

Perspectives: Travellers Views on COVID-19 and Halal Tourism

Hatem El-Gohary

Qatar University, helgohary@qu.edu.qa

Salma El-Gohary

Qatar University, se1807918@qu.edu.qa

David Edwards

Birmingham City University, david.edwards@bcu.ac.uk

Simeon Babatunde

Birmingham City University, Simeon.Babatunde@bcu.ac.uk

Abstract

COVID-19 pandemic has affected everyone's life around the globe in many different ways. The pandemic seems to have changed the way individuals and businesses work due to the restrictions imposed on travel by different countries. Accordingly, Halal tourism (like many other business sectors) suffered great losses because of the epidemic. Since the start of the COVID-19 crisis, two viewpoints seem to have emerged concerning the crisis among individuals and travelers around the world. Most individuals perceived COVID-19 as a worldwide pandemic and dealt with it according to this view. However, some others considered COVID-19 an international conspiracy led by major powers to control the globe economically and politically. The paper aims to offer a theoretical exploration of these two viewpoints with a view to provide some insights into Halal travellers' behaviour during COVID-19 in Muslim-majority countries. The paper offers an attempt to address different impacts of COVID-19 on Muslim travellers and also on Halal tourism activities. Scholars are encouraged to investigate this phenomenon with empirical data to gain insights into how to minimize the negative impact of COVID19 on the Hala industry.

Keywords: COVID-19, Halal Tourism, Muslim Travellers, Islamic Destinations, Halal Tourism Future Directions.

Introduction

COVID-19 has affected everyone's life around the globe either physically, emotionally, financially or socially. Regardless of stages of technological and economic developments, almost all countries around the globe were affected (and still are) due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many individuals lost their jobs, whereas others lost their beloved ones, and most people lost their lifestyle, sense of safety and stability.

Volume 1 (2021)

Inaugural Issue

Since the start of COVID-19, individuals around the globe including those living in Muslim-majority countries showed two different views concerning the crisis. While most of the public perceived COVID-19 as a worldwide pandemic that reflected a real crisis that all countries needed to deal with and take seriously, some groups, especially on social media, considered COVID-19 an international conspiracy led by major world powers to control the globe both economically and politically. Based on our own interactions and understanding of Muslim travelers in countries like Egypt, we note that a significant percentage of individuals seemed to be influenced by the second viewpoint (commonly known as the conspiracy theory). Given the spread of misinformation on social media, the issue represents a serious dilemma. Acceptance and support for conspiracy theory on social media has the potential to impact community views, assumptions, and, most importantly, behaviours during the COVID-19 crisis. When the majority of individuals including those, who travel consider COVID-19 as a conspiracy, they do not seem to fully commit to COVID-19 health or precautionary measures promoted by local health authorities and, as such, put themselves at significant risk.

Hence, there is a need to understand the viewpoints related to COVID-19 adopted by individuals in the Muslim world to understand their impacts on Halal tourism industry. Accordingly, some important questions can be asked: How can we understand travellers' behaviour during the COVID-19 crisis specially in Muslim dominated countries? In addition, how can those operating in the Halal tourism industry plan their marketing activities in line with such understanding? The rest of the paper is based on our extensive interactions and understanding of Muslim travelers in general, we feel further empirical research is needed to provide further insights into how and in what sense travellers' perceptions of COVID-19 impacts their travel and tourism related behavior.

Impact of COVID-19 on Halal Tourism

Halal tourism (like any other business and travel activities during the COVID-19 crisis) was badly affected by the pandemic. Given Halal tourism is generally perceived as a niche and a relatively small market (El-Gohary, 2020; Alsharief et al., 2018, and 2017, and El-Gohary et al., 2017), the impact of COVID-19 on its activities is expected to be greater than on other types of tourism. Within this context, although there is a lack of official statistics to support this, El-Gohary (2020) argues that Saudi Arabia COVID-19 possible losses within the Halal tourism and Halal hospitality sectors were around USD 18b.

While losses caused by COVID-19 represent a huge challenge for the Halal tourism industry worldwide, there are many factors which create optimism that the situation will get better in the future. For example, Islam and Islamic Shariah encourage and support travel offering Muslim travellers many concessions while travelling which can be seen as benefits and privileges. Table 1 illustrates some of the concessions offered by Islamic Shariah while travelling which can perhaps further motivate Islamic travelers to undertake travel despite the limitations imposed by travel restrictions.

