

Inbound Muslim Travellers' Profile In Malaysia

Intan Shafina Suid¹, Dzulkarnain Musa² & Rashdan Rashid³

¹Langkawi Tourism Academy@Kolej Komuniti Langkawi, Kedah, Malaysia

²Politeknik Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin, Perlis, Malaysia

³Politeknik Sultan Abdul Halim Muadzam Shah, Kedah, Malaysia
Malaysia

Abstract: Today, Muslim travellers segment are becoming high market potential in global tourism business. They are heterogeneous in nature, made up differences and looking for a wide range of tourism products. As such, information on Inbound Muslim travellers' (IMT) profile and travel characteristic will benefit tourism players in tailoring suitable tourism product for this segment. However, to date the detail information on their demographic and travel characteristic is limited. Beside, due to the increasingly competitive from Muslim and Non-Muslim countries in catering this segment, it is essential for Malaysia to have the latest information as to gain better understanding of IMT. Therefore, this paper is trying to give insight into IMT's profile in Malaysia. A survey was conducted at the international airports of Kuala Lumpur and Langkawi. The 600 questionnaire were returned and a descriptive analysis was performed to report the result. The results of demographics and travel characteristics can be used by tourism players in planning and development of Malaysia tourism industry.

Key words: *Inbound Muslim travelers, Profile, Travel characteristic, Demographic*

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism industry is becoming one of the most influential sector to the Malaysia' economy. In relation to that, government is focusing on the Muslim travellers segment in strengthening the sector. Recently, Malaysia tourism industry is focusing on the Muslim travellers segment. The segment has become one of the main contributors to the national and global tourism growth [1-3]. The focus is tailored according to the fast emerging economy shown by Muslim travellers market segment [4-5]. Mastercard and CrescentRating [6] also reported that Muslim travellers' expenditure growth rate is expected to be on average at 4.79% per year between 2012 until 2020. This expenditure growth rate is higher than the expected average global growth rate of 3.8% during the same period. The comparison between the Muslim travellers' and the global expenditure growth rate shows a very high potential of Muslim travellers segment's contribution to the global tourism industry. The high market potential of Muslim travellers in global tourism business has benefitted many tourism destinations including Malaysia.

In focusing on this segment, Malaysian government has established Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC) in February 2009 as an early initiative to ensure the right strategy attracting this segment. The main objective of ITC is to enhance the

development and expansion of Islamic tourism market [7]. On the other hand, the main function of this centre is to assist Ministry of Tourism, Art and Culture (MOTAC) in undertaking strategic tourism research through collaboration with local and international tourism research institutes and institutes of higher learning. Besides, ITC also serves as an advisory body and reference for the stakeholders and industry players by providing related information as well as training and services in relation to Islamic tourism [7]. As such, entrusted upon ITC is responsibility to ensure the success of Islamic tourism product in Malaysia.

The number of Muslim travellers arrival was about 5.2 million and it contributes approximately 20% of the total tourist arrival in 2015 [7]. ITC has classified IMT into six categories as ASEAN (SEA), East Asia (EA), South Asia (SA), West Asia (WA), Europe (EU) and others (OT). The classification is sufficient to determine the typology and common traits of IMT in Malaysia. At present, the top five of Muslim tourist's per capita expenditure in Malaysia are from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Iran. Meanwhile, Muslim countries of Indonesia, Brunei, Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan contribute to the top five tourist arrival to Malaysia [8]. Beside, Malaysia is the top destination among Muslim travellers [6]. However, fierce competitions do exist from other

Muslim countries like Indonesia, Qatar and UAE. At the same time, non-Muslim countries such as Singapore, Vietnam, Taiwan, China, South Korea and Japan are also becoming a challenge for Malaysia to remain as the top Muslim travellers destination choice [2, 8-9].

To capture this valuable market segment, these non-Muslim countries are gearing towards having Muslim tourism friendly environment such as developing halal industry [2, 8-9]. Given the importance of Muslim travellers segment and the challenge faced by Malaysia to retain its position as favourite destination, it is crucial for authorities and tourism players to have comprehensive information of their profile [2, 9]. Tourist profile is important as it has become the second phase of market segmentation [7, 9, 24]. The profiling phase involved the process of identifying the segment according to their personal and travel characteristic which may differ significantly between or among analysed groups [10-13].

