

The Analysis of Hoteliers Attitude towards the Establishment of Islamic Hospitality Policies: North Cyprus

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Abstract: The main aim of this study to examine the perception of hotelier's attitude toward Islamic hospitality, the readiness of North Cyprus as a destination for Islamic hospitality and attract tourist (i.e. Islamic tourist for visiting North Cyprus). The study conducts in 3, 4 and 5 Stars hotels in Girne City on North Cyprus. The questionnaire was disrupted among decision's makers in hotels. The results reveal that 3 stars hotels are most hotels agree to adopt Islamic hospitality perception. The study tries to fill the gap in literature which has few studies that focus on the research area.

Keywords: Hoteliers Attitude; Islamic Hospitality; North Cyprus; Hotels; SPSS

INTRODUCTION

Islamic (Halal) tourism, Shariah compliant hotels, Islamic hospitality, Halal friendly travel and Halal food are growing concepts with an observed significant growth of Muslim tourists to the international destination markets. According to WTO [43] the emerging markets for Islamic tourism is a huge potential wait to develop policy recommendations through providing facilities and services for the Islamic tourism resources. The opportunity becomes even bigger when emerging the gigantic Muslim citizens in the Islamic-minority countries, such as China and India, besides the Muslim Diasporas in European and North American countries and beyond. Much of this development is due to Muslims tourist income for some countries and their travel pattern in term of length of stays, size groups and purchasing power [1].

In addition to the expectations of its rapid growth, Islamic tourism as a new phenomenon has a potential to attract many tourists entirely of non-Muslim as cultural tourism experience to the Islamic culture, teachings and Shariah ethical codes. The increase of Muslim population has created new tourism trends such as increasing intra tourism between Islamic countries, and modifying the tourism product based Islamic requirements [2, 3].

Islamic hospitality is a product which can be established within policies to promote and supply this increasing market segment. While the literature of hospitality discussed very little bit Shariah compliant hotels, including Halal food sets, in Islamic destinations and worldwide. Therefore, this project in hospitality management tries to explore the prospect of

establishing the right Islamic Hospitality Policies (IHP) in North Cyprus (NC). This market gives an interest, and it would be worthy to examine the potentiality of applying the Emiratis experience in NC destination. The result of this effort is expected to provide right recommendations to develop Islamic hospitality industry from the destination policies perspective specified the mass of Muslim population, and hoped to highlight this area for more extensive research in particular for planning Islamic tourism.

Recognition and understanding are basic key determinants that may lead to make the right decision, and drives to our proper attitudes and willingness. On the other hand, the Islamic hospitality is an experience makes the audience travel and live through its events and services, it is interesting to study the emerging of IH services with regular hotel properties will bring incremental results. And the focus is limited in how hoteliers have constituted their assumption toward this kind of tourism and to market their services internationally. In particular, if the destination has all the components to success. Hoteliers' attitude in NC or their future intention to include programs is new research area in the country. When NC closes to be unfamiliar destination for this kind of hospitality, some previous research studied IH in other countries as UAE, Malaysia, and many other countries in Middle East and North of Africa.

The growth of global Islamic Tourism with the potential to emerge NC destination addresses the need to develop the required policies, accommodation facilities. For this vision, the IHP is a main focus to establish a conceptual framework designed specifically

to measure the interactivity of perception, attitudes, acceptance and trust on hoteliers to adopt IHP. The interaction of these factors may result in creating purposeful intention or taking a step toward new modifications. In this respect, the established framework will need to be tested through their decision and actions to implement the concept of IHP in NC hotels.

Thus, this research will enquire if the hoteliers' perception, attitudes, acceptance and trust about IH return to NC has enough power to create stimulating policies for their properties. This evoked inquisitiveness tries to illustrate enough evidence of which level of effectiveness happen to hoteliers' decision in the light of the four experimental keys, then if they will result in actions.

