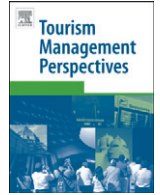




Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Tourism Management Perspectives

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/tmp



Review

Muslim world: A study of tourism & pilgrimage among OIC Member States



Hamira Zamani-Farahani ^{a,*}, Riyad Eid ^b

^a Astiaj Tourism Consultancy & Research Centre, Tehran, Iran

^b United Arab Emirates University, UAE and Tanta University, Faculty of Commerce, Tanta, Egypt

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Organization of Islamic cooperation (OIC)
Muslim countries
Islam
Tourism in OIC
Islamic pilgrimage & tourism
Tourism development

ABSTRACT

This study is concerned with tourism in general and pilgrimage in specific among Muslim countries. Reference is made to conditions in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Member States and their travel and tourism industry and the role of religion (Islam) in tourism and society. Selected literature, other relevant documents and data derived from previous studies and personal observations/experiences were examined to provide insights on the subject and to help achieve the objectives of study. Findings revealed that tourism and pilgrimage have great potential in most Muslim countries. However, in general, it is constrained by several internal and external factors, which lead to the industry's contribution to economic growth and unity among Muslim nations being relatively limited.

© 2015 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Contents

1. Introduction	144
2. An overview of the OIC Member States	145
3. The OIC and tourism.	145
4. Islam and tourism.	146
5. Tourism and pilgrimage among Member States of OIC	147
6. Conclusion and suggestions	148
References.	148

1. Introduction

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) was established in 1969 representing the majority of Muslim States. It is the second largest inter-governmental organization after the United Nations with membership of 57 Islamic States (OIC, 2010a) located in a wide geographical contribution in four continents. The organization has consultative and cooperative relations with the UN and other inter-governmental organizations to protect the interests of the Muslims in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony among various people of the world (OIC, 2010b).

Tourism cooperation among Muslim countries is one of the described objectives by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). In various developing countries, tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors and

an effective tool for foreign investment and financial reserves. International tourism activity has become the main source of foreign exchange revenues for several OIC Member States such as Benin, Chad, Gambia, Maldives, Mali, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Uganda. Tourism could be seen as a multidimensional, multifaceted activity, which touches many lives, and many different economic activities (Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert, & Wanhill, 2008). It is generating growth in economy, income, and employment, positioning the country as a leading global destination, upgrading and developing tourism products, infrastructure, facilities, and services.

Following September 11, 2001, the Muslims preferred to travel to and within destinations deemed friendlier. On the other hand, some Muslim countries have also been benefiting from the shift in tourism. These countries tried to attract Muslim tourists, as one of the best ways to generate foreign exchange revenue, improve their position and image as popular tourism destinations of the world.

This study is concerned with tourism and pilgrimage among OIC countries. Reference is made to introducing the Organization of the

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: hzfara@gmail.com (H. Zamani-Farahani), riyad.aly@uaeu.ac.ae (R. Eid).

Islamic Conference (OIC), the position of tourism in OIC, role of tourism and pilgrimage in Islam and among OIC Member States. It is followed by implications of the results and suggestions. Selected literature, other relevant documents and data derived from previous studies and personal observations/experiences were examined to provide insights on the subject and to help achieve the objectives of the study.

2. An overview of the OIC Member States

Each OIC Member State has its own diversity in natural, geographic, politics, historical, heritage economic and cultural assets. They also differ in view of level of development, national priorities, and policies as well as level of composing Islamic laws in their country. The OIC Member States have a total number of populations of 1,468,119,824 from Indonesia with highest number of population 245,452,739 to Maldives with lowest (359,008) (WorldLingo, 2010). Although Islam is often associated with the Arab world and the Middle East, however fewer than 15% of Muslims are Arab (Huda, 2010).

There is a gap in view of economic situation among OIC countries. The GDP per capita of six richest Member States exceeds \$US 10,000 per year while 46 members have per capital income of less than \$US 1000 (OIC Tourism Directory, 2008). In fact, they have an average per capita gross domestic product (GDP) of \$5746 and an average official unemployment rate of 15.44% (Sarsar & Strohmetz, 2008). The 22 countries out of 57 countries (about 40%) are considered least developed (OIC Tourism Directory, 2008).

In order to coordinate and boost in various fields of cooperation – political, economic, cultural, social, spiritual, and scientific among Member States, the organization has formed different committees, majority at Ministerial level, a number of which are chaired by Heads of State. They are including: Al-Quds Committee (1975), Bayt Mal Al Quds Agency (1995/1998), the Standing Committee for Information and Cultural Affairs (COMIAC) (1981), the Standing Committee for Economic and Trade Cooperation (COMCEC) (1981), and the Standing Committee for Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH) (1981) (OIC, 2010b).