Table 1: Concessions offered by Islamic Shariah during Travel

	<i>Islamic Pillar</i>	<i>Benefit / Privilege</i>
1	Praying	- Shorter prayers while travelling.
		- Combining prayers while travelling.
		- Exemption from Friday prayers while travelling.
		- Exemption from prayers timings while travelling.
2	Fasting Ramadan	- Exemption from fasting during Ramadan while travelling.
3	Zakat	- While travelling, Muslim traveller can benefit from Zakat until returning to their homeland.

Source: Adapted from El-Gohary (2020), El-Gohary (2014), Eid and El-Gohary (2014), and Eid and El-Gohary (2015a).

Additionally, further optimism comes from the fact that Muslims represent about 25% of the world population representing a good market size for those interested in Halal tourism (El-Gohary, 2020). Moreover, one can expect that the market size will grow year after year in the future offering Halal tourism companies opportunities to increase their sales and market share. Support comes from GMTI (2019) that illustrated that the Muslim travelling market is among the fast-rising tourism markets globally.

Optimistic perspective about the future of Halal tourism is supported when one looks at various motives of Muslim travelers. For example and according to GMTI (2019), Halal travel main motives include:

- Technology.
- Social Activism.
- Demographics.
- Environment.
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Although the GMTI is one of the leading indices that deals with Muslim travellers, GMTI (2019) seems to have ignored a significant religious motive behind Halal travel such as travelling for performing Hajj and Umrah. This is supported by scholars who consider religious motive as one of the most important motives for Halal travel (e.g. El-Gohary, 2020; El-Gohary and Eid, 2012). Given, performing Hajj is one of the five main pillars of Islam, one can expect a strong desire among Muslim travelers to undertake pilgrimage to Mecca as and when they are able to do so despite the restrictions and limitations imposed by COVID-19. In addition, there are many other motives for Halal tourism and for Muslims to travel, among which, Halal Medical Tourism, Halal Educational Tourism which can support optimistic views about the future of Halal tourism.

Moreover, there are many ways in which Halal tourism can potentially grow despite COVID-19. For example, the strategic view for Halal travel companies offered by GMTI (2019) is expected to help create better market dynamics for Halal tourism industry (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: A Strategic View for Halal Travel

	CURRENT SERVICES	NEW SERVICES
CURRENT MARKETS	<p>Enhance existing services through new technologies and better skilled travel professionals</p> <p>Improve brand communications, primarily through mobile, to welcome Muslim travelers</p>	<p>Instant Noodle trip offerings (affordable, impromptu short trips that are decided a few days prior to leaving)</p> <p>Better service integration with hotel sector</p>
NEW MARKET	<p>Target rising female travelers</p> <p>Target non-OIC markets</p>	<p>New larger Muslim lifestyle brands to offer more integrated services</p> <p>Deeper integration of AI and human service professionals to result in new product innovation</p>

Source: GMTI (2019)

It is also worthwhile to note the market dynamics relevant to Halal tourism. Considering the top Muslim inbound destinations, as illustrated in Figure 2, the top Muslim inbound destinations within OIC countries include UAE, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Malaysia, Turkey, and Indonesia. Meanwhile, the top Muslim inbound destinations out of OIC countries include the UK, Spain, France, Thailand, Greece, and Italy. Some of these Muslim inbound destinations are also among the top worldwide tourism destinations (as illustrated in Table 2).

Figure 2: Top Muslim Inbound Destinations



Source: GMTI (2019)

* OIC: Organisation of Islamic Cooperation

Table 2: Top 10 Worldwide Tourism Destinations

N	OIC Destination	None OIC Destination
1	Malaysia	Singapore
2	Indonesia	Thailand
3	Turkey	United Kingdom
4	Saudi Arabia	Japan
5	United Arab Emirates	Taiwan
6	Qatar	South Africa
7	Morocco	Hong Kong
8	Bahrain	South Korea
9	Oman	France
10	Brunei	Spain

