



The role of Islamic religiosity on the relationship between perceived value and tourist satisfaction



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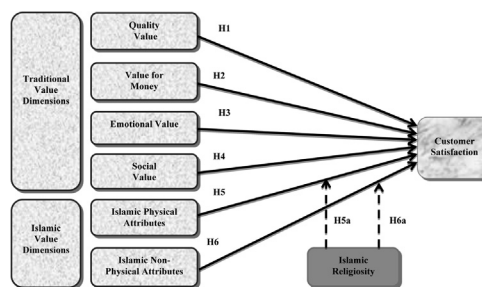
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HIGHLIGHTS

- Religiosity is one of the most important cultural forces that influence behavior.
- Islamic religiosity has an impact on the relationship between customer value and satisfaction.
- Findings reinforce the importance of religiosity in understanding Muslim customer satisfaction.
- Dimensions of Muslim customer perceived value positively affects Muslim consumer satisfaction.
- Religiosity moderates the effect of Islamic value attributes on Muslim customer satisfaction.

GRAPHICAL ABSTRACT



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ABSTRACT

Although Muslims make up one of the largest tourist markets in the world, knowledge related to the Islamic perspective on tourism is still less represented in the related literature. This study aims to assemble the theoretical foundations of Islamic tourism thoughts in relation to modern tourism paradigms. It aims to investigate the moderating effect of Islamic religiosity on the relationship between Muslim customer perceived value (MCPV) and Muslim customer satisfaction. It studies a sample of 537 Muslim tourists and employs a positivist research approach with a quantitative basis of enquiry, a survey strategy through questionnaires, and structural equation modeling (SEM). Six dimensions of Muslim customer perceived value (quality, price, emotional value, social value, Islamic physical attributes value and Islamic non-physical attributes value) were found to have positive effects on Muslim consumer satisfaction. The findings of the study suggest that Islamic religiosity moderates the effects of Islamic physical attributes value and Islamic non-physical attributes value on Muslim customer satisfaction. The findings reinforce the importance of religiosity in understanding Muslim customer satisfaction and behavior.

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1. Introduction

Religion is an important cultural factor to study because it is one of the most widespread and influential social institutions and has a significant influence on people's attitudes, values and behaviors at

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the level of both the individual and society (Mokhlis, 2009). Furthermore, religiosity is known as one of the most important cultural forces and key influences on behavior (Eid, 2013; Zamani-Farahani & Henderson, 2010; Zamani-Farahani & Musa, 2012). According to Ateeq-Ur-Rehman (2010), religiosity affects the adoption of new products by Muslim consumers through influencing their beliefs about what products they should adopt. Further, Alam, Mohd, and Hisham (2011) find that religious Muslims consider Islam to be their source of reference. They argue that religiosity plays a full moderating role in the relationship between contextual variables and the purchasing behavior of Muslim consumers.

The close relationship between tourism and religion has been extensively addressed in the tourism literature (Battour, Ismail, & Battor, 2011; Eid, 2013; El-Gohary & Eid, 2014; Henderson, 2011; Jafari & Scott, 2014). Religion has long been a strong motivating factor in people's travel (Wall & Mathieson, 2006). Moreover, given that the tourism and hospitality industry is a social and cultural institution, hospitality and tourism should then closely represent the dimensions of ethnicity and religion (Stephenson, Russell, & Edgar, 2010). In responding to these developments, the tourism industry is progressively moving away from mass marketing and is instead pursuing more sophisticated approaches to segmenting tourist markets in order to address the distinct consumer psychology of a particular target market.

Consequently, a religious perspective on travel and other purchase decisions is preferable to other segmentation variables, such as the demographic characteristics of age and life stage, which have traditionally been used to identify market segments (Gardiner, King, & Grace, 2013). Currently, the development of a hospitality market which represents Shari'ah-compliant hotels is very noticeable in such countries as the UAE, Turkey and Malaysia. Although Shari'ah-compliant hotels have traditionally existed in certain countries, including Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, the potential growth of such hotels could also relate to the increase in Muslim tourists around the world (Stephenson et al., 2010).