COUNTRY OVERVIEW

Beyond the modern secularity of the country, North Cyprus is one of the earliest oversea lands that had been attached to the Islam body outside the Arab peninsula. The island received later a strategic importance for the Ottoman naval fleet over 400 years [4]. Today, Muslims and non-Muslims tourists are invited to seeing the combination of that heritage meld within the modernity of the 21st century. A peaceful and very spiritual Muslim traditions making NC highly recommended destination as an Europeanised Muslim country for families seeking halal holidays. Unlike to the Greek South of the island, Muslim or non-Muslim tourists experience the oriental culture of NC; Ottoman tiled mosques, the quintuple call to prayer, Ramadan and feasts, language and faith, freedom and mode of life, oriental Halal food and Turkish crafts.

Rather than North Cyprus is highly visited destination for Westerns offering all hospitality facilities as beaches, restaurants, yet Middle Eastern or Turkish families can enjoy their holidays at their conservative convinces. In that sense, Northern Cypriots annually celebrate the two Muslim feasts where an amazing holiday can be spent. Every day during the fasting month of Ramadan has its private sense followed by the festival of Seker (Sugar) or Ramazan Bayram due to the Turkish sweets served during the holiday celebration. 70 days later, citizens celebrate the (Eid Al Adha) known as "Kurban Bayram" accompanied with a lovely festival atmospheres.

Northern Cyprus is recognized only by Turkey when it self-declared state in 1983 as a consequence of a coup d'état in 1974 against the attempt to annex the island to Greece. The political non-recognition of NC imposed economic scansions and international isolation. Although this situation, a democratic republic had been established exercised by legislative and executive powers with an independent judiciary authority. The Turkish cultural heritage contributed to growing

economy trends dominated by the services sector. Northern Cyprus consists of five large districts namely: Lefkoşa, Gazimağusa, Girne, Güzelyurt and İskele served by twenty-eight local municipalities.

The late official census in 2011 [5] revealed the total population was 294,906 people. Regardless the fact that Northern Cyprus is a secular state, the majority of Turkish Cypriots (99%) are almost entirely Sunni Muslims, and some religious traditions still practiced within the community.

North Cyprus' income is depending on service sector which includes the public sector, trade, tourism and education. A milestone achieved within the last decade, North Cyprus provides professional educational qualification attracting international accreditation and big number of foreigner students as well. Nevertheless NC continues dependent on the monetary transfers from the Turkish government. However, it has progressively improved its GDP growth rates due to the prosperity of the education and construction sectors resulted in decline of the unemployment rate at 8.3% in 2014 [6].

TOURISM IN NORTH CYPRUS

Tourism growth in North Cyprus is usually Turkish and European travelers [7]. For much of the European visitors come either via Turkey or South Cyprus due to the indirect flight imposed to the country. At this time, North Cyprus suffered from the political non-recognition in terms of its links to its conflict with Greek Cyprus [37]. The commentaries on NC tourism product from the early twenty century, in order to attract tourists, were extremely vital to the commencement of tourism. NC was often pictured to the 3S (Sun, Sea, and Sand) audience as an Island a short distance where the place could be easily won Accordind to Koutra and Karyopouli [8], such imagery nature was important in attracting tourists to NC. However, perhaps the most significant event in the country for making travel accessible to all social classes was the link with turkey's airports and the development of mass tourism. The onset of negotiations with the southern Cyprus led to a revolution in tourism and recreation financial activities. Prior to this, recreational travel helped open up the hinterland for Turkish travellers. Mass tourism as well started by tour operators to organize and run tours marked the beginning of packaged international travel to NC.

Accompanying the development of economic in NC, a number of social developments happened. Unlike Turkish working practices, in NC most hotels adopted casino activities. This kind of business was viewed till now in a positive way assisted in the pursuit of leisure by some Turkish as they made new destinations accessible and helped make travel a permanent part of NC culture. These were initially set up as destination for recreational activity of gambling,

rather than being for the families. By the end of the 90s, tourism and leisure were not just the attraction of the wealthy when Turkey's government banned gambling. At that time, the country's casino operators promptly moved their operations to NC, in particular for Turkish gamblers [9]. The mobility toward the country helped open up the interior for Turkish and non-Turkish tourism, while the cross border treaty with South Cyprus brought NC closer in term of travelling time to Europeans and Middle Eastern Urban, historical, cultural and natural attractions, still important today, were significant visitors are seeking. Also coastal resorts were also established, in such places as Karpas and Girne. However, at none of these places did Islamic Hospitality become common until recent years, as the original role of the hotels and resorts were established with the expansion of mass tourism. During this period a step-walking to adopting Islamic tourism provided the stimulus for the establishment of Islamic Hospitality concept. After the economic renaissance in Turkey and Islamic surrounded countries, most subjects with their families have greater disposable income with space holiday for more leisure time. These factors have resulted in noteworthy change in the accommodation industry became more welcoming Muslim tourists. During the more recent years, tourism activities developed into more simultaneous with North Cyprus's heritage.

