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DRAFT Book of Abstracts

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Motivations of individuals that attend the annual pilgrimage of Hajj

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The following abstract is a work in progress towards an MSc Thesis which is currently being developed as a possible Doctoral study. The purpose of the project was to research the motivations of individuals attending the annual pilgrimage of Hajj, which is one of the main pillars of faith in Islam. The scope of the project is to highlight whether the motivations of the attendees are changing from pilgrim to tourist.

Recent trends have highlighted the development of commercial aspect in Saudi Arabia as well as the use of modern technology to communicate and educate the pilgrim. For example, Dr. Abdul-Aziz bin Abdullah Al-Khudairi, deputy governor of Makkah states ‘Pilgrims are using social networking sites in large numbers to help them perform Hajj with ease’. Many seeking to perform Hajj use social networking pages to learn about Hajj, how to conduct themselves and undertake rituals.

Further developments are planned for the main Islamic holy cities. Taylor (2011) reported in an article titled ‘Makkah for the rich: Islam’s holiest site “turning into Vegas”’ (in the Independent newspaper) that over the last ten years the holiest place in the Muslim world has undergone a huge transformation. On the other hand Fears are rising regarding the loss of great historical sites, this has caused prominent Saudi archaeologists and historians to take action.

The research methods used were questionnaires and semi-structured interviews which contained questions regarding pilgrim, behaviour and motivations. The results indicate that the main motivations to attend the annual pilgrimage of Hajj were to fulfil the religious obligation, spiritual enhancement and to follow the teachings of the Quran and Prophet Muhammad. Some recommendations for further research have been made which include an exploration of the host country, perceptions and attitude and commercialisation vs. religion.

Key Words: pilgrimage, motivations, hajj, religious-tourism

Bibliography


Hz. Mevlana, the global value of Konya tourism, has influenced many people. Millions of visitors come to Konya each year due to this influence. There are many writers, philosophers and scientists among these visitors who have personally been effected. One of them is Eva De Vitray Meyerovitch (Havva Hanım).

She is a French Professor, is not only learning about Hz. Mevlana but also trying to introduce him to world. While Prof. Eva was studying on her PhD. thesis “Aristoteles and Symbol”, she came across with Hz. Mevlana and decided to change the subject so as to study Mevlana as her PhD. thesis. As a result of this study she has met with Islamic thought in which there are many concepts as peace, tolerance and serenity that the modern world needs. She has been buried to Konya Üçler semetary in accordance with her will that stated she “wanted to be buried in Konya behind Mevlana's tomb”.

Today, people who read her works visit her cemetary when they visit Hz. Mevlana. Furthermore, she has contributed greatly to belief tourism with her works “Konya and Sama”, “Mevlana and Sufism”. Therefore, the tourists who visit Konya read Mrs. Havva's books to find the answer of the question “Why is she buried in Konya?”

Finally, Konya which is already valuable for religious tourism has become stronger as Mrs. Havva's burial place in Konya. The historical and cultural touristic offers in Konya starting from Çatalhöyük proceed being the most important city of Ottoman Empire and the capital city of Selcuklu State. This historical period and cultural heritage has made Konya one of the most important destinations of belief tourism.

Key Words: Eva De Vitray Meyerovitch, religious tourism, Konya, Mevlana

Bibliography
The work which is known in our literature as Menâsikü’l-Hac (The Pilgrim’s Guide) was written by Gubârî, 16th century poet. Through this work, Gubari influenced many poets after him such as Şeyh Galîp who lived two centuries later. The actual name of the writer of this work is Abdurrahman. He was born in Konya Akşehir and preferred to use the penname of Gubârî since he was very successful in the gubârî writing form. In this which he wrote to inform people about pilgrimage, he gave information about the conditions and methods of pilgrimage as well as he gave advices to the candidate pilgrims so that they can complete their worship tranquilly.

Another work of Gubârî which he wrote in the mesnevi form is Ka’be-nâme. Kabenaame is the sole work which was written under this name. In his mesnevi, the writer starts with addressing to the pen. He tried to interpret the worship of pilgrimage under the light of the verses from Kuran-ı Kerîm (the Holy Book of Moslems). Moreover, he mentioned about the case of İbrahim the prophet, his wife and his son which consisted the origin of the pilgrimage. In accordance with the order he received from Allah, he leaves his wife and his son around Mecca. Hacer who was obedient to Allah rushes between Safa and Merve in Mecca seven times in order to find water for her baby. They experience the miracle of Zemzem water where the boy stays. The holy water, Zemzem, wells out. During the following periods, İbrahim the prophet and his son, İsmail, restorated the walls of Kabe. Upon their praying, Allah ordered İbrahim to invite people for pilgrimage. Gubari explains the events causing the worship pf pilgrimage through his talent for art.

**Key Words**: Classic Literature, Gubârî, Menâsikü’l- Hac, Ka’be-nâme, the worship of pilgrimage, Kur’ân-ı Kerîm, verses, Hadith

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The word used in Arabic for visiting places is ziyarah. This word mainly applies to visiting graves. A ziyarah is also made to mosques as well as other holy regarded places that are associated with holy persons and their legends.

The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) encouraged visiting graves of the deceased and explained the main purpose as the remembrance of death and to pray for the deceased. Muslim scholars have expressed the proper etiquette (adab) of visiting graves and tombs in their works as early as the 2nd/8th century. They have also warned people against engaging in unacceptable behavior during their visit.

This paper attempts to look at the debate over the permissibility of visiting sacred sites like tombs and shrines in the Sunni legal tradition. While most of the Sunni scholars have a general positive approach to visiting graves, a strong opposition to ziyara emerged from the later followers of the Hanbali school of law. These scholars, including Ibn Aqil, Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn al-Qayyim were concerned with Muslims engaging in practices during ziyarah that violate Islamic principles. They considered some kinds of the ziyarths to saints’ graves as bid’a (heretical innovation). Other scholars who represent the mainstream approach have affirmed ziyarah and its permissibility as long as it is conducted in accordance with Islamic principles. This paper will discuss the evidence put forward by both sides of the discussion and reach to a balanced conclusion.

**Key Words:** Religious tourism, sacred places, Islamic law, shrines, tombs

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The island of Cyprus is supposed to be that of immigration, and conflicts throughout the history. Despite the fact that the Republic of Cyprus was established in 1960 under the guarantee of the UK, Greece, and Turkey, it didn't unfortunately last long. Then the coup d'etat realized by Nikos Sampson backed by Greek Junta in Athens in 1974 divided the island into two parts. It was the end of living together on the island especially for the minorities such as the Armenians, Levantines, and the Maronites. Maronites are believed to have come to the island some 14 centuries before from Lebanon, and had mainly five villages on the island, one of which was Gurpinar. Today the village is deserted, isolated, and the population left the village completely. Recently a new development occurred so as to bring all those villagers back to their village again so as to live in peace together with the Turkish Cypriots. To show the reality of what happened in the village in history a documentary was filmed, and the essence of this scientific study will base upon it showing the demographic characteristics and the historical realities from the villagers themselves.

**Key Words:** Maronites, Cyprus, Gurpinar, Minorities, Strategy

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In the discussion of risk management, various studies have focused on the risk on religious places from the perspective of physical aspects such as the destruction of religious assets, objects and landscapes. Particularly, wars, conflicts and terror attacks are some occasions in which the physical environment of the holy places is demolished. However, the destruction of religious heritages also disrupts the network of religious capital related to the places, which accumulates the degree of mastery and attachment to a particular religious culture, as defined by Rodney Stark. The interaction of visitors, goods and information in the holy places has helped develop the hub of religious culture in a certain space.

In the case of Syria, contemporary conflicts have destroyed Shi’ite religious heritages as well as other cultural heritages in the country. In particular, the deliberate act of sabotage by the IS (Islamic State) have made a huge impact on the Shi’ite people and the world as a whole. The destruction of Shi’ite religious heritages also disrupted the network of Shi’ite religious capital because of the decline in the interactions between the visitors to such religious places. However, people in these holy places have encouraged the sustenance of the network, to enhance their degree of mastery and attachment without interaction in the places.

This paper, therefore, will explore the structure required to sustain a network of religious capital in Syrian Shi’ite religious places. The contemporary situation of the network of religious capital and the efforts to sustain the network will also be discussed. Thus, the activities of Shi’ite religious places in Syria will be analysed.

The paper reveals that the effort to sustain the network of religious capital promotes the enhancement of ties between religious places and Shi’ite religious scholars. The development of ties with authoritative figures helps to maintain the network of religious capital for individuals in a conflict situation.

Key Words: risk management, Syria, religious capital, Shi’ite religious places, religious scholars

Bibliography


Unutilized Opportunity: A Traveller’s Observations on the Potential of Hajj

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There is no doubt that the Hajj, Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca, is the single most crowded gathering in the world today. The number of Muslims from around the World performing Hajj has been increasing every year, approaching to 4 million. This gathering in fact provides a perfect opportunity to “charge the batteries,” refreshment, and strengthen global Muslim solidarity which would turn it into economic, political and social gains in many respects. Yet, almost every year the occasion is remembered for some unfortunate accidents, crashes, or stampede where thousands of innocent people become the victims. A better organization and infrastructure combined with more professional services can change the whole occasion from an “image destructor” to image maker: Hajj can become the biggest annual convention on earth, providing intellectual, cultural, political and economic interaction between Muslims from around the world. Based on personal observations of the author, this paper will criticize the unfortunate events that happen every year during the Hajj season, and suggest how the situation can be improved for better utilization of the opportunity and potential gains from Hajj by the Muslim world.