In Malaysian context, although the ITC was classified IMT according to the geographical segmentation which consist of six market segments, to date the detail information of each segment on their demographic and travel characteristic does not yet exist. Thus, this study will provide insight on Muslim travellers' current profile which is beneficial in developing effective marketing strategies for the purpose of influencing their satisfaction and encouraging repeat visit.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Generally, one of the main purpose of inbound Muslim travellers (IMT) visiting Malaysia is for leisure. They are looking for knowledge and education, family togetherness, achievement, excitement and escape from their routine [14]. The estimated number of IMTs' arrival is increasing as shown in Table 2.2. Normally, the high demand from this segment is in the months of July to September [2]. Ali and Mohd Safar [15] stated that the increasing number of IMT arrival is the impact from the promotion of Islamic tourism concept that is being highlighted in the Muslim tour packages specifically in term of halal activities, food and beverage, and hotel services. For example, the introduction of Islamic tourism concept in Malaysia has gained attention from Muslim travellers who are looking for halal food during their trip [16].

Furthermore, some activities in eco-tourism, agro-tourism, cultural heritage and health activities are tailored accordingly to fulfil Muslim requirements [17]. Besides the Islamic concept, the destination attributes such as natural scenery, wide space & activities, cleanliness & shopping, modern atmosphere, and different culture also play important roles [14]. The promotions were focused on Muslim travellers who seek pleasure of urban and ecological tourism [14]. Hence, Malaysia has been highlighted as an ideal destination for leisure and at the same time still maintain Islamic customs and traditions. Table 1 presents the estimated Muslim travellers' arrival to Malaysia.

Table 1: Estimated Muslim Travellers' Arrivals to Malaysia

Year	Tourist Arrivals in Malaysia				Estimated Muslim Tourist Arrival to Malaysia			
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2012	2013	2014	2015
SEA	18,687,899	18,979,499	20,250,862	19,055,513	4,310,069	4,406,632	4,682,637	4,460,318
EA	21,751,932	22,402,033	23,696,295	22,475,567	34,822	39,802	30,640	31,798
SA	22,795,651	23,465,281	24,988,779	23,558,468	257,320	298,117	403,542	313,974
WA	318,401	280,369	304,925	261,423	229,272	198,553	206,857	174,605
EU	553,325	575,485	635,061	566,704	58,657	54,801	68,026	60,235
OT	955,459	979,261	1,048,381	903,506	40,346	41,183	40,198	25,200
Total	24,593,724	25,247,085	26,906,956	25,248,078	5,019,615	5,120,904	5,529,968	5,152,948
Estimated Percentage of Muslim Tourist Arrival to Malaysia					20.41	20.28	20.55	20.41

**SEA (ASEAN), EA (East Asia), SA (South Asia), WA (West Asia), EU (Europe) and OT (others)

Source: Islamic Tourism Centre, Malaysia (2015)

As shown in Table 1, Muslim travellers segment has contributed more than 20% from the total tourist arrival in Malaysia [7]. Given the importance of IMT segment to Malaysian tourism industry it is crucial to have their update profiling that cover information of demography and travel characteristics as to understand this segment better. The tourist profile is vital not only to better understand IMTs' characteristics but also as a tool

to assist marketing decisions, to enhance tourism growth as well as to maximize benefits to the destination countries [10]. For example, the information on length of stay (LOS) will indicate to the amount of time tourist have at a destination. The shorter stays can cause greater administration costs for some companies and the promotional campaigns must be adjusted according to the tourist's decisions with regard to the time they

spent at a destination [17]. Given the importance of tourist profile to tourism development, the study with the focus on this area could benefit to the Malaysian tourism growth.

