

Chapter 4

An Evaluation of Tourist Profile, Travel Agencies, and Guidance Services in the Concept of Halal Tourism

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Changes in the tourist profile and tourism understanding around the world affect Muslim tourists, who perform tourism actions within the framework of the orders and prohibitions of Islam. In this direction, the aim of this study in the context of halal tourism is to examine the tourist profile and to provide literature support on travel agencies and guidance services in the context of halal tourism by revealing the behavior, expectations, and tendencies of Muslim tourist profiles. The tourist profile in the context of halal tourism, which is attributed as a new tourism concept, and its contribution to the literature on travel agencies and guidance services reveals the importance of this study. From this point of view, in the context of halal tourism, tourist profile, travel agencies, and tourism guidance, services issues were tried to be given under the main headings. It is thought that this chapter will contribute to halal tourism professionals and halal tourism-related researchers.

INTRODUCTION

Halal tourism is defined as the travel activities of halal-conscious tourists for any permissible or lawful (halal) purpose (El-Gohary, 2016). This form of tourism is demanded generally by people who belong to the Islamic religion and want to live their lives according to the provisions of Sharia. These people, who participate in various tourism activities, try to shape all their lifestyles, entertainment, touristic motivations, and consumption concepts according to the principles of the Islamic religion. Due to these features, the tourist profiles, product-service expectations, and holiday-travel understanding of these

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people can show various differences compared to other individuals. In the literature, it has not been found that any generally accepted name has been given for this type of tourist who participates in Islamic tourism activities (Vargas-Sánchez & Moral-Moral, 2019). However, it is considered that it would be appropriate for these tourists to be called by a different name such as “devout Muslim tourists” which can be used to describe the tourists in this profile due to the different tourist profiles they have, just as individuals participate in congress tourism are called “congressists” (Sormaz et al., 2017). “Devout” literally means “religious person”. In this context, it is possible to define “devout tourist” as a person who performs tourism action within the framework of the orders and prohibitions of him/her religion. From this point of view, it can be stated that the concept of a devout Muslim tourist briefly is a person who performs tourism action within the framework of the orders and prohibitions of Islam (Sandy, 2019). While purchasing the touristic products and services offered to him/her, a devout tourist also acts in accordance with his/her religious beliefs and buys some products and does not approach others (Yousaf & Xiucheng, 2018). In this respect, the concept of “halal product” is effective in product and service preferences for the devout Muslim tourist.

The concept of halal is not just a concept used to express the compliance of food and beverages with Islamic principles. In addition, the concept of halal is an important concept that has an impact on all areas of life of Muslims. Meeting the elements needed during travels in line with Islamic rules and beliefs such as “accommodation”, “food and beverage” and “transportation” as in Muslim-friendly tourism are the basis of the concept of halal tourism (Zawawi et al., 2017).

Muslim tourists traveling within the scope of this type of tourism are basically expected to be people who try to admire the works of Allah, who is the one and only God in Islam, and look at the world with an example. Because halal tourism is a tourism practice that makes use of the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the travel culture created around these two foundations. With this type of tourism, individuals travel with the main purpose of Allah's consent and implement all tourism activities on the basis of Islam. This form of behavior is completely in line with the orders and prohibitions of the Qur'an, the holy book of the religion of Islam, and the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). In addition, this form of behavior is also based on the lifestyle and discourses of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). For this reason, the tourist profile, expectations, travel styles, behaviors, consumption expenditures, entertainment, and touristic tendencies of this segment differ compared to other tourist profiles (Essoo & Dibb, 2004; Tajzadeh, 2013). Considering the fact that the changes in the tourist profile and tourism understanding around the world affect Muslim tourists, the aim of this study is to examine the tourist profile, to provide literature support on travel agencies and guidance services in the context of halal tourism by revealing the behavior, expectations, and tendencies of this tourist profile. In this study, it is also aimed to inform the readers about the travel agencies and tourism guidance services in the context of halal tourism and to inform the travel agencies and tourist guides that can serve Muslim tourists in the process of planning their travels and during their travels, about the expectations of these tourists. The tourist profile in the context of halal tourism, which is attributed as a new tourism concept, and its contribution to the literature on travel agencies and guidance services reveals the importance of this study. From this point of view, in the context of halal tourism, tourist profile, travel agencies, and tourism guidance services issues were tried to be given under the main headings. It is thought that this paper will contribute to halal tourism professionals and halal tourism-related researchers.

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