

A Framework to Compare Historical and Modern Islamic Spiritual Tourism: Study of Algerian and Malaysian Tourism

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Abstract

This conceptual paper builds on the argument that market for Islamic tourism is growing and it needs to be studied from various perspectives. One such perspective pinpoints historical and modern aspects of Islamic spiritual tourism that will further enhance its marketability. This study analyses the two different angles of Islamic tourism: historical in Algeria and modern in Malaysia. Due to the availability of resources and a multi-faith based social infrastructure, countries such as Algeria and Malaysia can capitalize on the emerging market of Islamic tourism. The purpose of this research is to identify the people, places and events associated with Islamic tourism in these two countries. Findings suggest that Muslim and non-Muslim spiritual tourists could be marketed Islamic tourism by employing both historical and modern resources if a standard format is adopted. Hence, a framework is presented for comparing historical and modern aspects of Islamic tourism with respect to tourism places, people and events. This unique research emphasizes on positioning Islamic tourism products based on historical and modern dimensions, hence filling a critical gap in marketing tourism in general and spiritual tourism specifically. A relevant empirical study of travelers interested in historical and modern Islamic tourism is a palpable future study.

Key words: *Islamic tourism, Algeria, Malaysia, historical and modern.*

1. Introduction

Tourism is appreciated as the fastest growing global export function. The remarkable growth in tourism is attributed to globalisation, open access to foreign markets, modern advertising and strategic marketing with facilitation of travel, communication and accommodation services (Hjalager 2015; Zhang & Hanks 2015; Milne & Ateljevic 2010; Kim, Chen & Jang 2006). WTO (2009) projected international tourist arrivals touching 1.6 billion travellers by 2020, spending around \$2 trillion per year. International tourist arrivals in the Middle East are estimated to be up by 4% through April 2015, following the region's recovery that started in 2014 after three consecutive years of declines (WTO 2015).

Tourism places around the globe received around 332 million international tourists from January to April 2015, which is 14 million more than the same period last year, conforming an increase of 4% (WTO 2015). Tourism has shown worldwide growth with an increase of 4.3% in 2014 associating with the upwards trend of international tourism in recent years, which averages more than 4.5% international tourist per year since 2010 (WTO 2015). According to World Tourism Organisation WTO (2009), 689 million people travelled to

foreign countries in 2000, out of which nearly 40 million people travelled for spiritual purposes from Christian, Muslim and Hindu families.

The significance of Islamic tourism has been appreciated by various authors and tourism marketers related to Islamic traditions and practices (Haq 2013; Henderson 2011; Scott & Jafari 2010). Islamic tourism is described by various scholars as tourism for Muslim tourists, offered by Islamic countries or organisations involving people, places and events associated with Islam (Scott & Jafari 2010; Zamani-Farahani & Henderson 2010; Al-Hamarneh & Steiner 2004). Al-Hamarneh and Steiner (2004, p. 24) further specified: “the economic concept of Islamic tourism focuses on the importance of intra-Muslim tourism for new markets and destinations”.

Markets in any type of tourism are fundamentally described in three ways: by the product, need satisfaction and customer identity (Haq & Wong, 2011; Buhalis 2000; Riege & Perry 1999). Product-based marketing focusses on the actual nature of the ‘product/service’ or the place in tourism, as it indicates the company’s offering. The success of tourism is now determined by the management and marketing of three elements: place, people or events (Hjalager 2015; Lim 2015; Tajzadeh 2013; Buhalis 2000). The Islamic tourism could be based on various forms of tourism such as cultural, spiritual, historical, ecosystem, heritage and adventure tourism (Scott & Jafari, 2010; Haq & Jackson 2009; Henderson 2009).

The media and other publishers have used the term ‘Islamic’ to elaborate religious, political, authoritarian and aggressive matters, but recently, it has been related to commercial and business affairs (Ahmad 2015; Alserhan, 2011; Zamani-Farahani & Henderson, 2010; Al-Shakry, 2001). Al-Shakry (2001) further explained ‘Islamic’ in business and marketing context as linked with the revival of Islam’s philosophy and values that provide competitive advantage to Muslim countries, governments and enterprises. Spiritual tourism in general has been accepted to be based on two important angles of being historical and/or modern (Al-Dalaeen, Alsarayreh & Saleh 2011; Haq & Wong 2011; Sharpley & Sundaram 2005).