3. METHODOLOGY

The respondent of this study was inbound Muslim travellers (IMT) who visit Malaysia from January until April 2017 and measured as an individual basis. The IMTs consist from six categories of South East Asia, East Asia, South Asia, West Asia, Europe and others. The reason for selecting respondents from the six categories is due to the classification determine by ITC as each category was selected equally to have better understanding of their profiles. Thus, this study involved 600 respondents as the sample size is already exceeding the standard stated by Krejcie and Morgan [19] where if the population is more than one million, the sample size is 385.

This study was applied probability sampling technique as the selected samples representing the whole population of IMT. The multistage sampling techniques used which involved two stages. The first stage used clustered sampling techniques to cover the population of IMT that came to Malaysia where the sampling frame is not available. The cluster sampling was applied as the size of IMT's population who visited Malaysia during period of research cannot be easily ascertained. Accordingly, in this stage Peninsular Malaysia was grouped into four regions which were Central, East Coast, Northern and Southern [8]. However, it is impossible for the researcher to conduct this study throughout all Malaysia. Moreover, the selected respondents in any location in Malaysia can then be considered as a homogenous group when they fulfil the selection criteria of the particular study [20-21]. For this study, the selected respondents should fulfil as IMTs who came to Malaysia for leisure purposes and already stayed for at least two nights as allow them to answer the questionnaire.

After selected clusters of venue for data collection, the second stage involved systematic sampling procedures. The systematic sampling was used as the mode of selecting the sample enables researchers to avoid biases in identifying the samples [22]. The departure hall of airports used as venue for data collection which was involved the Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) and Langkawi International Airport. Previous literature also stated that Kuala Lumpur and Langkawi as among of the popular places

visited by Muslim travellers in Malaysia [23]. The second stage of this study used systematic sampling to select the respondents who comprise every 10th passenger that passed the airports security check at the departure hall. The respondents were approached at the permissible point by airport administration after the security check to fill the questionnaire. If the 10th passenger was not an IMT to fulfil the criteria mention earlier, then the questionnaire would be given to the next passenger as a substitute.

The questionnaire contained two sections. Section A focusing on IMTs' demographic characteristics including gender, age, marital status, nationality, occupation, monthly income, and education level. While, Section B is for travel characteristics consists of length of stay, tour package, travel companion, source of information numbers of visit, transportations mode within Malaysia, types of accommodation, activities undertaken during the trip and numbers of visit.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

There are 700 of questionnaires were distributed and 600 sets were returned as equal to approximately 86 percent of response rate. The 600 set of questionnaire are usable and proceed for further analysis. The statistical analysis used were descriptive analysis (frequencies and percentage) using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 22.0.

4.1 Demographic

Table 2 illustrates the characteristics of the respondents according to their original region. Majority of the male respondents were from East Asia (10.8%), while 11.5 percent of the female respondents were from South East Asia. Majority if the respondents were aged 21 to 25 years old, mostly of them were from West Asia (37.0%). From the 70.8 percent are married respondents, most of them were from South Asia and majority of single respondents were from the other regions. Government employee is the highest percentage for occupation represent 25 percent where mostly come Europe. Respondents from South East Asia showed the highest percentage with the income less than USD1001 and mostly came from East Asia. The highest income of more than USD12001 mostly came from Europe. In term of academic qualification, most of the IMT are Degree holders (40.0).

