TRAVEL MOTIVATION AMONG FOREIGN MUSLIM TOURIST IN SELANGOR

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Abstract: Tourists discover new frontiers by traveling around unfamiliar geographical territories that bring new tourism opportunities to satisfy the needs of visitors and responsibility in destinations. Due to a fast-growing segment of Halal tourism in the tourism market, the Malaysian government has introduced many Muslim-friendly tourism initiatives to attract Muslim tourists. This study is aimed to investigate the travel motivation among foreign Muslim tourists in Selangor. Using a convenient sampling approach, data were collected from 200 foreign Muslim tourists by distributing questionnaires. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software was used to analyse the collected data. Most of the foreign Muslim tourists (76%) found the information about travelling through the internet. The findings indicate that all factors of travel motivation have a significant positive correlation. The results contribute to the understanding of travel motivation among foreign Muslim tourists from both a tourist and a destination perspective. The findings can also be used by the various halal tourism stakeholders to plan their future strategies concerning halal tourism.

Keywords: Travel motivation; Muslim tourist; Tourism

1. Introduction

As the global tourism industry increasingly becomes a competitive market, comprehending international travellers' needs, interests, demands, and behaviours play an essential role in the development of destinations (Han, Al-Ansi, Olya, and Kim, 2019). According to Jeaheng, Al-Ansi, and Han (2020), understanding the interest of each segmented market is a key element in formulating comprehensive service quality to achieve a memorable travel stay and as a journey, motivation to revisit. With a steady rise in the number of global visitor arrivals, the relatively untapped niche Islamic tourism market is one of the fastest-growing segments in the tourism sector. Figure 1 shows the most Muslim friendly travel destinations (GMTI, 2018) in that Malaysia topped the index for the eighth straight year, finishing ahead of Indonesia and the United Arab Emirates and cementing its position in the global Islamic tourism market.

The rapidly growing interest in halal tourism is partially associated with the continuous growth of the global Muslim population (Battour and Ismail, 2016). There were an estimated 25 million Muslim tourists globally in the year 2000, with the number rising to 98 million in 2010. The number of Muslim tourists globally was estimated at 117

million in 2015, 121 million in 2016, and 131 million in 2017. Recently, the importance of the Muslim market has attracted attention due to the fast growth of the halal tourism industry for inbound and outbound markets with a total of approximately 130 million travellers every year, and Malaysia has been ranked first according to the Global Muslim Travel Index GMTI (2018). The GMTI report identified several key factors pushing the growth of Muslim tourism, the biggest being the growing Muslim population.



Figure 1: Most Muslim Friendly Travel Destinations (GMTI, 2018)

According to Battour, Ismail, Battor, and Awais (2017), the Muslim market has its special requirements, and culture that cannot be ignored. Figure 2 illustrates the tourist arrivals of 26.1 million and receipts of RM86.1 billion to Malaysia. Tourism is the third biggest contributor to Malaysia's GDP, after manufacturing and commodities. In 2018, this sector contributed around 5.9 percent to the total GDP. In recent years, the tourism industry in Southeast Asia had experienced significant growth, and Malaysia is keen to capitalise on this trend.



Figure 2: Tourist Arrivals and Receipts to Malaysia (Tourism Malaysia, 2020)

2. Research Problem

Studies about travel motivation have always had a background in sociological theories and they have been deeply studied within the literature on tourist behaviour (Aldao and Mihalic, 2020). Motivation is an individual's psychological state that arises due to the need to act and it is a response that satisfies a deprivation. Motivation is referred to as a predisposition or frame of mind that arises due to a need that drives an individual to perform different types of actions to fulfill that need (Khan, Chelliah, and Ahmed, 2019; Li and Cai (2012). Aldao and Mihalic (2020) describe travel motivation as the driving force behind tourist behaviour and assesses the reasons behind the needs of human beings to understand tourists' behaviour and focuses on the causes that make a tourist decides to travel.

According to Aji, Muslichah, and Seftyono (2020), many studies use the theory of push-and-pull motivation to explain why tourists select one country over another to travel. Push factors are related to internal desires and emotional factors, whereas pull factors are related to tangible factors such as destination attributes (Battour, Ismail, Battor, and Awais, 2014). Since travel motivation is known as a psychological engine that exposes a particular tourism behaviour, it has been popularly used in tourism research (Khan et al., 2019; Song and Bae, 2018; Io, 2017). Accordingly, travel motivations can be studied from many perspectives to allow an understanding of why people choose one destination among others (Aldao and Mihalic, 2020). Aldao and Mihalic (2020) emphasise that travel motivation is special, as people travel to seek pleasure or something new or different to compensate for the emotional stress of their daily routine and escape from the imbalances caused by everyday problems. According to Battour et al. (2017), very few empirical studies have been conducted to examine purely the travel motivation for Muslim tourists. To fill this gap, the current study aims to determine the possible tourism motivations that drive Muslim tourists to travel.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Islamic Facilities and Travel Motivation