The aim of this paper is to propose a framework to apply the three tourism elements of place, people and events to the historical and modern aspects of Islamic tourism. Algeria is selected in this study as it is well known for its historical tourism treasures associated with Islamic tourism. Meanwhile, Malaysia is selected as a robust tourist country with a very modern approach and infrastructure enhancing tourism opportunities and activities, which can be associated with Islamic tourism.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Spiritual Tourism

Spiritual tourism is specialised tourism by people with a certain interest linked to a specific objective. It can be established from the literature review that all travels, journeys or tourism

that are taken from a religious or non-religious perspective, to a specific destination, or to attend a specific gathering or event, or to participate in a specific festival, could be recognized as spiritual tourism. However, these travels must be undertaken with the intention of obtaining spiritual growth by seeking, knowing or finding the Divine, which may be called as God or any other Super Being or High Spirit. Based on a synthesis of the definition of spirituality and special interest tourism, spiritual tourism can be defined as customised travel with the purpose of experiencing the Divine and thereby meeting the spiritual interest demands of individuals and groups. It needs to be noted that spirituality in this study was oriented towards a concept of the Divine, a relationship with God or a High Supreme Spirit.

Spiritual tourism has been implicitly accepted as part of the tourism industry. Throughout history, oral, archaeological and written records document peoples' involvement with spiritual experiences and their journeys to engage in spiritual activities (Blomfield 2009; Fish & Fish 2007; Sharpley & Sundaram 2005). Whether spiritual tourism has been to meet self-actualization, personal well-being, or any other needs, satisfying a spiritual need appears to be central to human social psychology, irrespective of race, colour, creed religion or any other identified criteria (Timothy & Iverson 2006). The literature review indicated that religious tourism and pilgrimage was increasing and the recent interest of people in spirituality and related matters is the major reason. People belonging to various religions frequently travel to fulfil their religious as well as spiritual needs in a quest to connect with God, or the Supreme Being, or the High Spirit. All of these pilgrims or religious tourists can be grouped together under the umbrella label of 'spiritual tourists'.

2.2. Islamic Tourism

There is a substantial depth of literature on travel and tourism in Islam, which has been principally descriptive rather than investigative. It is accepted without any argument that the Saudi Arabian cities of Makkah and Medina are the most popular Muslim tourism destinations (Henderson 2011; Haq & Jackson 2009; Clingingsmith, Kwaja, & Kremer 2008). The literature on Muslim spiritual tourism proved that other than Makkah, Muslims were always keen to travel to the Holy Lands in Jerusalem (Haq 2013; Livne-Kafri 2007; Timothy & Iverson 2006). Furthermore, Islamic tourism attracts travellers to different historic and modern Mosques and shrines of Sufis around the world, and also, events and festivals linked with the Islamic faith (Haq & Wong 2011; Henderson 2011). Modern places or sites for Islamic tourism include events such as the Bumitra Islamic Tourism Expo in Malaysia encouraging Malaysia to open the Islamic Travel Centre (Haq 2013; Al-Dalaeen, Alsarayreh & Saleh 2011; Anowar, Siwar, Ismail & Islam 2011).

Travelling in Islam, which is commercially and academically called as Islamic tourism, can be defined into three types: the Hajj, Umrah, Rihla or Ziyara (Scott & Jafari 2010; Timothy & Iverson 2006). Hajj is the mandatory travel to Makkah once a year on specified dates, or Umrah that is pilgrimage to Makkah anytime throughout the year (Henderson 2011; Haq & Jackson 2009; Clingingsmith, Kwaja, & Kremer 2008). A Muslim's religious adventure in

search of wisdom, knowledge, trade or health is called as Rihla (Haq & Wong 2011). The religious travels of Muslims visiting mosques, shrines or monasteries belonging to renowned religious Muslims of the past are called Ziyara (Haq 2013; Timothy & Iverson 2006).