Table 2: Demographic Background of Respondents

	SEA	EA	SA	WA	EU	OT	Total (n=600)
Gender							
Male	5.2%	10.8%	8.2%	8.3%	8.2%	7.0%	47.7%
Female	11.5%	5.8%	8.5%	8.3%	8.5%	9.7%	52.3%
Age							
Below 20 years old	1.0%	9.0%	10.0%	7.0%	0.0%	20.0%	7.8%
21-25	22.0%	8.0%	22.0%	37.0%	14.0%	28.0%	21.8%
26-30	15.0%	16.0%	19.0%	28.0%	18.0%	21.0%	19.5%
31-35	9.0%	6.0%	12.0%	12.0%	19.0%	9.0%	11.2%
36-40	17.0%	9.0%	11.0%	8.0%	15.0%	11.0%	11.8%
41-45	25.0%	15.0%	8.0%	7.0%	12.0%	4.0%	11.8%
46-50	8.0%	15.0%	8.0%	0.0%	4.0%	1.0%	6.0%
51-55	1.0%	14.0%	6.0%	0.0%	9.0%	3.0%	5.5%
56-60	0.0%	2.0%	4.0%	0.0%	4.0%	1.0%	1.8%
61-65	1.0%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.0%	1.0%	1.0%
66-70	1.0%	1.0%	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	1.0%	0.7%
71-75	0.0%	4.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%	0.0%	1.0%
Marital Status							
Married	10.3%	11.3%	14.3%	13.3%	12.7%	8.8%	70.8%
Single	6.3%	5.3%	2.3%	3.3%	4.0%	7.8%	29.2%
Occupation							
Professional	9.2%	0.7%	0.8%	5.0%	1.8%	2.7%	20.2%
Government Employee	2.5%	2.8%	4.7%	4.3%	7.8%	2.8%	25.0%
Private Sector employee	0.2%	2.0%	4.5%	1.5%	2.0%	1.8%	12.0%
House wife	3.0%	3.5%	2.5%	4.7%	1.5%	7.2%	22.3%
Self employed	0.0%	4.5%	2.5%	0.7%	2.0%	1.7%	6.8%
Business owner	0.0%	4.5%	2.5%	0.7%	2.0%	1.7%	11.3%
Retiree	0.3%	1.2%	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	1.8%
Student	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%
Income (\$USD)							
<1000	4.5%	10.9%	8.5%	6.5%	2.7%	7.2%	40.4%
1001-3000	12.3%	2.0%	4.2%	2.9%	6.9%	4.5%	32.8%
3001-5000	1.1%	3.6%	2.4%	3.3%	2.5%	1.8%	14.7%
5001-7000	0.0%	0.7%	1.3%	1.3%	1.1%	1.3%	5.6%
7001-9000	0.0%	0.4%	0.2%	0.7%	0.4%	0.2%	1.8%
9001-11000	0.0%	0.2%	0.4%	0.0%	0.7%	0.2%	1.4%
11001-12000	0.2%	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.7%
>12001	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%	0.4%	2.5%
Education							
PhD	0.3%	0.2%	0.7%	0.8%	0.7%	1.2%	3.8%
Master	3.3%	2.8%	5.7%	2.8%	4.0%	4.0%	22.7%
Degree	7.9%	2.3%	7.0%	8.9%	6.7%	7.2%	40.0%
Diploma	4.2%	1.3%	0.5%	1.0%	2.0%	2.2%	11.2%
Certificate	0.7%	3.7%	0.5%	1.0%	2.0%	0.5%	8.4%
Secondary school	0.3%	6.4%	2.3%	1.7%	1.3%	1.7%	13.7%
Others	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%

**SEA (ASEAN), EA (East Asia), SA (South Asia), WA (West Asia), EU (Europe) and OT (others)

The above finding shows that, most of the IMT's in Malaysia are among female and youngsters. Most of them are married and have their own career with the income less than USD1000 and they also educated as most of them are Degree holder.

4.2 Travel Characteristics

The travel characteristics are reporting base on the finding according to six groups that have mentioned earlier. This section consists of the information on length of stay, the usage of tour packages, types of tour packages, travel companion, source of information, transportation,

accommodation, visit places, first visit and number of past visit.

Table 3 shows that majority of the respondents from SEA group stayed 1 to 5 nights (99%) and used tour packages (60%). Most of them preferred to join group tours (95%). Most of IMT's from this group preferred to travel with their friends (35%) and only 0.5 percent are travelling alone. The information about Malaysia has been gathered from Tourist Information Center (in their home countries) (63%) and internet (46.0%). In term of transportations within Malaysia, most of them chose low cost air travel (79.0%) and taxi (69%). They are preferred to stay low cost hotel (1-2 star hotel/resort) (77%). Their main activities were shopping (89.0%) and sightseeing (65.0%).

Meanwhile, 74 percent of the tourist from SEA indicated that this was their first visit to Malaysia.