Halal tourism deals with tourism objects or activities which are suitable to Muslim tourists. Currently, many Muslim travellers have been concerned with halal products and services (Battour and Ismail, 2016). Furthermore, tourism and religion may affect tourist behaviour; for example, religion influences the destination choice, tourist product favourites, and the selection of religious opportunities and facilities offered (Battour et al., 2017). The encouragement of tourists likely to meet the requirements of Islamic law is called Muslim tourism (Battour et al., 2017). For example, Japan has started to complete the Muslim travellers' necessary facilities, such as halal foods and prayer rooms at important public places in the big cities (Aji et al., 2020; Samori, Md Salleh, and Khalid, 2016). Australia is also concerned about Muslim tourists' needs by providing facilities such as prayer rooms, mosques, and halal foods (Aji et al., 2020). Following the above argument, it is then hypothesised that Islamic facilities can strongly affect travel motivation among Muslim tourists.

- H1. Islamic facilities positively affect travel motivation.
- 3.2 Relaxation and Travel Motivation

Motivations contain the results of the situation–person interactions, as well as the expectation of certain results (Özdemir and Çelebi, 2018). Tourist motivation can be defined as a dynamic process of internal psychological factors that generate either a state of tension or disequilibrium within individuals (Crompton and McKay, 1997). Dann (1981) explains tourist motivation as a meaningful state of mind that both adequately dispose of tourists to travel and is expressed as a valid explanation for such a decision. According to Zhang, Wu, and Buhalis (2018), it has been widely recognised that tourists' interpretation of the meanings of products, activities, and tourism destinations is subjective.

Recently, tourist motivation studies have moved away from broad ideas about what motivates tourists and instead consider more specific motives, such as relaxation/rest (Huang, Wu, and Shi, 2018). Kim, Ritchie, and McCormick (2012) summarises 19 experiential components that various researchers had identified to help understand tourism experiences, including hedonism, happiness, pleasure, relaxation, stimulation, refreshment, social interaction, escaping pressure, and intellectual cultivation. Crompton and McKay (1997) define relaxation as a desire to refresh oneself mentally and physically away from normal day-to-day stresses. It is mainly about getting away from the everyday routine and having a "good time" (Huang et al., 2018). When tourists' travel motivation is about relaxation, travellers expect to have a feeling of ease when travelling. Given the above, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2. Relaxation positively affects travel motivation.

3.3 Perceived Risk and Travel Motivation

Understanding risk perception is important in risk analysis because many individuals do not consider risk factors when selecting areas in which to live nor to visit (Rittichainuwat, Nelson, and Rahmafitria, 2018). According to Rittichainuwat et al. (2018), risk perceptions can be changed, therefore future research should examine specific risks of destinations instead of general risks. Eiser, Bostrom, Burton, Johnston, et al., (2012) assert that understanding how people interpret risks and choose actions based on their interpretations is vital to disaster reduction.

Risk theory refers to situations where probabilities can be based on "hard" information (Kim, Bonn, and Lee, 2020). In tourism, perceived risk is defined as consumer perception of the probability that action may expose them to the danger that can influence travel decisions if the perceived danger is deemed beyond an acceptable level (Mansfeld, 2006). Fuchs and Reichel (2006) identified perceived risks in the travel of nine dimensions as human-induced, service quality, financial, socio-psychological, natural disasters and car accidents, and food safety problems and weather. Khan et al. (2019) argue that the perceived risks have a significant effect on the behaviour of travellers (Khan et al., 2019). Based on this, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3. Perceived risk positively affects travel motivation.3.4 *Bond of Silaturrahim and Travel Motivation*

Silaturrahim is an Arabic word meaning 'brotherhood' or the 'bond of friendship'. It is enacted in various ways and has been positioned as building communities, family reunions and gatherings of kinship, and kindness towards others (Young, Reindrawati, Lyons, and Johnson, 2020). Malaysian communities embrace *silaturrahim* as part of their well-being. Malaysians stay connected with their identity as Malaysian and bonded with each other as *silaturrahim* even though they are from different races and religions, considering that Malaysia is a multicultural and multi-racial country (Adzmi and Bahry, 2020). In Islamic tourism, associating and connecting with others is a central purpose of Islamic travel with *silaturrahim* commonly understood as bonding with one's family and society as well as getting in touch with oneself. Hence, *silaturrahim* can be described as how tourism fosters the growth of human relationships. Similarly, travelling would make one feel belonged to the group or communities where the bond lasts even after the tour ends.

