

UNCOVERING THE MUSLIM LEISURE TOURISTS' MOTIVATION TO TRAVEL DOMESTICALLY – DO GENDER AND GENERATION MATTERS?

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Abstract

Purpose – Current study is an attempt to understand what motivates local Muslim Leisure Tourists to travel domestically. This study further investigates the impacts of gender differences and generation gaps towards the local Muslim Leisure Tourists' tour motivation and the respective determinants.

Design/Methodology/Approach – Muslim Leisure Tourists who have been on the domestic leisure tours were approached to participate in the self-administered survey. Upon processing the data, 371 sets of responses were analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) technique.

Findings – Four motivational factors, i.e. bond of *Silaturrahim*, knowledge widening, relaxation, and Islamic facilities had significant influence on the local Muslim Leisure Tourists' intention to travel. Multi-group Analysis (MGA) highlighted a homogeneous nature of local Muslim Leisure Tourists whose tour motivation was deemed to be identical despite gender differences and the generation gaps.

Originality of the research – In line with the study's key finding, i.e. homogeneity nature of local Muslim Leisure Tourists, "one for all strategy" is deemed appropriate instead of gender and generational specific marketing strategy.

Keywords Travel Motivation, Local Tourists, Muslim Leisure Tourists, Gender, Generation, Malaysia

1. INTRODUCTION

A demographic study involving 230 countries and territories worldwide, conducted by Pew Research Centre revealed that about 80 percent of people worldwide can be affiliated with religion (Pew Forum 2012). Such impressive statistics signals the important role of religion and its influence on one's behaviour. According to Arli and Pekerti (2017), religion affects human behaviours such as voting preference, spouse choice, ethical beliefs, etc. where topic of religion influence on consumer behaviour has not been completely studied mainly due to its divisive potential within social communities. Nevertheless, the systematic literature search by Mathras et al. (2016) indicated an upward trend on the recent publications involving religion influences on consumer behaviour. Compilation of 180 articles, with the word "religion" and published from 1992 to 2014, indicated an increase in the average number of articles mentioning the word "religion" from five to 13 from year 2007 onwards (Mathras et al. 2016).

Religion is often associated with famous sacred sites due to their spiritual significance where the followers are encouraged to visit as a part of their religious faith. Visit to Mecca (Saudi Arabia) by Muslims, Varanasi (India) by Hindus, Lumbini (Nepal) by Buddhists and Vatican City (Italy) by Christians are some of the famous religious journeys worldwide (Fourie, Rosselló and Santana-Gallego 2015; Shabina 2015). These journeys are unanimously known as pilgrimage (Fourie et al. 2015). As compared to other pilgrimages, visit to Mecca, which is widely known as Hajj, is compulsory at least once in a lifetime for all adult Muslims who are physically and financially capable (Qiblawi, Fox and Petterson 2017). While the city of Mecca receives pilgrims throughout the year, it is typically crowded by about 3 million pilgrims during the peak Hajj season, i.e. twelfth month of the Islamic calendar (Fourie et al. 2015; Qiblawi, Fox and Petterson 2017). These millions of pilgrims often go for sightseeing and shopping in Madinah, an adjacent city to Mecca, upon completing Hajj and before returning to their homes (Huda 2017). Their inclination towards such form of tour activities implies that they are inherent tourists.

A search involving the terms “travel” and “traveller” on the Holy Book of Al-Quran results into about 38 verses, which either contain touring, its importance or criticism about those who are not travelling (Refer to Appendix 1). This implies that the act of travelling is indeed permissible and cultivatable among Muslims. Due to the strong association with religion and adherence to religious principles, Muslim tourism is often misinterpreted as a mere religious journey pursued by Muslims (Fahim and Dooty 2014; Bevins 2017). In fact, Muslims are not mere religious tourists but they are also fond of leisure oriented activities similar to non-Muslim tourists (Fahim and Dooty 2014). This is evident with the recent research findings of the Committee for Economic Corporation of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC). The report revealed that out of four key themes of Muslim tourism (i.e. religious, leisure, business, and healthcare); about 75 percent of tours made by Muslims in 2015 represented the theme of leisure (COMCEC 2016) which comprised activities of shopping, sightseeing and visiting family and friends.