Key words: Hajj, Pilgrimage, Islam, Mecca, potential gains from Hajj

Bibliography
Conflict between Religious Sentiment and Freedom of Speech: Link to Religious Terrorism

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Human rights are interdependent rights enshrined in international legal documents in order to protect human dignity. However, in this modern democratic right conscious society conflicts between fundamental rights are unavoidable. Due to the fundamental nature of those rights it becomes immensely difficult to have a balance where all rights can be given the protection they deserve. Religion and freedom of expression are frequently found to be in tremendous conflict. Balancing these two rights are particularly crucial for the courts, academic scholars and the international bodies, moreover, this battle of rights often results in undesirable violence.

First half of this paper discusses the nature of the conflict between freedom of expression and freedom of religion. Firstly the extent to which freedom of religion and be taken to protect religious groups from being offended, insulted or provoked would be discussed. The discussion will then lead to the question on whether free speech could be limited to protect religious sentiments of a particular group or community.

The second half of this paper discusses the violence induced by the conflict in light of key incidents that gave rise to controversies. Such incidents of violence are often labelled as religious terrorism. Nature of religious terrorism is very difficult to establish as there is no precisely defined definition of terrorism. Also international instruments do not acknowledge religious terrorism as a special category of terrorism. Incidents of terrorism committed by religion oriented terrorist groups is alarmingly increasing since the past decade. Once a direct link between religious sentiments induced violence and freedom of speech is this paper then critically analyses whether freedom of expression could be restricted as a counter terrorism strategy. This paper also suggests the possible legal solution to such unsolicited violence arising from the conflict between Religious Sentiment and Freedom of Speech.

Key Words: Free speech, religious sentiments, religious terrorism, counter terrorism strategy, violence from free speech.

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Session C: Value of Pilgrimage

International Education: a new type of pilgrimage

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Pilgrimage is generally defined as a journey that aims at reaching to the sacred and obtaining spiritual satisfaction at the end of the journey. Traditional or religious pilgrimages, mainly focus on intangible processes and targets; especially, mental and spiritual parameters are the main prompters behind pilgrimages.

On the other hand, modern or post-modern times let us critically discuss the old forms of pilgrimages and also encourage us to observe alternative phenomena regarding pilgrimages. Such phenomena are generally fed by a materialistic world view and expectations of the individual. That is why, journeys and long ‘ways’ are endured in order to reach to materialistic benefits rather than spiritual satisfaction.

Being an international student and dealing with many tough processes could be identified as a new type of pilgrimage in the 21st Century. Visa processes, expensive and lengthy flights, tuition fees, getting used to a new country and environment, new curriculums, new friends that do not speak your language and the other ‘tests’ which represent the ‘ordeal’ that are handled during the modern pilgrimage. Skills and graduation certificates that are obtained on this ‘way’ remind us of the spiritual and mental satisfaction obtained in traditional or religious pilgrimages. As in traditional pilgrimages, international education as a new route for modern pilgrimage, changes the life of the pilgrims who follow their desires, potently.

In this presentation, the similarity between international education processes and traditional religious pilgrimage journeys will be reciprocally and philosophically analysed by referring to the comparison among spiritual and materialistic expectations and satisfaction.

Key Words: pilgrimage, spiritual satisfaction, international education, materialistic expectation

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Religious Factors on Medical Travel Decision

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Recently, medical travels (bases on travelling for medical treatments) have been growing market in tourism industry. Many studies have been performed to evaluate medical travels through reasons, types and benefits of abroad treatments and related issues. But, a few studies point out that some special issues like religious aspects have not been examined comprehensively. Some studies give important cues about religious factors on medical travel decision. These studies show the different approaches and relations between religious factors and medical travel decisions. Halal travel and treatments for Muslim countries, cultural context and ethical standarts in religious or cultural differences in medical travel, secular or spiritual affects of religious travel on human body and healt, are seen main points of these approaches. So, main aim of the study is to examine the religious factors on medical travel decisions. And related to main aim, the study tries to show some market implications on medical tourism and offer some marketing strategies to medical tourism destinations.

The study methodology has a theoretical context. Related literature was used to evaluate conceptual aspects and second hand statistical data were analysed for receiving tangible indicators. The study results were constructed on these two sources.

The study findings are like; although some studies have pointed out the connections, there is any direct study about examining the relations on religious issues and medical tourism; Halal tourism is one of the growing area and it encapsulates the halal treatments in medical travel; because of ethical or cultural context of some religions, patients have to get some kind of treatments in abroad. On the other hand, there is not so many findings about healty or physical wellness or outcomes of religious or secular travel on human body. Study findings can be usefull for medical tourism marketers for product development to private groups.

Key Words: Religious factors, medical travel, treatment, tourist’s decision.

Bibliography

The Relationship of Religious Tourism with Social Peace in Terms of Intercultural Communication

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Tourism is a modern phenomenon in terms of social point of view. Gained a new meaning with the industry civilization, tourism has become a social phenomenon with its social function in addition to its economic functions. Turned to be a global social phenomenon, tourism has begun to be proposed as a social treatment against the burnout syndrome appeared in contemporary industrial society. Thus, it has begun to improve communication between the countries of incoming and outgoing tourism and economic, social and cultural interaction of the people in the World has also started to improve. While on one side the people of our weary world are defeated by their unsatisfying greed and ambition, on the other side they have unavoidably entered the legislative process of living together and cooperation. In our globalized world, intercultural communication is becoming one of the important aspects of living together and cooperation process. Social peace is a reality in the existence of humanity. It is an essentialness that humanity's longing with an optimist approach. Social peace is a way of sustaining social life distant from internal conflict. It is one of the objectives of social politics, which offer peaceful solutions to the disputes and conflicts that may arise from disagreements and social tensions among national and international various sectors of society. However, in the mutual recognition of different cultures, understanding of social values and in the establishment of intercultural relation, the importance of religious tourism covers human values in its frame has been increasing steadily. In this study, in the context of intercultural communication, the relationship between religious tourism and its social and cultural dimension taking parenthesis its the economic dimensions and social peace was discussed.

Keywords: Religious Tourism, Social Peace, Intercultural Communication, Cultural Interaction

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A Story Less Known: Honaz, a Christian sacred place.

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The history of the Jews is mostly based on a religious characteristics and the first terms of their history can be learned from the Torah. Since the Hellenistic era, Jews preferred a western oriented settlement, especially in western Anatolia and southwest of Phrygia. Christianity began to spread rapidly after its birth in Jerusalem by the Prophet Jesus. The religion was accepted by the masses who were oppressed under the forces of the Roman Empire. The people of Honaz, who were invited to Christianity by the church founded by Epaphras, were warned by a letter of Paul to not continue their ancestral traditions.

Honaz is a well-known Phrygia town, famous for fabric dying and wool craftsmanship, and is located 110 km east of Ephesus. As Cicero narrates, a Jewish settlement was found at the site. The letters by St. Paul sent to the Christian society founded by Epaphras are important. The letter with the title ‘Letter to the Colossians’ was written to mention the contradictory acts against Christianity of the Honaz Christians. This paper examines the history of Honaz and its importance in the history of religions from a historical and tourism perspective.

Key Words: Honaz, Jewish community, Christianity, Tourism, Denizli

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Muslim Civilisational Identity and Religious Tourism: journeys of British Muslim women

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The significance of Islamic tourism mobilities upon conceptions of belonging to the global Ummah among second generation British Muslim women is of importance in this research. In essence, this research seeks to evaluate the social fields within which second generation British Muslim women identify; and explore and interrogate the multiplicity of sites and sources which these Muslims draw upon to construct their religious identity. In particular, their sense of belonging to the Ummah, or the global community of Muslim believers, is explored. This research evaluates Islamic (and non-Islamic) tourism and how its associated mobilities contribute towards a sense of belonging to the Ummah. Research into female Muslims’ perspectives in relation to the Ummah has seen little exploration through the medium of mobility. In the current political climate, media focus on the mobility of particularly young female British Muslims is one which is couched in fear and distrust, with heavy surveillance and questioning. This research seeks to reflect a more positive light on the travel mobilities of second generation British Muslim females, and draws a more nuanced picture of their mobility and identity construction.

During the first decade of the 21st century, mobility has become a central concept which has percolated many interdisciplinary fields of approach, as well as standing as a powerful discourse on its own. However, religious mobility has commonly been explored though the lens of pilgrimage. Though this research partly looks at religious journeys/pilgrimage, its scope is wider. The research will also seek to shed light on directionality. Many studies have focused on the second generation ‘looking back’ at their ancestral and/or parental homelands. This research looks at the notion of a civilisational islam, and asks, ‘Where are second generation British Muslims looking back to’? From a civilizational point of view this could be a range of countries / spaces / places.

Key Words: Civilisational Islam, mobility, identity, belonging

Bibliography


Women as independent actors in pilgrimage - The example of Aaron's shrine

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In most communities and times, woman traveling for pleasure has been an anomaly. The difficulty of travelling, the risks along the journey, the costs, as well as women's duties as caretakers of home and family have prevented them from going on journeys. There is, however, one exception: Pilgrimage and religious tourism has been acceptable for women.

Turner & Turner discuss the concept of liminal space in connection with pilgrimage. They refer both to the state of mind, and to the physical reality, where the norms and barriers of society cease to exist and are replaced by a temporary, egalitarian ‘social antistructure’. Women have been able to make use of this breaking down of prevailing structures. Going on a pilgrimage has not only been a way to show personal piety, but it has also given an opportunity for independence, leadership, and even rebellion.