In Islam, the aim of traveling within the social context is to encourage and strengthen the bond of *silaturrahim* (Muslim relationship) among the Ummah that refers to communities of Muslims bound together by ties of religion. Correspondingly, Muslims are also encouraged to establish and strengthen *silaturrahim* (bond of friendship, brotherhood) with others even during their holidays (Krishnapillai and Kwok, 2020). As travel is considered as a purposeful action of mingling with others, which is in line with their Islamic faiths, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4. Bond of *silaturrahim* positively affects travel motivation.

2.5 Knowledge Widening and Travel Motivation

Knowledge has been linked to terms such as data, information, intelligence, skill, experience, expertise, ideas, intuition, or insight (Zehrer and Frischhut, 2011). Drucker (1989) describes knowledge as information that changes something or somebody - either by becoming grounds for actions or by making an individual (or an institution) capable of different or more effective action. However, Ruhanen (2018) argues that knowledge is distinct from data or information. Travel is a fundamental aspect in any definition of tourism, as it plays a significant part in the entire experience, travel satisfies the desire to learn about the culture and the customs of a place (Tomasi Paviotti, and Cavicchi, 2020).

While travelling, tourists are actively involved in their cognitive, emotional, and bodily dimensions (Crouch, 2000), and learning becomes possible through the direct experience, that is "meaningful discovery" (Boydell, 1976). Liang, Caton, and Hill (2015) focus on the motivation for travel and on the value of leaving one's comfort zone, and of reflection during and after the journey, and proposed the development of an individual travel biography to facilitate learning. Pitman, Broomhall, McEwan, and Mahocha (2010) found that customers linked the travel experience to learning

about a country through its history, art, food, and culture. Furthermore, spending some time during the experience to absorb and share it with the other actors enhances reflection and thus knowledge widening (Pitman et al., 2010). As knowledge widening is believed to be one of the key determinants of Muslims' travel motivation, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5. Knowledge widening positively affects travel motivation.

Based on the above arguments, a model is formed that relates Islamic facilities, relaxation, perceived risk, bond of *silaturrahim* and knowledge widening on travel motivation. Figure 3 illustrates the conceptual framework of this study.



Figure 3: The Proposed Research Framework

4. Methodology

This study employs a quantitative research approach, which is a descriptive and crosssectional study. Quantitative methods are research methods that use numbers as their basis for making generalisations about a phenomenon (Regoniel, 2015). Quantitative research is defined as a research strategy that emphasises quantification in the collection and analysis of data (Bryman, 2016). The research method attempts to investigate the answers to the questions starting with how many, how much, and to what extent (Rasinger, 2013). Positivistic researchers believe that the social world consists of concrete and unchangeable reality that can be quantified objectively. According to Rahman (2017), the positivist model is dominant in social and educational research by giving importance to using standardised tests and systematic observation, experiment, survey data, and statistical analysis. Thus, the quantitative research method has been known to be powerful in establishing research findings.

The survey instrument is mainly aimed at identifying the factors of travel motivation. The questionnaires were distributed to 200 respondents, that have been chosen randomly. All questionnaires were found to be usable for the analysis, obtaining a 100 per cent response rate. The questionnaire consists of two parts. A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure all the variables. The respondents of this study were requested to indicate their level of perceptions on a 5-point Likert Scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Many previous studies have used the 5-point Likert Scale to measure travel motivation (Su, Johnson, and O'Mahony, 2020; Song and Bae, 2018; Yoo, Yoon, and Park, 2018). Thus, it is considered a valid and appropriate measurement.

The first part consists of 20 items about travel motivation, Islamic facilities, relaxation, perceived risk, the bond of *silaturrahim* and knowledge widening. The second part contains demographic background including gender, highest education level, age, annual net household income, and channel of travel information. The collected data were analysed using SPSS version 22, and descriptive analyses were conducted to analyse the demographic data. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to compare the two groups in terms of the Islamic facilities, relaxation, perceived risk, bond of *silaturrahim*, and knowledge widening related to a specific feature of travel motivation. Finally, multiple regression and Pearson Correlation were run to determine which factors could affect travel motivation.