The inclination of Muslims towards leisure activities has not only dismissed the misconception about Muslim tourism but also draws attention to the lucrative Muslim leisure tourism market. Growing Muslim population (COMCEC 2016), their inclination towards leisure tours (COMCEC 2016; Fahim and Dooty 2014), and tendency to spend more during vacation as compared to non-Muslims (Bevins 2017; Rakhmat 2016; Som, Masutani and Ahmad 2016) are the key reasons for the rising interest and focus on the Muslim Leisure Tourists (MLT) market in the recent years. The promising growth of MLT market has lured even non-Muslim countries to cater to the unique needs of Muslim leisure tourists (Som et al. 2016; COSMEC 2016). Attention given to the Muslim friendly tour services by non-Muslim is indeed a spur for the growth of Muslim leisure tourism.

Malaysia has been proactive in seizing the MLT market opportunities while other traditional popular travel destinations, mainly western countries, were hesitant in welcoming Muslim tourists ensuing the September 11th tragedy (Bevins 2017; Shafaei and Mohamed 2015). One of the key initiatives taken by Malaysia in addressing the needs of MLT market is the creation of Islamic Tourism Centre, which oversees,

develops, and promotes Islamic tour activities (Bevins 2017; COMCEC 2016). At present, Malaysia managed to position itself as a preferred tour destination among MLT worldwide (Bevins 2017; Som et al. 2016; Shafaei and Mohamed 2015) where the annual arrival of Muslim tourists to Malaysia is equivalent to about 17 percent of its 30 million population (Bevins 2017).

Despite the number of local tourists, which has outweighed the number of foreign tourists (Department of Statistics Malaysia 2017), the Malaysian government placed greater emphasis on making Malaysia the preferred international tourist destination because the foreigners were found to be spending more as compared to the local tourists during their vacation in or within Malaysia. As such, more efforts have been devoted on foreign tourists as opposed to local tourists through the formulation of strategic development plans and intensive promotional efforts (Mosbah and Saleh 2014). The plans and efforts include National Tourism Policy, National Ecotourism Plan, Malaysian Tourism Transformation Programme, e.g. Visit Malaysia, Malaysia My 2nd Home, and Malaysia Mesra.

Although Malaysia succeeded to welcome 26.8 million of inbound foreign tourists, which generated a tourist receipt of MYR81.2 billion (EUR17.72 billion¹) in 2016, Malaysians, on the other hand, were found to have spent about MYR33.5 billion (EUR7.31 billion²) on 11.9 million outbound trips during the same year. As outbound trip is typically seen as more glamorous than local trips (Kasim et al. 2013), Malaysia's outbound tourism is believed to continuously prosper and hence record the highest outbound ratio in Asia by 2021 (Bernama 2017). As outbound tourism essentially results into huge cash outflow which is not healthy for the nation's economic growth, more efforts are needed to sway the locals to travel within Malaysia. Formulation of such efforts is plausible only by having a good understanding on the tour behaviour of local tourists.

Reviews on the existing relevant literature indicate a dearth of research on local MLT as compared to the literature on foreign Muslim tourists. Existing literature on domestic Muslim leisure tourism can be broadly divided into two streams namely, Muslim tourism and domestic tourism. While the stream of Muslim tourism research focuses on the successful halal tourism practices (e.g. Samori, Salleh and Khalid 2016; Battour and Ismail 2016), Muslim traveller needs (i.e. Oktadiana, Pearce and Chon 2016), and Muslim tourists perceived values (e.g. Eid 2015; Eid and El-Gohary 2015), the stream of domestic tourism research focuses on travel determinants of domestic tourists (e.g. Hwa 2002; Kasim et al. 2013); expenditures of domestic tourists (i.e. Amir et al. 2015) and insights of managers and planners on Muslim tourism development (i.e. Kumarudin and Ismail 2012). Given the importance of the neglected local and Muslim tourists towards the nation's tourism sector alongside the scarce of relevant literature on local MLT, the current study intends to explore the tour behaviour of local MLT particularly their motivation towards domestic tours.

¹ The average exchange rate (from Euro to MYR) in year 2016 was 1 MYR equals to 0.2182 Euro (Source: <https://www.exchangerates.org.uk/EUR-MYR-spot-exchange-rates-history-2016.html>)

² Refer to footnote 1.