In the Islamic world the pilgrimage, or visit (ziyara) to the shrines of saints has been an important tradition in the religion of the people. While many holy sites are local in nature, more important saints attract pilgrims from all around the region. In southern Jordan, the most important holy site is the shrine and tomb of Nabi Harun, Biblical Aaron, the brother of Moses. In this paper I will analyze the roles of women in the annual pilgrimage to the shrine, also comparing it to similar traditions in other parts of the Islamic world. I will discuss the importance of religious travel in the local women's lives, and argue, that the decline of the tradition has also diminished women's role in public expressions of piety and religiosity. The study is based on my anthropological field research among the Bedouin in Southern Jordan.

Key Words: Pilgrimage, Women, Islam, Liminality, Shrines

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The Role of Goddess in Pilgrimage Tourism

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This paper aims to explore how ‘goddess’ has a role in pilgrimage tours and how tours are differentiated according to classical pilgrimages and neopaganism. In tourism literature it is a common thought that travel to peripheral places is hardly a radical act. Reincorporated into the cultural logic of capitalist and neo-colonialist social relations, travel becomes global tourism, a consumption of countries and places by privileged and mobile members of the developed world (Ivakhiv, 2003). With the development of technology, globalization has led people to see different places. Tourists that get the opportunity to know the religions of different destinations began to spread some of their rituals and norms in their countries. At the same time they visit the countries and share traditions with citizens. In this way, the phenomenon of pilgrimage is seen as a tool that combines and intersects religion and culture.

According to Theologians, theology aims to empower women, giving value to the female body, conceiving the Goddess as an imminent deity, who is both within the person and in the natural world (Starhawk, quoted in Puttick, 1997). As pilgrimage is a product and manifestation of its social environment, it is liable to change with the changing preoccupations of that social environment, and since the expectations and values of society today are different from, say, medieval times, it is only to be expected that pilgrimages will have altered in some expects (Readers, 1992).

Thus, pilgrimage tourism is handled from a different angle and it is thought to contribute to the emerging idea of goddess. Firstly, a conceptual overview of ancient societies, religion and religious tourism and pilgrimage tourism is set forth to illustrate the difference. Then, with the Goddess case, this is emphasized in the role and importance of pilgrimage tourism.

Key Words: pilgrimage tourism, religion, pilgrim, goddess.

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Session E : Challenges (ii)

Sacred Places, Tourism and Cultural Heritage: pilgrimages to West Java

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Sacred places on Java (Indonesia) have for a long time served as pilgrim sites and have also become major tourist attractions (Chambert-Loir 2002). In the paper we follow two groups of pilgrims to local pilgrim sites, one mountain, Gunung Sunda and one river, Sancang. One reason for their pilgrimage is to increase their knowledge, not so much about esoteric matters as about history, ethics and morals provided to them directly by spiritual ancestors inhabiting the place. They also have wishes of more material kinds (pregnancy, luck in economic transactions, getting a new job, etc). At the place, ancestors possess the pilgrim leader and communicate directly with the pilgrims. The modes of these meetings are not ‘sacral’ or esoteric but rather casual and straightforward. The ancestors like to socialize, have a smoke and drink coffee. This form of pilgrimage - villagers meeting with ancestors at specific places - have been under heavy contestation for a long time (Hefner 2011), mainly by Islamic organizations which see it as blasphemy. However, they have also been marginalized by the growth of a national cultural heritage (Doon-Harder2001) where religious monuments and sacred places have become tourist objects - framed by ticketing, regulations, souvenir shops, etc., making pilgrimage into just one out of many reasons to visit the place, something that corresponds to a global trend in mobility (Coleman 2004).

The paper is basically empirical and describes how sacred places on Java have changed and are changing. The theoretical part deals with the specific problem of how the transformation of religious sites deprives the pilgrims of the chance to establish direct communication with ancestors. In this sense the wishes pilgrims have to improve on their lives by contacting ancestors in ways they are familiar with, are drawn into a nationwide power struggle between nationalists and Islamic organisations.

Key Words: Sacred sites, Conflict, Indonesia, Heritage

Bibliography


To own the Sacred, to Control the People: Mahabodhi temple complex, India

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Sacredness goes beyond scriptural texts and archaeological remains *per se*. Its significance lies mainly in the active interaction between religious architecture within its dynamic ritual settings. The Mahabodhi Temple complex [UNESCO World Heritage Site] and its surrounding landscape is a ‘living’ heritage, which has been produced socially and constitutes differential densities of human involvement, attachment, and experience. It is highly unlikely that everyone would equally share and experience this place in a similar way. Defining the universal essence and the sacred boundary (as stated in Outstanding Universal Value of UNESCO WHS designation) can be seen to dominate, limit and control the sacred experience.

This paper will highlight how religious attention and gaze on historic structures and events of a particular cultural group often limit understanding of a place as a shared resource. Using Bodhgaya as an example, it will illustrate how this narrow consideration creates a boundary that often excludes other communities from being a part of a diverse and larger cultural community, thus, forming a wide gap and disputes among various stakeholders. Firstly, it will be argued that although the Mahabodhi Temple complex seems to be harmonious on the surface, tensions and conflicts simmer beneath its outer layer with regard to divergent ritual practices that are sometimes deemed incompatible with the prevalent conservation values.

Secondly, wider heritage issues, which stem from the UNESCO WHS Information Dossier prepared by the Government of India for the Mahabodhi Temple complex will be examined in order to highlight the authoritative heritage discourses. Lastly, the dynamic interaction of Mahabodhi Temple with the ongoing diverse ritual practices and prevalent social activities that occur in its immediate surroundings will be illustrated. These dynamics have created a complex environment, which need to be appreciated in order to maintain religious harmony.

**Key Words:** Mahabodhi temple; World Heritage Site; sacredness; ritual; community; conservation

**Bibliography**


Muslim Americans on the Hajj: The challenge of a modern pilgrimage in an ancient land

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For US Muslims, preparing and going on Hajj is straightforward and the facilities offered to Western Muslims are often luxurious compared to pilgrims from other countries on smaller budgets. Whereas Muslims from Muslim-majority countries must wait their turn to go on Hajj because of the quota imposed by Saudi Arabia and might only be allowed to go once in their lifetime, Muslim Americans are permitted to go every five years. In 2010, Hajj was performed by about 12,000 Muslim Americans out of 2.5 million pilgrims from around the world. This paper examines the privilege and politics of US Muslims who have gone on Hajj in recent years. Drawing on a variety of sources, such as blogs, published memoirs, and tweets, this paper draws on the experience from a selection of US Muslims and their Hajj narratives.

Because some US Muslims have negative views of Wahhabi-influenced Islam, their experiences on Hajj are often coloured by their perspectives of the government and its policies. Mecca is now replete with luxury hotels and high-end malls, technology embedded in religious rituals, a golden clock tower that looms above the Grand Mosque of Mecca as well as the ubiquity of cellphones, and people constantly taking selfies. With the almost complete destruction of religious and heritage sites in and around Mecca, US Muslims are faced head-on with a new form of oil-funded capitalism at Islam’s most sacred site. In their Hajj narratives, American pilgrims encounter and discuss the challenge of combining an intensely spiritual experience with the materialism of Mecca and the destruction of historical mosques and other sacred heritage sites. They also experience internal conflict as they come into proximity with practices and beliefs from the literalist Wahhabi-influenced Saudi Arabian government that contrast their own.

Key Words: Islam, Saudi Arabia, Hajj, pilgrimage, American modernity

Bibliography


Practice of Umrah in Indonesia; Preserving (New) Tradition and the Question Between Pilgrimage and Tourism

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As a southeast Asian country, the practice of Indonesian Muslim pilgrimage, has historically displayed its own dynamics. The term Istitha'ah, from a social perspective does not only mean financial capabilities but also illustrates the policy of the government as the organizer in Indonesia (Putuhena, 2007). The consequences of this are examined in this paper, particularly in relation to the hajj in Indonesia, which is undertaken by significant numbers of pilgrims every year. This trip has a spectrum of meaning; such as the quest for knowledge (Javanese term, elmu), supporting the struggle of the anti-colonial, religious duty and identity, up to the awareness of the social of for the pilgrims. (Azra, 1994; Chambert-Loir, 2013; Abdurrahman, 2009)

Following the New Order of rampant global tourism, the Umrah is seen as a tradition able to meet all of the Indonesian Muslim community’s needs for pilgrimage in this contemporary era. (Timothy and Olsen, 2006; Majid, 1997)

By using a sociological approach which emphasizes practice of tradition (Sunnah) and hadiths among the pilgrims, this paper utilizes methods of living traditions (Qudsy and Imron, 2013), in order to prove the existence of a new issue in Umrah, namely that of pilgrimage and tourism. The research informants consisting of Umrah pilgrims from different religious groups (Nahdlatul Ulama’ group, the Salafist group, and non-partisan group) show Umrah as a new trend of spiritual tourism that has never been seen in the previous era (Timothy and Iverson, 2006). Sociologically speaking, the pilgrims as agents of spiritual tourism also connect the meaning of Umrah to the spectrum of the hajj (Nahdlatul Ulama’ and Salafist group), and some are trying to meet the needs of their own identity (for non-partisan group), amid the challenges of a modern consumerism culture.

Key Words: meaning of hajj, umrah, living hadiths, spiritual tourism

Bibliography


23
Halal Tourism: Role of Culture and Religiosity

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Consumption of halal is a basic qualifying condition for developing, maintaining and reinforcing an overall Islamic lifestyle and identity and is a mechanism for comforting stability (Sandikci & Ger, 2010) for Muslims around the globe and in particular those living in the Western developed economies (Jamal and Sharifuddin, 2014). For highly religious Muslims, Islamic ideology transcends all acts of their life, providing them with a set of resources and ideals for identity creation in a dynamically changing market environment.

