THE INFLUENCE OF PLACE OF RESIDENCE ON THE MUSLIM TOURIST'S DESTINATION CHOICE WHEN FAVORING BETWEEN MUSLIM-FRIENDLY DESTINATIONS AND OTHER TOURIST DESTINATIONS

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ABSTRACT: *Tourist destinations compete to attract emerging tourist segments such as Muslim tourists. A destination can gain the Muslim tourist when it offers the key attributes upon which he can build his choice. Studies show that Muslim destination choice and Muslim tourist satisfaction are affected by offering Muslim-friendly attributes. However, these studies did not consider the potential effect of cultural differences that influence the customer behavior. Accordingly, the current study suggests that the place of residence, as a force of cultural differences, affects the Muslim overall destination choice. It mainly assumes that Muslims residing in Muslim countries adopt different criteria from Muslims residing in non-Muslim countries in their destination choice. Findings confirmed that place of residence has a moderating effect on Muslim destination choice; revealing the differences between both Muslim groups concerning the relative importance of Muslim-friendly attributes and general destination attributes.*

KEYWORDS: Muslim Tourist, Muslim-Friendly Attributes, General Value Attributes, Place of Residence

INTRODUCTION

Various studies focus on customer behavior which involves "individuals or groups that choose to purchase or use products, services, ideas or experiences in order to satisfy their own wishes and needs" (Djeri, Armenski, Tesanovic, Bradić & Vukosav, 2014, p.267). A range of factors affect this choice including values, religion, place of origin, place of residence and other cultural factors (Perreau, 2016; Rani, 2014) .

Religion is one of the vital factors that affect some people's behavior and daily matters including leisure and tourism activities. For Muslims, religion provides guidance in all human activities. 'Shari'a' is the Arabic word referring to the rules that should be followed by Muslims in all aspects of life covering foods and drinks that are permissible for Muslims, modesty in dressing, ways of entertainment and ways to behave. Thus, religion influences the direction of the Muslim tourist choices, attitude, behavior, perception and leisure practices (Jafari & Scott, 2014; Henderson, 2015; Reisinger & Moufakkir, 2015; Samori, Salleh & Khalid, 2015; Eid & El-Gohary, 2015a).

However, Shari'a is not considered static since its interpretation and practice vary according to different reasons and situations. Muslim scholars that lived in different times and faced different circumstances have developed what is known by 'Fiqh', a number of different thoughts and interpretations of the Shari'a.

As Islam responds to changes in culture and changing activities such as tourism, some of the main areas that fiqh has dealt with is setting standards and stating permissible actions

according to practical realities during travelling and visiting or even living in non-Muslim countries (Henderson, 2015; Shakona, Backman, Backman, Norman, Luo & Duff, 2015; Mohsin, Ramli & Alkhulayfi, 2015; Jafari & Scott, 2014).

The influence of the place of residence on the potential tourist when choosing among tourism products generally and tourist destinations specifically has not been studied sufficiently. In addition, research that addresses the relationship between religion and tourist destination choice, in general and the relationship between Islamic attributes in a destination and tourist destination choice, in particular, remains scarce, especially, in the empirical research field (Battour, Battor & Bhatti, 2014; Djeri *et al.,* 2014; Ryan, 2015; Zhang and Cai, 2016).

The current study assumes that both religion and place of residence, as main cultural forces, can influence the potential Muslim tourist's decision when choosing a tourist destination.

The place of residence is chosen instead of the country of origin since migrations represent a tendency in various countries like the USA and UAE where most of their residents are immigrants, in addition to the increase in immigration from a country to another in recent years (Djeri *et al.,* 2014).

With this regard, the study first discusses the place of residence as a main cultural force that can affect the consumer's perception and choice. Then, it highlights tourism for Muslims in general, how they view and practice it and the latest tourism trends offered to the Muslim tourists. It also, emphasizes the Muslim-friendly attributes or services provided by some destinations to attract the Muslim tourist specifically. In addition, it discusses some of the general value attributes offered by destinations to attract tourists in general. Furthermore, an empirical study is conducted to examine if the place of residence has a moderating effect on the Muslim tourist's destination choice when favoring between Muslim-friendly destinations and other destinations. In this context, a self-administered survey was conducted to investigate if there is a difference between the Muslims residing in Muslim countries and Muslims residing in non-Muslim countries when favoring between Muslim-friendly attributes and general value attributes offered by tourist destinations.

Furthermore, the study proposes and assesses the Muslim Overall Destination Choice [MODC] as a higher order factor with five lower order factors representing both Muslim-friendly attributes and general value attributes that influence the Muslim's destination choice.

Finally, the current study concludes by suggesting future research that can advance and develop the research related to this topic.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Place of residence as a cultural force

In general, people who live in a certain region usually share the same values, attitudes and preferences. Additionally, people's behavior is affected by where they live whether in urban areas, rural areas or suburbs; big cities or small cities; a developed country or a developing country, different regions and different continents. The diversity in people's behavior along different places results from differences in climate, social customs, culture, religion and other factors (Djeri *et al*., 2014).

Kozak and Ferradeira (2015) have revealed in their study the existence of cross-cultural heterogeneity of societies and that this cross-cultural heterogeneity is not limited to cross-continental studies but also among countries belonging to the same continent such as European countries, as a result, distinctions in behavior patterns can be perceived and even more, this cross-cultural heterogeneity can directly induce tourists' decisions. Despite their research focused only on the Western society prototype studying only the European countries, differences among them could still be observed. On the other hand, within the Global Muslim Community there is diversity among different regions and countries as a result of the blending of religious, cultural, political and historical forces in each country. These forces also play an essential role in forming the consumer behavior, and tourism practices may also vary among different communities (Jafari &Scott, 2014; Rani, 2014; Perreau, 2016).

Furthermore, previous studies pointed out that the difference in the country of residence or the country of origin among tourists can cause variation in their perceptions concerning the evaluation of the tourism product and the level of satisfaction with the destination, quality and services ((McCleary, Weaver & Hsu, 2006; Forgas-Coll, Palau-Saumell, Sánchez-García & Callarisa-Fiol,2012). However, the use of country of origin as the main cultural force that would influence the consumer behavior in general and his tourism behavior in particular has been criticized as it ignores the role of other important cultural dimensions (Zhang & Cai, 2016). For instant, Correia *et al.,* (2015) state that cultural values are learned by the age of ten and remain with individuals for the rest of their life. Thus, people who are born in one country and raised in another absorb the culture from where they were raised. Therefore, changing the place where someone lives can cause changes in his preferences and choices depending on the difference in lifestyle and life constraints.