Organizational Background

This study is coming at this stage to start studying some recommendations to make NC as a cultural meeting destination. The idea beyond this project is to study empirically the impact of hoteliers' attitudes, acceptance, and trust on change towards IH concept in NC. Therefore, the current study aims primarily to verify if their perception of IH able to move for advanced level of implementation IHP, since the impact of IH on the destination has been confirmed by many researchers as [9-11]. However, this study tries to answer the particular given questions.

RATIONALITY TO STUDY IHP

Reviewing the existing research related to IH in some countries and the characteristics of attitude formation toward it. It comes out to be there are well-built and attested correlation can be produced among these dimensions, nonetheless with the spreading out of IH area there are some gaps appear in the literature with specific recommendations of preceding studies about the topic necessitate to be researched. In order to enrich the area of IH by recent findings, new studies need to be undertaken in what other researchers have ignored.

Studying IHP have not been well studied yet, indeed, this project has a main focus on the impact of hoteliers' attitude on their internal policies and their intention to include further policies for this segment, undertaken the case of NC where Europeanization is the

main characteristic for the country. The majority of cases brought positive impacts on destinations as a result of having developed right policies to attract this segment. Khan and Khan [12], Ayob and Ramli [13] claim that IH can be managed effectively by hoteliers to bring benefits when there is right fulfillment to this segment. Thus, hoteliers' attitude of IH on their intention to implement policies suiting to the requirement of those tourists in NC destination.

Overview of Islamic Hospitality (IH)

Although Islamic Hospitality had been relatively faced recent interest [14]. Traditionally, Muslim countries held and celebrate the religious ceremonies, festivals associated to Islam culture. Taking into the consideration of Muslim population worldwide; these occasions drive Muslims to voyage and present cultural tourist appeal for non-Muslims [15, 16, 38, 39]. Battour and Ismail [3] illustrate the advantages of studying the opportunities and challenges of Halal tourism for planning, developing, and marketing that policy makers and marketers who are concerned with target niche to understand its requirements or find suitable alternatives, in addition to guide the industry players to develop infrastructure, Halal travel packages, activities and facilities to this type of tourism.

Duman [17] refers to the accommodation facilities, trips, food and beverage as basic elements in the Islamic tourism. These products cannot be offered to the target markets far of managing the service production process such as; marketing and ethics. This product development and marketing efforts planned for Muslims, as all products even without absolutely religious motivation or providing leisure locations to experience Islamic culture to non-Muslims [18]. Al-Hamarneh [19] asserts that the conservative concept in hospitality presents an economic, cultural dimension on the future of IH in the Islam countries. Al-Hamarneh adds that the Islamic Tourism concept has much to be theoretically articulated the inclusion of service to enable for self-confidence-building elements. This step to search various opinions and some practices in hotel's management indicating that implementation of this type is just a matter of time [20].

Complying to this market requires deeper understanding to its requirements such as: Serving only Halal food, No alcohol beverages neither in room mini bar nor in the premises, Holy Quran and prayer mat available in each room, Separate swimming pool and beach for men and women, Separate gym for men and women, Furniture furnished according to Islamic architecture, Direction of bed should not face the qibla, Direction of Qibla available in the room, No nightclub and casino, Muslim dress code, Hotel development and operations are finance by Islamic financial arrangement and follow Zakat principles, Bidet available in toilet

and the position of toilet bowl should not face the Qibla, Separate floors for single man, single woman and families, Male staff serve male customer only and vice versa, separate event hall for men and women guest, prayer room available in hotel. Holiday makers as well have started to integrate Islamic elements to their website including information for the Muslim travellers about prayer time in visited destinations, lists of Halal food restaurants, and Islamic travel tips [20].