Halal tourism refers to tourism activities and behaviours geared towards individuals and families who abide by the rules and principles of Islamic Shariah. Countries like Malaysia, Turkey and many more aim to such Muslim customers from all over the world, offering facilities in accordance with the religious beliefs of Muslim tourists. Recent trends include an industry which offers flights where no alcohol or pork products are served, prayer timings are announced, and religious programs are broadcast as part of entertainment offered on board. The recent launch of the first Islamic-compliant airline called Rayani Air in Malaysia also provides support for such trends.

The purpose of this paper is to consider the potential of targeting Muslims who can be considered highly religious and in particular to develop a good understanding of market segments that are most likely to value services offered by the halal tourism industry. The premise of this discussion is that not all Muslims are same and even when their religiosity levels are high, they may still not be an attractive segment for the industry. With this in mind, this paper reviews and presents recent empirical work published by the author concerning the perceived value and usefulness of halal labelling and the relevant role played by cultural orientations in segmenting Muslim consumers. The paper offers practical insights in terms of market segmentation approaches.

Key words: Culture Orientations, Halal Tourism, Islamic Shariah, Muslim Consumers

Bibliography


Mosque Tourism Conceptual Framework: Towards its Definition and Application.

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The emerging notion of Islamic Tourism is newly recurrent in the Religious Tourism Literature and often offers interesting and challenging themes comprising outstanding ramifications. Its definition is in itself a justification to critically analyse and understand its components and meanings. Many researchers have attempted to define and characterise Islamic Tourism by detailing its features and by distinguishing who that type of tourism actually caters to. More recently, it has been defined by its purpose and scope, which seem to offer a better understanding of its significance. Indeed, the notion is presented as “Muslims travelling to Muslim friendly destinations offering halal tourism options combining religious and cultural tourism oriented attractions” (Kessler, 2015) encompassing a type of tourist, a place of travel, a way to travel and tourist activities.

This presents Islamic Tourism under four interconnected axes: Economic, Geographic, Religious and Cultural and argues that they all merge under the concept of Mosque Tourism. Undeniably, the term Mosque Tourism has been legitimized as a religious tourism practice featuring religious and non-religious motivated visits to Mosques incorporating several processes: Muslims visiting mosques as tourist attractions while travelling; Muslims attending prayers while travelling and; non-Muslims, visiting Mosques as tourists or knowledge seekers.

Consequently, Mosques and Mosques tourism are presented as central features of Islamic Tourism and are potentially the key to sustainable Islamic Tourism. In this context, this paper offers to define and analyse the term Mosque Tourism, a term that has recently been introduced to the academic literature in order to validate the construction of a comprehensive Framework. Indeed, the purpose of this paper is to build a framework around Mosque Tourism that could be applied to any population in order to evaluate the sustainability and viability of strategically planned Islamic Tourism products around Religious Tourism practices.

Key Words: Mosque Tourism, Halal Tourism, Islamic Tourism; Religious Tourism

Bibliography


Consciousnesses in Conflict

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This presentation aspires to expand on the material delivered in Konya, 2013 by Professor Keith Hollinshead, on the theme of understanding the cultures and spiritualities of ‘the Other’. This presentation seeks to return to those germane themes and areas of interest through an Islamicised lens.

This Konya presentation will draw inspiration from a range of relevant commentators and discourses. In an era where we inhabit what can be described as porous realities, floating territories and difficult spaces (Bauman, 2000); and where tourism forcefully serves to declare what a place, event, or inheritance is, or proclaim which vision of culture/heritage/nature is ‘right’ (Hollinshead, 2009), the concept of worldmaking is at the forefront of such discussion. Worldmaking constitutes a highly portable conceptualisation revealing where/when/how tourism does not just mirror a fixed ‘world’ out-there (be it locality/region/nation, be it history/myth/storyline), but plays an unsuspected/under-suspected role creating or changing the ways in which things are understood symbolically and materially. In applying these matters, this presentation will be inspected in terms of traditional and contemporary constructions of Muslim self-hood. In doing all of this, attention will be paid to the realm of travel and tourism as a producer and creator of consciousness today in general and specifically for the Islamic world.

This presentation will ask: how can Muslims construct honest-to-self enunciations which are receptive to an Islamic way of being and becoming? How are the battles between dominant/disliked non-sense representations of the Islamic world being challenged by organic and preferred new-sense representations and narratives?

This particular presentation will give a timely insight into a long-term research agenda by Hollinshead and Suleman which will culminate in a glossorial book exploring matters of geopolitics and identity.

Key Words: Worldmaking, the ‘Other’, Muslim-selfhood, discourse

Bibliography


Religious Places as Discrete Systems

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This paper attempts to explore places of religious significance as discrete systems. A discrete system through its lawful internal working, produces an output in the form of realised spatial order (Hillier, 1996) with its social logic, and a social order with its spatial logic. Thus, it appears to exhibit its duality of spatial and trans-spatial (Hillier & Hanson, 1984). The components of this system share a relevance, forming a collective (Halbwachs, 1980). This shared relevance creates meaning, forming a group where all collectives share one identity. The above-formed group with its new social order and its spatial logic revives the already existing spatial order. In the case of religious groups the collectives have a tendency to expand, resulting in production of space (Lefebvre, 1991) in a situation of encounter where they have found relevance. But an irrelevant encounter without a lawful internal working of discrete system results in anomaly because groups do not find relevance, due to absence of collective identity.

This paper makes an effort to explore the case of Babri Mosque, Ramjanmabhumi, Ayodhya; and Dashashawamedha Ghat, Varanasi to relate the anomaly as a transposition of social and spatial. The paper through the case studies makes an attempt to generate an equation, explaining the two different situations of religious encounters, the former reviving the social and spatial order and the other resulting in anomaly.

Key Words: Discrete, social, spatial, collectives, anomaly

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The Ancient Wisdom of Shams-i Tabrezi and Contemporary Complex Tourism Systems

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Turbulence in the global tourism market demands flexibility and fast reaction time from the entire service industry. Fast reactions require superficiality and decisions, frequently reflecting opposing interests, linear thinking and acting, making decisions solely upon influential surroundings. Here, we can say that an excellent methodological approach to these problems is an urgent need.

Today we encounter the systems approach and systems thinking, which became common management tools in the 1990s. These methods are actually collected and presented with the ancient Sufi wisdom in Shams-i Tabriz and his disciple Muhammad Jalaluddin Rumi teachings. The connections among elements of the whole (people, situations, relationships) have been invisible many times and thus not understood. In the world of complex systems, especially when we think of complex tourism system, we talk about interdependent elements of the whole where the surrounding influences the system at the same time as the system and its elements influence the surrounding.

One should understand that the surrounding reacts upon the system's dynamic elements. We can translate this into the language of Shams-I Tabriz: ‘The microcosm is concealed in the creation of man and the macrocosm is the outer space that surrounds us’. For prophets it is the just opposite: the outer universe is the microcosm and the macrocosm is hidden in them.

With the creation of a system dynamics model, we will present ancient wisdom as a knowledge of systems thinking. The system dynamic model is essentially simple; we will find a compromise between simplicity, limited usefulness and complexity and explain a critical analysis, and the synthesis of ancient wisdom and contemporary knowledge of systems thinking, which can become a base for future tourism systems strategies.

Key Words: Shams-i Tabriz, wisdom, complexity, tourism, modelling, systems-thinking,

Bibliography


Diplomacy and Religious Tourism as a Strategic Soft Power in Cyprus

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For years, Cyprus is believed to be in the midst of chaos, turmoil and conflict. Unfortunately, because of this, it is ignored and people have forgotten that the Goddess of Beauty lived in Cyprus after escaping the wrath of Zeus. A good many civilizations have lived and left remains on the island such as Ashap-I Kehf, that is, the Seven Sleepers.

Mythological figures, historical sites such as the chivalry of Richard, the lion, the King Temples etc all show that the island is of great importance. Talking of religious tourism, what we first come face to face is Ashap-I Kehf and Hz. Ömer Tekkesi located near Kyrenia. Then Apostolos Andreas Monastery and the Holy Fountain that are supposed to be very important for the Christian world, and St. Barnabas Monastery located near Salamis ancient city are also the primary figures on the island. Passing beyond the borders, what we see is the Hala Sultan Tekkesi, belonging to Prophet Muhammed’s aunt who has fallen and passed away nearby Salt Lake in Larnaca.

This paper will focus on the various religious figures in Cyprus, and the scientific study will present the importance of their value for Cyprus, using economic data and figures.

Key Words: Cyprus, Religion, Diplomacy, HalaSultan, St.Barnabas

Bibliography


Session H: Development (i)

Religious Heritage Tourism: The St. Paul trail project in Troas

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Today many tourists wish to explore different cultures, lives and visit cultural, historical and religious sites. The UNWTO estimates that each year 300-330 million tourists visit the most important religious sites in the world. Religious tourism fosters socio-economic development of host communities and promotes awareness of the historical, cultural, traditional, and artistic heritage values of the destination. Host destinations increasingly create and offer cultural and religious routes as tourism products, so that the duration of tourists’ stay can be extended and revenues can be increased. Religious - pilgrim tourism in Turkey is also growing in popularity.

This paper is a preparatory work of a project called as ‘The St. Paul Trail in Troas’. St. Paul was responsible for the spread of Jesus’ message of Christianity to Asia Minor and Western Europe. He made 4 Missionary Journeys. In his 2nd Missionary Journey to Greece: A.D. 50-52 (Acts 15:36 - 18:22) and his 3rd Missionary Journey - Paul returns to Asia and Greece: A.D. 53-38 (Acts 18:23-21:15), he visited and passed through the Troas region (today’s Canakkale). He raised a young Eutychus from the dead and met up with Luke in Assos.