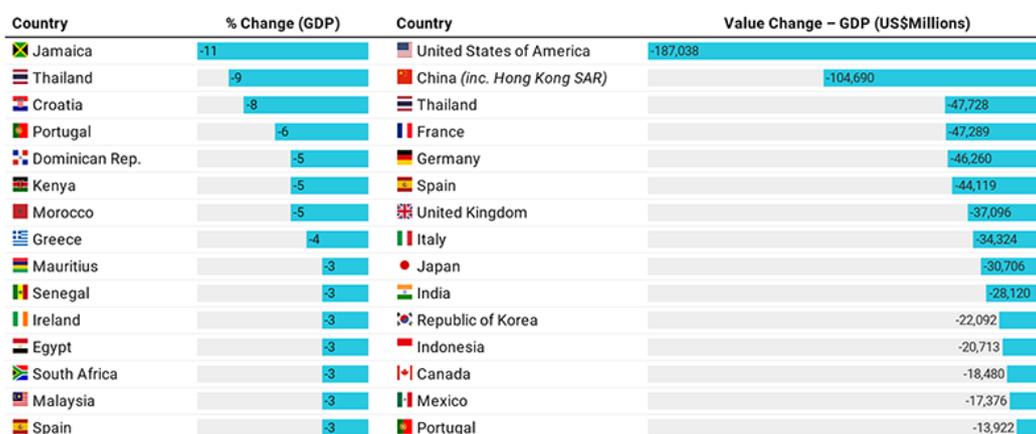
Source: GMTI (2019)

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Effect of COVID-19 on Travel and Tourism Industries

As expected from any pandemic, COVID-19 led to a damaging effect on the travel and tourism industries. According to Statista (2021a), the travel and tourism industries revenues for 2020 were around USD 396.37b with a decrease of 42% from 2019. Moreover, according to the UNCTAD (2020), for each one million USD decrease in travel and tourism industries revenues in any country, the GDP can drop by three million USD (UNCTAD, 2020). The following figure illustrates the COVID-19 most affected countries in terms of GDP.

Figure 3: COVID-19 most affected countries (GDP % Change and Value of Change)



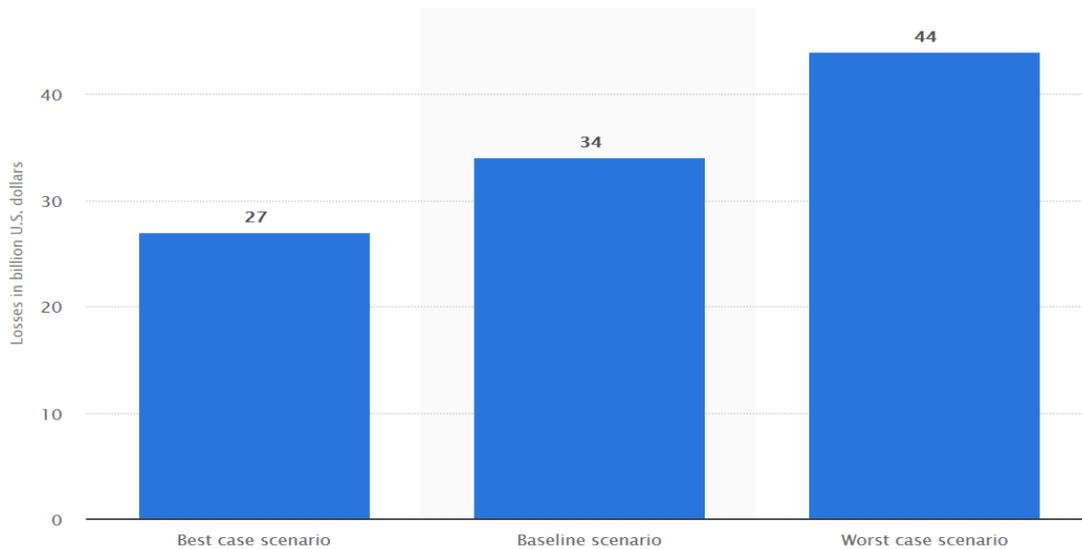
Source: UNCTAD (2020).

Volume 1 (2021)

Inaugural Issue

As illustrated in Figure 3, some famous Halal tourism destinations and countries are among the most affected countries in terms of GDP % of negative change (namely: Egypt, Malaysia, Morocco, etc.). Meanwhile, according to Statista (2021b), predicted tourism GDP losses owed to the pandemic in the Caribbean's is expected to reach USD 44b.

