

Low-Cost Passengers' Preference of Halal Friendly Airport Design at Kuala Lumpur International Airport 2 (KLIA2) Terminal, Malaysia

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Abstract:

The purpose of this research is to explore the concept of Halal friendly airport terminal based on the specific experiences, supported by an extensive survey of business operators at low-cost Terminal, Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA 2) Malaysia. The concept of Halal friendly airport is the process of managing the services and products offers by the airport terminal. Quantitative data is acquired to give meaningful results justifying the research outcomes and allow non-biased interpretation of the research results. It represents the process within the development of the methodology and the concept of halal friendly airport terminal and passenger's preference. The questionnaire is used to increase the reliability and validity of the research. Respondents who volunteered for the study are chosen among the low-cost travellers in airport terminal. The Mean, Standard Deviation (SD) and Two-Way ANOVA test were used to analyse the results and discussed with reference to the general needs as halal standard design of airport terminal access and take into account the preference of low-cost travellers' general experience. The paper will conclude by suggesting guidelines for airport terminal Halal friendly design that will seek to optimise the relative aspirations of all parties concerned. Although many airports have taken into account the concept of Halal friendly airport, a detailed evaluation on travellers comfortable at the airport in respect of low- cost travellers were still unexplored domains.

Keywords: Airport terminal, facilities, halal, service, wayfinding.

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INTRODUCTION

The airport industry is facing competitive challenges as a result of the rapid growth of low-cost airlines (carriers) (LCCs) worldwide (Sabar, Anuar, & Abdullah, 2018). In order to become Malaysia's next generation international airport hub, Kuala Lumpur International Airport 2 (KLIA2) was built to allows seamless connectivity for both local and international low-cost and full-service carriers. The airport is designed to cater for the explosive growth in low-cost travel industry, and it is scaled to accommodate 45 million passengers a year (KLIA2, 2019). The knowledge

of Muslim tourist behaviour in the context of Halal friendly airport is relevant to airport authorities, industry players, policy makers and travellers in developing Halal friendly airport facilities, infrastructures and travel activities.

Although many airports are beginning to take into account the needs of the growing segment of Muslim travellers, lot more can be done in order to make these travellers comfortable at the airport as well as ensuring a larger share of their expenditure at the airport (Battour, 2018). Battour agreed that the availability of Muslim friendly airport can be used as promotion tools to attract Muslim travellers

to increase inbound Muslim tourists and make the destination Muslim friendly. In addition, CrescentRating (2013) found that by having better airport services for Halal friendly airport is not only important for visitors to the destination, but also for the airport to become a preferred transit airport. The two key services for airports to cater to Muslim travellers are Halal food and prayer rooms. Shi Yan et al. (2017) agreed that one of the examples of Muslim friendly facilities is prayer room complete with wudhu' facilities for Muslim convenience to perform their prayers. For instance, prayer rooms have been installed in Kansai International Airport (Battour, 2018). Moreover, Narita Airport and Haneda International Airport in Tokyo opened a prayer room in 2014. Using availability of Muslim friendly airport as promotion tools to attract Muslim travellers is the best choice to increase inbound Muslim tourists and make the destination Muslim friendly. In addition, fifteen *surau* (prayer rooms) are provided by KLIA2 throughout the terminal. At the Gateway@klia2 mall, the Prayer room is located at Level 1 opposite Capsule by Container Hotel and Level 2 behind Original Classic shop (KLIA2, 2019).

METHODOLOGY

In order to evaluate the passengers' preference of Halal friendly airport, an adoption of a specific method of research to achieve the study objectives was reviewed. In this research, the descriptive approach continued to be applied to understand Halal friendly airport. A problem or situation was evaluated using a descriptive analysis after extensive previous knowledge was defined (Robson & McCartan, 2016). This research needed extensive preliminary work to be done to gain familiarity with the phenomenon in the Halal friendly airport situation and understanding the research scope for further investigation. For instance, emails have been sent to academic and professional experts in order to have a better understanding of Halal, passengers' preference and airport facilities design. Theories (e.g. theoretical frameworks), hypotheses and theoretical model were designed after Halal friendly airport data and patterns were gathered. In order to increase the validity of the research on Halal friendly airport, the quantitative approach was applied. Items and concepts were tested through a questionnaire. Sekaran and Bougie (2016) stated

that the questionnaire can be carried out by employing the same research instrument in another context with the problem of causality being eased by the emergence of path analysis to which surveys are wellsuited.

The questionnaires were designed to be effective, approachable and easy to understand. Feedback and comments were acquired from airport travellers. The first section indicates respondent demographic profiles. General information is useful in obtaining data on the background of the respondents which might have a direct correlation with the responses to the questionnaire statement (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Section two evaluates the effect of Halal friendly airport on low- cost airport terminal travellers. The questions were developed based on research questions; what are the key factors that may influence travellers' preference in Halal friendly airport terminal?, what are the impacts of Halal friendly airport on travellers'behaviour?, how should the impacts of Halal friendly airport design on travellers'behaviour be measured?, does Halal friendly airport have an effect on travellers?, how should the effects of Halal friendly airport design on traveller be measured?, and how does the receipt of Halal friendly airport information affect traveller navigation?