The St. Paul Trail will start from Geyikli where he landed from the boat on his 3rd Missionary Journey and by following his footsteps through the temple of Apollo Smintheion, the ancient cities of Aleksandria and Neandria, will end in the ancient city of Assos. The trail will be about 60 kms. In some places it will be possible to follow the original Roman route. It is expected that a successfully constructed and promoted trail may attract many tourists from all over the world who wish to trace the history of their religion, visit Biblical places and hear the legends related to St. Paul.

Key Words: Religious heritage tourism, St. Paul.

Bibliography


International Competitiveness: Analysis of Konya within the scope of religious tourism

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Konya is recognized one of the most important cities in the World owing to its deep-seated and rich historical legacy. Thanks to various values settled in Konya, this city becomes one of the most important faith centres in Turkey, therefore, a considerable amount of domestic and foreign tourism is hosted in the city every year. In national ranking of foreign tourist number, Konya is in 9th place and it is also placed near the top in domestic tourist mobility. Future needs for this city should strategically be analysed in order to structure the sector in a competitive and healthy way.

In this current study, the competitive capacity of religious tourism in Konya City, which keeps an important potential among the other tourism areas, has been analysed. Within this framework, first of all, the basic conceptual studies about the religious tourism have been outlined. Secondly, some of the data such as the amount and ratio of tourists, statistics for tourist facilities, purpose of visits, etc. have been obtained from global and local institutions such as World Tourism Organization, The Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey, Turkey Statistical Institute (TurkStat), and Konya Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism.

Within the scope of the field study and data obtained from it, Porter’s Diamond Model was utilised, to undertake the analysis of international competitiveness of the sector. In light of the data and the model mentioned above, international positions of the sector have been presented.

In the analysis, by explaining the basic features of religious tourism, the level of competitiveness of Konya City has been determined.

Key Words: Religious Tourism, Competitiveness, Diamond Model.


Rethinking Pilgrimage Routes Through New Forms of Consumption

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Themed routes as tourist attractions have gained prominence in recent years and have greater pulling power by connecting attractions that would independently not have the potential to entice tourists to visit an area, thus spreading tourism’s economic benefits to marginal areas (Meyer, 20014). Routes are often seen as good opportunity for less mature areas with rich cultural resources that appeal to special interest tourists. Pilgrimage routes are good examples of such situations, working as catalysts of tourism development (Richards & Fernandes, 2007). Studies indicate that the number of tourists traveling purely for religious reasons is relatively small, with leisure/recreation increasingly providing the motivation for the pilgrimage, suggesting that even traditional pilgrims may be looking for new forms of consumption (Fernandes et al., 2012). However, findings in the literature suggest that the lack of proper planning and management of the route’s tourism can lead to a lack of economic benefit in communities along the route.

This paper aims to explore a paradigm shift from a place-based to a lifestyle based approach. It entails bridging tangible and intangible elements of heritage representing the region’s traditions and cultural identity thus creating new reasons to visit local communities along the route. Emphasis is placed on linkages between the landscape, agricultural practices, gastronomy and the involvement of residents to provide visitors with an aesthetic experience thus creating considerable added value. The paper is based on studies of the Portuguese Camino de Santiago in the Minho region of Portugal.

Key Words: Routes, pilgrimage, motivation, consumption

Bibliography
Commodification of Islamic Religious Tourism: From a spiritual to a touristic experience.

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In Saudi Arabia, the government and the local population of Mecca who used to facilitate pilgrims as ‘Guests of Allah’ free of charge have adopted the concept of ‘pay to pray’ (Shackley, 2001 & Woodward, 2004). In other words, given the escalating demand for religious tourism and the desire to achieve maximum economic benefits, the Saudi government is enhancing the hospitality and tourism sectors in general and transforming Mecca’s tourism infrastructure in particular, developing it into a contemporary city / tourist destination by injecting US$80 billion into the local economy (Pecenoni, 2012). It is unclear, however, what impact this will have on the experience of religious tourists / pilgrims. That is, what effect will this commodification have on the authenticity of the destination (Mecca), the religious ritual (Hajj) and on pilgrims’ experiences?

Certainly, it might be hypothesised that the pilgrim’s behaviour is becoming more materialistic, that owing to contemporary highly-branded hospitality services, modern tourism infrastructure and SMART technology in Mecca, the pilgrim’s spiritual experience is being transformed into a touristic experience, an experience which competes with and jeopardises the equality, simplicity and principles of the Islamic religious journey of Hajj.

The purpose of this paper is to begin to address the consequences of this commodification of the Hajj. Specifically, it considers the outcomes of preliminary research (focus groups) conducted in the UK with pilgrims who have performed Hajj within the last three years. This research reveals that, for these pilgrims at least, the Hajj has become commodified; not only has the experience become more ‘touristic’, but they also seek out greater comfort and luxury, indicating that the pilgrimage has become more of a ‘branded’, commercial experience. The research also points to further research that will be necessary to fully comprehend the implications of the commodification of the Hajj for religious tourism more generally.

Key Words: religious tourism, commodification, spiritual & touristic experience, authenticity

Bibliography


Factors Affecting Satisfaction Level in Religious Tourism and Its Effects: Comparison of Şanlıurfa and Konya

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Tourism sector is very important for both national and local economies. This importance changes depending on the tourism values that tourism destinations have. Having the largest share economically depends on satisfaction levels of tourists they have after their touristic visits. The satisfaction level of tourists, on the other hand, depends on the brand values and factors that is affective in the management of brand values. In other words, factors that affects satisfaction levels of tourists and the importance of their importance have an impact on the share that destination will obtain from the tourism market.

Visiting destinations in terms of religious tourism and satisfaction levels of tourists after leaving the destination depends on the features that the destination have in general and on the factors like cleanliness, transportation and knowledge acquisition that the destination have.

These factors affecting satisfaction levels of tourists also contribute to the brand value of the destination that will develop in the minds of tourists. The formation of the destination brand and its having marketable quality depend on the satisfaction level that these factors will produce. Therefore, the aim of this study is to define the concepts of destination and destination brand and to emphasize how important is to form brand identity for marketing of the destination and as a result, to what extent this affects satisfaction level of the tourists. For this aim, two destinations having a substantial structure in terms of religious tourism (Konya and Şanlıurfa) are chosen and how satisfied tourists that come to these destinations while leaving and what are the deficiencies of these destinations and cities are tried to be determined.

As a consequence, by comparing two cities, similarities and differences between these cities’ having impact on the satisfaction levels of tourists are explained and the expectations of tourists are determined. With regard to both Şanlıurfa and Konya, the regional feature that tourists have the highest satisfaction level is the historical values and religious places of these destinations. Besides this, attitudes and behaviours of the public and shopkeepers are determined to be the regional feature having the lowest average. And, while in Şanlıurfa, Balıklıgöl and the cave where Prophet Abraham was born has the highest level of satisfaction, in Konya, Mevlana Museum seems to bring about the highest level of satisfaction.

**Key Words:** Tourism, Religious Tourism, Destination Brand, Şanlıurfa, Konya

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The Socio-Economic Impact of Religious Tourism: The Case of Konya

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From time immemorial, human beings have been moving voluntarily from place to place. This movement is called ‘tourism’. Tourism may be defined as a voluntary human travelling from one’s place of residence to another. The place to be visited may be within the same region, nation or anywhere on the surface of the globe (and lately even beyond). A person who engages in this activity is known as a ‘tourist’. The World Tourism Organization defines tourists as people “travelling to and staying in places outside of their usual environment” (UNWTO, 1995). The travelling or tour usually involves a period from a few days to several months although history has recorded perhaps the longest trip of 20 years undertaken for the sake of seeking knowledge of other societies and cultures by a famous historian Alberuni in the sixteenth century AD. There are several reasons why people travel from one place to another. Likewise, tourism also leaves its footprints on the local and regional socio-economic landscape.

There are a number of reasons why people travel. It may be for the sake of recreation or pleasure, enrichment of knowledge about other people and the type of societies they live in, trade and commerce or for fulfilling religious obligations. According to the WTO, the impact of tourism involves “full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, environments and host communities”.

Konya is a relatively small metropolis situated inland in Turkey. Although growing rapidly economically and in terms of knowledge-based industry, it still has a long way to go in terms of its tourism industry. Its biggest tourist attraction is religious in nature. It is the resting place of a very famous Sufi philosopher, poet and religious leader, Maulana Jalal ad-Din Rumi. People come from all parts of the globe to pay respect to him and satisfy their spiritual need.

The main purpose of this paper is to examine the impact of tourism on the economy of Konya. Being a spiritual centre of Maulana Jalal ad-Din Rumi, of course, it will continue to benefit from tourism by attracting national and foreign visitors from all walks of life. At the same time, it has to further develop its cultural and tourism industries to facilitate and attract tourists. It should also take advantage of the national and global developing economies.
The Effects of Climate Changes on Foot Pilgrimages

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Going on a pilgrimage depends on a scheduled event and/or on the pilgrim’s plan. There are pilgrimages like the Lent Pilgrimage on the main Island of the Azores (Portugal) which always takes place between Carnival and Easter but other pilgrimages like the one to Santiago can be pursued all year long. Looking at the Santiago data (Oficina de Acogida al Peregrino, 2015) one may observe that most northern European pilgrims choose to go on pilgrimage during spring (April, May June) or autumn (September, October). Will it be the same if global warming proceeds as expected?

The interface between the weather/climate change and tourism is multifaceted and complex. Climate is both a vital resource to be exploited, and an important limiting factor representing risks to be managed by the tourist industry and by tourists. All destinations (tourist stakeholders) and tourists are sensitive to climate, which is a key influence in planning and travel experiences.

This research aims to understand the relationships established between climate change/climate and tourism and the consequent tourist’s adaptation measures (mainly concerning the choice of the month(s) to go on a pilgrimage). The methodology includes, among others, tourist surveys, covering descriptive and multivariate statistics, as well as the non-parametric statistical inference.