Islam is a way of life for a lot of Muslims which give virtues and morality fundamental place, and leave any shapes of sin. Islam prohibits Muslims to enter places where there are activities against Islam teachings. Entertainments like night club, casino, control over TV channels and mixed beach, are provided in hotels but strictly prohibited to Muslims

[22]. Also consumption, manufacturing, supplying and sell alcohol is banned in Islam.

Nevertheless non-Muslims are free to alcohol consumption in their own room conditioned to not disturb other Muslim guests, and not to be provided in their mini bar. To be far away of any engagement result in sin, Islam sets restriction on free mixing places or seclusion with the opposite sexes and, the wearing clothes respectable from construction to operation [23]. Also Rosenberg and Choufany [24] included other IH environment as hotel's operations, its interior design as Islamic art. Muhammad [40] includes further hospitality services in accordance to the Syariah principles as establishing complete Islamic financial transactions.

Research Model

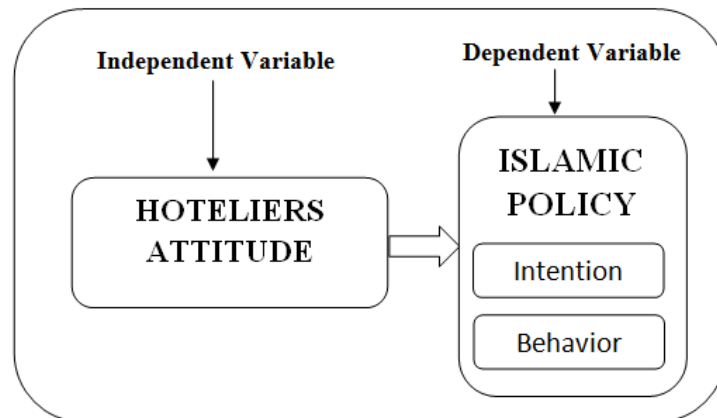


Fig-1: Conceptual Framework to research variables

Research Hypothesis

H1: Hoteliers attitude has a significant statistical impact on the **Islamic policies**.

H1.1: Hoteliers attitude has a significant statistical impact on the Islamic policy (Intention).

H1.2: Hoteliers attitude has a significant statistical impact on the Islamic policy (Behavior).

H2: The Level of hoteliers Attitude towards Islamic Hotels Concept is high.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A proper quantitative method was used to collect data through the sample population in NC. Survey was used to collect data at two time periods, before and one month after the initiation of the planned change. The hoteliers groups were selected to conduct this research to measure their perception (cognition), acceptance and trusts (affective), intention and decision (conative) towards IHP. This was carried out through self administered questionnaire survey. Furthermore, findings from previous research were also used as secondary data that are related to the given topic.

The survey questionnaire was fully structured in order to respond the questions within the least possible completion time. As it was hoped, the response rate of this survey came adequate with 87 respondents which enable generalizable results. The collected data was analyzed and the outcomes are obtainable. All the survey questions were designed in the form of likeliness and agreement with 30 numbered questions applied by different hotel managers in NC from different job position.

DATA ANALYSIS

Researchers use analysis methods to determine if given data is valid. The current analysis employs SPSS software version 22.0 to produce its findings through respondents and their demographic characteristics, testing its validity and reliability, correlational relations and assessment of the standard multiple regression. Cronbach's Alpha reliability test was used to test the questionnaire reliability. A descriptive statistical analysis presents the results by tabulations, figures in form of tables and bar charts. An illustration presents the distribution of frequencies and percentages for the specific given variables. Finally, the standard multiple regressions are in place to recognize

the most leading aspects that influence the hoteliers' attitude towards the implementation Islamic Hospitality Policies (IHP).

Reliability Analysis

Reliability test is fundamental in a quantitative research in order to be. The instrument is reliable since

the derived data are consistent through time and responses can be repeated under the same circumstances [41, 42, 25]. Cronbach's Alpha method has identified that the research is reliable and valid of the survey questionnaire; Cronbach's Alpha value in this study is $\alpha = 0.89$ which signifies a high reliability coefficient level.

