

Halal holidays: Islamic values play a significant role in the travel decisions of Muslim tourists

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Islamic values are just as important as the destination, quality and value for money for Muslims when choosing a holiday destination, according to a new study by the University of Portsmouth.

The research found that when choosing a halal holiday (one that allows Muslim tourists to go on a holiday while remaining true to their religion), Muslim's travel destinations are based on a combination of 'consumption' values (associated with accommodation, airline, entertainment), 'personal' values (fun, enjoyment, security) and Islamic religious values, such as Iman (faith).

Islamic values, related to aspects such as halal food, segregated facilities for men and women, prayer facilities and avoiding haram, were found to play a significant role for Muslim's in their expectations of a halal holiday.

The study, published in the latest issue of the International Journal of Tourism Research, recommends that tourism and hospitality companies develop products and services that are Sharia- compliant. With the halal tourism market expected to be worth more than USD 200 billion by 2020 (Global Muslim Travel Index GMTI, 2016), such initiatives would enable tourism and hospitality firms to demonstrate their cultural responsiveness to this emerging sector.

Lead author of the study Dr. Padmali Rodrigo, Research Fellow in Marketing at the University of Portsmouth, said: "Given the growth in Halal tourism, understanding the values that influence Muslim consumers travel decisions are important as it would allow companies to provide a unique and authentic travel experience to Muslims, which would make them feel safe, secure and welcomed. Therefore, we argue that consumption values need to be broadened to include religious values such as Islamic values that stem from Iman."

The data for the study was gathered via 21 semi-structured interviews conducted among Sri Lankan Muslims (17 male and 4 female). While the study has limitations, such as interviewees from just one country and the low number of female respondents, the findings provide new insights into expectations of Muslim consumers in the under-represented halal-tourism market (the share of [halal](#) tourism is 12 percent globally).

Co-author Dr. Sarah Turnbull, Principal Lecturer in Marketing at the University of Portsmouth, said: "Merely understanding the values associated with basic consumption expectations are not sufficient [tourism](#) and hospitality companies need to pay attention to other factors such as religious and [personal values](#) that come into play. It is not possible to understand the behaviour of Muslim tourists without incorporating the Islamic attributes."

More information: Padmali Rodrigo et al. Halal holidays: How is value perceived by Muslim tourists?, *International Journal of Tourism Research* (2019). [DOI: 10.1002/jtr.2290](https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.2290)

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