POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS / MARKETING
OF ISLAMIC TOURISM PRODUCTS

By:
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BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOTAL POPULATION</th>
<th>422,700</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MUSLIM POPULATION</td>
<td>333,100</td>
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Source: Index Mundi – Brunei Demographics Profile 2015
HISTORY OF ISLAM IN BRUNEI

• Brunei became a Muslim country in 14th Century during the reign of the 1st Sultan of Brunei, Sultan Muhammad Shah – formerly known as Awang Alak Betatar (1363-1492);

• The 3rd Sultan of Brunei, Sultan Sharif Ali (1425-1432), added the name Darussalam (“Abode of Peace”) after Brunei – to emphasise Islam as Brunei’s state religion. He was a descendent of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) through His grandson Hassan;

• Until today, Brunei remains the world’s only Malay Islamic Monarchy (Melayu Islam Beraja – MIB) with an unbroken royal lineage that has ruled the nation for the past 600 years;
THE SIGNIFICANT OF ISLAMIC TOURISM

• Geared towards individual Muslim who abide by Islamic rules;

• HALAL – permissible in Arabic: applied to ALL including food; Syariah compliant products;

• The categorization of tourism related goods and services that are designed, produced, and presented to the markets could be considered under Islamic or halal tourism;

• Features of Islamic Tourism:
  • No Islamic element in default and vices to Allah Ta'ala;
  • Islamic Tourism is Tourism knowledge, to recognize the creator, from some signs at every destination;
  • Islamic Tourism is a practice encouraged by the Quran;
  • Islamic Tourism provide happiness and satisfaction of spiritual, mental and physical.
• Islamic heritage – Intrinsic to the Bruneian culture from the philosophy of Brunei being an MIB country which emphasizes on:
  • Malay language;
  • Culture;
  • Community;
  • Teaching of Islamic Laws and values;

• This can be observed through:
  • Incorporation of Syariah Law;
  • Incorporation of compulsory Islamic studies into the national education curriculum and Religious schools;
  • Ban from sales and public consumption of alcohol and absence of nightclubs;
  • Conservative way of dress;
  • Compulsory closure of all offices and shops during Friday prayer;
  • Regular involvement of royal family in religious and community activities;
SYARIAH AND TOURISM IN BRUNEI PERSPECTIVE

• Syariah, literally translated, means "the way". It is the law that governs and regulate the day-to-day aspects of a Muslim’s life. It is the path that every Muslim is required to follow (Doi, 1984).

• Syariah laws regulate all aspects of interactions between a Muslim and his peers, with other human beings as well as with his environment. Hence, Syariah laws have direct implications on the tourism and hospitality industry.
A fundamental doctrine of Islam is extolling virtues and upholding morality, and deprecating sin and evil in all shapes and forms. Islam, as a way of life that is “syumul” or “all virtuous”, scorns not only the evils themselves but the ways leading to evil (Muhammed Salih Al-Munajjid, 2009);

The Syariah prohibits Muslims to go to places where immoral acts happen. Rasma (2008) explains that if tourism involves immoral and corrupt activities, a Muslim is prohibited from joining in or assists others to disobey Allah and go against His commands. Therefore, entertainment such as night clubs and adult TV channels, are strictly prohibited in tourist places and accommodations;

Therefore Brunei has long banned all night clubs or pubs either in Hotels or in a separate shop;
The consumption of alcohol is forbidden in Islam and its ban covers the consumer, the purveyor and seller, the manufacturer, as well as the carrier;

Brunei Darussalam has long been known for being a “dry country”; alcohol is not sold anywhere in the country including in hotels, restaurants and even in the Brunei national carrier, Royal Brunei; and public consumption of alcohol is prohibited by law;

However, non-Muslims are allowed to bring into Brunei 12 cans of beer and two bottles of other alcohol. However, alcohol permits must be obtained upon arrival in Brunei while going through customs;
Another fundamental Islamic principle is its emphasis on cleanliness and this extends to mere physical cleanliness. Food items have to be certified “halal” before they can be consumed by a Muslim. This certification means that the food items are not only clean and free of diseases it also means that it is prepared and slaughtered according to Syariah guidance;

Brunei has initiated the ‘Brunei Halal Brand’ certification in its efforts to make sure that all foods and food items consumed and sold in the country complied with Syariah law and fit for consumption by Muslims as well as those whose products carry the label;

It is mandatory for restaurants and food manufacturers in Brunei catering to the Muslim community to obtain a Halal Certificate as well as Halal Branding;
• In closing all roads that lead to evil, free mixing of the sexes and, the wearing of inappropriate and revealing clothing are strictly prohibited in Islam. These acts can lead to *fitnah*, arouse desires, and encourage the commitment indecent acts. Therefore, in upholding the sense of morality and decency, the tourism and hospitality industry should take this into consideration and segregate male and female facilities, such as gym and swimming pool;

• Like most other hotels, beauty and health establishments are always available. New regulations for beauty and health establishments have been unveiled by the Attorney General's Chambers (AGC) in Brunei, including laws that prevent male employees from treating female clients, and vice versa, and keeping male and female treatment areas strictly separate;

• Brunei might want to implement the same policy to gym and swimming pool i.e. such as, a segregated timing for male and female users;
Praying is one of the pillars of Islam and each Muslim is ordered to pray five times daily. The tourism and hospitality industry need to provide prayer facilities to Muslim tourists, such as prayer halls or rooms, and place indicators for the direction of the qibla where Muslims face when performing their prayers;

- Brunei has 117 Mosques;
- Brunei built its 1st mosque in the 15th Century;
- 1st Grand Mosque was built and officiated in 1958 – Omar Ali Saifuddien Mosque and 2nd Grand Mosque was built and officiated in 1994 – Jame’ Asr Hassanil Bolkiah;
- Muslims prayer rooms are always available in most hotels and public buildings in Brunei to enable all Muslims to perform their obligations.
PRODUCT AND MARKET DEVELOPMENT

• According to BTDD Master Plan 2011-2015, two main clusters have been identified to drive tourism growth under the primary offerings i.e. Nature and Culture & Islamic (heritage) to be supported by secondary offerings and optimization of current product offering. Many tourists travel for culture and history and contribute significantly to the economy in destinations with well-developed offerings.