Investigation on the moderation effect of personal characteristics such as age, gender, education, income, etc. towards consumer behaviour has been prevailing in the past studies due to the unpredictable nature of consumer decision-making process (Lee et al. 2017; Han and Ryu 2007). Nonetheless, the findings of these past studies were not concrete in demonstrating the real moderating role of personal characteristics, at least in the context of tourism literature. Past tourism literature often reported variations in the tourist behaviour. For instance, while Remoaldo et al. (2014) found a significant gender difference where female Portuguese tourists have greater preference towards visiting heritage places as compared to male tourists; Lin et al. (2014), however, found no difference between male and female tourists in Taiwan on their tour hesitation and destination decision. Besides, Hwa (2002) reported the age of tourist significantly affects the tourists' decision to travel domestically, where the older the tourist is, the lesser his or her intention to travel domestically. On the contrary, Nassar, Mostafa and Reisinger (2015) and Kasim et al. (2013) reported age and gender is not a significant predictor of tourists' motivation. The inconsistent moderating role of the personal characteristics, i.e. gender and age, has necessitated a further investigation on its impact towards tour motivation of local MLT and the respective determinants.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Tour Motivation and its fundamental

Motivation is about one's urge to strive for the goal aimed and it is the key antecedent of human behaviour (Jang et al. 2009). Plainly, it refers to one's desire for a product, services or experiences in the context of consumer behaviour. Correspondingly, tour motivation implies one's readiness and willingness to travel (Jang et al. 2009; Kasim et al. 2013; Ryan 1998). An individual is essentially motivated to engage in the tour mainly to revel in the manmade and/or natural attractions available outside his usual habitat.

Reference to the Maslow Theory of Hierarchical Needs has become inevitable in the research that investigate consumer behaviour in general and consumer motivation in particular. This theory describes the pattern where human motivations generally move through in a hierarchical manner; from basic to higher level of needs. It classifies human needs into five groups namely, physiological, safety, social, self-esteem, and self-actualisation. Using the typology of Maslow Theory, Pearce had introduced Travel Career Ladder (TCL) model in year 1988 particularly to be used within the tourism sector (Ryan 1998; Williams and McNeil 2011). TCL essentially postulates a career goal in tourist behaviour where, while some might "climb" the ladders, others might stay at a certain level, bound by individual constraints. TCL also suggests that people move upward through ladders by accumulating travel experience where tourists are seen to seek for satisfaction of higher needs as they gain experiences. TCL identifies five levels of needs affecting tourist behaviour where the lowest level is relaxation, followed by stimulation, relationship, self-esteem and development, and fulfilment needs.

Adherence to the Islamic principles has contributed to the uniqueness of the Muslim tourists' behaviour (Samori et al. 2016; Shafaei and Mohamed 2015; Som et al. 2016). Besides pilgrimage tour to perform Hajj, which is the fifth pillar of Islam, Muslims are motivated to engage in the tour mainly to reinforce bonding with others, gain knowledge,

and appreciate God's beautiful creations. Thus, appropriate simulation of TCL model is a necessity in understanding Muslims tourists, otherwise their tour behaviour and hence motivation will not be completely explained. The current study modifies the components of TCL model into Muslim oriented travel determinants as shown in Table 1. In addition to the four groups of travel determinants derived from the TCL model, determinant of Islamic Facilities has been added in this study. Consideration of Islamic facilities is deemed appropriate given the needs for Muslim tourists to adhere to the Islamic teachings during their trips (Samori et al. 2016; Som et al. 2016).

Table 1: **Modification on TCL Model**

Components of TCL Model	Travel Determinants
Relaxation	Relaxation
Stimulation	Perceived Safety
Relationship	Bond of <i>Sillaturrahim</i>
Self-esteem and development	Knowledge Widening
Fulfilment	
	Islamic Facilities

Source: Developed for this study

2.2 Relaxation

Relaxation is a human basic desire to physically and mentally revitalise from the chaotic stressful daily routine (Van Vuuren and Slabbert, 2011; Wong, Cheung and Wan 2013). Relaxation makes one work harder and better in fulfilling the obligations of life (Hashim, Murphy and Muhamad Hashim 2007; Fahim and Dooty 2014). In the context of tourism, relaxation can be attributed as the driver for tourists to find peacefulness and tranquillity (Lien 2010). This notion is in agreement with the findings of past studies (Pearce 2011; Yoon and Uysal 2005) which demonstrated that a person's desires to escape from routine environment will be a motivation for his or her travel decision. In addition to the relaxation consideration, Muslims are also encouraged to tour around to appreciate and enjoy God's creation (Jafari and Scott 2014; Zain n.d.). Muslims are believed to be closer to God and hence are blessed with effortless *dua* (prayer) granting during their travels (El-Gohary 2016). Rest and relaxation were indeed the key travel motives among the Middle Eastern tourists (Prayag and Hosany 2014) where Muslims were found to consider the elements of relaxation prior to selecting a specific destination (Chek 2014). Subsequently, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Relaxation has a positive and significant influence on the travel motivation of local MLT.