With this study the authors intend to contribute to the development of more effective policies, in which the participation of stakeholders in a bottom-up approach, and the integration of climate policy with other policies, including religious tourism, can act as an effective basis for the formulation of global policies.

Key Words: climate change; pilgrimage on foot; religious tourism

Bibliography


A Typology of Christian Mega-Events in the 21st Century

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In an age where the numbers of people attending churches in the UK has been falling consistently (for decades), a trend that applies across Europe and North America, there is a marked contrast to the burgeoning growth in Christian religious encounters ‘including church attendance’ around the world, and particularly in the Global South (Avis, 2007). Amongst the characteristics of this growth is the emergence of large-scale mega-events, commonly held across Africa and the Indian sub-continent, as well as smaller but significant events held elsewhere around the world.

The emergence in the modern day of large-scale Christian events began in the UK with Billy Graham’s evangelistic crusades in 1954, attended by 1.3 million people over a period of three months. Thirty years later, over one million attended ‘Mission England’ mass rallies, held in football stadia. But whether these meetings were merely ‘public spectacles’ (Guest, 207, p25), or had any measureable impact in terms of numbers attending church, at the time they certainly achieved media coverage and public visibility. The original evangelistic events in the UK were able to build on knowledge that many children gained in school and at Sunday school, which, some would argue, has been eroded by secular influences on education and society in general (Savage, Collins-Mayo & Mayo, 2006).

This research seeks to develop an understanding of the different types of large Christian events, focusing on the mega-events in Africa and India where preachers with a global reach, such as the German evangelist Reinhard Bonnke (www.cfan.org.uk) and American Joyce Meyer (www.joycemeyer.org) are joined by less well-known speakers. The growth of megachurches and global worship brands in Australia and the USA provide another strand for comparison.

Key Words: mega-event, church-event, Christianity, eventization-of-faith, megachurch

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Implementation Issues of Religious and Pilgrimage Tourism - An Approach from the Religious Authorities

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Religious and pilgrimage tourism can be viewed from different perspectives: as a faith activity, as a cultural and historical monument visit, as an experience of different arts (painting, architecture, iconography, etc), as an event or celebration, as a custom or tradition. These views can also be related to the stakeholders from whose side the approaches are coming.

Religious and pilgrimage tourism, so far, despite its importance, has been primarily studied from the tourism operators side or by research on the activities of the pilgrims or tourists. In the past, the author has studied the interactions between the various stakeholders of religious and pilgrimage tourism and their interrelationships. Empirical research results indicated the importance of the involvement of local Religious Authorities, in both the interpretation and presentation of an individual religious site, shrine or monument and the valorization of the significance for the pilgrims and other visitors.

A different approach for various implementation issues and expressions of the pilgrimage and religious tourism activity, has been tried by the author, though a research effort addressed to the religious authorities – in this instance, the local dioceses of the Church of Greece.

Based on a questionnaire survey (2015-2016) with support from the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece, to the various Dioceses in Greece, the present paper tries to describe and assess the extent of involvement by the religious authorities in the implementation aspects of religious tourism activity. The involvement has been categorized under five main areas of activity: (a) importance of religious shrines; (b) pilgrim groups received; (c) specific pilgrimage activities; (d) promotion materials prepared; (e) saleable products.

The paper will present the findings, make comparisons with research results from previous work on the religious activities undertaken during pilgrimage visits, and offer recommendations for the collaborative interactions between religious and tourism stakeholders.

Key Words: pilgrimage identification and implementation, religious stakeholders, Greece

Bibliography


The Transformation of Pilgrimage in Consumer Societies

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Contemporary societies are defined in using various terms such as late capitalism (Jameson, 1991), risk society (Beck, 1992) and consumer society (Baudrillard, 1970). One of the most important of these is that of the consumer society. This term focuses on the transformation of the capitalist system, the important role of consumption in social structure, the influence of consumption on social identity and social stratification. The fast developments of communication technologies have enhanced the influence of consumption on human behaviour. Turkey has also experienced this transformation.

There are three important turning points in this transformation: (i) liberalization of the Turkish Economy in the 1980s, (ii) the spread of the culture industry as a result of the permission for private TV channels, (iii) the spread of a consumer society and the integration of religious people into the consumer society in the 2000s. On the one hand, artificial needs have been created by advertisements and on the other hand sign values and the perception of existence in the world by consuming goods have spread throughout all society. After 2000, religious people have also increased their purchasing power and have been integrated into the consumer society (Demirezen, 2015).

The contagion of the codes of consumer society into religious values and rituals, the commodification of religious rituals, the influence of commodification on individuals’ approaches to religion have important influences on the meaning and functions of pilgrimage in Turkey. The differences between the meaning of pilgrimage and tourism have evaporated because of the commodification of pilgrimage. Although, as Cohen says, there are some differences between pilgrimage and tourism (Cohen, 1992), the organization and performance of pilgrimage has become very similar to touristic organization and touristic activities in consumer societies. In this paper, we aim to analyze the features of consumer society by examining and conceptualizing consumer society, to detect the stages which Turkish society has passed through to become a consumer society, to explore the influence of the changes and transformations on the meaning and the functions of pilgrimage and to explain pilgrimage and religious tourism in the frame of consumer society.

Key Words: consumer society, pilgrimage, tourism, Turkey, religion

Bibliography

Religious tourism in the Caribbean, current situation, challenges and opportunities for future

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Religious tourism is considered as the oldest form of tourism (Rinschede, 1992). It is a type of heritage tourism that is motivated exclusively or strongly by religious reasons (Olsen & Timothy, 2006). Religious tourism has great potential as a growing phenomenon that would benefit from academic advances and applied improvements (Aleen, 2010; Collins-Kreiner & Gatrell, 2006). As Olsen & Timothy (2006:3) noted, ‘Religiously motivated travel including pilgrimage has grown tremendously during the past fifty years’. More information is needed in terms of motivations and behaviors that might help destination managers design effective pilgrimage packages for this growing niche market (Digance, 2003; Triantafillidou, Koritos, Chatzipanagiotou, & Vassilikopoulou, 2010). Furthermore, the profitability of service providers relies on how well destination managers and marketers meet the customers’ expectations of the tourism product (McKercher, Packer, Yauc, & Lam, 2003). Religious tourism is increasingly becoming an area of noteworthy study in the field of tourism studies. The Caribbean as a tourist destination has not been typically associated with religious tourism, but this is beginning to change especially in the realm of Cuban tourism. The vast majority of tourists to the Caribbean are leisure tourists, attracted to the famous ‘sun, sea, sand’ marketing promise. The purpose of this study is to examine the nature and status of religious travel to the Caribbean with an analysis of its challenges and opportunities for future development. The population of this study consists of senior personnel working in the tourism marketing offices of 25 Islands in the Caribbean.

Method: Exploratory research and sampling design with a self-administrated questionnaire distributed to senior officials of Caribbean tourism destinations offices during February.

Key Words: Religious tourism, Caribbean, Challenges, Opportunities, Development

Bibliography
Pilgrimage as a Support for Regional Development: A proposed model for underdeveloped regions.

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There are five pillars of Islam: to believe and say: ‘I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is Allah's servant and messenger.’; to perform prayers; to undertake Ramadan fasting; to give Zakah once a year; to go on a pilgrimage once in a lifetime. The last two require a person to have sufficient wealth. So, poor Muslims can perform, only the first three. These conditions encourage Muslims, to earn enough wealth, for zakah and for pilgrimage.

On average, 74,000 people, go to Makkah annually from Turkey for pilgrimage. A feature of Turkish pilgrims is that most people travel only once in their lifetime. Undertaking this Hajj trip requires information. So they have to learn enough about the hajj. Some of their relatives and friends, come with these people to the airport to say ‘goodbye’ to each other. Generally ‘goodbye’ follows prayer for each other. This traditional ‘goodbye’ ceremony makes airports more crowded.

In this study, undertaken in Konya Province which is Turkey’s pilgrimage meeting point. A model is developed, examining cost, tourism and regional development. In the study, the activities of ‘collecting pilgrims in Konya province, informing them and send them to Makkah’ are examined, taking account of economic, and regional development impacts.

Key Words: Regional development, pilgrimage, economics, tourism

Bibliography


Event Planning and the Policy Framework: The Impact of Events Planning on Abu-Dhabi

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Event management and tourism refers to leisure activity held for pleasure. Even though, Abu Dhabi is part of the United Arab Emirates, it has been competing with other member states of this union to attract more events and tourists and it appears that more emphasis is placed on infrastructure development than actual policy formulation (Boukas, 2013). In this regard, Abu Dhabi government focuses more on building its events and tourism industry through its present competitive and comparative advantages. Abu Dhabi acts as an important location for the International Defence Exhibition (IDEX) but this reputation must be carefully reviewed as most of events are portrayed as bringing cultural impact as much as economic impact (Bethapudi, 2013). A major problem in achieving strategic objectives regarding the development of the tourism industry, is the ad hoc approach to economic development by the government.

Religious tourism is expected to have potential in Abu Dhabi. The key motivation for this sort is to travel is the heavenly and profound needs of people. The motivating force for such tourism could be exploring the ways of life of distant nations, other religions, or exploring spiritual matters (Arturo Molina, 2010). This research first inspects literature on the possibility of developing this form of tourism in Abu Dhabi and making it an attractive religious tourism sites by contrasting it with Middle East countries which are perceived as pilgrimage destinations. The study investigates other destinations, and components to explore the advancement possibilities for Abu Dhabi. The investigation then examines possibilities of building up that sort of activity in Abu Dhabi and its possible impacts on enhancing tourism in Abu Dhabi and broadening the visitor stream into Abu Dhabi (Argan, 2011).