• According to the MasterCard-Crescent Rating Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI), Brunei is amongst the top 10 spot of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) destinations in 2015;

• Countries within the region are expanding and developing their offerings to attract cultural tourists. For instance, Singapore has the new National Art Gallery in 2014; Thailand has the Bangkok Art and Culture Centre which was opened in 2008; Philippines has proposed expansion and rehabilitation of the Cultural Centre of the Philippines etc.;
• For Islamic Tourism in particular, Brunei needs to improve its current infrastructures and facilities;

• One in particular is the Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Islamic Exhibition Gallery (BPISHHB), on how to position this exhibition hall to become one of the main tourist attractions in Brunei.

• The current BPISHHB is on temporary location awaiting for the permanent building to be completed by March 2017;
• BPISHHB is a realisation of the aspiration of His Majesty the Sultan of Brunei in fulfilling the appropriateness of Islamic knowledge as a heritage that is still kept largely in manuscripts and other Islamic heritage materials, the excellent quality of which are to be restored;

• The construction of this new exhibition gallery building with the concept of a knowledge museum, reflects the intellectualism of a true Muslim Monarch’s leadership. The new exhibition hall will not only extend the function and agenda of collecting the materials for permanent exhibition, but will continue to expand the knowledge in Islamic heritage, particularly through research and dissemination of the research findings for Islam, the Muslim community and humanity;
This building would become a platform for propagation of Islamic teachings that can open the minds of visitors with a new experience through knowledge that is beneficial to all generations, so that the strength of Aqidah will be secured forever in line with His Majesty’s pure intention to uphold Islamic knowledge and values in Brunei Darussalam – the Abode of Peace.
FUTURE RESEARCH AND CONSIDERATION

• There is also considerable scope to further develop products and services to cater for the needs of Muslim visitors including the availability of Syariah-Compliant Hotel (SCH) Concepts. Although most hotels in Brunei are dry-hotels (no alcohol and serving halal food only) but the Bruneian and the relevant authorities need to understand the overall concept of SCH. Hence, Brunei would eventually have a comprehensive set of Islamic Tourism tour packages;

• A research was done in 2013 by Haji Mahmud bin Haji Mohamed, entitled “Promoting Islamic Tourism In Brunei: Through Customers Understanding Towards The Syariah Compliant Hotel Concepts” (MBA, University of Nottingham – 2013), which can be used by the Brunei Government for future research and consideration, aimed at promoting its Islamic tourism;
• This research has tried to address the need to enhance the development of Islamic Tourism in Brunei through the improvement of its current tourism infrastructure, focussing on the establishment of SCH using a conceptual framework the author has developed specifically to expose the factors required for any Muslim country to be successful in today’s highly competitive hospitality market;

• In this respect, the author has tested the framework with mass visitors through their ‘Understanding’ on the importance of implementing the concept of SCH on three independent variables such as ‘Attitudes’, ‘Acceptance’ and ‘Trust’. Results have showed that the level and strength of these three factors have positive relationship with the customers understanding towards the SCH Concepts;
• In respect of the overall level of understanding of most respondents towards the SCH concepts, the author has found that it is only at moderate level albeit there were moderate and positive correlations between their understanding, attitude, acceptance and trust towards the concepts;

• This indicated that there is a high potential market (untapped) that is available for this concept to be implemented in Brunei. However, this would need intensive marketing and awareness campaigns as proven from the analysis whereby their overall understanding is only at moderate level;

• Moreover the concepts are still unknown and unclear to Brunei hotelier as per mentioned by the President of Brunei Associations of Hotel. The overall results showed that based on the three independent variables of customers understanding towards the concepts on SCH, there is no doubt that implementing the concept of SCH in Brunei is feasible;
Similarly, the interest in creating the Islamic banking system, which is governed according to Syariah, is not less important. In line with the current needs in the world of global challenges today, the existence of a hotel in accordance to the Syariah concept is a fundamental requirement;

In conclusion, the Muslim travel segment is undoubtedly extremely attractive for countries and service providers. But they need to think carefully about how they brand themselves to appeal to both Muslim and Non-Muslims sensibilities. And these branding claims need to be precisely and substantively supported by the services and experiences available once the tourists arrive;

Exclusively for Brunei with its significant Islamic values and MIB ideology, Brunei should continue to develop and market the Islamic tourism internationally by marketing to countries with significant Muslims communities as well minority Muslims communities and make Islamic tour packages available with collaboration between tour operators and other relevant parties;
• These initiatives would eventually benefited Brunei in improving awareness of Brunei’s Islamic cultural heritage, complement Brunei’s MIB and basis for attracting more Muslims Tourists and the non-Muslims to Brunei in the future;

• Furthermore, it is key to bring the Brunei’s infrastructure up to another level. Much is already in place for religious travellers, such as the ban of alcohol and easy excess of prayer rooms and Islamic facilities, halal food and other halal-oriented hospitality, but the country has more work to be done in building additional facilities to accommodate for travellers;

• There is also the fact that many tourist want the luxurious of staying in prestigious hotels and going on package tours while continuing to practice their Islamic beliefs and values during their visit to the country. This is the niche market on Brunei Darussalam can focus.
والله ولى التوفيق والسلام

THANK YOU