Figure 4: GDP losses owed to the pandemic in the Caribbean's



Source: Statista (2021b).

COVID-19 also badly affected employment and paid salaries in the travel and tourism industries. The following figures illustrate the COVID-19 most affected countries in terms of paid salaries and unskilled employment.

Figure 5: COVID-19 most affected countries (unskilled employment - expected three scenarios)

Country	Moderate	Intermediate	Dramatic
Jamaica	-15	-29	-44
Thailand	-17	-24	-31
Croatia	-12	-17	-22
Dominican Republic	-8	-16	-24
Portugal	-9	-15	-21
Ireland	-7	-14	-20
Greece	-6	-13	-19
Malaysia	-5	-10	-14
Morocco	-6	-8	-10
South Africa	-4	-8	-12
Spain	-4	-8	-11
Egypt	-4	-7	-11
Mauritius	-5	-7	-9
Philippines	-4	-7	-10
Senegal	-3	-7	-10

Source: UNCTAD (2020).

Volume 1 (2021)

Inaugural Issue

Similarly to what happened with the GDP % of negative change due to COVID-19, some famous Halal tourism destinations and countries are among the most affected countries in terms of unskilled employment negative change (namely: Egypt, Malaysia, Morocco, etc.).

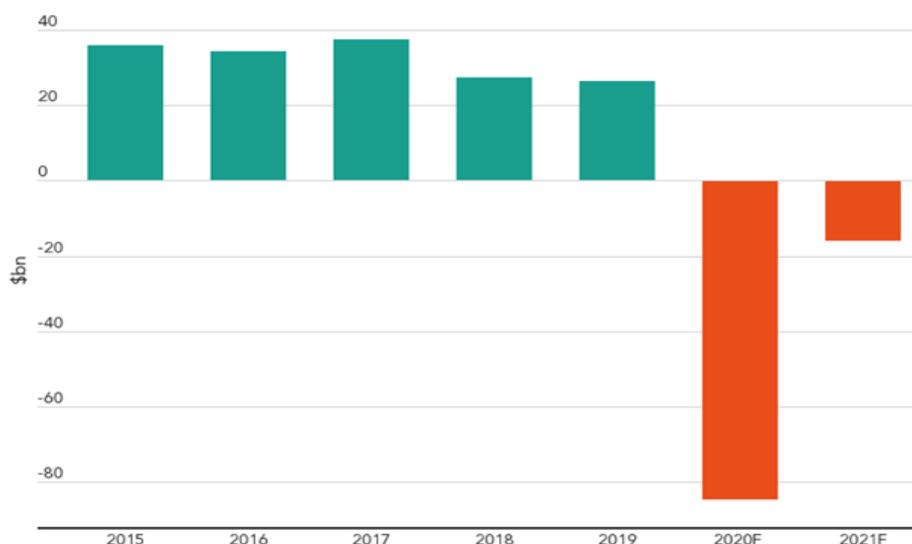
Figure 6: COVID-19 15 most affected countries (skilled paid salaries - three expected scenarios)

Country	Moderate	Intermediate	Dramatic
Jamaica	-11	-22	-34
Thailand	-12	-17	-23
Croatia	-9	-13	-17
Dominican Republic	-6	-12	-18
Kenya	-8	-11	-14
Portugal	-6	-11	-16
Greece	-5	-10	-14
Ireland	-5	-10	-15
Malaysia	-5	-9	-13
Senegal	-4	-8	-12
Morocco	-5	-7	-9
Spain	-4	-7	-11
United Arab Emirates	-4	-7	-10
Egypt	-3	-6	-8
South Africa	-3	-6	-10

Source: UNCTAD (2020).

Additionally, the air travel industry was also severely affected by COVID-19. The International Air Transport Association (IATA) predicted losses of USD 84b in 2020 and USD 18b in 2021 (Dunn, 2020).

Figure 7: Air Transport Industry Revenues



Source: International Air Transport Association - IATA, Dunn (2020)

Volume 1 (2021)

Inaugural Issue

Resultantly, with no doubts, the travel and tourism industries were poorly affected due to COVID-19 crisis. The losses within the industry were not only monetary losses, but they also included other types of losses. The authors argue that the industry losses can be classified into three main categories as follows:

Figure 8: Travel and Tourism Industries Losses Categories due to COVID-19 Crisis



Source: Prepared by the Author.