2.3 Perceived Safety

According to the Maslow theory, safety and security needs are among the key driving forces behind the behaviour of an individual. Likewise, safety and security are critical factors that tourists carefully consider when selecting their destinations (Rahman, Zailani, and Musa 2017). Perceived risks and the probabilities of disasters or attacks associated with a particular destination will discourage an individual's intention to visit (Bianchi 2006). There has been a switch on the Muslims' tour destination choice, from

Western countries to Middle Eastern and Muslim countries since the September 11th terrorists' attacks (Henderson 2003). Such change in the Muslim tourists' preference was noted in the study conducted among Middle Eastern tourists, where the respondents opted to visit Malaysia mainly due to the country's safety and security aspects (Salman and Hasim 2012). As tourists are more likely to visit the destinations with a positive safety image (Khan, Haque and Rahman 2013), it is sensible to assume that Muslims' motivation to travel will be higher if the destination is perceived safe. For that reason, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Perceived safety has a positive and significant influence on the travel motivation of local MLT.

2.4 Bond of *Silaturrahim*

Humans have social needs. In addition to the relationship with family and friends, one's social needs also revolve around belonging, love, affection, and companionship (Maslow and Herzberg 1954, as cited in Demir n.d.). It goes without saying that one would feel close to the fellow travellers whom they share their travel journey with. Similarly, travelling in a group would make one to feel belonged to the group where the bond lasts even after the tour ends. There are many advantages of travelling in a group, among others, gaining additional local knowledge from fellow travellers who had been to the destination, having higher tolerance dealing with others from different backgrounds, meeting new people, and making new friends (Aiton 2016). Correspondingly, Muslims are also encouraged to establish and strengthen *Silaturrahim* (bond of friendship, brotherhood) with others even during their holidays (Din 1989; Jafari and Scott 2014). The requirement to perform prayers five times daily is indeed a platform for Muslims to meet new friends other than their fellow travellers. As they visit prayer rooms or mosques to perform prayers, they are likely to meet these new friends. Such meeting would facilitate their interaction and hence create bonding. 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:

H3: Bond of *Silaturrahim* has a positive and significant influence on the tour motivation of local MLT.

2.5 Knowledge Widening

Knowledge acquisition is one of the human basic needs as well as an approach for human being to feel safe because the knowledge they gained helps elude or moderate possible dangers (Maslow 1943, as cited in Green 2000). Travel essentially facilitates the mind broadening by interacting with people from different cultures as well as through new experiences and historical knowledge gaining (Kwok and Gengswari 2018). Such knowledge gaining has hence become the main agenda for travel. Muslims are not exceptional for this worldly circumstance where gaining new experiences, acquiring new knowledge and understanding Islamic history have been recognised as the key push factors for Muslims to engage in the tours. This is in line with the saying of "Seek the knowledge even as far as China", where Prophet Muhammad encouraged Muslims to travel to far destinations like China to seek knowledge (Daiyu, 2007). Fahim and Dooty (2014) added that the Muslims will not only gain knowledge but also be able to spread their knowledge and Islamic teachings to others whom they come across with during

their travels. As knowledge widening is believed to be one of the key determinants of Muslims' tour motivation, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Knowledge widening has a positive and significant influence on the tour motivation of local MLT.

2.6 Islamic Facilities

Muslims' tour decisions are inherently subject to the availability of Islamic facilities during their holidays. Recent years witnessed an increasing concern among Muslims on the consumption of products and services in line with their religious faith especially during their holidays. Availability of mosques or prayer rooms (equipped with prayer mats, Quran, Qibla stickers), access to halal foods, banning of alcohol consumption and gambling, and forbiddance of sexual permissiveness are some of the necessities for Muslim tourists (Battour et al. 2014; Eid and El-Gohary 2015). Absence of these Islamic facilities would deter the holiday plans of Muslims and hence, provision of Islamic facilities is deemed a great motivation for Muslim tourists. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5: Islamic facilities have a positive and significant influence on the tour motivation of local MLT.

2.7 Moderator – Gender

Gender refers to a set of characteristics distinguishing males from females. These characteristics are not only referring to the biological or physical differences, but also variances in the personal traits, attitudes and activities which are affecting one's behaviour (Hoyer and MacInnis 2010). Males and females observe the environment besides processing and evaluating the information in a different manner (Hoyer and MacInnis 2010; Karatepe 2011). Due to such noticeable differences in each stage of decision-making process (Bakshi 2012; Rudell 1993), gender has often been used in past studies to understand the unique behaviour of both male and female consumers (Brown and Osman 2017).