Great migrations occur between and inside certain countries such as the USA (Djeri *et al*., 2014).This contributes in the formation of 'sub-culture'. Subcultures are groups of people who live in the same society but each group has its own values shared by its individuals according to their similar lifestyle in general. Subcultures may involve groups with the same religion, same nationality or same race (Correia *et al*., 2015; Perreau, 2016; Rani, 2014; Zhang and Cai, 2016). Accordingly, Muslims living in a non-Muslim country are a sub-culture. Their consumption behavior varies from the wider culture of their place of residence as a result of the difference in religion and values and at the same time, it varies from the culture of their place of origin due to the difference in lifestyle, circumstances and social constraints they experience.

Based on what is mentioned above, it can be concluded that cross-cultural heterogeneity between Muslim and non-Muslim countries is present since it exists among different countries within Western societies, that are non-Muslims, and among different countries within the Global Muslim community.

Consequently, the Muslim individual who lives in a Muslim country will be different from the Muslim who lives in a non-Muslim country in terms of behavior, attitudes, purchasing decisions and others as a result of the different cultural forces each of them confront in his place of residence.

With this context, the current study aims to explore the impact of the place of residence on the Muslim tourist's decision when choosing a tourist destination. It seeks to investigate if Muslims residing in Muslim countries differ from Muslims residing in non-Muslim countries regarding

their overall destination choice based on the presence or absence of certain attributes within the destination.

Tourism for Muslims

A Muslim tourist is just like any other tourist who wants to see the world. This aligns with his faith as such travel enables him to appreciate the wonder and beauty created by God. A Muslim tourist can visit any destination that appeals to him and explore the destination's cultural, social and recreational attractions and activities but at the same time behave in a permissible manner according to Islam (Ryan, 2015; Jafari & Scott, 2014; Battour, Battor & Ismail, 2012).

Muslims represent nearly 30% of the world population and it is estimated that this percent will increase in future. Muslims represent a large tourist niche market generating US$140 billion in 2013 (Shafaei & Mohamed, 2015; Henderson, 2015).

As the Muslim tourist market is expanding, many tourist destinations, especially in Muslim countries and regions with high Muslim population, are increasingly interested in catering the Muslim tourist needs and demands in terms like food, worship facilities and entertainment (Jafari & Scott, 2014; Batrawy, 2015; Razzaq, Hall & Prayag, 2016).

New tourism concepts such as 'Islamic Tourism' or 'Halal Tourism' have emerged targeting the Muslim niche market specifically. They involve any tourism practice that is permissible to the Muslim tourist to engage in according to the Islamic teachings (Battour, Ismail & Battor, 2011; Battour & Ismail, 2015, Razzaq *et al.,* 2016).

'Halal' is an Arabic word that means allowable or permissible. Most non-Muslims think that it is only related to the food that Muslims are allowed to eat, however, it covers all the life aspects of a Muslim and it involves the need for any Muslim to have products that are permissible from a religious point of view. Hence, 'Halal tourism' mainly focuses on delivering tourism products and services that are Muslim-friendly to target the Muslim tourists which has led some tourism suppliers in some Muslim and non-Muslim destinations to announce themselves as Halal hotels or Shari'a compliant hotels, Halal resorts, Halal restaurants and Halal trips (Henderson, 2015; Razzaq *et al.*, 2016; El-Gohary, 2016).

This new concept of tourism was worth US$ 137 billion in 2013 and was estimated to reach US$181 billion by 2018 (Mohsin *et al.*, 2015, p.2).

Identifying the right terminology for this tourism concept is still considered a challenge. The most commonly-used terms are 'Halal tourism' and `Islamic tourism' and the two terms are used interchangeably to refer to the same concept (Battour & Ismail, 2015, Henderson, 2015).

Other terms used in this context include 'Muslim tourism' and 'Muslim-friendly tourism' (Nogues-Pedregal , 2012; Wang, Ding, Scott & Fan, 2015; Batrawy, 2015; El-Gohary, 2016). The current research will be using the later term as the terms 'Halal' and 'Islamic' might give the indication that this tourism product cannot be consumed except by Muslims and that Muslims are closing on themselves and anyone else is not welcomed in their world while on the contrary, the Muslim-friendly tourism products and services are available to all tourist segments to practice. First, its place is not limited to Muslim regions, they can be found in both Muslim and non-Muslim countries and many tourism suppliers cater both Muslim-friendly and non Muslim-friendly services at the same time. Second, the purpose of the travel is not religious and it can be mainly recreational or involve any other general tourism motivation. Third,

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Muslim-friendly tourism and activities can also appeal to non-Muslim market segments such as Jewish and conservative Christians or even for causes other than religion such as health, hygiene, privacy or safety. Families with kids can choose a Muslim-friendly resort as it gives them the option to spend their vacation in a family-friendly or kids-friendly environment (Mohsin *et al.,* 2015; Battour & Ismail, 2015, Batrawy, 2015, El-Gohary, 2016).

Several destinations are now actively targeting Muslim tourists especially from the Middle East, Persian Gulf and those considering the provision of Muslim-friendly services and amenities within the tourist destination is a priority, although, these destinations promote themselves in many other ways to attract other tourist segments (Jafari & Scott, 2014; Ryan, 2015; Henderson, 2015). On top of these destinations come Malaysia, Singapore, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates. Other non-Muslim countries are also promoting some of their regions as Muslim-friendly destinations such as England, USA, New Zealand, Russia, Japan and Thailand. The Muslim-friendly destinations and tourism suppliers there offer the Muslim tourist services that are compliant with Islam teachings. There is no written formal tourism principles that state the Muslim tourist's unique needs, however, those needs involve the observance of his religious obligations, avoiding what is prohibited and practicing what is allowed according to Islam teachings. Any atmosphere or tourism product or practice that would provide these requirements is considered permissible and appreciated by the Muslim tourist (Hassan & Hall , 2011; Jafari & Scott, 2014; Battour & Ismail, 2015; Eid & El-Gohary, 2015b; Batrawy, 2015; Mohsin *et al*., 2015; Razzaq, *et al*., 2016).

The basic requirements include performing the daily prayers, eating Halal food, avoiding alcoholic beverages and gambling places and considering the general Islamic morality (El-Gohary, 2016).

This research will focus on these four basic attributes as the essential Muslim-friendly attributes.