Results show that religious tourism could face challenges in its practical implementation, yet it could be extremely beneficial in supporting the tourism business in Abu Dhabi. Religious tourism can offer diversified employment for tourism workers. Other advantages include diversification of tourism product, increasing tourist numbers and thus increased tourism consumption (WTTC, 2014). The study gives suggestions regarding activities that could urge more sightseers to visit Abu Dhabi as a religious destination.

Key Words: tourism, religious, culture, planning & policies, event success

Bibliography


Session M : Management Issues (ii)

Sacred Space and Sacred Music in the Information Age

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The harmonious relationship between sacred music and sacred space is going through hard times. What used to be a well-regulated marriage ‘sacred music performed live in a sacred setting during a religious service or a concert’ is now completely redefined in 21st century society, by the advancements of information and communication technologies, along with the increasingly pervasive commodification of culture. But are the ‘spouses’, space and music, still the same as 500 years ago? Or even 50 years ago? Drawing on a great deal of personal experience on the one hand as a performer, member of the audience and a concert promoter, and exploring further some ideas circulated in a paper by Veronica della Dora (2009) on the other hand, I will investigate to what extent sacred music has become a vehicle for transporting, re-creating and re-inventing the sacred space in secular places using information technology and digitization.

The growing distinction between the sacred space and the sacred place emerges as a consequence of the omnipresence of modern technology and the seemingly endless possibilities it offers, including the virtual ubiquity generated by the internet. This paper endeavours to identify contemporary forms of sacred space, or what is nowadays regarded as such, and investigate whether or not sacred music is experienced differently in those. Based on findings of an ongoing qualitative research project, it will postulate that the sacred space can be virtually (re)created, shared with others or self-centredly retained.

As the rules of an exclusivity of a sacred place have changed, the sacred-profane dichotomy has lost its topicality. The research in question has only been carried out in the context of Christianity and is concerned with musical performances outside regular religious services, irrespective of the original ecclesiastical character of the music.

Key Words: sacred music; sacred space; technology

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How Visible Are Sacred Sites Online?: The availability of sacred Websites

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Sacred sites are the places where the ‘spiritual’ world meets the ‘real’ world. Every culture in the world has sought to accolade the mysterious, the divine, the martyr or the extraordinary. There are tens of thousands of sacred places of prehistoric, historic and contemporary culture in the world. The internet has recently become a popular tool for gathering information about sacred sites as well as imagery and other required details related to travel towards the attractions of sacred sites. Internet sources exert an inevitable impact during the selection process of a sacred destination.

This study aims to investigate the online background of the sacred sites of Europe. Firstly a list of sacred sites along Europe prepared and then the online background of sites checked through main web search engines. This study focuses to investigate the online status of sacred sites in Europe and it suggests avenues for tour operators, destination management actors and tourism stakeholders to improve the online detail of sacred sites throughout Europe.

Key Words: Sacred, Sacred Sites, Religious Tourism, OnlineTravel

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**El Pueblo Manda: Almontese Men on the Move.**

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The procession in honour of the Virgen del Rocio in the Spanish hamlet of El Rocio (Andalusia, Spain) is unique for several reasons. Besides its historical significance, amplitude, and unique location, the spectacular way in which the procession takes place distinguishes it: turbulent, unpredictable and oftentimes violent. A ‘contractio in terminis’ for many, an example of extreme adoration for others (Murphy and Faraco, 2002).

In the days before Pentecost, thousands of pilgrims fill the otherwise mostly abandoned site of El Rocio to feast and to participate in a multitude of official celebrations; many of them as members of one of the more than 100 brotherhoods, coming from all over Spain. On Sunday night, tens of thousands pour in to witness the bringing out of the heavy statue and the bewildering procession which follows and continues until Monday noon. The protagonists during the procession are the Almontese men. As El Rocio belongs to the village of Almonte, it is their patron saint which is honoured and it is their privilege to carry the image around. The organization of the religious acts is firmly in hands of the Almontese brotherhood, but their control ceases when hundreds of Almontese men jump over the altar verge in the early hours of Whit Monday. This so called ‘salto a la reja’ marks the start of a procession in which the Almontese appear to be in a never ending fight to get under the stretcher while at the same time, non-Almontese, who intend to get close to the image, are forced back hard-handed. Unwritten rules, known and respected by the Almontese men, make it possible that, notwithstanding the obvious chaos, a procession can take place in which all the brotherhoods are greeted one by one. However, research has revealed that the infamous ‘salto a la reja’ has undergone drastic changes during the last 50 years and has turned out to be a highly dynamic event with profound internal transformations that can be correlated with social and political changes in Spain. (Plasquy, 2012)

During the last four years, new and unforeseen events took place during the procession and taken together, this new process seems to confirm this hypothesis. In 2011 a rupture of a rod of the stretcher made it necessary to abort the procession. In the following year, this calamity set off an unseen process within the village in which latent displeasures gave rise to a drastic remodelling of not only the beginning but also the course of the procession. In this process, the local brotherhood did not take part. Instead, a highly informal decision making model came into existence. In the following years the implemented modifications not only underwent further changes but were also at the same time openly contested. This process is still going on. The most drastic changes so far were to keep all the non-Almontese out of the chapel at the moment of the ‘salto’ and to literally empty the nave to facilitate the taking out of the statue. The typical images of fighting men before the start of the procession changed radically to tranquil and patiently waiting men. At the same time the procession was significantly shortened by several hours while aggression against outsiders increased.

Comments during the procession and later on in the village, indicate that the underlying discontent is linked to the ‘stressful’ relation between the Almontese and the public. The fact that their attitude during the procession has evolved into a spectacle in itself and their idiosyncratic behaviour as an example of ‘pure’ locality in an expanding and globalizing devotional dynamic, seems to have reached ‘a tipping point’ in which the locals are actively seeking strategies to recoup control over spatial and temporal dimensions of the ritual.

**Key Words:** Spain, Romería, ritual dynamics, locality

**Bibliography**


Improving Sacred Site Management Through New Technologies: the case of Montserrat

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The paper proposes a framework for improving sacred site management through the use of new media. Montserrat Monastery, in Catalonia, is a major sacred site and, also, one of the most visited places for tourists in northern Spain. Over 2.5m visitors each year visit this sacred place, generating, sometimes, conflicts between different types of visitors and carrying capacity problems.

The paper proposes to implement a technology solution based on Bluetooth and Wi-Fi coverage in different areas and buildings of Montserrat. This solution allows the researchers to geotag visitors using their mobile phone in order to track their behaviour, and in addition to interact with them to provide services.

This is a project that aims to use information and communications technology to improve the sustainability of a fragile and sometimes crowded space, while providing a performance improvement of the facilities (providing those products and services to visitors who may be interested in it) and improves therefore the visitor experience.

Therefore, part of the information system will allow the managers of the space to think about the design of new products adapted to different audiences depending on their motivations and behaviour (they may be more interested in the natural, historical or cultural aspects, in the spiritual sphere, etc.).

The objectives to be achieved through the paper are:

- Better knowledge about the behaviour of tourists in sacred spaces
- Generate content for the visit to the heritage site and make it accessible to visitors.
- Improve the management of space assets, especially in periods with large visitor numbers
- Optimize marketing products; create new products geared to different demand profiles according to their behaviour and their motivations
- Improve visitor satisfaction and increase the level of loyalty

Key Words: Montserrat, technology, visitor experience, geo-tagging, visitor satisfaction

Bibliography


Religious Journey of St. Paul – Two Tourism Destinations From Turkey: Konya And Kilistra

Abdullah Karaman & Mustafa Aksaray

Konya, or with its ancient Roman name Iconium, is known to have been founded by the Hittites. Throughout history, it is known as an important city. Starting from one of the humanity’s first settlements, Çatalhöyük, it has maintained this status until today. Being one of the centers of the first settlement, in terms of faith systems, it started from the Paganists and Konya has become the center for all three religions that are accepted as divine religions. There are reports that the Roman citizen, St. Paul, who is one of the Jewish Pharisees has lived in Konya. Moreover, Mevlana (Rumi) who communicates to the world the importance of tolerance and peace, also causes thousands of people from other countries to visit Konya. Therefore, in terms of Turkey’s tourism, Konya is one of the leading provinces with its faith tourism. In this context, St. Paul might be of value in increasing the number of tourists coming to the city.

Mentioned by his name and of his teachings in many places in the Bible, St. Paul has a church in Konya located in the village of which is named Gökyurt today. The region has many chapels, and a cross-shaped church which is still standing and other structures belonging to the period. Named as Kilistra as well as with its ancient name Lystra in the era, this region is known to be one of the centers during the era of the spread of Christianity. In addition, approximately 15 km from the city center the famous Hagia Elena Church located in Sille are seen as the intriguing destinations for the people with Christian faith. Known for its tolerance and respect for all the religions, Konya causes excitement for new beginnings within the Religion Tourism with these values.

Key Words: Religious Journey of St. Paul, Bible, Konya, Kilistra

Bibliography


Mevlana Ceremonies In Terms Of Belief Tourism And The Role Of Tourism Shareholders

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Each year, between the dates December the 10th and 17th, Konya experiences a very important period in terms of belief tourism. On days of Mevlana's death anniversary, called as "Şeb-i Aruz" – "Wedding Night", sema rituals (whirling of Dervishes) are realized. Many people from all around the world come and watch these ceremonies. Hz. Mevlana is an important Islamic philosopher who acts by his religious belief. Hz. Mevlana's teachings are based on global notions such as humanism, friendship, peace, tolerance.