Ziyara has been further classified into ‘two major types’ (Bhardwaj 1998, p.71). The first type is linked to spiritual development achieved by travelling to listen to or witness famous Islamic scholars, attend religious festivals or seminars, celebrate special days for prophets, Imams or Sufis at their shrines or mausoleums, or replicate the journeys of prophets, Imams or Sufis. The second type of ziyara is linked to travelling to holy places in search of solutions for daily life problems (Bhardwaj 1998). Muslims travel on ziyara to specific tombs, shrines, mosques or monasteries to ask for physical and spiritual healing, recovery from a significant loss, family affairs and family development (Haq 2013). Some Islamic schools of thought criticize such ziyara and declare them as a notion based on local cultural and traditional practices, and not endorsed by Quran or Hadees. However, in this paper, any type of journey taken by Muslims, Hajj/Umrah, rihla or ziyara, with the intention of spiritual growth and connection with God (Allah in Arabic) is considered as Islamic tourism.

Most Sufis and modern Islamic scholars explained Hajj as a spiritual journey rather than a ritualistic and physical adventure, akin to a formal pilgrimage (Timothy & Iverson 2006; Nicholson 1996). The most commonly quoted among them is Ali Bin-Usman al-Hujveri, called Data Ganj Bakhsh, 'bestower of favours' by the devout, a renowned Sufi scholar and teacher of many Sufis of the eleventh century (Haq & Medhekar 2014). Sufi Hujveri of Lahore explained that Hajj contained two stations: ‘first station is that of the body, namely Mecca, and the second is the station of the soul, namely, friendship (with God). Whoever seeks his bodily station must renounce lusts and pleasures and put on the pilgrim’s garb, and follow all the rituals. But whoever seeks his spiritual station must renounce familiar associations and bid farewell to pleasures and take no thought of other than God. Accordingly, what is truly valuable is not the Ka’ba, but contemplation and annihilation in the abode of friendship, of which many things the sight of Ka’ba is indirectly a cause’ (Nicholson 1996, p.326-7).

The above mentioned, three types of travels could be placed under the blanket of Islamic tourism. It can be argued that the nationality, culture, language, dressing, music, and food are not relevant or significant in Islamic tourism, if the tourist is searching for a connection with an Islamic site, people, rituals, spirituality or events, then he or she falls under the description of an Islamic tourist. Haq (2013) presented a conceptual framework for Islamic tourism, which illustrates that Islamic spiritual tourism and Halal tourism are subsets of Islamic tourism; while Hajj/Umrah, rihla and ziyara are subsets of Islamic spiritual tourism.

An academically recognised definition of spiritual tourism has not been established yet; though a definition of a spiritual tourist could be analysed here. A recently accepted definition of a spiritual tourist could be used as: “someone who visits a specific place out of his/her usual environment, with the intention of spiritual meaning and/or growth, without

overt religious compulsion, which could be religious, non-religious, sacred or experiential in nature, but within a Divine context, regardless of the main reason for travelling” (Haq & Jackson 2009, p. 145). This paper accepts and adapts with the above given definition for a Muslim spiritual tourist who travels with similar intentions to relate with, or to be close with Allah.

Current research carried on Islamic tourism presented different perspectives on tourism in Islam and hence there is yet to be a unanimously accepted business definition of Islamic tourism (Alserhan 2011; Henderson 2009). Islamic tourism has been discussed as travelling to places and events linked to Islam with the intention to gain knowledge, education or appreciation of Islamic arts and artefacts (Al-Dalaeen et al. 2011; Scott & Jafari 2010; Zamani-Farahani & Henderson 2010; Timothy & Iverson 2006). Islamic tourism is being recognized as a new prospect for growth and development of the Muslim identity while following the existing tourism activities and systems (Zamani-Farahani & Henderson 2010). Al-Hamarneh and Steiner (2004, p. 24) resolved ‘the economic concept of Islamic tourism focuses on the importance of intra-Muslim tourism for new markets and destinations’. Anowar et al. (2011) clarified that Islamic tourism is embedded into heritage and hence it is constructed upon Islamic heritage, anthropological heritage, geographical heritage and historical heritage. Therefore, this paper suggests that Islamic tourism, regardless of the definition, needs to be marketed as a combination of places, people and events based on historical and modern aspects.