Muslim-friendly attributes:

Religious beliefs can persuade and direct the Muslim tourist to visit particular destinations or sites and influence his attitudes, behavior and perceptions at those sites (Jafari & Scott, 2014; Eid, 2015). While traveling, there are rules and regulations that a Muslim has to follow. This includes fulfilling the religious duties such as the daily prayers with certain easiness specified to this condition. Other rules have to be followed concerning food, drink, dress and behavior (Henderson, 2015; Samori, *et al*., 2015).

The following constructs highlight the basic Muslim-friendly attributes offered by some destinations and tourism suppliers to assist the Muslim tourist in performing his duties while on a vacation:

-Worship facilities

- Halal food

- Alcoholic drinks and gambling free

- General Islamic morality

Worship facilities:

A Muslim is required to perform his five prayers daily. Some destinations and accommodation facilities have met this need by providing mosques near tourist and recreational sites and including their locations on their websites or on apps.; dedicating an area for worship needs and prayer within the accommodation facility; including a loud announcement or prayer call, 'Athan', to indicate prayer time; furnishing the hotel room with a prayer mat, a 'Qiblah' sticker to show the direction point for praying and a copy of the Holy Book 'Qura'an' (Battour, *et al*., 2011; Battour, *et al.*, 2014; Razzaq , *et al.*, 2016).

A Muslim may appreciate these amenities so much and choose to spend his vacation in one of the Muslim-friendly destinations, however, another Muslim tourist may decide to visit a tourist destination that does not provide these services and still be able to perform his daily duties and prayers as required. Muslims, especially those who live in Western countries and non-Muslim countries, do not rely on Muslim-friendly services to be offered to them to be able to perform their daily duties and prayers, instead, they depend on the technological tools and Islamic software applications available for cell phones, iPods and laptops that provide them with convenient alternatives (Hosseini and Ramchahi, 2014). For example these Muslims can know prayer times and prayer direction, 'Qiblah', through prayer apps and its various tools. They can locate the nearest mosque through these apps or via the internet and if it is hard to locate one, they can just pray anywhere according to 'Fiqh' views (Batrawy, 2015; Al-Munajjid, 2016a; Islam.com, 2016). In addition, they can use soft copies of the Qur'an if it is difficult to reach a hard copy and they can have their own prayer mats which are not necessary for performing prayer.

Halal food:

Halal food means the food allowed to be eaten by Muslims according to Islam. The main issues regarding this matter involve that the food should be free from any alcoholic or pork products and the beef or chicken should be slaughtered (Hassan & Hall, 2011; Battour, *et al*., 2011; Samori *et al.,* 2015).

To satisfy the Muslim tourist, some destinations provide Halal food in accommodation facilities and restaurants; this can count as a high priority for some Muslim tourists when choosing a destination. This service can appeal to some non-Muslim tourists too for religious or non-religious purposes such as health (Battour, *et al*., 2014; Mohsin *et al.,* 2015; El-Gohary, 2016; Razzaq ,*et al.,* 2016) . On the other hand, a Muslim can choose to visit a tourist destination that does not offer this Muslim-friendly service and he would depend on himself in eating Halal food by making sure that his order is alcohol and pork free; depending more on vegetables, fruits and bakery products; eating fish instead of beef or chicken or if he is visiting a Christian or Jewish place, he is permitted to eat meat or chicken there after saying the name of God according to 'Fiqh' views. This is normally what Muslims living in Western countries do, especially, if they do not have Muslim food stores that promote themselves as 'Halal' (Shakona, *et al*., 2015; Al-Munajjid, 2016a).

Alcoholic drinks and gambling free:

Muslims cannot be in any place where consumption of alcoholic drinks and gambling activities are taking place. Certain destinations responded to this by prohibiting alcoholic drinks consumption and gambling in public places. Some tourist facilities as well are alcoholic drinks

and gambling free while others specify a special section for those wishing to drink alcoholic beverages or gamble and they do not provide alcoholic drinks in the mini fridge of the hotel room (Razzaq , *et al.*, 2016, Mohsin, *et al*., 2015; Battour *et al*.,2014).

This Muslim-friendly attribute is really appreciated by Muslim tourists, however, some Muslims can still have this service without choosing to visit a Muslim-friendly destination. Destinations and resorts that identify themselves as family-friendly or kids-friendly, even in non-Muslim countries like the USA, already allocate special sections for alcoholic drink consumption and gambling if any. These sections are located away from the restaurants and spaces that the family and kids access easily to prevent the under aged from entering or even seeing it. Furthermore, the mini fridge in the room is usually empty to facilitate for the family to bring whatever they want and put it there, no alcoholic beverages are in there and even snacks and soft drinks are usually available in vending machines in every floor (Johnson & Wu, 2013; Schlinger, 2013; Schänzel & Lynch, 2015; Long, 2016). Muslims living in Western countries may be more aware and used to these family-friendly places than Muslims living in other regions like the Middle East and Arab counties.

General Islamic morality:

The basic aspect here involves modesty in general by avoiding red-light places and practices, adult channels, free mixing between men and women especially at beaches and pools and counting for the Islamic dress code for women the 'Hijab' (Battour, *et al.,* 2015; Batrawy, 2015).

Muslim-friendly destinations and tourist facilities responded to this by banning adult channels in hotel rooms and using the Islamic dress code or a conservative dress by hotel and restaurant staff and providing segregated entertainment options such as segregated swimming pools and beaches. Other destinations like Orlando, Florida offer the Muslim tourist the option of renting a tourist house with a complete curtained pool (Battour *et al*., 2011; Battour *et al*., 2014; Batrawy, 2015; Razzaq *et al.,* 2016). These services can delight Muslim tourists and even some non-Muslim tourist segments. Families with kids would also avoid the red-light places and would appreciate the conservative dress of hotel staff and the banning of adult channels to prevent the exposure of their children to these things. Private pools can please families with kids to ensure safe, free play for the kids and even honeymooners can like this idea for more privacy.

On the other hand, some Muslims can choose going to one of the family-friendly destinations or resorts were they can also be away from red-light zones, hotel staff dress conservatively and adult channels are coded unless an adult request decoding.

For Muslim women, they either choose to practice entertainment activities other than swimming or they wear the 'Burqini', an appropriate swimwear for Muslim women, to enjoy swimming and beach-related activities with their families. Muslim and non-Muslim women are recognizing the benefits of the 'Burqini' swimwear including sun protection, flexibility and modesty (Battour & Ismail, 2015; Batrawy, 2015).