Şeb-i Arus, means Wedding Night in Turkish (Şeb in Farsi: Night, Arus in Arabic: Wedding). In Mevleviyeh, it is the night when Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi died. Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi calls the night as wedding night as he embraces death as the union night with god, his creator. He is mostly known as Rumi in western societies.

UNESCO announced the year 2007 as Mevlana year which attracted the attention of both the public and the world to Konya. From that time on Konya has been an important destination for belief tourism. Moreover, UNESCO has listed Şeb-i Aruz ceremonies as Intangible Cultural Heritage on 4th of November, 2008.

The number of national tourists and tourists from all over the world is considerably increasing each year in Şeb-i Arus ceremonies in Konya. The visitors are usually from The USA, England, Japan, Korea etc. During this period, local shareholders leading, many international foundations and institutions take part in these ceremonies. In this study, the opinions and suggestions of local shareholders such as tourism agencies, hotels, souvenir shops and restaurants are included.

Key Words: Mevlana, Belief Tourism, Konya, Shareholders

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Mevleviyeh’s Cultural Location and Tourism Value

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Cultural point of Rumi Lovers and the value for nowadays is described as thought and education, starting with Rumi that effects individuals and communities for following ages.

At the age of easy-obtaining information and learning, individuals reach enough information about Rumi and Mevleviyeh and create awareness. The study aims to examine, evaluate and determine activities about Lodges and Mevleviyeh cultures and affects on tourism industry.

Determining the Mevlevi Lodges locations and activities have an important on cultural and religious tourism. Lodges and religion places are not used in accordance with its purposes in Turkey.

Mevlevi Lodges are restored in Nicosia, Cairo, Sarajevo, Plovdiv but all of them couldn’t be used in accordance with its real purpose. Rumi lovers locating in abroad (if they are not from Turkey) generally rent an apartment or hall and give name of “Mevlevi Lodge”. They meet weekly or annual overthere, read together Quaran or Masnavi by obeying the rules of Mevlevi (at least trying to obey). They also carry out Sama Ceremony and Mevlevi Ritual (Evrad-ı Kebir) such kind of activities are done in Germany, Netherland, Austria, USA, Colombia, Brazi etc. Additionally, Rumi Lovers living in Europe meet once in a year at Switzerland (approximately 150 or 200 people). They came in to a training of Mevleviyeh around Mevlevi Masters and Chiefs for 3-5 days.

As a result, Mevleviyeh and Rumi that is universal value is a vital cultural heritage within the scope of Religious Tourism. Activities that mentioned attribute value in economical way to tourism companies (accomodation companies, catering companies, transportation companies and travel agencies). It plays an important role in developing to tourism marketing and regional development.

Key Words: Mewlana, Mevleviyeh’s Cultural, Religious Tourism, Cultural Tourism.

Bibliography

Humankind have felt the need of belief; lived as performing rituals and duties that his belief required, and worshiped that obligated since came into existence. From the point of tourism these necessities and obligations as obligated travelling through human’s beliefs and devotion, have caused starting and development of “religious tourism” term. In the concept of religious tourism that has got important place in the tourism activities today, tours organized to see shrined places or pray, getting to know the things that belong to these places and to attend organized religious ceremonies. These visitings are encouraging believer peoples to travelling, accommodation, buying and catering. For this reason, there is a positive relationship between belief and tourism, tourism activities and tourism products. Subjects of peoples that have to perform some obligations by belief are visiting shrined places for their belief and consume food and beverage that become shrined or religious ritual. This study is a compilation study that prepared to present holy foods of Konya, which can be preferred by domestic and foreign tourists that came to religious belief destination Konya.

Key Words: Tourism, Religious tourism, Konya, Holy foods.

Bibliography

Session 0 : Routes and Trails

Faith Tourism and ‘Possible’ Faith Tourism Routes Between Turkey And Georgia

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The purpose of this study is to emphasize the potential of religious tourism in Turkey and Georgia and determine possible routes between Turkey (especially the TRA2 Region comprising Kars, Agri, Ardahan and Iğdır provinces in northeastern part of Turkey) and Georgia, based on observations and experiences of the authors.

Although the concept of development is generally used to relate to economic growth, it embraces a larger content. In common terms, development means all positive qualitative and quantitative improvements. Distribution of income, demographic structure, social welfare etc. is considered as qualitative meanwhile growth in gross national product is considered as quantitative factor. The main aim of culture and faith tourism is to feel locality and experience the local and spiritual feelings, not to have fun. In this regard, it depends on and develops local capacity (Poria, Butler and Airey, 2003). In faith tourism, churches, cathedrals, mosques and temples are the main tourism attractions (Woodward, 2004).

Local administrations support tourism because of its positive economic effects on local economy, besides, culture and faith tourism is important through preservation of cultural heritage and local development. ‘Faith Tourism’ which takes advantage to satisfy the spiritual needs of people, has the potential to contribute to the development of local economies. Within this scope, cultural and faith tourism is of importance for many regions and local development (Gil and Curiel 2008; 425).

In this study, potential faith tourism of the Northeastern part of Turkey and Georgia are explicated and it is concluded that to contribute to cross-border collaboration and tolerance between different religions, a draft religious tourism route should be designed as a basic step (UNWTO, 2011). The findings provide valuable information to tourism planners and decision makers to build joint projects between two neighbouring countries and this study is the first done in the one of the less developed regions of Turkey.

**Key Words:** TRA2, Georgia, Faith Tourism, Route, Development

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The European Grail Project - The Holy Grail Route: Transfer and dissemination of Sociological data - The Spanish case.

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This paper involves a sociological analysis of the Grail Project, focusing on the transfer and dissemination of the achieved results under the coordination and evaluation of the authors. The analysis design is based on a triple perspective of all the processes developed in the Project.

First of all, a content analysis has been done with the participative process that was made during the project, involving the main stakeholders and social actors. From this, a European, thematic, transnational and touristic product was defined, designed and planned; so, we can show best practice ideas in developing European Routes.

Secondly, a database was developed with all the mass media contents. Likewise, all the scientific and social contributions have been taking into account showing the relevant work done during the project and all the future research and action lines.

Finally, semi structured interviews have been undertaken with the people involved in the Project: members of the research team, stakeholders, cultural associations, politicians, etc. And analysis of the results tries to understand how to manage and plan the future of the Holy Grail Route.

With all these data, the authors make a diagnosis and evaluation of the Grail Project and design the future of the European Holy Grail Route as a pilgrim and tourist route.

**Key Words:** Holy Grail Route, Spain, European Route development, best practice.

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Mankind has determined holy places according to favourable geographical conditions in every period of history. In the historical process people who have many religions and beliefs, worship by going temples. As a result, the concept of pilgrimage emerged in later periods. There is pilgrimage both in first beliefs and in Abrahamic religions.

In Arabic, means of pilgrimage are heading for, going, visiting and also it is one of the five pillars of Islam for Muslims. Mecca is the pilgrimage center of Islam which is one of the most important cities of Islamic civilization and hosting Kaaba. Every year this holy land hosts hundreds of thousands of pilgrims in certain periods and one of the world's most populous religious rituals occurs there.

Although there are individuals belonging to different religions muslims are majority in the Ottoman State. Ottoman had a wide geographical area and people went on pilgrimage from its all parts especially capital city İstanbul to Hejaz region. This troublesome journey used take months by using old transportation, stopping in inns, caravanserai on the road but today it takes a few hours by air.

In this study the pilgrimage routes in the Ottoman State in the 19th century have been viewed as a geographer and a tourism professional’s approach. It has tried to be identified whats are needed to pay attention for determination of this roads and stops.

**Key Words:** Pilgrimage, Pilgrimage routes, Ottoman State

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The Problems of Deficient Data when Planning for Religious Tourism:
An Irish Case Study

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Reliable and up-to-date data are of tremendous importance in effectively planning for religious and pilgrimage tourism and tourism in general. The lack thereof has significant implications to the management, marketing as well as service and product development decision-making. At its worse this problem disguises the real size and value of the market. However, if readily available, as well as reliable and up-to-date, it provides hands-on information to all interested parties to include; tourism professionals, researchers, students, educators, policy makers and custodians of these sacred places.

To this end, this study stresses the importance of the availability of relevant and up-to-date data for the purpose of effectively planning for religious tourism, and in particular Religious Trails and Routes. Such data would result in the advancement of tourism knowledge and the enhancement of visitor experiences (pre and post experiences) for those particularly interested in walking sacred trails, as well as its study.

With sacred trails in the Island of Ireland as sites under investigation, the dearth in relevant and up-to-date data on religious tourism to include aspects such as; actual visitor numbers to these trails, and their related activities, management issues and visitor experiences is highlighted – both the world over and in the Island of Ireland in particular.

In arriving at relevant and up-to-date data necessary for a comprehensive understanding of these trails, their planning and management, a content analysis approach is utilised to include desk research (including data from governmental organisations in the Island of Ireland), followed by e-mail and telephone interviews with custodians of these sacred trails.

Findings of this study reveal that not much attention has been given to religious tourism as a unique and economically viable market segment. It seems that religious tourism and pilgrimage are marketed as part of the cultural and heritage product. Evident, in the limited amount of data available in terms of visitor numbers, activities, experiences, managerial and marketing activities, the economic value and potential of this market segment to the Irish economy as well as research into this unique and economically viable market segment is enormously important, but little understood. The study further reveals that a classification of these trails into varying categories would provide hands-on information to all interested parties and support potential visitors, thus, ease all sorts of planning decisions towards the development of sustainable religious and pilgrimage tourism products and services. The research has implications to the management, marketing and policy decision making in terms of sacred trails in the Island of Ireland, and globally.

Key Words: religious tourism, planning, sacred sites, data, Island of Ireland

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