- **Monetary Losses:**
 - Lost income and profits.
 - Credit costs.
 - Maintenance costs.
 - Opportunity costs.
 - Overhead costs.
 - Increased loan costs.
 - Decrease in shares prices and value.

- **Human Resources Losses:**
 - High staff turnover.
 - Staff redundancy costs.
 - Loss of highly qualified members of staff.
 - Low morale among staff members.
 - Cuts in staff salaries and benefits.
 - Cuts in training offered for staff.
 - Hardship in recruiting qualified members of staff after the Crisis.
 - Longer time to recover from the Crisis because of losing highly qualified members of staff.
 - Training and orientation needs and costs for newly appointed staff after the Crisis.

Volume 1 (2021)

Inaugural Issue

- Decrease in the quality of the services provided to customers.
- Decrease in job security levels among staff.

- **Brand Losses:**
 - Decreases in brand value.
 - Damages related to brand image.
 - Cuts in marketing and promotional activities.
 - Reputation damages.

All these losses require travel and tourism firms to think innovatively to overcome all these hardships, which necessitate a lot of outside the box thinking to generate novel ideas to face all these challenges. Some of the suggested solutions can include:

- Collaborating and partnering with governments to offer quarantine facilities.
- More dependency on e-marketing solutions.
- More dependency on low-cost marketing platforms and activities.
- Reducing the cost of the offered service.
- Merging with other firms to establish more resources to enable the new firm to compete effectively and efficiently.
- Adopting a diversification strategy (which can take more than one form, e.g. products diversification, investments diversification, market segments diversification, etc.)
- Introducing new and innovative services.

Effect of Governmental Policies on Travel and Tourism Industries

It is also essential to understand the impact of governments' policy on the travel and tourism industries during the COVID-19 crisis. Many countries (in an attempt to control the spread of COVID-19) implemented complete lockdowns with no travel or mobility availability. This led to a massive negative impact on the travel and tourism industries during the lockdown periods. However, not all governments acted in the same way and one can identify two main groups of countries while analysing the governments' role on the travel and tourism industries during the COVID-19 crisis. The first group implemented quite harsh human travel mobility rules with strict regulations for travelling such as getting pre-travel permission, the necessity of having a COVID-19 testing certificate, getting a return home permission before travelling, imposing home or hotel quarantine after arriving and upon return, etc. Most of the world countries belong to the first group, which led to more control on COVID-19 spread levels.

In contrast, some other countries offered more relaxing human travel mobility rules, which allowed people to travel to such countries. Most of these countries were main tourist destinations (e.g. Tunisia, Egypt, France, Lebanon, etc.) and seemed to be motivated by economic reasons to apply relaxed human travel mobility rules to generate more GDP. For instance, Egypt allowed foreign tourists to visit Egyptian coastal cities (especially those on the Red Sea) during the first few months of the

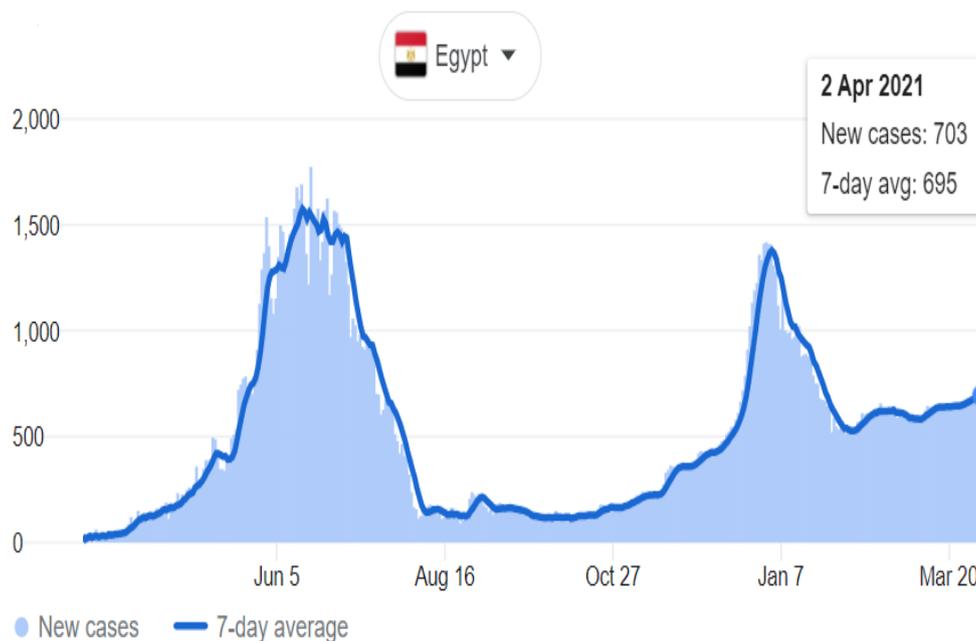
Volume 1 (2021)