All what is mentioned previously indicate that the Muslim-friendly attributes offered by destinations and tourism suppliers can play an important role in targeting the potential Muslim tourist. In addition, it may also appeal to other non-Muslim tourist segments. Alternatively, a Muslim can choose to spend his vacation in a destination other than the Muslim-friendly ones

and still perform his religious duties, do what is permissible and avoid what is prohibited according to the Islam teachings. With this regard, the current study assumes that Muslims living in the Muslim countries might find it easier to spend their vacation in a Muslim-friendly destination since they can rely on the destination services and offerings to facilitate practicing their religious duties. However, Muslims living in non-Muslim countries might not give the same priority to the presence of the Muslim-friendly attributes when choosing a tourist destination as they are already used to depending on themselves in performing their religious duties and they rely extensively on 'Fiqh' views and regulations that guide them to overcome the challenges that might interfere with their daily duties and practices of Islam according to the lifestyle and circumstances they experience as a minority living in a non-Muslim country.

The current study, hence, proposes its first and second hypotheses to be:

H1: Muslims who reside in Muslim countries have significantly higher perceptions of Muslim-friendly attributes than Muslims who reside in non-Muslim countries.

H2: Muslims residing in Muslim countries put a greater emphasis on the availability of Muslim-friendly attributes when choosing a destination than Muslims residing in non–Muslim countries.

General destination attributes:

Many studies have focused on the push-pull model to explain why people in general travel and choose a specific destination. It indicates that tourists are pushed by internal desires to travel and pulled by external factors in the form of the value attributes offered by destinations to choose where to go (Battour, et al., 2011; Zhou, 2005; Zhang & Cai, 2016).

From the whole set of different attributes the potential tourist evaluates only a few of them and choose the destination that meets his perceived value attributes to fulfill his desires (Eid, 2015; Bajs, 201; Zhou, 2005).

The main attributes that destinations use in general to attract the tourist and make him choose one destination over another are: Quality, price, product or attractions and service (Eid & El-Gohary, 2015a; 2015b; Uk Essays, 2015; Bajs, 2011).

Quality attribute:

This attribute involves: destination image, excellence, uniqueness and well-organized tour packages within the destination (Ragavana *et al*., 2014; Abooali, *et al*., 2015; UK Essays, 2015).

Price attribute:

It is considered as a major attribute in a tourist's decision to choose a destination over another. It involves: having the cheapest price, providing discount, same quality as competitors but for a lower price, total price of the tour package and value for money (Zhou , 2005; Ragavana *et al*., 2014; Abooali, *et al*., 2015; UK Essays, 2015).

Attraction or Product attribute:

Many researchers view it as the main reason for visiting a certain destination by tourists. It involves cultural attractions and sightseeing; leisure and relaxation attractions; natural scenery;

good weather; night life and friendliness of the host community (Zhou, 2005; Ragavana *et al*., 2014; Abooali, *et al*., 2015).

Service attribute:

This attribute exists during the whole tourist trip. It involves immigration and customs procedures; accessibility to the tourist destination and the tourist attractions; shopping;; cleanliness of the destination, accommodation and catering services; ease of communication and local transport services (Zhou , 2005; Abooali, *et al*., 2015).

The Muslim-friendly attributes previously mentioned are considered a category among the attributes that certain destinations employ to pull the Muslim tourist to them and let him favor them on other destinations.

The problem of the current study is to investigate whether there is a difference in the destination choice of Muslims who reside in Muslims countries and the destination choice of Muslims residing in non-Muslim countries subject to the existence or absence of the Muslim-friendly attributes within the destination. In other words, when favoring between the existence of the Muslim-friendly attributes within a destination with minimum presence of the other general value attributes, or vice versa, the absence of the Muslim-friendly attributes within a destination with high presence of the other general value attributes, which destination choice will the Muslim tourist make? Will the Muslim tourist residing in Muslim countries differ from the Muslim tourist residing in non-Muslim countries concerning the destination choice or not?

The current study, thus, implies a third hypothesis in addition to the two hypotheses previously mentioned, that is:

H3: Muslims residing in non–Muslim countries are more concerned with the availability of the general value attributes than the presence of Muslim-friendly attributes when choosing a destination.

The study

There has been no report so far of an empirical study that examines the role of place of residence as a powerful aspect in the Muslim tourist's destination choice when favoring between the existence of Muslim-friendly attributes and other general value attributes within the tourist destinations.

Battour *et al*.(2011) claims that the Muslim tourist may not select a particular destination if the Muslim-friendly attributes are absent while El-Gohary (2016) deems that some Muslims might not see the Muslim-friendly attributes as an important factor when making a decision regarding their travel preferences. Furthermore, Nassar, Mostafa and Reisinger (2015) found that Muslim-friendly attributes did not affect Kuwaitis' travel decisions to visit Islamic destinations.

Hence, the key question here is whether the absence of the Muslim-friendly attributes will affect the Muslim tourist's destination choice if all the other general value attributes are present within a certain destination or alternatively, whether the existence of the Muslim-friendly attributes would affect the Muslim tourist's destination choice if some of the other general value attributes are missing within a certain destination.

The current study assumes that the place of residence has a moderating effect on the Muslim tourist's destination choice. In other words, it can influence the degree of priority a Muslim tourist may give to the existence of the Muslim-friendly attributes when choosing a tourist destination. It should be very clear here that the current research only focus on the influence that the place of residence can have on the Muslim tourist's choice when choosing between an ordinary tourist destination and a Muslim-friendly destination, thus, the current study is not concerned by any means with religiosity.

Research method:

Traditional scaling procedures were followed to develop the research instrument. This process involved generating items, conducting exploratory tests to validate the scale, and conducting a field survey of Muslims residing in Muslim countries, featured in Egypt, and Muslims residing in non-Muslim countries featured by the USA and UK.

Items generation:

The study has initially employed the same Muslim-friendly attributes and general value attributes, illustrated in figure (1), that were proven reliable in previous studies. The Muslim-friendly attributes that were initially utilized by the study to investigate the effect of their existence or absence versus the other general value attributes on the Muslim tourist's destination choice were: the worship facilities, Halal food, alcoholic drinks and gambling free and general Islamic morality. These attributes were proven reliable and valid by Battour *et al.* (2014) and Eid & El-Gohary (2015a,b).

