaction.

The study focuses on hotel selection behaviour of tourists as an example of tourist behaviour. The specific objectives to carry out this study are:

1. To investigate the relationship between the degree of Islamic culture adoption level and hotel selection behaviour of Muslim travellers.
2. To examine differences between high degree of Islamic culture adoption level and lesser degree of Islamic culture adoption level of customers’ hotel selection behaviour.

This study seeks to answer the following research questions

1. Is there any relationship between Muslim traveller’s’ degree of Islamic culture and their hotel selection behaviour?
2. Is there any difference between highly religious and less religious customers’ hotel selection behaviour?

Literature review

In this section, the description on the relationship between consumer behaviour and Islamic culture and Islamic consumption is presented. It follows by the studies on hotel attributes and religious needs of travellers done by the past and present scholars.

Consumer behaviour

Human behaviour is very complicated and unpredictable by nature. In business researches, therefore, the area of consumer behaviour has been continuously being studied. Consumers are users of the products and services, at the same time; they are the ones who make the decision to choose products and services. Consumer behaviour is a study about how they buy, how they pick one brand while numerous of brands are out there, how often and from where they buy, as well as the reason why the consumers buy a product instead of another.

Factors influencing consumer behaviour

Many purchase decisions are, most of the times, made by automatic reaction of the mind without much efforts and serious thinking, which is considered as the outcome of habitual process. Gilbert (1991) pointed out that consumer’s decision is affected by two levels of factors. The first level is about psychological influences which are motivation, perception, personality, and learning. The second level is made up of socioeconomic, cultural, reference