5. Result

5.1 Demographic Analysis

The respondents are males and females in the range of 18 to 41 years old. Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents in that 43 per cent of them are male, and 57 per cent are female.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristic of Respondent (N=200)			
Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage
			(%)
Gender	Male	86	43
	Female	114	57
Education	Primary education	1	0.5
	Secondary education	7	3.5
	Diploma	48	24.0
	Bachelor of Degree	116	58.0
	Master / PHD	27	13.5
	Others	1	0.5
Age	18 to 23	99	49.5
-	24 to 29	81	40.5
	30 to 35	17	8.5
	36 to 41	3	1.5
Income (USD)	6,000 or below	119	59.5
	6,001 to 8,000	35	17.5
	8,001 to 12,000	20	10.0
	12,001 to 16,000	20	10.0
	16,001 or above	6	3.0
Channels	The Internet	152	76.0
	Magazines/Books/Newspaper	7	3.5
	TV/Radio	3	1.5

Consultant	3	1.5
Recommendation from family/friends	35	17.5
Others	0	0

The respondents include foreign Muslim tourists whose ages ranging from 18-23 (49.5 per cent), 24-29 (40.5 per cent), 30-35 (8.5 per cent) and 36-41 (1.5 per cent). Most of the respondents hold a bachelor's degree (58 per cent) followed by Diploma (24 per cent). A majority of them earn USD6,000 or below monthly (59.5 per cent) and only 3 per cent earn USD16,001 or above. The internet (76 per cent) is the most channel that the tourists obtained information about travelling.

5.2 Pearson Correlation Analysis

To understand the factors of travel motivation among foreign Muslim tourist, Pearson correlation coefficients was calculated. Pearson correlation coefficient test was performed to analyse the relationship between the variables. A rule of thumb by Schober, Boer, and Schwarte (2018) was used as a guideline to interpreting the strength of the relationships, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Coefficient Rule of Thumb				
Observed Correlation Coefficient	Interpretation			
0.00–0.10	Negligible correlation			
0.10–0.39	Weak correlation			
0.40–0.69	Moderate correlation			
0.70–0.89	Strong correlation			
0.90-1.00	Very strong correlation			
Source: Schober et al. (2018)				

Source: Schober et al. (2018)

Table 3 shows the results of the correlation test in terms of Islamic facilities, relaxation, perceived risk, the bond of *silaturrahim* and knowledge widening. The results show a significant positive correlation between Islamic facilities and travel motivation (P < 0.001), relaxation and travel motivation (P < 0.004), perceived risk and travel motivation (P < 0.000), the bond of *silaturrahim* and travel motivation (P < 0.000), as well as knowledge widening and travel motivation (P = 0.001). All factors of travel motivation have a weak positive correlation as emphasised by Schober et al. (2018).

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Results of Travel Motivation				
Predictors	Correlation	<i>P</i> -value		
Islamic Facilities (IF)	0.236	0.001**		
Relaxation (R)	0.202	0.004**		
Perceived Risk (PR)	0.328	0.000**		
Bond of Silaturrahim (BS)	0. 326	0.000**		
Knowledge Widening (KW)	0. 232	0.001**		

Note: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

5.3 Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression was calculated to predict travel motivation based on the factors of Islamic facilities, relaxation, perceived risk, the bond of *silaturrahim* and knowledge widening. A significant regression equation was found [F (5, 194) = 8.512, p = 0.000], with R² of 0.18. There are about 18 per cent of the total variation in travelling motivation among foreign tourists that are affected by perceived risk and bond of *sillaturahim*. The predicted travel motivation of foreign Muslim tourists is equal to 7.498 + 0.081(IF) + 0.044(R) + 0.203(PR) + 0.201(BS) + 0.065(KW). Travel motivation increases 8.1 per cent for Islamic facilities, 4.4 per cent for relaxation, 20.3 per cent for perceived risk, 20.1 per cent for the bond of *sillaturahim*, and 6.5 per cent for knowledge widening. Only two factors are found to contribute to travel motivation among foreigners: perceived risk and bond of *sillaturahim* as illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4: Multiple Regression Results of Travel Motivation					
β	SE	t-statistics			
7.498	2.023	3.707*			
0.081	0.057	1.422*			
0.044	0.085	0.522*			
0.203	0.063	3.213*			
0.201	0.084	2.391*			
0.065	0.101	0.638*			
	β 7.498 0.081 0.044 0.203 0.201	β SE 7.498 2.023 0.081 0.057 0.044 0.085 0.203 0.063 0.201 0.084			

Note: *F* = 8.512; **P* < 0.05

6. Discussion

This study found that all factors of travel motivation have a positive correlation among foreign Muslim tourists in Selangor. As previously discussed, participants in the study just reported the important condition of their travel motivation. Five primary conditions, which were related to travellers' motivation were pivotal in obtaining experiences: Islamic facilities, relaxation, perceived risk, the bond of *silaturrahim* and knowledge widening. The study shows that there is a significantly positive correlation between Islamic facilities and travel motivation. It is consistent with previous studies (Battour et al., 2017; Krishnapillai and Kwok, 2020). Relaxation is another factor that motivated foreign Muslim tourists to travel. The result of this study indicates that there is a positive correlation between relaxation and travel motivation and consistent with the research conducted by Krishnapillai and Kwok (2020). It indicates that travelling allows the tourist in taking a temporary discharge from a hectic daily life (Huang et al., 2018).