This paper accepts the formation of Islamic tourism based on Muslim tourists, operators and destinations, but challenges its exclusive definition that labels Islamic tourism to be for Muslim tourists only. In today’s age of globalization, an inclusive approach for Islamic tourism needs to be applied for cultural progress and economic development for all Muslim countries. This paper agrees with the notion from Haq and Medhekar (2014) that a non-Muslim tourist traveling to Islamic destinations engaging with Muslims to learn about the history, spirituality, aesthetics and culture of Islam is also contributing to Islamic tourism. For example, a Buddhist, Christian or Hindu visiting the Blue Mosque in Istanbul could be engaged in cultural or spiritual tourism, hence be a consumer of Islamic tourism.

2.3. Economic Development By Spiritual Tourism

Tourism is considered as the fastest growing export sector. The tourism growth is credited to globalization, access to foreign markets, effective advertising and strategic marketing with facilitation of travel, communication and accommodation services (Milne & Ateljevic 2010; Kim, Chen & Jang 2006). WTO (2009) forecasted that the number of international tourist arrivals will reach 1.6 billion by 2020, spending a total of \$2 trillion per year. Tourism in the developing countries in Asia and Africa is growing faster than the world average. According to World Tourism Organisation WTO (2009), 689 million people travelled to foreign countries in 2000, out of which nearly 40 million people travelled for spiritual purposes from

Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, Sikh and Hindu families and hence boosting the spiritual tourism spending to US \$ 478 billion.

In Algeria, nationwide initiatives are required to recognize tourism in general and Islamic or spiritual tourism in particular as an instrument for economic development, through its potential to create job opportunities and earn foreign exchange. Demand for spiritual tourism among men and women of various faiths and religions are a fast-growing global phenomenon (Haq & Medhekar 2015; Al-Dalaeen et al. 2011). Many new pilgrimage circuits are being opened and old ones rejuvenated around the world. For pilgrims, the emphasis is on the power of the journey itself to a sacred spot, and the sense of spiritual awakening (Henderson, 2011; Blomfield 2009; Sharpley & Sundaram 2005). Fish and Fish (2007, p. 83) declared from their study that pilgrimage which is more so spiritual in nature is similar to tourism and should be exploited by developing countries to create opportunities, and ‘more healthy development of tourism to the third world’. Various factors are responsible for the recent growth of religious and pilgrimage tourism all over the world, such as: consumers want more authentic experience by immersing themselves in the spiritual and cultural traditions associated with specific religions and pilgrimage sites, an increasing number of travel agents offering religious tourism, pilgrimage tours in response to demand and diversified products within a trip (WTO, 2009).

In context of economics of Islamic tourism as a type of spiritual tourism when linked with a particular Islamic destination, for example the historical Mosques and shrines in Algeria and the state-of-art Mosques and Islamic Museums in Malaysia, it will provide employment, generate revenue for the state and improve the infrastructure and landscape. The Algerian and Malaysian Governments need to appreciate this potential and introduce Islamic and spiritual tourism friendly policies to position tourism as a major growth engine. Hence, this will enable both countries to capitalize on various economic benefits and multiplier effects for employment generation and sustainable social and economic development.

3. Research Problem & Objectives

The overarching research problem of this paper is the marketing and economic link between historical and modern Islamic tourism as a tourism product based on places, people and events. This research problem is addressed in this article by setting the objective of studying various tourism places, people and events in Algeria as historical and in Malaysia as a modern Islamic tourism product. The effective goal of this study is to design a framework presenting the connection between historical and modern Islamic tourism, which would support the solution for the above stated research problem. The assessment of the performance of Algerian and Malaysian Governments regarding tourism development is not the scope of this paper. Ultimately, this paper attempts to provide theoretical suggestions and marketing guideline to governments of Muslim countries seeking to achieve sustainable economic development by appreciating the role of historical and modern Islamic tourism.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Islamic tourism in Algeria

Algeria enjoys a unique geographical location that offers a huge potential for leisure and tourism. A rudimentary search shows several tourism opportunities available to Algeria based on its very robust cultural, geographical and social infrastructure. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) reported that Algeria has a total area of natural World Heritage Sites of 7,361,315 sq. km, which is 8th in the world and the Algerian area of natural World Heritage Sites is 52% of national protected areas (IUCN, 2013). Moreover, assorted landscapes, favourable weather conditions, affordable consumer prices and a historically rich and diverse heritage could enable Algeria to be a leader in tourism destination (Bouadam 2011).