Table 1: Research Questionnaire Reliability– Variables

Variables	Cronbach's alpha value
Hoteliers attitude	0.83
Islamic policy(Intention).	0.78
Islamic policy(Behaviour)	0.87
Total	0.89

According to table (1) the reliability value for each research variable is above (0.78) which is considering acceptable reliability level.

Hypothesis one (H1) deals with the impact of hoteliers attitude on Islamic policies implemented in hotels as discussed above "H1: Hoteliers attitude has a significant statistical impact on the Islamic policies ", using the tests conducted in the analysis chapter in this study points to hypothesis number one being accepted statistically. There is a significant statistical impact of hoteliers' attitudes on their Islamic policies. Hoteliers attitude on Islamic policy in Cypriot hotel industry shows statistical significance at level 0.05 which mean that the hypothesis is accepted. This hypothesis is divided into two sub-hypotheses that are discussed below.

Hypothesis 1.1 (H1.1) deals with the intention side of the impact of hoteliers attitude on Islamic policies implemented in hotels as discussed above "H1: Hoteliers attitude has a significant statistical impact on the Islamic policies (intention)", using the tests conducted in the analysis chapter in this study points to hypothesis number one being accepted statistically. The intention embedded in Hoteliers attitude on Islamic policy in Cypriot hotel industry shows statistical significance at level 0.05 which mean that the hypothesis is rejected. The results achieved in this investigation points to certain degree of disagreement with previous studies as mentioned in [26]. In which they study the intention of attitude held by hotel's staff and how it influences hotels' policies. Stephenson [11] on the other hand, has applied innovation as a moderator when studying attitudes and concluded that a positive impact does indeed exist on the policies formulated in the travel sector in general and in hotels in particular.

Hypothesis 1.2 (H1.2) deals with the behavioural side of the impact of hoteliers attitude on Islamic policies implemented in hotels as discussed above "H1.2: Hoteliers attitude has a significant statistical impact on the Islamic policy (Behaviour).",

using the tests conducted in the analysis chapter in this study points to the second sub-hypothesis of hypothesis number one being accepted statistically. The intention embedded in Hoteliers attitude on Islamic policy in Cypriot hotel industry shows statistical significance at level 0.05 which mean that the hypothesis is rejected. The results achieved in this investigation points to certain degree of disagreement with previous studies as mentioned in [19], in which they study the behavioural attitude held by hotel's staff and how it influences hotels' policies. However, [27] has applied culture as a moderator when studying attitudes and concluded that a positive impact does indeed exist on the policies formulated in hotels in general and the Middle East in particular.

Hypothesis 2 (H2) deals with hoteliers attitude on Islamic policies found in hotels as examined in the analysis above "H2: The Level of hoteliers Attitude towards Islamic Hotels Concept is high. ", using the tests conducted in the analysis chapter in this study points to hypothesis number two being accepted statistically. There is a significant statistical impact of hoteliers' attitudes on their Islamic hotels concept. Cypriot hoteliers' attitude studied here shows attitude on Islamic hotel concept has statistical significance at level 0.05 which mean that the hypothesis is accepted. Wilson [28] maintains that the wide spread applications of "halal" tourism is expanding at a higher rate than ever before. The main view here is that Islamic tourism as a concept is well equipped to be a long-term service which primes Islamic tourism to turn into a sustainable economic sector. Scot and Jaffari [29] provide a confirmatory view that attitudes that support spiritual tourism is high.

CONCLUSIONS

This research has studied empirically its objectives in respect of reviewing the concept of the attitude components of Eagly and Chaiken [31]. Taken as a whole perception and understanding level of most hoteliers towards the IH concept.

The feasible policies may provide untapped market whenever the IHP concepts to implement in NC. It still need serious awareness and marketing campaign target to match that segment and improve the trust of hoteliers in NC as proven from the previous analysis, where the overall hoteliers' attitude is barely at moderate level. Likewise, the concept, acceptance and trust among the three star hotels managers were strong, in particular for those hotels where there is not casino or nightclub. This research found that it is a worth for the destination marketers to push attention towards this IHP as this is the first framework to investigate the phenomenon in NC, and to be included to the limited research of IHP in the country. The designed questionnaires proved that the hoteliers should be completely aware about the IH concepts and Islam principles.