Such differences are also not exceptional in the context of tourism services where the said variation is highly noticeable among Muslim tourists. Owing to the influence of religion on the sociocultural norms, females are greatly controlled and treated as inferior to the males in most of the Arab countries (Eltahawy 2015 as cited in Brown and Osman 2017). Female tourists typically receive different treatment particularly in the Arab countries. For instance, female tourists can be prohibited from engaging in a particular leisure activity which can however be accessed by the male tourists (Zaytoun et al. 2010 as cited in Brown and Osman 2017). The stereotype on the female tourists and hence plausible biased treatment received during the trips are deemed to greatly affect Muslim females' leisure tour decision as compared to the males. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H6: There is a significant difference in the tour motivation and its determinants between male and female local MLT.

2.8 Moderator - Generation

The term “generation” refers to a group of people with a set of experiences that exhibit a shared worldview and continue to exhibit these characteristics as they grow through life (Comeau and Tung 2013; Li, Li and Hudson 2013). As a result of shared events and experiences, it is commonly believed that each cohort group (i.e. Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y (Millennials and Generation Z) is distinct in terms of its traits, values and beliefs as well as its interests and expectations (Comeau and Tung 2013; Strauss and Howe 1997 as cited by Li, Li and Hudson 2013). Similarly, the major generational cohort groups generally behave differently in their tour behaviour and decision making (Li, Li and Hudson 2013; Huang and Petricks 2010; Gardiner, King and Grace 2013). For instance, the cohort groups were found varied on their destination evaluation criteria as well as preference on the future destination and travel activities (Li, Li and Hudson 2013).

However, Comeau and Tung (2013) asserted that the universally acceptable generational cohort group labelling used in Western countries might not be completely applicable to all other parts of the world, such as Malaysia. Subsequently, they had refined the generational cohort groups as shown in Table 2 and claimed that the new label is better in representing the true reality of Malaysian generations.

Table 2: The Generational Cohort Groups

Year of Birth	Labels in Western Countries as proposed by Strauss and Howe Generational Theory (1992)	Labels in Malaysia Context as proposed by Comeau and Tung (2013)
1943 – 1960	Baby Boomers	The Seekers
1961 - 1981	Generation X	The Builders
1982 - 2004	Generation Y	The Developers
2005 onwards	Generation Z	The N-Generations

This research has adopted the new generation label and aims at taking a closer look at two specific generational cohort groups, i.e. The Builders and The Developers. Extending the unique behaviour of each generational cohort to the context of Muslim tourism, it is believed that Muslim Builders and Muslim Developers will behave differently in their travel decisions. For that reason, the following hypothesis is proposed: H7: There is a significant difference in the tour motivation and its determinants between the Builders and Developers of local MLT.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS

The population for this study is the local Muslim tourists in Malaysia. 400 local Muslims who have been on the domestic leisure tour at least once in the past 12 months were approached to participate in the self-administered survey conducted in early 2017. Upon processing the data gathered, 371 sets of responses were retained and analysed using PLS-SEM technique with SmartPLS 3 software.

3.1 Respondent's Profile

As summarised in Table 3, 62.8 percent of the respondents in this study were female. In addition, the majority of the respondents in this study were in the 18-35 years age group. Besides, 68 percent of the respondents had a minimum education qualification of a diploma.

Table 3: Respondent's Profile

Category		Frequency	Percentage, %
Gender	Male	138	37.2
	Female	233	62.8
Age Group	18 – 35 years old	329	86.0
	36 – 42 and above	52	14.0
Education Level	Primary	8	2.2
	Secondary	111	29.9
	Diploma	132	35.6
	Bachelor	102	27.5
	Master/Ph.D.	18	4.9

3.2 Measurement Model Analysis

Composite Reliability (CR), Cronbach's Alpha (CA), convergent and discriminant validity were assessed before proceeding with the structural model analysis. Item 3e and 4d were withdrawn from further analysis as they had Factor Loading (FL) value below than 0.6 where removal of these items was in line with the suggestion by Bagozzi and Yi (1988). The Average of Variance (AVE) for all latent factors ranged from 0.530 to 0.667 exceeded the required threshold value of 0.5. Both Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha values exceeded the required value of 0.7 (Refer to Table 4). Besides, the discriminant validity was also supported as the squared root AVE values were greater than the inter-correlation coefficients of the constructs (Refer to Table 5).