The general value destination attributes initially utilized by the study to measure the influence of the Muslim-friendly attributes against them on the Muslim tourist's destination choice were: Quality, price, attractions and services. These attributes were proven reliable and valid by Eid & El-Gohary (2015a, 2015b); Abooali *et al.*(2015) and Ragavana *et al.* (2014).
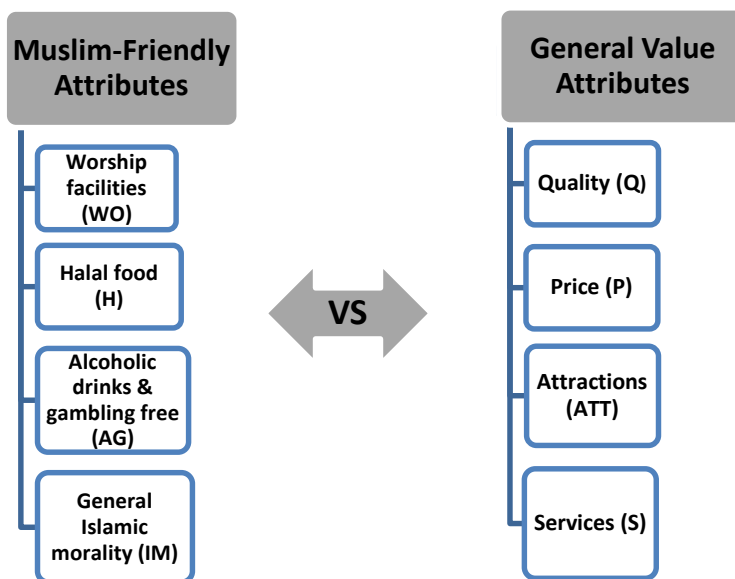
Figure (1): Muslim-friendly attributes versus general value attributes in tourist destinations

An initial set of items composing each of the above attributes was developed based on the literature review of existing and validated measures. Subsequent refinement of this initial set was carried out through a number of interviews conducted with some Muslims in both Egypt and the UK. Ten interviewees in Egypt were casually selected from a group of international Muslim residences who were visiting a famous Egyptian historical mosque during the celebrations of the Holy month, Ramadan, after getting permission from their escort. Ten interviewees in the UK were also casually chosen from international Muslim students who were attending a Malaysian community event at the campus of the University of Leeds. All participants were international Muslim students with an international travel experience.

The diversity among Muslim participants in both Egypt and the UK helped in figuring out whether Muslims residing in Muslim countries and Muslims residing in non-Muslim countries would adopt similar or different criteria and perspectives in selecting their tourist destination.

The interviewees were first asked to indicate the level of consent with the set of items provided for the general value attributes and Muslim-friendly attributes offered within a tourist destination. Then, they were encouraged to add other items that were not included in the existing battery of measures based on their traveling experience and their needs during their tourist trips. The outcome of this stage of scale development was a slight modification and alteration of the existing measures leading to an initial pool of 32 items.

A questionnaire has been developed including the 32 items that compose both the general value attributes and the Muslim-friendly attributes. The questionnaire consisted of three sections. The first section aimed to assess the importance of each attribute according to the Muslim respondent's opinion. It covered the general value attributes and the Muslim-friendly attributes that could be offered within a destination featured in the 32 items denoted previously: 4 items for quality, 4 items for price, 4 items for attractions, 6 items for services, 4 items for worship facilities, 2 items for Halal food, 4 items for general Islamic moralities and 4 items for alcoholic drinks and gambling free. All the items in this part were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "not at all important" to "very important". The second section of the survey aimed to explore the priority that the Muslim respondent would give to the existence of the Muslim-friendly attributes versus the other general value attributes by investigating his preference in regard to visiting destinations that offer Muslim-friendly attributes or the general attributes. This section was measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" using the following three items: *"I would sacrifice any of the quality, price, attractions or general services within a destination if it offers Muslim-friendly services" ,"It doesn't matter if the tourist destination offers Muslim-friendly services or not if the quality, price, attractions and general services are available"* and *"If a Muslim-friendly destination would offer me good quality, price, attractions and services I would favor it on any other destination."*

The third section involved demographic factors; country of origin, country/place of residence, age, gender, marital status, level of education and level of income; in addition to travel experience.

Exploratory pretests:

To further purify the scale items, a formal pretest was conducted with the 32 items by asking 150 international Muslims residing in Egypt to complete the questionnaire based on their travel experience. Data were collected in famous Islamic attractions in Egypt over a three-week

period. Participants were recruited with a convenient sampling method. All participants were screened and only those who are Muslims and Egypt is their country of residence but not their country of origin were involved in the exploratory study.

Collected data was subjected to exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to assess the dimensional qualities of the scale. Factor analysis of destination attributes showed that Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant (p<0.00) and KMO measure of sampling adequacy was 0.947 which is above the recommended level (minimum value 0.60) (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson & Tatham 2006), indicating that data was appropriate for factor analysis. A Principal Component Analysis with Varimax rotation was used to explore the main attributes featuring destination choice for Muslims. A number of criteria were used to determine the number of factors extracted such as eigenvalue, scree plot, and percentage of variance, item communalities and factor loadings (Hair *et al.*, 2006). Only factors with eigenvalue greater than or equal to 1.0 were considered, scree plots were also examined, items were retained if they load at 0.4 or more on a factor and did not load at more than 0.3 on any other factor. Only one item was removed as it failed to load at 0.400 or above on any factor. The remaining 31 items were rerun and a new five-factor structure emerged with items clearly loading on their factors at 0.400 or above (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). The yielded five factors accounted for 42% of the variance extracted.

Internal consistency reliability was achieved by calculating Cronbach's coefficient alpha for the items of each dimension. All dimensions showed Cronbach alphas values exceeding 0.800 which indicate good internal consistency (Nunnally, 1978).