Islam is the predominant religion of Algeria with 98% Muslims where a very high majority belongs to the Sunnis mostly devoted towards the Maliki School of Fiqh or jurisprudence. An overview of the Algerian history reflects that Islam came to Algeria in 642 and was established by 669 since it became very popular among the locals. The key acclaim for this success of Islam as a system being established in Algeria goes to the religious scholars or Sufis who poured in this place from various Muslim states spread from Europe to Asia. These scholars were not only religious preachers but also teachers and reformers of society and hence were able to leave an ever lasting impact on the social and spiritual foundation.

The love and dedication for the Sufi scholars that brought and developed Islam to Algeria throughout its Islamic life is common among Algerians. The shrines and tombs of the great characters of Islam are revered and regularly visited as ‘ziyara’ by the devotees. Due to these reasons Algeria has been selected in this study as a case of historical Islamic tourism with several historical Mosques, Sufi shrines and monasteries.

4.1.1. Islamic People in Algeria

The most famous Sufis that are observed as part of the historical people associated with Islamic tourism in Algeria are:

- Abu Maydan whose tomb is in Tlemcen.
- Sidi M’hamad Bou Qobrine the pioneer of the Rahmaniyya Sufi order.
- Sidi Ahmed Ben Youcef Al Rashidi, buried in the city of Melyana (Islamic Tourism 2007).
- The Patron Saint of Algiers Sidi Abdul-Rahman Athaalibi, he belongs to the family of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) with noble lineage going up to Jaafar Ibn Abi Taleb, author of more than 100 books during the fourteenth century, he is buried at Bab El Oued in the center of Algiers (Islamic Tourism 2007). He is also referred to as the primary ‘people’ in Islamic tourism.

- Sidi Ahmed Zerrouk Al Barnoussi the pioneer of the Chadiliyya Sufi order.
- The lady Lalla Zaynab bint Sheikh Mohammad ibn Abi Al-Qasim.

4.1.2 Islamic Places in Algeria

The following examples of historical Islamic tourism referring to places have been selected from the study of Algeria:

- Among the historical Islamic monuments in Algeria, the Great Mosque of Tlemcen stands out. This Mosque was built during the reign of Sultan Yousuf bin Tashfin in 1082 and after many renovations is still considered as the spiritual capital of Algeria and could be referred to as primary 'place' for Islamic tourism.
- The Great Mosque of Algiers, also known as El Jadid Mosque was also built during the time of Sultan Yousuf bin Tashfin in 1097.
- Historically the most significant site is the Ketchaoua Mosque in the Kasbah of Algiers and is recognized as UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Ketchaoua Mosque was built by the Ottomans in 1612. The French invaders converted it into Saint Phillippe Cathedral in 1838 and erected a gigantic Cross on it in 1940 to celebrate their occupation of the land. Ultimately, in 1962 it was restored as a Mosque again and has been the center of attention for many Muslim tourists around the region.
- The city of Biskra hosts the Mosque of Fatih Okba, which is the resting place of the famous conqueror of North Africa Okba Ibn Nafea Al Fihri (Islamic Tourism 2007).
- The mosque of Sidi Al Moubarak in Khanka Sidi Naji is also known as "the Big Mosque" or the " Friday Mosque". This mosque was constructed in 1734 and is considered as one of the most dominant historical monuments and a center of Islamic and scientific scholarship.
- The Al Bacha Mosque in Oran is well known as an architectural jewel of the region.

These well-known structures not only present the national glory for Algerians but also a good case to be studied as historical places for Islamic tourism.

4.1.3 Islamic Events in Algeria

These Sufi scholars, their shrines and their birth and death anniversaries are examples of historical events that derive historical Islamic tourism.

4.2 Islamic Tourism in Malaysia

Malaysia is considered as the new economic tiger of Asia that has risen against expectations and achieved many economic targets. One of these is the success in tourism development, management and growth. The key success factor behind the Malaysian tourism success is the diversified place, people and events offered to different travellers around the world

(Henderson 2003). Considering the diversification applied by Malaysian tourism, all tourists are aware of the successful campaign of 'Malaysia truly Asia', but then pursuing special interest tourists, Malaysians have well promoted and managed Islamic and Halal Tourism, narrowly targeting Muslim tourists (Anowar, Siwar, Ismail & Islam 2011).