Inaugural Issue

COVID-19 crisis through charter and direct flights without any required quarantines or any evidence of COVID-19 free. There was only one condition imposed, which was for such travellers to stay within the determined coastal cities' boundaries.

Relaxed government policy may have contributed economic activity within the tourism sector, but the policy caused increased COVID-19 infection rates among Egyptian staff members within the pre-determined coastal cities. The same scenario (relaxed human travel mobility rules) happened in other countries as well (Tunisia, Lebanon, etc.), leading to identical results concerning COVID-19 infection rates. For example, Figure 9 illustrates the infection rates in Egypt. As can be seen from Figure, 9 that infection rates rose massively in June due to relaxed human travel mobility rules within the country.

Figure 9: COVID-19 infection Rates in Egypt throughout the Crisis



Source: CSSE COVID-19 Data (2021)

Travellers’ Views on COVID-19

Based on our own interactions with Muslims and also our understanding of Islamic Shariah and Halal tourism in countries like Egypt, we can offer some insights into how some Muslims might view and respond to COVID-19 or indeed any other calamity. These viewpoints or perspectives can be organized into following categories as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Various Perspectives about COVID-19

Theme	Comments
COVID-19 as a Sign of Test from God	Each calamity is seen as a test from God to determine who among the people accepts the wish and destiny decided by God (and wins His Forgiveness) and who continues to rebel and deserves the punishment from God
COVID-19 as a Sign of Punishment from God	Each calamity is seen as a sign of punishment from God specially for those Muslims who have moved away from commitment to God and guidance provided by Him.
COVID-19 as a Favour and Blessings from God	Muslims who suffer from illnesses and diseases will be rewarded by God; people's bad deeds will be replaced by good deeds as per the amount and intensity of suffering caused by illnesses such as due to those caused by COVID-19.
COVID-19 as a Reminder to Repent and Seek Forgiveness from God	For those Muslims who are away from the road of God, experiencing the pandemic is a sign from God so that they can repent, seek forgiveness and make a connection with God.

Source: Authors

Is COVID-19 a Reality for all Religious Travellers?

The answer to this question seems to be 'no' given contrasting views concerning the COVID-19 crisis. There are many who perceive COVID-19 as a worldwide pandemic and deal with it seriously using all the possible precautionary measures, there are others who consider COVID-19 as an international conspiracy (or even a hocus for some) led by major powers and pharmaceutical firms to control the globe both economically and politically. For such individuals, COVID-19 does not really exist, and even if it does exist, it is just a flu like virus with a little bit of severe symptoms. One understanding based on our interactions with religious travellers from Qatar, Egypt and Sudan is there are some who tend to support both points of views. The conspiracy theory seems to be accelerated by some supportive variables such as medical uncertainties about COVID-19 virus, lack of proper education, illiteracy, poverty, belief in superstitious concepts, etc.

An acceptance and support from some religious travellers specifically has the potential to significantly impact others in the community. When someone specifically considers COVID-19 as a conspiracy, the person is not expected to fully commit to COVID-19 health or precautionary measures promoted by health authorities and, as such, put them at significant risk. This happened already in many countries around the globe where the general public did not really commit to COVID-19 health or precautionary measures (regardless of the efforts by relevant governments and health officials to increase COVID-19 awareness). It is common practice in such countries for people to go around the main cities without even wearing a mask. To counter such a trend, the Egyptian government had to enforce facemask fines

Volume 1 (2021)

Inaugural Issue

on members of the public not wearing facemasks. Similar actions were taken by other governments too.

At the start of COVID19, a tendency of perceiving COVID-19 as a conspiracy or a hoax led to the continuity of daily activities to be conducted as usual by the adopters of this view. Examples of activities included continued visits to holy places outside Makkah and Madinah in Saudi Arabia, visits to places in Iran and Iraq (e.g. Imam Hussain Shrine, Imam Ali Mosque, Karbala city, Qom city, Al-Abbas Mosque, etc.). One can therefore argue that the practice was not limited only to religious travellers in cities like Makkah and Madinah, but also to those who continued religious travellers visiting other Islamic cities associated with Prophet Mohammad's (PBUH) family. Among these places, El-Hussain Mosque, El-Sayyidah Zainab Mosque, El-Sayyidah Nafesah Mosque in Cairo, and El-Sayed El-Badawy Mosque in Tanta city north of Egypt.

Consequently, there was an upsurge in the number of infected individuals with COVID-19 in such countries and some other neighbouring countries (such as Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain, etc.). According to AL-Rousan and Al-Najjar (2020), human mobility and participation in diverse religious rites were key factors affecting the spread of COVID-19 within the Middle East.

Islamic Shariah Guidance and Travelling During Pandemics

Islam inspires and supports travelling for numerous diverse causes and aims (El-Gohary, 2020). Accordingly, there is no contradiction between Islam and tourism activities. However, not all tourism activities may be viewed as acceptable by many travellers. For such travellers, tourism activities that are companionable with the directions of Islam and the regulation of Islamic Shariah (El-Gohary, 2016; and Eid and El-Gohary, 2015a) are seen as acceptable. Nevertheless, and as stated earlier on, it is vital to notice that travelling in normal times is quite different from travelling during pandemics from an Islamic standpoint.

Religious Travellers and tourism customers differ among themselves not only when it comes to dealing with COVID-19 but also in their understanding of the different Islamic Shariah sources related to travel in general or travel during the pandemic in particular. According to Islamic Shariah, Muslims are required to follow the guidance of two primary Islamic Shariah sources, which are:

- The holy Quran, and
- The guidance and speeches of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), which is normally referred to as "Hadith".

For example, religious travellers can console themselves and bear the COVID-19 pandemic with patience because the holy Quran states: *"So, surely with hardship comes ease"* (Surah Ash Sharah 95: 5). Moreover, Islam places great importance upon cleanliness as stated in the holy Quran: *"And Allah loves those who seek to purify themselves"* (Surah At-Tawbah, 9:108)

Volume 1 (2021)

Inaugural Issue

As such, Muslims are required to perform ablution which includes washing of hands before performing any of the five obligatory prayers (Salah). They are also advised to wash their hands before eating and also after attending the toilet. Accordingly and during times of pandemics (such as COVID-19), righteous religious travellers have the religious guidance to keep themselves clean, safe and protected.

Within the same line of Islamic guidance, the Prophet Mohammad(PBUH) said (in a Hadith):

"if you heard of an outbreak of plague in a place, do not visit such a place; nevertheless, if the plague breaks out in a place while you are in it, do not leave it (until the end of the plague"

Source: Saheeh El Bukhari Book, chapter: 76, Hadith: 5787 - Al-Asqalani, 1987.

Although the Hadith is mainly concerned about the outbreak of plague, its meaning is not limited to plague. In contrast, it provides general guidance and precautionary measures for Muslims to follow during any pandemic outbreak. In fact, this Hadith is one of the very early precautionary measures adopted to fight pandemics' spread. As if any person who lives in a country that is affected by a pandemic stay in the country and in the meanwhile all other people who are outside the country do not travel to it until the end of the pandemic, there is greater likelihood that pandemic can be under control and may come to an end in a short time. Accordingly, it seems to us that the worldwide travel restrictions during the COVID-19 outbreak are actually practical examples of the implementation of the blessed guidance provided by the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) 1400 years old.

The teachings of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) with regard to prohibition of travel during pandemics have implications for the entire tourism industry within a country and also outside the country. While we consider the guidance provided via the holy Quran and also by the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), we can argue that Islam does not allow or encourage travel or tourism activities during the outbreak of any pandemic.