The former general and Muslim-friendly attributes were reordered in the new emerging structure, forming the following five factors: factor 1: Attractions and Services (ATT&S); factor 2: Worship facilities, Halal food and Segregated pools (W,H&SP); factor 3: Other Islamic moralities and Alcoholic drinks & gambling free (IM&AG); factor 4: Quality (Q); and factor 5: Price (P). These new five factors represent lower order factors with the higher order factor 'Muslim Overall Destination Choice' [MODC] as demonstrated in figure (2).
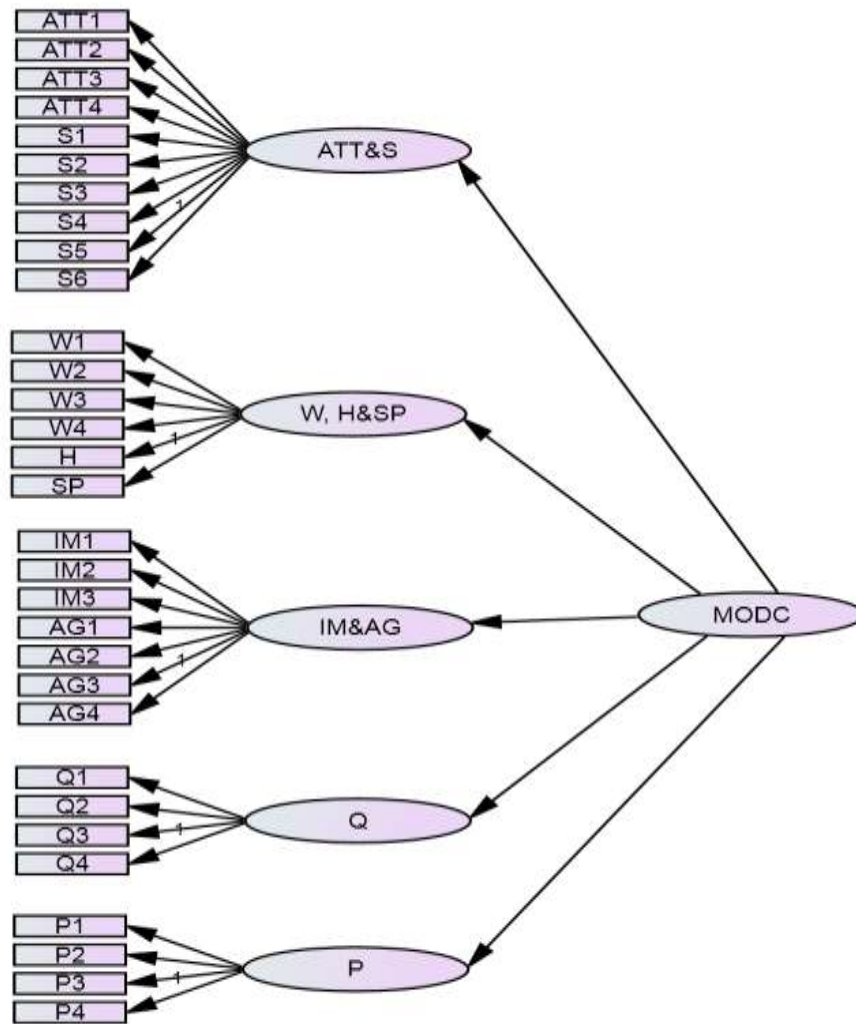
Figure (2) Muslim Overall Destination Choice proposed model

Field study

For the full-scale test, the revised scale with 31 items was administered to a sample of Muslims residing in Muslim countries and Muslims residing in non-Muslim countries over a period of six months from July 2016 to January 2017, using a convenient sample of the US and UK Muslim residents, representing Muslims residing in non-Muslim countries on one side and Muslim residents in Egypt, representing Muslims residing in Muslim countries on the other side. It was chosen to conduct the current study on the US and UK markets as they both accommodate a good number of Muslim residents; with 3.3million Muslims in the USA and 4.13 million Muslims in the UK (Mohamed, 2016; Hackett, 2016).

The questionnaire was originally written in English, yet, an Arabic version was created for Muslims whose first language is Arabic. A brief description of the study was provided in the

cover letter of the survey.   Filtering questions regarding country of origin, place or country of residence and travel experience helped in screening out visitors, natural born citizens and respondents with no travel experience.

Regarding the US market, Questionnaires were distributed in person on mosques within two major cities encompassing Muslim residents in the State of Ohio: Cleveland including 0.8% of Muslims and Toledo having 1% of Muslim residents. Questionnaires were also distributed by regular mail and email on mosques in another two major cities encompassing Muslim residents in the State of California: Los Anglos with 1% of Muslim residents and San Francisco with 1.1% Muslims (The Daily Beast, 2017).

The completed questionnaires were collected either by mail, email or in person through the responsible personnel within the designated mosques. A total of 650 questionnaires were distributed in the USA, 520 were returned while 500 of them were used for analysis after excluding a number of questionnaires that most of its questions were not answered by the respondents. Thus, questionnaires used for analysis from the US market presented a valid response rate of 76.9%.

Concerning the UK market, questionnaires were distributed in Leeds City at Leeds Grand Mosque and other major mosques as well as the green room at the University of Leeds' campus where most of Muslim students perform their prayers. Questionnaires have been distributed in person. A total of 600 questionnaires were distributed and 533 were returned. After invalid questionnaires were excluded such as those with a high percent of incomplete answers, 476 questionnaires were accepted for analysis, resulting in a valid response rate of 79.3%.

Finally the Egyptian market, questionnaires were distributed in person at a number of famous Islamic attractions. A total of 650 questionnaires were distributed and 566 were returned. The Questionnaires were filtered to include only those filled by non Egyptians residing in Egypt, visitors and Egyptians, were excluded.   Incomplete questionnaires were also overlooked; hence, 537 questionnaires were used for analysis representing a valid response rate of 82. 6%.

Thus, a total of 1513 Muslims were surveyed; 537 participants from Egypt, representing Muslims residing in Muslim countries and 976 participants from both the USA and UK (500 from US and 476 from UK), representing Muslims residing in non-Muslim countries.

Construct validation of MODC:

Items used to assess Muslim Overall Destination Choice [MODC] are provided in Table 1.

First, Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to examine the factor structure of (MODC) in the total sample and along each Muslim group. Analyses were conducted using the AMOS 20 program (Byrne, 2010) and maximum likelihood estimation procedures. Chi-square ($\chi2$) is a traditionally used index to assess overall model fit. However, since it is sensitive to sample size (Hu & Bentler, 1993; Cheung & Rensvold 2002; Chen, Sousa & West, 2005) as it often indicates statistical significance when dealing with large samples, as in the case of the current study, other commonly used fit indexes were utilized: the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI), the root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA), and the standardized root mean squared residual (SRMR). Generally, RMSEA ≤ 0.08, SRMR ≤ 0.08, TLI ≥ 0.90 and CFI ≥ 0.09 can be considered acceptable (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Second, before comparing the results between the two groups, Muslims residing in Muslim countries and Muslims residing in non-Muslim countries, multigroup CFA methods were used to test for factorial invariance of (MODC) across the two groups, which consisted of a hierarchical set of steps (Samuel, South, & Griffin, 2015).

In the first type of invariance estimated, Model 1, Configural invariance, no constraints were imposed across both groups. The factor loadings, intercepts of variables and error variances of this model were freely estimated. In model 2, the first-order factor loadings were constrained to be equal across groups. In Model 3, first- and second-order factor loadings were also imposed to be equal across groups. Concerning Model 4, intercepts of measured variables were invariant, in addition to the constraints already set previously. In Model 5, invariance of intercepts of first-order latent factors was imposed. In Model 6, invariance of disturbances of first-order factors was constrained to be equal across the two groups. Finally in Model 7, invariance of residual variance of observed variables was constrained across groups, beside all previously imposed constraints.