Table 4: Cronbach's Alpha, Convergent Validity and Composite Reliability

Items	FL	CA	CR	AVE	
Relaxation					
R1	I am willing to discover new places.	0.724	0.718	0.822	0.539
R2	I feel my stress is released during tours	0.704			
R3	Travel can help my mental relaxation.	0.839			
R5	I can spiritually develop strong faith in God.	0.656			
Perceived Safety (I would like to have the following during tours)					
PR1	Destination which is safer (e.g. less/no violence).	0.768	0.826	0.877	0.589

Items		FL	CA	CR	AVE
PR2	Destination which has lesser chance of natural disasters occurring.	0.804			
PR3	Destination with easy access to advanced healthcare services.	0.819			
PR4	Tour packages that offered by travel agencies.	0.736			
PR5	Political stability in the destination would make me feel less risk for travelling.	0.707			
Bond of <i>Sillaturrahim</i>					
BS1	I am willing to mingle with others from varied cultural backgrounds during tours.	0.765	0.846	0.891	0.622
BS2	I can build good relationships with other travellers.	0.836			
BS3	I can initiate a good relationship with people around me during tours.	0.853			
BS4	I feel a sense of belongings to the people surrounding during tours.	0.777			
BS5	I can interact with other Muslims in the mosque or prayer room during worship.	0.703			
Knowledge Widening					
KW1	I can find my actual self during tours.	0.707	0.789	0.864	0.616
KW2	I have opportunity to acquire new knowledge during tours.	0.857			
KW3	I can share my experience and knowledge gained from traveling with others.	0.830			
KW4	I can challenge my living ability when travelling to the foreign destinations.	0.734			
Islamic Facilities (I would like to have the following during my tours)					
IF1	Easy access to the halal food in my destination.	0.796	0.876	0.909	0.667
IF2	The destination's recreational facilities must be aligned with the Shariah rule.	0.856			
IF3	Accommodation is nearby to a mosque.	0.865			
IF4	Placement of Qibla stickers in accommodation.	0.826			
IF5	Availability of a copy of the Quran in the hotel room.	0.732			
Travel Motivation					
TM1	I am about waiting to go for a holiday.	0.659	0.778	0.849	0.530
TM2	I am willing to travel.	0.717			
TM3	I travel to fulfil self needs.	0.738			
TM4	I strictly follow Shariah rules during tours.	0.786			
TM5	I do not follow a pre-planned travel decision.	0.736			
Deleted Items: R4 - I can escape from daily routine; KW5 - I would be exposed to different cultures and environments during my travels					

Table 5: Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	BS	IF	KW	PS	RX	TM
Relaxation (RX)	0.734					
Perceived Safety (PS)	0.432	0.768				
Bond of Sillaturrahim (BS)	0.511	0.363	0.789			
Knowledge Widening (KW)	0.621	0.465	0.548	0.785		
Islamic Facilities (IF)	0.371	0.579	0.348	0.422	0.817	
Travel Motivation (TM)	0.528	0.378	0.511	0.576	0.452	0.728
Remark: The Bold values are the square root of AVE						

3.3 Structural Model Analysis

The relationships between the five exogenous variables and one endogenous variable were then examined using the structural model. Altogether, the five factors explained approximately 44.5 percent of variances in the local Muslims tourists' intention to travel. Four hypotheses proposed were supported, while one hypothesis, i.e. H2 was rejected. Perceived safety did not appear to significantly influence the travel motivation of local MLT in this study (refer to Table 6).

Table 6: Structural Model Analysis

R ² = 0.445				
Hypothesis	Links in the model	Path coefficient	t-statistic	Results
H1	Relaxation - Travel Motivation	0.190	3.481	Supported
H2	Perceived Safety - Travel Motivation	-0.025	0.459	Rejected
H3	Bond of <i>Sillaturrahim</i> - Travel Motivation	0.201	3.696	Supported
H4	Knowledge Widening - Travel Motivation	0.270	4.657	Supported
H5	Islamic Facilities - Travel Motivation	0.212	4.148	Supported
Chi-Square: 1157.648; NFI: 0.773; SRMR: 0.0675; degrees of freedom (df): 299				

3.4 Multi-Group Analysis

The moderator effect of gender and generation on the relationship between respondents' tour motivation and determinants were then analysed using Multi-Group Analysis (MGA) technique. To test the moderation effect of gender, the original data were divided into male (n=138) and female (n=233). Similarly, the original data set were divided into two groups, i.e. Muslim Developer (18 – 35 years old) and Muslim Builders (36 – 42 years old and above) for testing the moderation effect of generation. These two sets of newly classified data were then used to analyse the moderation effect of gender and

generation, respectively. The findings are as summarised in Table 7. Overall, the relationship between tour motivation and its determinants was found to vary insignificantly between the male and female tourists as well as between Muslim Builders and Muslim Developers (P-value >0.05; refer to Table 7). Accordingly, both H6 and H7 were rejected.