RESULTS

There was a total of 380 respondents who volunteered to participate in this research as a convenience sampling design was applied. In total, 213 male respondents (56.1 per cent) and 167 female respondents (43.9 per cent) successfully completed the questionnaire session. By age group, the respondents volunteered in this research are from 20 years old until 60 years old and above; 20-29 years (68 respondents), 30-39 years (114 respondents), 40-49 years (109 respondents), 50-59 years (66 respondents), and Over 60 years (23 respondents). Based on frequency analysis, the respondents' purpose of travelling to the airport are mainly for leisure rather than business purposes. From the survey 67 per cent of respondents travelling for leisure purpose, followed by 32 per cent of respondents who travelling for both business and leisure purpose, and 1% of respondents travelling for only business purposes. Table 1 shows the respondent feedback based on the questionnaire.

Table 1 Passengers'' Preference for Halal friendly airport

Parameter	F	Sig.
I aware of Halal friendly airport design	1.866	0.118
It was easy to navigate in the Halal friendly airport terminal	1.902	0.112
I noticed that the terminal building structure were blocking some of the signs	5.703	0.000
There were a few Halal foods shops	3.011	0.019
Poor prayer room condition because lack of Halal awareness	3.399	0.010
Poor foods quality provided by restaurant in airport terminal	3.643	0.007
The facilities design in the terminal affect my feeling of Halal perception	0.365	0.834
I felt uncomfortable when enter the prayer room	0.996	0.411
I felt safe to perform the prayer in the airport terminal	6.024	0.000
The Halal signs were easily noticeable around terminal	0.531	0.713
I could not read the Halal sign at the shop or restaurant	1.099	0.359
I was looking for the word of “Halal” on the sign	8.636	0.000
The quality of services provided by airport were acceptable	3.071	0.018
The font of the prayer room signs was clear and readable	1.535	0.193
The signage helped me navigate easily	2.071	0.086
There was ablution area in the prayer room	2.381	0.053
I was distracted by the prayer room signs	1.678	0.157
The quality of service was adequate	2.561	0.040
The variable directional signs of services were noticeable	5.453	0.000

All respondents agreed that the airport terminal was safe and convenient to perform prayer ($F=6.024$, $p=0.00$). The results also show that respondents satisfied with the quality of services provided in airport terminal ($F=3.071$, $p=0.018$). In term of airport terminal design, respondents found that the terminal building structure were blocking some of the important signs ($F=5.703$, $p=0.000$) and the facilities design in the terminal did not affect their feeling of Halal perception ($F=0.365$, $p=0.834$). However, all respondents agreed that the quality of foods provided by restaurant in airport terminal was excellent ($F=3.643$, $p=0.077$) and able to perform prayer because of excellent prayer room condition ($F=3.399$, $p=0.010$) in the airport terminal.

Although, the airport terminal design indicates a convenient facility, respondents were distracted by the quality of service ($F=2.561$, $p=0.040$) that has been offered in the airport terminal. It allowed the researcher to assess respondents' preference (i.e. based on questionnaire). Respondents believed that ablution area in the prayer room almost not

available ($F=2.381$, $p=0.053$) affected the travellers' preferences towards Halal friendly airport at KLIA2.

Too many signs led to traveller becoming confused, missing the way and stress in the airport spaces (Kanakri et al., 2016). However, the advert sign is important to generate extra airport income. Therefore, airport planners should find the balance between the safety and commercial provision (Suzer, Olgunturk, & Guvenc, 2018) in order to develop an ideal Halal friendly airport terminal design. The variable directional signs of services ($F=5.453$, $p=0.000$) were noticeable. Surprisingly, respondents agreed that there are not many Halal foods shops in the airport terminal ($F=3.011$, $p=0.019$). Respondents were also looking for the word 'Halal' on the signs ($F=8.636$, $p=0.000$) around KLIA2 airport terminal.

CONCLUSION

Many airports are now providing prayer facilities (either Muslim prayer rooms or multi-

denomination prayer rooms) in either the transit or the public area. The key criteria for Halal friendly airport are the availability of Halal food, prayer and ablution facilities and the quality of service (at transit and public areas of the airport). However not many still provide these facilities in both the transit and public areas of the airport (CrescentRating, 2013). Further, only a minority of them still provide proper ablution facilities. When it comes to Halal food services at airports, many of them fall short, especially in the non-OIC countries. This is both a major inconvenience for the travellers as well as a lost revenue opportunity for the airports. In contrast, some of the non-OIC countries have taken actions to attract Muslim travellers by improving airport facilities and services to fulfil Muslim travellers' needs (Shi Yan et al., 2017). Si Yan et al. agreed that this action clearly illustrates that the non-OIC countries have taken an effort to improve the Muslim friendly facilities such as the access to prayer spaces, airport facilities, accommodation options and improving dining options and Halal assurances in their countries where all the average score for the facilities mentioned is increasing from 2015 to 2016.

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