The respondents from East Asia (EA) normally stayed in Malaysia for 1 to 5 nights (71%) for this study period. Less than half of the respondents (53.1%) used tour packages with majority of them used group tour packages (74.10%). While, almost half of them were travelling with family (50%). The most important source of information about Malaysia obtains from the internet (65.5%). In Malaysia, majority of them used bus/coach (57%) and low cost air travel (47%) compared to other types of transportations. Furthermore, majority of the respondents from EA stayed in 3 stars hotels (69%). Their main activities in Malaysia were shopping (97%) and sightseeing (89%). Most of the respondents visiting Malaysia for the first time (70%).

Respondents from South Asia (SA) stayed almost 1 to 10 nights (94%) which half of them are stayed for 5 to 10 nights (50%). More than half of respondents preferred not to use tour packages (58%) while travelling in Malaysia. For those who chose the tour package, they chose city or regional tours (43.2%). More than half of respondents travelled with their spouse (58%) and family (55%). Information gathered about Malaysia was from the internet (50%) and word of mouth (46%). Low cost air travel (68%) and taxi (76%) were the most popular transportation used within Malaysia. They stayed at 4-5 stars hotels/resort (48%) and 3 stars hotels/resorts (45%). Their main activities were shopping (66%) and sightseeing (87%). Meanwhile, 73 percent of the tourist from SA indicated that this was their first visit to Malaysia.

Most of the respondents from West Asia (WA) stayed for 5 to 10 nights in Malaysia for their current visits (40%). Only 48 percent of the respondents used tour packages with majority of them used city or regional tours (53.2%). Majority of the respondents from WA also have been accompanied by their family (39%) or their spouse (67%). The most important source of information about Malaysia was the internet (72%). In Malaysia, majority of them used low cost air travel

(75%) and taxi (80%) compared to other types of transportation. In term of accommodation, majority of the respondents from WA stayed in 4-5 stars hotels (74.2%). Their main activities in Malaysia were shopping (84%), sightseeing (79%) and visiting natural/man made sites (72%). Most of the respondents are first timer (77%).

It can also be found in Table 3 that majority of the respondents from Europe (EU) stayed for 1 to 5 nights (48%) and not using touring packages (77%). For those who chose the tour package, they chose city or regional tours (52.4%). Half of them travelled with their spouse (49%) and family (40%). Information gathered about Malaysia was from the internet (70%), word of mouth (24%), brochure (20%) and travel guide book (20%). In term of transportation within Malaysia, most of them chose low cost air travel (37.4%) and taxi (84.8%). They stayed at high range hotels (59.6%) or mid-range hotels/resorts (36.4%). Their main activities were sightseeing (95%), shopping (78%), visiting natural and manmade site (41%) and fine dining (33%). 72.7 percent of the tourist from EU indicated that this was their first visit.

The last group of respondents is others (OT) as they were from countries of North and South America, Africa and Oceania. This group have tendency to stay longer compared to other group as the percentage for staying in Malaysia for more than ten nights is the highest (39%). 43 percent were using tour packages and chose group tour services (59.1 %) to travel in Malaysia. The respondents preferred to travel with their spouse (40.2%) and family (36.2%). The internet (63.3%) and word of mouth (28.8%) were among the favourite source of information about Malaysia. Most of them chose low cost air travel (78%) and taxi (71%) for transportation. They preferred to stay at high range hotels (51%) or mid-range hotels/resorts (53%). Their main activities were sightseeing (88%), shopping (87%), and visiting natural or man-made site (80%). Most of respondent stated that this was their first visit to Malaysia (67%).

Table 3: Travelling Background by Region

	SEA	EA	SA	WA	EU	OT	Total (n=600)
Length of Stay							
1-5 nights	99.0%	71.0%	44.0%	31.0%	48.0%	25.0%	53.0%
5-10 nights	1.0%	17.0%	50.0%	40.0%	27.0%	36.0%	28.5%
> 10 nights	0.0%	12.0%	6.0%	29.0%	25.0%	39.0%	18.6%
Using Tour Package							
Yes	60.0%	53.0%	42.0%	48.0%	23.0%	43.0%	44.8%
No	40.0%	47.0%	58.0%	52.0%	77.0%	57.0%	55.2%
Types of Package							
Adventure Tour	1.7%	0.0%	25.0%	17.0%	14.3%	20.5%	11.9%
City or regional tour	5.0%	20.4%	43.2%	53.2%	52.4%	22.7%	29.3%
Group tours	95.0%	74.1%	25.0%	17.0%	38.1%	59.1%	55.6%
Guided tour	3.0%	6.0%	1.0%	0.0%	8.0%	7.0%	4.2%
Travel Companion							
Alone	0.5%	1.0%	0.2%	0.0%	1.3%	1.2%	4.2%