Third, the latent mean differences across the two groups were tested. Testing for the invariance of latent mean structures involves measuring the equivalence of means related to each dimension to test the latent mean differences between the two groups (Byrne, 2010). In this stage, one of the compared groups was chosen as a reference group or baseline group, and the latent mean of this group was set to 0, while the latent mean of the other group was estimated. The value indicates the difference between factor means of both groups and significance test reveals whether the latent means of both groups were different. The critical ratio (CR) was selected as the index to assess whether the latent means were different across the two groups. The estimate is unacceptable if $CR \geq 1.96$ or ≤ -1.96, otherwise, it is accepted. In addition, a positive CR value indicates that the latent mean of the compared group is higher than the reference group, while a negative CR value indicates that the latent mean of the compared group is lower than that of the reference group (Tsaousis & Kazi, 2013).

Finally, group difference on the second-order mean was tested. To evaluate the difference between the higher-order factor means in the two groups; again one of the groups was selected as a reference group and its second-order latent mean was constrained to zero. The latent mean of the other group was calculated; this value indicates the difference between the factor means of the two groups. The critical ratio (CR) was again used as the index to assess whether the latent means were different across the two groups (Tsaousis & Kazi, 2013). Invariance of first- and second-order factor loadings and intercepts of the measured variables and first-order factors were constrained in both groups.

RESULTS

Demographic factors and descriptive statistics:

The total sample (N = 1513) fairly represented both Muslims residing in Muslim countries, featured by Egypt, with 537 respondents (35.5%) and Muslims residing in non-Muslim countries, featured by the USA and UK, with 976 respondents (64. 5%). 748 of the total sample were males (49.4%) and 765 were females (50.6%). The majority of respondents were between 20-29 years old (41.9%) followed by those between 30-39 years old (27.0%). (49.6%) of all respondents were unmarried, while (44.7%) were married. (67.9%) of the total sample

had a high educational level. The income for (43.4%) of the total sample was under $25.000 and for (20.8%) ranged between $25.000- $34.000. The total sample encompassed various nationalities with a slightly higher proportion of Malaysians and Pakistanis compared to other nationalities, (26.5%) and (15.3%) respectively. All the respondents had a previous travel experience.

Confirmatory factor analysis:

In the current study, the Coefficient alpha was 0.90 for the Attractions & Services subscale; 0.95 for the Worship facilities, Halal food and Segregated pools subscale; 0.94 for the other Islamic moralities and Alcoholic drinks & Gambling free subscale; 0.84 for the Quality subscale; and 0.80 for the Price subscale. The standardized factor-loading estimates for each item on the five dimensions ranged from 0.56 to 0.94 (see Table 1). The R^2 results indicate that 42% of the variances in the higher order latent construct (MODC) could be explained by its attributes. These findings support the content validity of the proposed [MODC] model and consequently, the ability to generalize it on all the Muslim tourists whether their country of residence is a Muslim country or a non-Muslim country.

Moreover, results of standardized regression/loadings demonstrated that the factor associated with Worship facilities, Halal food and Segregated pools, the factor of Attractions & Services and the factor of Other Islamic moralities and Alcoholic drinks & gambling free had the largest influence on the Muslim Overall Destination Choice (MODC) for Muslims who reside in Muslim countries, Egypt, with 0.99, 0.96 and 0.92 respectively. On the other hand, the factor related to Attractions & Services, the factor of Quality and the factor of Price had the largest impact on (MODC) for Muslims who reside in non-Muslim countries, USA and UK, with 0.93, 0.91 and 0.82 respectively.

Accordingly, the two hypotheses H2 and H3, particularly, are accepted:

H2: Muslims residing in Muslim countries put a greater emphasis on the availability of Muslim-friendly attributes when choosing a destination than Muslims residing in non–Muslim countries.

H3: Muslims residing in non–Muslim countries are more concerned with the availability of the general value attributes than the presence of Muslim-friendly attributes when choosing a destination.

The fit indices of CFA were summarized in Table 2. All CFI were ≥ 0.90: full sample 0.911, Muslims residing in Muslim countries 0.907, Muslims residing in non-Muslim countries 0.905. All TLI were ≥.90: full sample 0.903, Muslims residing in Muslim countries 0.902, Muslims residing in non-Muslim countries 0.901. The RMSEA values were ≤ 0.08: full sample 0.079, Muslims residing in Muslim countries 0.074, Muslims residing in non-Muslim countries 0.076. Finally, the SRMR values were ≤0.08: full sample 0.022, Muslims residing in Muslim countries 0.020, Muslims residing in non-Muslim countries 0.029. These results show that the model fits the data well for the full sample and each Muslim group. Thus, the model can serve as the baseline model for the following factorial invariance tests.

Table 1: Items CFA standardized factor loadings on first order factors and 2nd order CFA

MODC dimensions and variables	CFA standardized factor loading	Cronbach alpha	2nd order CFA	R^2
Attractions and Services: (ATT&S)		0.90	0.90	
The destination has sightseeing and scenery (ATT 1)	0.56			
The destination has good weather (ATT 2)	0.61			
The local people are friendly (ATT 3)	0.70			
The destination has recreational & relaxation options (ATT 4)	0.72			
The destination is accessible (S1)	0.76			
The tourist attractions and services are accessible (S2)	0.70			
Communication is easy within the destination (S3)	0.76			
Good local transportation (S4)	0.77			
Good accommodation facilities and restaurants (S5)	0.68			
Shopping options (S6)	0.63			
Worship facilities, Halal food and Segregated pools: (W, H &SP)		0.95	0.51	
The destination has to have mosques (W1)	0.86			
The hotel has to have a prayer room (W2)	0.94			
The hotel room has to have a 'Qiblah' indicator (W3)	0.93			
The hotel room has to have a prayer mat and a Qura'an copy (W4)	0.91			
Restaurants have to hold a ' Halal' certification for food (H)	0.78			
There are separated beaches/pools for men only & women only (SP)	0.75			
Other Islamic moralities and Alcoholic drinks & gambling free: (IM &AG)		0.94	0.66	
Adult channels are banned in the hotel (IM1)	0.73			
Hotel and restaurant women staff wear 'Hijab'(IM2)	0.59			
Hotel and restaurant staff dress conservatively (IM3)	0.73			
Gambling is forbidden within the destination (AG1)	0.93			
Gambling is prohibited in the hotel (AG2)	0.92			42%
Alcoholic consumption in public is forbidden (AG3)	0.90			
Alcoholic drinks is prohibited in hotels and restaurants (AG4)	0.81			
Quality: (Q)		0.84	0.93	
The destination has a good reputation (Q1)	0.67			
The destination is unique (Q2)	0.71			
The destination has quality tour packages (Q3)	0.83			
The destination's tour packages are well organized (Q4)	0.86			
Price: (P)		0.80	0.71	
The vacation price is cheap (P1)	0.79			