Table 7: Multi-Group Comparison Test Results

Hypothesis	Links in the model	Path coefficient difference	P-value	Results
H6	Relaxation - Travel Motivation	0.034	0.389	Rejected
	Perceived Safety - Travel Motivation	0.151	0.899	
	Bond of Sillaturrahim - Travel Motivation	0.038	0.621	
	Knowledge Widening - Travel Motivation	0.069	0.273	
	Islamic Facilities - Travel Motivation	0.041	0.343	
H7	Relaxation - Travel Motivation	0.166	0.156	Rejected
	Perceived Safety - Travel Motivation	0.023	0.432	
	Bond of Sillaturrahim - Travel Motivation	0.153	0.129	
	Knowledge Widening - Travel Motivation	0.079	0.678	
	Islamic Facilities - Travel Motivation	0.100	0.732	

4. DISCUSSIONS OF KEY FINDINGS

The findings showed that four motivational factors, i.e. bond of *Silaturreh*, knowledge widening, relaxation, and Islamic facilities had significant influences on the local MLT' tour motivation. Besides performing Hajj prayer, Muslims are encouraged and motivated to travel as they could gain various benefits: taking a temporary discharge from a hectic daily life (Fahim and Dooty 2014; Duman 2012), gaining new knowledge (Wang 2007, Yousaf et al. 2018) and strengthening the bond of *Silaturreh* (Din 1989; Jafari and Scott 2014) during the holidays. Besides, given the adherence to Islamic teachings, Muslim tourists' reliance and preference on the availability of Islamic facilities goes without saying.

Perceived safety did not appear to significantly influence local MLT' tour motivation in this study. It was noted that tourists commonly select the destinations to visit carefully by considering the safety and security level of the destination (Rahman, Zailani and Musa 2017) as recorded in previous research. However, this assumption might not always be factual. Perceived safety may be crucial while one considers outbound tours in terms of familiarity and certainty about the country to be visited. Local tourists, however, may not perceive touring around in their own country, which they are relatively familiar with, as a risky activity. On top of that, the research conducted by Salman and Hasim (2012) has revealed that Middle Eastern tourists chose Malaysia primarily due to the country's safety and security aspects. This essentially implies that Malaysia is a safe destination to visit (Hafiz et al. 2015). In view that all respondents in this study were local, safety

concern, hence, may not be the main consideration of local Muslims while making domestic leisure tour decision.

The findings of this study, which highlight the homogeneity nature of local MLT, are mainly due to two important dimensions namely, Islamic teachings and familiarity with (local) tour attractions. Understandably, Muslims, irrespective of gender, age and other personal characteristics, are required to adhere to Islamic teachings in their undertakings. Fundamental Islamic values imparted since young age is deemed the key reason for the similar tour behaviour and hence motivation among Muslim tourists. This is coupled with the local Muslim tourists' familiarity with the local attractions, which eventually reduced their tour indecision, partly due to their access to the abundant information about the tour destinations through technology advancement. This study's findings on the insignificant moderating role of gender and generation (comparable to age) are indeed in line with some of the past studies' findings (e.g. Kasim et al. 2013; Nassar et al. 2015; Lin et al. 2014) which advocated that consumers essentially behave in a similar style as soon as they undertake the ad-hoc role of tourists. Therefore, tourists, irrespective of any personal characteristics, are deemed to go through a similar process in gathering their tour related information besides holding similar tour practices.

5. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

Although some marketing programmes such as "Go Domestic" and "Cuti-Cuti Malaysia Dekat Je" (i.e. literally means Malaysia Holidays Near Only) campaign have been launched, Malaysia Inbound Tourism Association (MITA) and Tourism Malaysia are urged to organise more similar or creative marketing programmes to encourage locals to travel domestically. This study has discovered the homogeneity nature of local MLT. This implies that the "one for all strategy" is more appropriate for local MLT's market rather than the gender and generational specific marketing strategy. Marketing programmes that appeal to all local MLT, irrespective of their personal characteristics, i.e. gender and age, should be formulated as they generally behave in similar manner.