The previous discussion towards IH as presented in the analysis, hoteliers tendencies were mostly in moderate and rarely on high level. Consequently, there still a lot of efforts to be done by the relevant authorities in NC to do to understand the IH concepts in depth by its hoteliers before they can establish such kind of hotels. Respondents were asked to describe their overall attitude of Islamic Hospitality, and to what extent they are likely or unlikely to consider implementing IHP in the future.

This discussion indicates the hoteliers' acceptance towards IHP concept is conditioned to experience the mobility of Muslim tourists toward NC. This means the more positive trust of the hoteliers; the more intention will be their decision towards IHP. Lastly, making sense with all of Eagly and Chaiken [30], Maio and Haddock, [32], and Stephenson [1], the conative attitude can reflect either hoteliers' actions or intention to fully or partially IHP through the overall operations. The developments of the idea was not really rejected with not considering of their religion, largely of hoteliers have either moderate or strong behaviour or intention of implementing the hotel to IHP.

The prevention of alcohol, Casino and nightclubs in the premises are not the main factors that hinder the hoteliers to the development of IHP in their hotels, whereby their moderate level of trust of the return of this market. Most hoteliers strongly agree to providing Quran and prayer mat rooms; remove casino entertainment. Whereas, resonant from the three star hotels trust and accept in higher level than others. for instance they accept to prohibit any human form of art that contrast the Islamic rules and regulations; at the same time, they believe that Islamic Hospitality is effectual to introduce Islamic norms to non-Muslims guests; accept to only serve halal food, separating both sex wellness facilities (Swimming pool, gyms, spas, and etc.), remove entertainment as casino and nightclub, they also trust the benefits prospect of Islamic

Hospitality and its strong potential to North Cyprus, safety and convenience of this applicable concept. Therefore, their willingness to implement IHP when there is Muslim guest fit the stated attitude.

Overall Recommendation related to the establishment of IHP based on the Findings of hoteliers' attitudes

Adjusting such Islamic policies seems today to be an obligation at least by some Northern Cypriot hotels for such tourists. Once performed, a national policy needs to be accomplished to market the country with these fulfillments addressed to all other Muslim countries, or potential Muslim tourists in non-Muslim countries such as those Muslims in Europe or North America. Furthermore this vision is based on the potential return as stated in the case of UAE and other destinations. The assumption also is in aligning with the significant studies as argued in literature chapter where the IHP concept would positively be advantage to locals [11, 26, 33-36] Equally, the interest in creating IHP system, which is governed by authorities and according to Syariah, in line with the current challenges in the light of intra regional mobility in Middle East as UAE was the big winner of that change starting from 2012. The instability in Middle East and the global challenges attributed to the existence of prospered Islamic Hospitality Policies in UAE in accordance to the IHP concept which is a primary requisite for other destinations such as North Cyprus.

This work recommends to implementing Islamic hospitality policies provide an opportunity to market widely North Cyprus destination. Besides that, it is the responsibility of the authorities to increase the awareness of hoteliers on the concept through media, group discussion, meeting and etc. Once the hoteliers begin to fully know about the IH concepts, they might be more interested about any related development in the topic or they might think to move towards adjusting Islamic policies in their hotels. This intention to change, they might promote their product and destination by away. They might find new markets either Muslims or non-Muslims who come to experience the Islamic culture.

The researcher suggested that an in-depth research to establish such hotel policies in North Cyprus taking into account the Islamic culture environment. The establishment of Islamic Hospitality Policies would be a premier fulfillment to attract more Muslims tourists. Once when having at least one hotel operated according the Islamic laws and performed by any person, the trust would be improved by all others. Furthermore, future studies need to acquire more key stakeholders in hospitality industry to get a wider perspective, this step will diversify the responses according to IHP, and will produce a better picture of the potential of that untapped segment.

Regarding North Cyprus situation as part of the Muslim nation, North Cyprus is a perfect central destination which can welcome all and provide facilities to cater almost of the basic requirement for Muslim tourists in term of Halal food, accommodation with good service quality. Furthermore, in the country, mosques are almost available to perform Muslims prayers a short distance, and Halal food is available too. Therefore, promote the country to Muslim countries through packages including Islamic Tourism components would establish for the IHP which would definitely add value to the tourism product in North Cyprus.

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