Husband/Wife	2.0%	27.0%	58.0%	67.0%	49.0%	38.0%	40.2%
Family	9.0%	50.0%	55.0%	39.0%	40.0%	24.0%	36.2%
Relatives	7.0%	20.0%	6.0%	4.0%	5.0%	8.0%	8.3%
Friends	35.0%	18.0%	8.0%	3.0%	20.0%	32.0%	19.3%
Business Associates	0.0%	3.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.0%	2.0%	1.7%
Tour group	55.0%	32.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	17.0%	17.8%
Source of information							
Previous trip	6.0%	7.0%	15.0%	13.0%	19.0%	17.0%	12.8%
Internet	46.0%	66.0%	50.0%	72.0%	70.0%	62.0%	61.0%
Broachers	1.0%	24.0%	4.0%	8.0%	20.0%	15.0%	12.0%
Word of Mouth	2.0%	24.0%	46.0%	39.0%	24.0%	38.0%	28.8%
Travel guidebook	0.0%	9.0%	4.0%	5.0%	20.0%	8.0%	7.7%
Travel expo/exhibitions	0.0%	19.0%	0.0%	1.0%	5.0%	4.0%	4.8%
Travel agencies	15.0%	21.0%	9.0%	7.0%	6.0%	17.0%	12.5%
Tourist information center	63.0%	4.0%	3.0%	9.0%	4.0%	5.0%	14.7%
Transportation within Malaysia							
Air travel (premium)	2.0%	5.0%	28.0%	22.0%	26.0%	18.0%	16.8%
Air travel (low cost)	79.0%	47.0%	68.0%	75.0%	37.0%	78.0%	64.0%
Private vehicle	2.0%	13.0%	15.0%	22.0%	18.0%	7.0%	12.8%
Rented vehicle	3.0%	16.0%	16.0%	15.0%	11.0%	17.0%	13.0%
Bus/coach	24.0%	57.0%	6.0%	9.0%	24.0%	25.0%	24.2%
Train	6.0%	23.0%	6.0%	6.0%	34.0%	15.0%	15.0%
Taxi	69.0%	55.0%	76.0%	80.0%	84.0%	71.0%	72.5%
Cruise ship	0.0%	9.0%	1.0%	4.0%	5.0%	8.0%	4.5%
Types of Accommodation							
High range hotel/resort (4-5 star)	6.0%	16.0%	48.0%	75.0%	59.0%	51.0%	42.5%
Mid-range hotel/resort (3 star)	36.0%	69.0%	45.0%	20.0%	37.0%	53.0%	43.3%
Low cost hotel (1-2 star)	77.0%	9.0%	10.0%	4.0%	5.0%	9.0%	19.0%
Serviced apartment/condominium	1.0%	4.0%	3.0%	3.0%	5.0%	4.0%	3.3%
Guest house	0.0%	10.0%	1.0%	3.0%	8.0%	2.0%	4.0%
Homestay	1.0%	9.0%	0.0%	2.0%	1.0%	1.0%	2.3%
Main Activities							
Shopping	89.0%	97.0%	66.0%	84.0%	78.0%	87.0%	83.5%
Sightseeing	65.0%	89.0%	87.0%	79.0%	95.0%	88.0%	83.8%
Cruising	2.0%	4.0%	19.0%	31.0%	18.0%	25.0%	16.5%
Attending cultural events	1.0%	5.0%	6.0%	22.0%	6.0%	11.0%	8.5%
Fine dining	3.0%	2.0%	34.0%	35.0%	33.0%	28.0%	22.5%
Visiting natural/man-made site	2.0%	30.0%	70.0%	72.0%	41.0%	80.0%	49.2%
Attending concert/shows/plays	0.0%	6.0%	10.0%	13.0%	3.0%	16.0%	8.0%
Attending professional sports activities	0.0%	5.0%	5.0%	9.0%	2.0%	9.0%	5.0%
First visit to Malaysia							
Yes	74.0%	70.0%	73.0%	77.0%	74.0%	67.0%	72.5%
No	26.0%	30.0%	27.0%	23.0%	26.0%	33.0%	27.5%
No. Of Past visit							
1-2	36.0%	66.7%	50.0%	85.0%	73.3%	69.6%	62.2%
3-4	52.0%	29.2%	40.0%	5.0%	13.3%	26.1%	29.1%
5-6	12.0%	4.2%	5.0%	5.0%	13.3%	0.0%	6.3%
7-8	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%
9-10	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.3%	0.8%
>10	0.0%	0.0%	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%

5. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study reveals the IMT profile in Malaysia according to the six groups determined by ITC. Most of the respondents were female, young, married, government servants and have their own income. The respondents were educated as most of them have Masters and Degrees. Most respondents

only tend to stay for 1 to 5 nights in Malaysia. Although group tour is among the most popular types of packages used, but most of IMTs have decided not to use the travel packages when traveling in Malaysia. Majority of the respondents also been accompanied by their spouse which is one of the referent group that may influenced IMT travel decision. The most important source of

information was from the internet, but in the same time travel guidebooks also acted as useful printed material to get information about Malaysia.

In term of accessibility within Malaysia, IMT are preferred to choose low cost air travel and taxi compared to other types of transportation. The high (4 to 5 stars) and mid-range hotels (3 stars) were preferred accommodation and most of them like to go shopping, sightseeing and visiting natural or man-made sites. The finding is in line with previous study as the main purpose of IMT visiting Malaysia is for leisure [2, 14, 16-17]. Although there are repeaters found in this study, but most of the respondents were the first timers. The finding shows that even Malaysia has been rank as top destination for the past five years among Muslim travellers, but the achievement cannot reflect the success of retaining IMT in Malaysia as most respondents are the first timers. Thus, the information pertaining to the IMT's demographic and travel characteristic are beneficial in assisting tourism players in designing effective marketing strategy as to ensure IMT retention.

As Muslim travellers' revisit will significantly be foreseen as one of the contributors to the potential growth of Malaysian tourism industry [3-4, 24-25]. It is crucial to investigate the antecedents of Muslim travellers' revisit intention. Thus, this study area should be one of the main concerns for future research as to predict IMTs' behaviour of revisit Malaysia in future.