Views about Death Caused by COVID-19

Despite the blessed guidance provided by the holy Quran and also by the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), it is quite surprising that many individuals living in Muslim-majority countries like Egypt feel OK to travel during pandemic times. Table 3 presents Islamic perspective on death as revealed via various verses of the holy Quran.

Table 3: Evidence from the Holy Quran that supports Islamic perspective on death

N	Verse(s)	Surah
1	<i>"Say the death from which you flee will meet you. Then you will be returned to the Knower of the unseen and the witnessed, and He will inform you about what you used to do".</i>	Al Jumu'ah (62: verse 8)

2	<i>"But never will Allah delay a soul when its time has come. And Allah is Acquainted with what you do".</i>	Al Munafiqun (63: verse 11)
3	<i>"No person knows what he will earn tomorrow, and no person knows in what land he will die. Verily, Allah is All-Knower, All-Aware (of things)".</i>	Luqman (31: verse 34)
4	<i>"For each and every matter (life) there is a Decree (from Allah)".</i>	Ar Ra'd (13: verse 38)
5	<i>"Wherever you are, death will reach you, even if you were in towers of lofty construction."</i>	Surah An-Nisa, 4, verse.78

Source: Al-Quran English, 2021; and The Holy Quran, 2017

As per Islamic perspective and shown in Table 3, each person has a specific date and time of death – a fact that is already known and determined by God even before the birth of a person. Accordingly, no one can die a second earlier or a second later than his/her own predetermined death date and time. A Muslim traveller’s person’s perspective on death has the potential to impact their actions and behaviours during COVID 19. Therefore, we call for empirical research to investigate the impact of death perceptions on Muslim travellers’ motivations and behaviours.

Another reason for some Muslims to find it right to travel during pandemic times (such as COVID-19) is that from an Islamic perspective, each Muslim who dies as a result of a pandemic is considered to be a martyr, as mentioned in the following Hadith for Prophet Mohammad (PBUH):

"who is killed in the way of Allah is a martyr; who dies naturally in the Cause of Allah is a martyr; who dies of plague is a martyr; who dies of a belly disease is a martyr; and who is drowned is a martyr" (Riyad Al-Salihin, 2021, Hadith 1354)

When reviewing Islamic guidance, Islamic Shariah, and Islamic literature, the value of martyrs in Islam stand clear because a martyr is rewarded and privileged generously by God. Such rewards and privileges are evident in the holy Quran and the sayings of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) known as Hadith and include:

- Forgiving all the martyr sins by God.
- Entering heaven.
- Being saved from grave punishment.

Volume 1 (2021)

Inaugural Issue

- Having the right to intercede for seventy members of his family (which saves them God punishment and rewards them by entering heaven).

While the range of responses to the COVID-19 crisis from the Muslim travelers varies a lot, a critical analysis of how and in what sense Muslim travelers use Islamic guidance about death as a rationalizing mechanism need to be fully explored by future research. Moreover, further research is needed to explore the impact of levels of awareness and understanding of Islamic teachings on Muslim travellers's behaviours during COVID-19 crisis.

Conclusion

The paper highlighted views of two groups of travellers, one seeing COVID-19 as a pandemic and the other perceiving COVID-19 as a conspiracy. The travellers' viewpoints within each group can differ between the members of the same group. The travellers' view concerning COVID-19, how to deal with it, understanding of COVID-19 rules, guidance and regulations, vary massively from each other. By observing the recent trends in COVID-19 infection rates among Muslim travellers globally, it is noticed that Muslim travellers view towards COVID-19 is leaning towards the realistic view of it. Muslim travellers perceive COVID-19 correctly as a real pandemic that requires excellent attention when dealing with it. This is also evident by the growing number of Muslim travellers who are very keen to get the COVID-19 vaccine in almost all Muslim countries. However, there remains a need for some urgent actions from policymakers within Muslim countries to implement some relevant policies that can increase Muslim travellers' awareness concerning COVID-19.

There is an inordinate need to conduct more empirical research to examine Muslim travellers' views on COVID-19 and other pandemics. Such investigation will help in covering an important research gap in the field that can help scholars in understanding how Muslim travellers' perceive and deal with COVID-19. It is hoped that with such understanding, policymakers and tourism firms will be more able to plan their policies to benefit from Muslim travellers' views and attitudes.

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Volume 1 (2021)
Inaugural Issue

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