Islamic tourism was a challenge for Malaysian Government as they wanted to attract hedonistic tourists as well as faith-conscious Muslims and family tourists. This issue was resolved by delivering distinct programs and products at state, national and international levels while presenting Islam in their official tourism marketing (Anowar et al. 2011). Islamic tourism also required religious and sacred places, people and events, which were not very common and historically available in Malaysia. Therefore, the authorities decided to start from scratch and to build an innovative and modern Islamic tourism infrastructure in Malaysia. Taking concrete steps towards this goal, the Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC) was launched in early 2009 in the Auditorium at Al-Azim State Mosque in the city of Melaka. This centre helps as a planning block where all research, intelligence and information is processed for effective marketing and management of Islamic tourism. The Board of Directors of ITC consist of senior government people, key professionals in hospitality and tourism and renowned international scholars from esteemed global institutions (ITC 2015).

In order to build their Islamic tourism based on people, Malaysia arranged conferences and seminars highlighting Islamic religious and spiritual issues and invited best scholars and presenters from all corners of the planet. Regarding the events, Malaysia has progressed in Islamic tourism by planning many international festivals, seminars and conferences to draw Muslims together to integrate their professional, spiritual and intellectual capabilities. These festivals invite Muslims from all over the world to destinations that are a far cry from the historical religious places as observed in the case of Algeria.

4.2.1. Islamic Events in Malaysia

Following examples of modern Islamic tourism referring to events have been selected from the study of Malaysia:

- The first Bumitra Islamic Tourism Expo organised in Malaysia from 20-22 February 2009 attracted several Muslim tourists as well as providers of Islamic tourism, Hajj/Umrah agents, hoteliers and industrialists from hospitality and travel (Bumitra Islamic Tourism Expo 2009). This Islamic Tourism Expo exposed the potential market for modern tourism for Muslim tourists, which has been conducted regularly since then. Earlier notions that any type of religious tourism should be based on historical sites were rejected and a paradigm shift was witnessed with modern Islamic tourism being recognised as a formal tourism product.
- The importance of the halal industry and its exponential growth has amazed all industries around the globe who are now busy planning to capitalise on it (Ahmad

2015; Alserhan 2011). The International Halal Product Expo and the Halal Industry Seminar was organised in Malaysia to get all buyers, suppliers and sellers of halal products together. This event was initially planned to expand market opportunities for Malaysian manufacturers. Eventually, the overwhelming response of travellers visiting the halal seminars as a family day out, trying halal product samples from international producers, triggered the idea to have different types of halal seminars for different products as events that would attract high number of Muslim tourists.

- The International Competition of Al Quran Recital and Memorization is another example of an event organised as a product of modern Islamic tourism. Generally, Muslim youth travel to Holy Quran competitions and tried to be the best reciter and memorizer of the Holy Quran. These competitions have been arranged in many Middle Eastern countries for decades, but only Malaysia has been able to be the pioneer to redesign it into a tourism event. Now the young male and female competitors travel to Malaysia on an excursion tour and compete in the Quran recitation and memorisation. More recently, the organisers of these competitions have also packaged tours for the parents and relatives of these youth to join them in the competition while they can also enjoy sightseeing in Malaysia.
- World Islamic Economic Conference (WIEF) and World Islamic Tourism Mart (WITM) have also being organised as forums for Muslim and non-Muslim intellectuals and entrepreneurs to get together and discuss the growth of global and regional economies and tourism based on Islamic principles and teachings. Now such forums are also designed as a family friendly tour package where one family member could officially attend the seminar while the rest of the family would become Islamic tourists in Malaysia.
- The two annual Eids and the holy month of Ramadan are devotedly observed in all Muslim countries. But again, Malaysia has managed to use these as modern Islamic tourism events. In Ramadan, special Aftar dinners are arranged where Muslims break their fasts at sunset after abstaining from eating and drinking since dawn. These Aftar gatherings are promoted as multi-faith congregations where non-Muslims are also invited to observe and share the joy of Muslims breaking fast. Likewise, events are planned for Eids when people from all faiths get together to learn about Islam and try some food, local dresses, hinaa, hijabs and other Islamic cultural experiences. Hence many cultural tourists could be targeted by this event as Islamic tourists.