6. REFERENCE

- [1] Khan, A. H., Haque, A., & Rahman, M. S. (2013). What Makes Tourists Satisfied? An Empirical Study on Malaysian Islamic Tourist Destination. *Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research*, 14(12), 1631–1637. <https://doi.org/10.5829/idosi.mejsr.2013.14.1.2.2250>
- [2] Norlida Hanim, M. S., Redzuan, O., Abu Hassan Shaari, M. N., & Mohd Safar, H. (2010). Malaysian Tourism Demand from the Middle East Market: A Preliminary Analysis. *International Journal of West Asian*, 2(1), 37–52.
- [3] Rahman, M. K. (2014). Motivating factors of Islamic Tourist's Destination Loyalty: An Empirical Investigation in Malaysia. *Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management*, 2(1), 63–77.
- [4] Bhuiyan, A. H., Siwar, C., Ismail, S. M., & Islam, R. (2011). Potentials of Islamic Tourism: A Case Study of Malaysia on East Coast Economic Region. *Australian Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences*, 5(6), 1333–1340.
- [5] Wilson, J. a. J., Belk, R. W., Bamossy, G. J., Sandikci, Ö., Kartajaya, H., Sobh, R., ... Scott, L. (2013). Crescent Marketing, Muslim Geographies and Brand Islam: Reflections from the JIMA Senior Advisory Board. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 4(1), 22–50. <https://doi.org/10.1108/17590831311306336>
- [6] Mastercard & CrescentRating. (2017). *Mastercard-CrescentRating Global Muslim Travel Index 2017*.
- [7] Islamic Tourism Centre. (2015). *Muslim Friendly Malaysia: Guides for 2015*. Putrajaya.
- [8] Ministry of Tourism and Culture. (2015). *ETP Annual Rreport 2014*. Retrieved from http://etp.pemandu.gov.my/annualreport2014/upload/08_NKEA06_ENG_Tou.pdf
- [9] Battour, M., & Ismail, M. N. (2016). Halal tourism: Concepts, practises, challenges and future. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 19, 150–154. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2015.12.008>
- [10] Amir, S., Osman, M. M., Bachok, S., & Ibrahim, M. (2014). Understanding Tourists Profile and Preference of Tourists Destination Choice: a Case Study in Melaka. *Journal of the Malaysian Institute of Planners*, III(December 2014), 81–94.
- [11] Benjamin, S. K. (2011). *Lost in Mayberry/Mount Airy: Importance of Tourist Profiles in Sustainable Tourism Planning. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses*. East Carolina University.
- [12] Dolnicar, S. (2008). Market Segmentation in Tourism. In *Tourism Management: Analysis, Behavior and Strategy* (pp. 129–150). <https://doi.org/10.1079/9781845933234.0129>
- [13] Quirici, E. (2011). Analysis of Consumers Profile as an Important Tool for Tourism Development. *Journal of Knowledge Management, Economics and Information Technology*, (7), 1–12.
- [14] Battour, M. M., Battor, M. M., & Ismail, M. (2012). The Mediating Role of Tourist Satisfaction: A Study of Muslim Tourists in Malaysia. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 29(3), 279–297. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2012.666174>
- [15] Ali, S., & Mohd Safar, H. (2012). Factors and Competitiveness of Malaysia as a Tourist Destination: A Study of Outbound Middle East Tourists. *Asian Social Science*, 8(12), 48–54. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v8n12p48>
- [16] Maisarah, A., Suhaila, A. K., & Nurul Azida, S. (2013). Perceptions and Behavior's of Muslims and Non-Muslims towards Halal Products. *Journal of Social and Development Sciences*, 4, 249–257.
- [17] Nor'ain, O., Rozian, M. T., & Shaya'a, O. (2013). Maqasid Al Shariah in the Governance and Management Strategy of Islamic Tourism Business, 1–16.

- [18] Ritchie, J. B., & Crouch, G. I. (2003). *The Competitive Destination: A Sustainable Tourism Perspective*. Cabi.
- [19] Krejcie, R. V., & Morgan, D. W. (1970). Determining Sample Size for Research Activities. *Education and Psychological Measurement*, 30, 607–610.
- [20] Mohamad, M., Ali, A. M., Ab Ghani, N. I., Abdullah, A. R., Mokhlis, S., & Ghani, N. I. A. (2012). Positioning Malaysia as a Tourist Destination Based on Destination Loyalty. *Asian Social Science*, 9, 286–292. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v9n1p286>
- [21] Shumin, F., Abdullah, C., & Alam, S. (2009). What Really Matters When Choosing a Hotel? The Case of Middle East Tourists In Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. *Journal of Tourism, Hospitality & Culinary Arts*, 53–62.
- [22] Sekaran, U., & Bougie, R. (2009). *Research Methods for Business: A Skill Building Approach* (Fifth). John Wiley and Sons Ltd.
- [23] Mohammad, B. A. M. A. H. (2014). Examining Tourist 's Satisfaction , Loyalty and Intention to Revisit. *Research Academy of Social Sciences*, 2(6), 260–273.
- [24] Ahmad Puad, M. S., Seyedeh, F. M. S., Azizan, M., & Jamil, J. (2011). A Critical Analysis of Tourist Satisfaction and Destination Loyalty. *Journal of Global Management*, 2(2), 178–186.
- [25] Battour, M., Battor, M., & Bhatti, M. A. (2013). Islamic Attributes of Destination : Construct Development and Measurement Validation , and Their Impact on Tourist Satisfaction. *International Journal of Tourism Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr>