ASSESSMENT OF MICE TOURISM ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE SCOPE OF MUSLIM FRIENDLY TOURISM

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EXTENSIVE SUMMARY

According to Weber and Ladkin (2003), meetings and conventions emerge as a segment that gains more and more importance in the tourism industry. Besides its major contribution to the economy, its contributions such as high tourism expenditure amount of its convention and business tourism activities, its provision of participation to local activities, its constitution of an integrated image under the roof of a destination by including a multifaceted organization are approached with importance as well (Clark, 2004, p.15-21). In every part of M.I.C.E tourism activities, which signify the meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions and embody all these scopes, a detailed and planned agendum is present related to a theme or a manner such as a particular occupational trade organization, a private community of interest or a mutual education/discussion (Khan, 2015, p.299).

According to Priporas (2005), development in transportation and service area and the development of substructure, historical/cultural properties, and service quality carried out under the roof of business tourism aimed at convention/meeting tourism for M.I.C.E tourism destinations will be sufficient. The activities carried out within the M.I.C.E. tourism involve the processes of the determination of customer/tourist group and organization, transfer services and transportation services, the specification of pre-conference and post-conference tour opportunities, the determination of the region to be accommodated, services of conference, exhibition and etc. organizers, welcoming services, accommodation services, catering services and the determination of social program flow, the provision of services such as visual, audial etc. services and technical support, the provision of transportation to M.I.C.E. tourism organization area and the actualization of organization and the provision of customer/tourist feedback. M.I.C.E. tourism activities involve all business groups that present services included in the process (Mistilis and Dwyer, 2013, p.57).

The incentive of M.I.C.E. tourism produces results such as the increase of tourism destination attractiveness, product discrimination, enhancement of product quality, reformation and improvement of target destination image, support of locals, creation of new lines of business, attracting region's substructure support to itself. Across the globe, protecting its position as a sector that continues to grow even though economic conditions in the region devolve, M.I.C.E. tourism activities are supported both in terms of providing benefit to numerous

lines of work, supporting destination in various areas and it emerges as a form of tourism supported and preferred not only by businesses but states in terms of its contribution to developing both country image and regional potential (The Mice Industry Course Title, 2013).

According to Henderson (2010), in Islamic Tourism, which is explained as the embodiment and actualization of tourism activity in line with the commandments and prohibitions of Islam, before touristic motivation, conformity to Islamic principles arises as the essential selective factor that designates the choices, behaviors and tendencies of consumption (Tsalikis and Lassar, 2009, p.91; Ghadami, 2012, p.25).

According to Battour and İslamil (2015), the increase in Muslim population and the income levels of religious community and the change occurred in their aspect of tourism require the provision of services and products in accord with Muslim (devout) tourists and fulfilling the needs of this shaping market. Conformity to Islam, the main motivation resource in Muslim-friendly tourism, leads to differentiation of preferred travel, accommodation, food and beverage and entertaining choices. It can be said that Muslim (devout) tourists, generally, attach importance to accommodation units that present separate opportunities for males and females, hotel's adjustments of pool, spa and etc. accordingly, importance given to gender segregation in entertainment system, the presentation of the same quality in each season (Peak-Low), the presence of hygienic areas and service, the security and   safety. (Arpacı, 2015, p.17; Arpacı and Batman, 2015a, p.13; Arpacı and Batman, 2015b, p.17)

 Dinarstandard (2012) states that tourist profile whose faith in Islam anticipates accessibility to food in compliance of halal, affordable prices and Muslim-friendly applications from the tourism activity he choose preferably. He discusses that Muslim tourists choose their touristic activities expecting proper transfer and vale services, a non-alcoholic environment, a menu that includes a variety of halal food, candid service and communication and a substructure suited for prayers.

According to the study of Günaydın (2015), when the profiles of Muslim tourists and especially the expectations/desires of Middle Eastern tourists are examined, it is determined that they pay attention and need manners such as mouth-pleasing service, communication and internet substructure, informative and introductory brochures, signboards in line of their languages, mobile applications that responds to questions, the necessity of consultation, complaint and support line, language skills, fair prices. In addition to this, it is seen that Muslim business travels, in which durations are determined to range averagely between 3 and 4 days with 41%, is consisted of participation in conferences or exhibitions at the ratio of 57% and participation in meetings at the ratio of 45%. While security is 74% important, belief tolerance and conformity to belief commitments take places at the ratio of 50% for Muslim tourists who travel within their business travels. The importance of risks regarding to health and environment is stated as 46%, while politic stability is rated as 44% in the research. It is observed that more than 50% of Muslim tourists analyzed within business travel research, book and purchase their own tickets and accommodations. It is seen that they prefer to sleep and relax at the planes at the ratio of 80% (Muslim Business Traveler Insights, 2016). While the tourist flow rate to the member states of the Organization of Islamic Conference is observed as 33,8 percent, this rate is estimated to increase to 39,1 percent until 2020. Turkey has 16% share among these rates. The rate of those who travel for business purposes is determined as 9-10 percent among Muslim tourists.

Approximately 30% of total of tourism revenue is acquired within M.I.C.E. tourism across the globe. It can be said that 40 percent of Turkey's tourism revenues comes from M.I.C.E. sector. It is considered that the expenditure of tourists who come to Turkey within M.I.C.E. is approximately 2.280 dollars. THY's flights to 254 different destinations emerge as a factor that enforces our M.I.C.E. substructure in terms of this. International MICE Association aims to gather leading MICE tourism companies in Turkey. It is considered that the financial difficulty and the tourism bottleneck our country is suffering from thus can be overcome and the signals of collaboration with Ministry of Tourism are given in this sense. It can be said for the Ace of Mice Exhibition to be held in February, 2017 that new connections may be established with especially EMEA countries and different collaborations may be actualized. (Turizm Güncela, 2017; Turizm Güncelb, 2017; Mice Awards, 2017; Turizm Newspaper, 2017). Based on the information given in literature, suggestions and important aspects that can be developed within Muslim-Friendly M.I.C.E. Tourism are as follows:

·Increasing mutual studies between the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and travel agencies and operators and the development of different tour programs towards businessmen within M.I.C.E. tourism,

·Enhancing accessibility to food in compliance with Halal standards food,

·Providing halal accommodation standards and hotel expectations,

·Augmenting water-friendly applications, the dominance of a modest service approach within Islamic approach that does not encourage wastage,

· Presenting diversity in menus, attaching importance to palatal delight,

· Providing standards within Halal travel and attaching importance to comfortability,

·Ensuring child care units competent in the language for businessmen who travel with their children,

· Providing proper transfer and vale services,

·Including supportive and introductory Islamic conferences and activities within extra activities to be performed,

·Increasing rich social activity opportunities, recreation areas and opportunities segregated for women within the scope of Islam,

· Suggesting assistants who can help in managing business follow-ups of businessmen,

· Establishing consultation, complaint and support line,

· Developing mobile applications that are capable of responding to possible questions,

·Providing signboards with language options,

·Providing a non-alcoholic environment, attaching importance to suitability environmentally in outdoor activities and time, choosing venues accordingly,

· Ensuring a candid service and communication,

·Supplying a substructure aligned with prayers,

· Integrating themes that will encourage M.I.C.E. tourism in Turkey into TV series within promotion activities since Turkish TV series are in vogue.

This study aims to inform about M.I.C.E. tourism activities, draw attention to M.I.C.E. tourism activities and develop suggestions at the applicability point within Muslim-Friendly Tourism and determine significant points. It is hoped that the study conducted will be a basis for future studies.