4.2.2. Islamic Places in Malaysia

The following examples of modern Islamic tourism referring to places have been selected from the study of Malaysia:

- The floating Crystal Mosque, called as Masjid Kristal among Malaysians, was inaugurated in 2008 in Kuala Terengganu. The giant and spectacular building is

constructed entirely from steel and tinted glass attracting many Muslim and non-Muslim travellers till today. The Crystal Mosque also markets itself as a spiritual theme park presenting scaled-down replicas of historically famous mosques, shrines, tombs, mausoleums and other Islamic structure. Hence, a good marketing of the replicas of the Islamic places is proving to be more effective than some of the original sites.

- The capital of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur is now home to the new Islamic Arts Garden Complex, which is a centre of Islamic arts heritage (ITC 2015). Regular exhibitions on Islamic calligraphy and Quran manuscripts are displayed here to attract Muslim tourists. The Islamic Arts Garden Complex also presents globally inspired and borrowed Islamic architecture, interior design and paintings. The crown display is of an original manuscript of the Holy Quran that is considered priceless by devout Muslims. Visitors also get an opportunity to watch shows presenting the process of the Holy Quran being preserved, copied and produced.
- The Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia is known as the largest Islamic museum in South East Asia (ITC 2015). Again a good example of modern Islamic tourism based on a place that has just been constructed to attract several spiritual tourists. This Islamic Arts Museum holds more than 7,000 artefacts in 12 galleries that also include an extensive library on Islamic art, but built on modern designs. The Islamic art pieces displayed in this museum come from different parts of the wide spread Islamic world, from East to the West. The main attraction of this museum is the world's largest scale model of the central Mosque of Makkah, Masjid Al-Haram, which is the spiritual centre of Islam and known as the House of Allah. Appreciating the fact that non-Muslims are restricted to visit the real city of Makkah and could never able to witness Masjid Al-Haram, this replica is a key spiritual product that can take non-Muslim spiritual tourists as close to reality as possible.

5. Conclusion

The findings and discussion in the preceding section leads towards an explicit conclusion that Islamic tourism can be studied, evaluated and promoted by adopting three elements of places, people and events. This study also conceptually approves the impression that Islamic tourism is based on historical and modern aspects. It can also be noted that probably Islamic tourism is the only type of tourism today that can be marketed as a historical product as well as a modern product. It all depends upon how operators can effectively package the related place, people and events. This study has contributed to the theory of Islamic marketing, management and tourism, spirituality, tourism business and marketing, by identifying the elements to measure tourism performance and use effective tools to position spiritual tourism products and services.

The conceptual framework given in the following table illustrates the findings and conclusion of this conceptual study indicating the places, people and events being marketed separately as historical and modern Islamic tourism in Algeria and Malaysia respectively.

Table 1: Conceptual framework to market historical and modern Islamic tourism in Algeria and Malaysia

ISLAMIC TOURISM	Algeria - Historical	Malaysia - Modern
PLACES	Mosques, Sufi Shrines, Islamic Monasteries, Islamic Schools or Madrassas	State-of-Art Mosques, Islamic Museums, Replicas of famous Islamic Sites
PEOPLE	Sufis of the past, Religious Leaders	Modern Scholars of Islam experts in Technology, Islam & Science
EVENTS	Anniversaries of Sufi scholars, National Days, Eid and Ramadan Programs.	Islamic Knowledge & Business Seminars, Islamic & Halal Tourism, Eid & Ramadan gatherings.

6. Future Research Direction

An empirical study to confirm the findings of this research is an evident future research direction. In order to test and confirm the reliability and validity of conclusions of conceptual findings of this research, further qualitative and quantitative study is suggested. The quantification of findings related to historical and modern Islamic tourism based on behavior and attitude of tourists needs to be undertaken in order to reach evidence based tourism marketing strategies. An empirical study on the behavior of Muslim visitors who qualify as Islamic tourists, regarding their understanding and preferences for historical or modern Islamic tourism is an imperative future study. Similarly, more new and useful segments of Islamic tourists could be identified by an empirical research based on tourist's regional, ethnic and sectarian backgrounds. A quantitative research would provide better marketing information on tourists' tastes and preferences for tourism marketers. Meanwhile, a qualitative study could be conducted with management and organizers of places, people and events linked to Islamic tourism, which will provide in-depth details regarding the supply-side of tourism marketing and management.

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