This study has also revealed that Muslim tourists are motivated to engage in the tour essentially to gain knowledge besides reinforcing bonding with others. Hence, local tour service providers are strongly encouraged to integrate the elements of learning and social interaction into their tour services. In addition, the elements of relaxation that comply with the Islamic teachings should be carefully incorporated into their existing and newly introduced tour services. Halal compliant tour services can be provided only through collaboration involving both tourism suppliers (i.e. hotels, transportation companies, restaurants, and excursion operators) and intermediaries (i.e. tour operators, guides). While hotel and excursion operators are required to ensure the availability of Islamic facilities and necessities at their premises, transportation providers can also opt for transportation for family travellers, solo female and sole male travellers. Islamic programmes can also be aired during the long journey. Though provision and availability of certified halal food is no longer a real concern in Malaysia, display of halal logo, halal slaughtering certification as well as Syariah-compliant restaurant ambience (e.g. appropriate wall painting and wall display, separation of dining tables (i.e. family, solo male and solo female diners), appropriate entertainment, brighter lighting, and

announcement of prayer timing) are must-have elements in the restaurants at tour destinations. Failure of a single tourism agency in ensuring halal compliance would certainly affect the whole tour experience.

Besides being seen as less glamorous, domestic trips are also being side-lined given the locals' familiarity with the tour destinations and attractions. This is in line with the insight of Lee and Crompton (1992) which claims one inherently travels due to his/her desire to have new experiences. As such, local tourists are thought to have higher preferences on outbound trips to experience something novel and unique. This is factual among Malaysians where the nation's outbound tourism was forecasted to top the list in Asia by 2021. It is believed that the provision of new tourism services and attractions compared to those available overseas would significantly influence local tourists' intention to participate in the domestic trips. Therefore, greater emphasis should be placed in designing and setting up more new attractions and services particularly to cater to the needs of local Muslim tourists.

As adherence to Muslim faiths is essentially family value oriented (e.g. banning of alcohol, hygienic food preparation, segregation by gender), more and more non-Muslims begin to look for Muslim friendly services during their vacations (COMCEC 2016; Jebreil 2015; Rakhmat 2016). This certainly is a great market development opportunity and thus, local tourism service providers are suggested to creatively design tour activities or services by taking into account the family and Muslim friendly tour elements. Through the provision of such creative and customised offerings, the service providers could cater to the travel needs of both Muslims and non-Muslims market simultaneously. In conclusion, serving the promising local MLT is akin to discovering the hidden jewels by commoner.

6. LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

The discovery of insignificant influence of perceived safety on the locals' tour motivation, which is unlikely among foreign tourists aroused the need for future researchers to compare the influence of destination's perceived safety between local and foreign tourists. The findings of this study revealed the homogeneity nature of local MLT. In an attempt to extend and generalise the findings of this study particularly the travel determinants (i.e. Table 1), this study also suggests future researchers to consider investigating the domestic travel behavior of local Muslims in other nations.

Nevertheless, one of the findings of this study, namely the insignificant difference between Muslim Developers and Muslim Builders on their tour motivation and determinants, should be considered and generalised cautiously. It is mainly due to the imbalanced composition of elements in these two groups (i.e., 52 elements in the group of Muslim Builders and 329 elements in the group of Muslim Developers). Nevertheless, this study also suggests future researchers to consider investigating the effect of other personal characteristics, i.e. income, occupation, and education level towards tour behaviour of Muslims in an attempt to demonstrate the consistency of current findings on the homogeneity nature of local MLT.

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APPENDIX 1

Travel		Traveller
Surah Al-Baqara, 273	Surah Ta Ha, 77	Surah Al-Baqara, 177
Surah Al-Imran, 137	Surah Al-Hajj, 46	Surah Al-Baqara, 215
Surah An-Nisa', 43	Surah Ash-Shu'ara', 52	Surah An-Nisa', 36
Surah An-Nisa', 101	Surah Al-Ankabut, 20	Surah Al-Ma'ida, 96
Surah Al-Ma'ida, 106	Surah Ar-Rum, 9	Surah Al-Anfal, 41
Surah At-Tawba, 1	Surah Ar-Rum, 42	Surah At-Tawba, 60
Surah At-Tawba, 2	Surah Saba', 18	Surah Yusuf, 10
Surah Yusuf, 109	Surah Fatir, 44	Surah Al-Isra', 26
Surah Al-Hijr, 65	Surah Ghafir, 21	Surah Ar-Rum, 38
Surah An-Nahl, 36	Surah Ghafir, 82	Surah Al-Waqi'a, 71
Surah An-Nahl, 46	Surah Muhammad, 10	Surah Al-Waqi'a, 72
Surah An-Nahl, 69	Surah Al-Muzzammil, 20	Surah Al-Waqi'a, 73
Surah An-Nahl, 80		Surah Al-Hashr, 7

Source: <http://www.quranindex.net/index.php>

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