This study also found that perceived risk has a significant correlation with travel motivation and it is supported by Khan et al. (2019) and Rittichainuwat et al. (2018). It was observed that tourists commonly select the destinations to visit carefully by considering the risk level of the destination (Rahman, Zailani and Musa, 2017). At the same time, the respondents consider that travelling can develop brotherhood and a bond of friendship. The finding of this study indicates that bond in *silaturrahim* has significant correlation with travel motivation among foreign Muslim tourists and supported by Krishnapillai and Kwok (2020). Hence, by travelling, the foreign Muslim

tourist can strengthen the bond of *silaturrahim* which is developed during their holidays. Lastly, the knowledge widening is also found to be significantly correlated with travel motivation among foreign Muslim tourists and consistent with the study done by Liang et al. (2015) and Krishnapillai and Kwok (2020). As travelling concerned, tourist can gain new knowledge and experiences.

Based on the multiple regression analysis, this study found that perceived risk and bond of *silaturahim* significantly influence travel motivation among Muslim foreigners. As hypothesised, this finding is explained by push-and-pull motivation theory, in which bond of *silaturahim* plays as the internal motivation that pushes the Muslims to travel or not to Islamic and non-Islamic countries. It can be implied that the higher the level of commitment a Muslim has with his or her bond of *silaturahim*, the lower the perception of risk build of the Islamic countries. However, the result also shows the interesting finding where Islamic facilities does not influence travel motivation of Muslim tourists. It can be understood that the religious Muslims do see the Islamic facilities in Islamic countries like Malaysia.

Perceived risk was found to significantly affect travel motivation of Muslim tourists. This result implies that the travel motivation perceived by Muslim respondents has a strong connection with their perception of halal risk in the Islamic countries. The finding supports the study conducted by Olya and Al-Ansi (2018) that in general, travel motivation is mostly influenced by cognitive factors which can also include risk. It does support Woosnam, Shafer, Scott, and Timothy (2015) and Artuğer (2015), who generally found that in tourism context, risk is the significant factor that influences tourists' behavioural intention to travel. The findings also do support the pull motivation factors that consist of destination attributes (Battour et al., 2014). It can be inferred that Muslim tourists do directly get "pulled" by the Islamic attributes on the Islamic country.

Results also revealed that relaxation and knowledge widening of Islamic country destinations do not directly influence Muslim respondents' travel motivation. It does not support Krishnapillai and Kwok (2020) and Huang et al. (2018), who generally found that in tourism context, relaxation and knowledge widening are the significant factor that influences tourists' travel motivation. The findings also do not support the push motivation factors that consist of destination attributes (Özdemir and Çelebi, 2018).

Muslims, irrespective of age, gender, race, and other personal characteristics, are required to adhere to Islamic teachings in their undertakings. Moreover, the fundamental Islamic values imparted since a young age is deemed the important reason for the motivation among Muslim tourists. Halal tourism in Islamic and non-Islamic countries is about providing services and facilities that are in line with Muslim tourists' values and norms. The Muslim tourists want to enjoy tourism anywhere as long as it is in accordance with religious guidance.

7. Conclusion

The findings of this study are limited to foreign Muslim tourists in Selangor and the study adopts a convenience sample derived from the foreign Muslim tourists' population in Selangor, which may not necessarily reflect that of the general population in Malaysia. However, Selangor is the richest state in Malaysia apart from Penang and the Klang Valley that is known for intense economic activities spread largely in some districts in Selangor as well as the capital city, Kuala Lumpur. Most tourists come to this state a lot more than the other states in Malaysia or the least stopover before they go to other districts around Malaysia. From a research perspective, there is a need for a greater understanding of the social, cultural, and behavioural factors that predict the Muslim tourists' decision to go travelling. One suggestion for future research is to perform the same study with different life stages and nationalities. The destination held by individuals based on a combination of motivational factors will influence their future visit intention. The findings of the study have practical implications to understand tourist motivation to travel. It seems convincing that the image of the destination can be improved by infusing the motivations of future travellers to travel to a particular destination. All tourism agencies must learn to differentiate the travel motivations of potential travellers.

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