The OIC has also created several institutions for purposes of promoting greater cooperation among Member States, including Islamic Development Bank (IDB) Group; the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Center for Islamic Countries (SESRTCIC); the Islamic Center for Development of Trade (ICDT); the Islamic Chamber for Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and Organization of the Islamic Ship-owners Association (OISA). To-date more than twenty six Tourism Islamic Summit Conferences, seminars, meetings, forums (see Table 1) and 41 Councils of Foreign Ministers (CFM) (OIC, 2015) were organized by OIC.

3. The OIC and tourism

The September 11 and other terrorist attacks collapsed tourism in some Muslim countries, which are dependent on North America, Europe, and Japan markets. Besides, due to this event the Muslim tourists are not welcomed in western countries as before. This led to more and more Muslim tourists' desire to spend their holidays in Arab or Muslim countries. The Persian Gulf countries are becoming important export tourist markets to several Muslim countries like Malaysia, Lebanon, Turkey, Syria, UAE, Bahrain, Egypt, and Indonesia. On the other hand, the traditional Arab oriented destination like Cairo, Beirut, and Bahrain are booming and other destinations like Sharjah, Ain Sukhna, Singapore, and Kuala Lumpur are becoming as new placement. However, in general the pilgrimage destinations have been less damageable by world crises.

A number of OIC general objectives indirectly encourage promoting tourism cooperation among Member States, they are included:

- Enhance and consolidate the bonds of fraternity and solidarity among the Member States,

Table 1

List of main tourism conferences/gatherings/workshops organized under OIC.

Conference/Gathering/Workshop	Year	Place/Organizer
The 1st Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers	2000	Iran (Isfahan)
The 2nd Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers	2001	Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur)
The 3rd Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers	2002	Saudi Arabia (Riyadh)
The 4th Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers	2005	Senegal (Dakar)
The 5th Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers	2006	Azerbaijan (Baku)
The 6th Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers	2008	Syria (Damascus)
The 7th Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers	2010	Iran (Tehran)
The 8th Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers	2013	Gambia (Banjul)
The 9th Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers	2015	Niger (Niamey)
The 1st OIC International Forum on Islamic Tourism	2014	Indonesia (Jakarta)
Forum of Tourism in Islamic Countries	2007	Saudi Arabia (Jeddah)
Forum of Silk Road Tour Operators of Islamic Countries	2008	Azerbaijan (Baku)
International Scientific Conference on Role of Tourism in the Economies of OIC Countries	2007	Azerbaijan (Baku)
International Islamic Tourism Conference & Travel Mart	2010	Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur)
Religious and Health Tourism Conference: Organization of Spiritual and Physical Recreation	2008	Azerbaijan (Nakhchevan)
International Seminar on Development of E-tourism Technologies in Islamic Countries	2008	Bangladesh (Dhaka)
Seminar on Development of Tourism in the Muslim World	2009	Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
Meeting on the implementation of the Framework for Development and Cooperation in the Domain of Tourism between the OIC Member States	2009	Syria (Damascus)
Meeting on the implementation of the Framework for Development and Cooperation in the Domain of Tourism between the OIC Member States	2010	Turkey (Antalya)
Workshop on Tourism Statistics and Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) for the Arab Countries	2009	Syria (Damascus)
The 1st Global Islamic Marketing Conference	2011	UAE (Dubai)
The 2nd Global Islamic Marketing Conference	2011	UAE (Abu Dhabi)
The 3rd Global Islamic Marketing Conference	2012	Egypt (Cairo)
The 4th Global Islamic Marketing Conference	2013	Turkey (Istanbul)
The 5th Global Islamic Marketing Conference	2014	Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur)
The 6th Global Islamic Marketing Conference	2015	Turkey (Istanbul)

Source: OIC official website, SESRIC and International Islamic Marketing Association (IIMA).

- Ensure active participation of the Member States in the global political, economic and social decision-making processes to secure their common interests,
- Strengthen intra-Islamic economic and trade cooperation, in order to achieve economic integration leading to the establishment of an Islamic Common Market,
- Protect and defend the true image of Islam, to combat defamation of Islam and encourage dialog among civilizations and religions (OIC, 2010b).

Promoting and developing tourism among OIC countries could be studied in three views: Religious, Socio-cultural and Economic. Religious concept referring to pilgrimage potential among Member States, the host country of Hajj (Saudi Arabia) and a center of Shia pilgrimage (Iran and Iraq) are the most important religious destinations among the OIC Member States. Furthermore, most of Islamic countries, benefit from Islamic cultural heritage as second ranging markets like shrines, tombs, old battle sites, old mosques, holly caves, ancient pilgrim routes, etc. that could be addressed in tourist promoting program among Muslim countries. Furthermore, respecting Islamic codes and ethic in most Islamic countries, facilitate traveling by Muslim among them. In economic perspective, Muslim countries with high demographic and destination potentials can work together in tourism fields by considering inter-Muslim market to improve the economic welfare of their nations. Furthermore, tourism is a peaceful encounter among people and it can

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1013567>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1013567>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)