However, although previous research has examined the relationship between perceived customer value and customer satisfaction, there has been only limited investigation into the impact of religiosity on the relationship between customer value and customer satisfaction. Eid (2013) developed and tested a conceptual model of the antecedents and consequences of MCPV. He showed that consumer satisfaction and customer loyalty mediate the relationship between MCPV and customer retention. Eid's study (2013) is notable because it shows that, on top of the traditional dimensions which help to create value for tourists, other factors also have a direct impact on the successful creation of MCPV, which he suggests is a key determinant of the intention to return. However, by focusing on MCPV only, his research examines only a narrow aspect of symbolic consumption within the tourism industry.

The present study introduces a parsimonious measure of Islamic religiosity which expands the evaluation of the symbolic consumption of the tourism package by incorporating Islamic beliefs and Islamic practice into Eid's model of consumer satisfaction (2013). It further contributes to the existing body of knowledge by examining the moderating role of Islamic religiosity on the relationship between MCPV and customer satisfaction. Although past studies proposed that Islamic attributes have a direct influence on customer satisfaction (Battour, Battor, & Bhatti, 2013; Eid, 2013), to the best of the researchers' knowledge, no study has examined the influence of Islamic religiosity on the relationship between perceived value and customer satisfaction in the tourism industry.

In the following sections, first, the development of the conceptual model and the hypotheses of the study are presented. Next,

the methodology of the study is discussed followed by the analysis and results. More specifically, the conceptual model is tested using path analysis, with the AMOS 19 structural equation modeling package, and data collected from a mail survey of 537 Muslim tourists. Finally, the conclusions and their implications are discussed.

2. Research model

Fig. 1 (below) illustrates the research model which guides this research on investigating the moderating role of Islamic religiosity on the relationship between MCPV and customer satisfaction. As Fig. 1 depicts, the important variables of this research include MCPV as the independent variable, Islamic religiosity as the moderating variable, and customer satisfaction as the dependent variable. Customer perceived value is the ultimate result of marketing activities and is a first-order element in relationship marketing (Oh, 2003; Prebensen, Woo, Chen, & Uysal, 2013; Sanchez, Callarisa, Rodriguez, & Moliner, 2006). It is defined as a trade-off between total perceived benefits and total perceived sacrifices and is considered an abstract concept (Weinstein & Johnson, 1999); hence, its interpretation varies according to its context (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). The word 'perceived' is included because it reflects the experiential view, which holds that value judgments depend upon the consumers' experience.

More recently, Eid (2013) has stated that it is important to study value from an Islamic perspective in particular, because in the Islamic faith the boundaries of the spiritual and secular are transcended. The Islamic holy book (the Qur'an) provides guidance on all aspects of human activity; thus, religion influences the direction of tourism choices that individuals make between various tourism options (Jafari & Scott, 2014). Therefore, due to the requirements of Islamic Shari'ah, an assessment of the value of tourism products by Islamic tourists entails a completely different process from a secular assessment. The participation of Muslims in tourism activities requires religiously acceptable goods, services and surroundings. Therefore, any attempt to design a scale of measurement of the overall MCPV of a purchase, or to identify its dimensions, must reflect not only a structure which identifies not only functional and affective dimensions but also Shari'ah-compliant attributes.

The research model proposes that the six components of MCPV – quality, value for money, emotional attributes, social attributes, Islamic physical attributes and Islamic non-physical attributes – have positive effects on customer satisfaction when moderated through Islamic religiosity. As shown in Fig. 1, the effects of the MCPV dimensions on customer satisfaction are moderated by Islamic religiosity. In order to examine the direct effects of MCPV dimensions on customer satisfaction and the moderating effect on these of Islamic religiosity, the study develops and tests a moderation model – as shown by the dotted lines in Fig. 1.

2.1. Independent variable: MCPV

In the hospitality and tourism industry, customer perceived value has recently been an object of interest to many researchers. Some studies have treated perceived value as two crucial dimensions of consumer behavior (the functional value): one of benefits received (economic, social and relationship) and another of sacrifices made (value for money, time, effort, risk and convenience) by the customer (see for example Cronin, Brady, Brand, Hightower, & Shemwell, 1997; Oh, 2003).

Undoubtedly, to understand the full meaning of the tourist's purchasing decision, hospitality and tourism activities need to play on fantasies, feelings and emotions. Beyond their tangible

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