The vacation is good value for money (P2)	0.63
The vacation is reasonably priced (P3)	0.64
The vacation is discounted (P4)	0.74

Table 2: Goodness of fit indexes for the MODC model

	χ2	df	TLI	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR
Total sample (n=1513)	6570.593	429	0.903	0.911	0.079	0.022
Muslims reside in Muslim countries (n=537)	2045.779	429	0.902	0.907	0.074	0.020
Muslims reside in Non-Muslim countries (n=976)	5564.685	429	0.901	0.905	0.076	0.029

*χ2= chi-square; df = degrees of freedom; TLI = the Tucker– Lewis Index; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; RMSEA = root-mean-square error of approximation; SRMR = standardized root mean squared residual.

Measurement invariance:

Table 3 shows the results of the measurement invariance tests across the two groups. Since the performance of the chi-square difference test is influenced by large sample size as mentioned previously, goodness-of-fit indexes are typically used to assess model fit (Chen *et al.,* 2005). The changes in CFI, was used to evaluate invariance among different successive models, a $\Delta CFI \leq 0.010$ (Cheung & Rensvold, 2002) was considered evidence of invariance. The results revealed that between the configural model (Model 1) and (Model 2), the ΔCFI was 0.001 and; between (Model 2) and (Model 3), the $\Delta CFI=0.001$; between (Model 3) and (Model 4), the $\Delta CFI=0.001$. The ΔCFI between (Model 4) and (Model 5), was 0.000. Between (Model 5) and (Model 6), the $\Delta CFI=0.002$. The value of the ΔCFI between (Model 6) and (Model 7) was 0.002. Moreover, the fit indices indicated reasonable fit in the two groups. Therefore, we concluded that strict invariance was tenable between Muslims residing in Muslim countries and Muslims residing in non-Muslim countries.

Table 3: Summary of Fit Statistics for Testing Measurement Invariance of Second-Order Factor Model of MODC

Model	χ2	df	P	TLI	CFI	RMSEA	Model comparison	ΔCFI
Model(1)	3582.988	858	0.000	0.904	0.908	0.072	-	-
Model(2)	3692.949	884	0.000	0.905	0.907	0.074	2vs.1	0.001
Model(3)	3812.252	888	0.000	0.903	0.906	0.076	3vs.2	0.001
Model(4)	4062.258	919	0.000	0.902	0.905	0.071	4vs.3	0.001
Model(5)	4253.244	919	0.000	0.901	0.905	0.073	5vs.4	0.000
Model(6)	4383.506	924	0.000	0.902	0.903	0.075	6vs.5	0.002
Model(7)	4483.577	950	0.000	0.903	0.901	0.076	7vs.6	0.002

*χ2= chi-square; df=degrees of freedom; TLI=the Tucker–Lewis Index; CFI=Comparative Fit Index;   RMSEA=root-mean- square error of approximation.

Latent mean differences:

Testing for the equivalence of latent mean structures (First-order CFA model):

A core focus in the current study was to test for latent mean differences in multidimensional [MODC] across the two Muslim groups. Comparing the latent means derived from multigroup CFA, rather than conducting t-test using raw scores, make it possible to draw less vague conclusions from the data.

We examined the well-fitting structural invariance model, where the means of the five factors were set to 0 in the group of Muslims residing in Muslim countries and freely estimated in the group of Muslims residing in non-Muslim countries. Findings indicated that Muslims who reside in Muslim countries appear to have significantly higher perceptions of Muslim-friendly attributes, as hypothesized by the current study, as well as other general value attributes than Muslims who reside in non-Muslim countries. Specifically, Muslims residing in Muslim countries had higher perceptions with respect to Factor 1: Attractions and Services, Factor 2: Worship facilities, Halal food and Segregated pools and Factor 3: Other Islamic moralities and Alcoholic drinks & gambling free, as well as to factor 4: Quality (CR =-5.245, -27.146, -12.509 and -14.573, P=0.000 respectively) and there was no significant differences between the two groups regarding Factor 5: Price, (CR= -.397, P=0.691). This shows that Muslims residing in Muslim countries concentrate more on the existence of all the destination attributes in general, when compared with Muslims residing in non-Muslim countries.

Nevertheless, results revealed that the highest factor means difference between the two groups was in factor 2: Worship facilities, Halal food and Segregated pools followed by factor 3: Other Islamic moralities and Alcoholic drinks & gambling free. This proves that Muslims residing in Muslim countries give greater concern to the existence of the Muslim-friendly attributes in particular, when compared with Muslims residing in non-Muslim countries.

Accordingly, the first hypothesis, in particular, is accepted:

H1: Muslims who reside in Muslim countries have significantly higher perceptions of Muslim-friendly attributes than Muslims who reside in non -Muslim countries.

Table 4: Testing for latent mean differences *(First-order factors)*

	Estimates	**S.E**	**C.R**	**P**
Factor 1	-.179	.034	-5.245	0.000
Factor 2	-1.292	.048	-27.146	0.000
Factor 3	-.591	.047	-12.509	0.000
Factor 4	-.590	.040	-14.573	0.000
Factor 5	-.017	.042	-.397	0.691

Test of the Group Difference on the Second-Order Factor Mean

To obtain an estimate of the difference between the higher order factor means in the two groups, the group of Muslims residing in Muslim countries was selected as a reference or baseline group and its second-order latent mean was set to zero. The latent mean of the other group, Muslims residing in non-Muslim countries, was calculated; this value reflects the difference between the factor means of the two groups. The significance test (Critical Ratio) for the latent

means of the Muslims who reside in non-Muslim countries was used to test for significance in the difference between the latent means of the two groups (Tsaousis & Kazi, 2013). Invariance of first- and second-order factor loadings and intercepts of the measured variables and first-order factors was imposed on both groups.

Significant mean difference was recorded between the two groups on the higher order factor [(-.427), C.R = -14.904, p < .0001].This difference indicates that the group of Muslims residing in Muslim countries had a higher score on Muslim Overall Destination Choice (MODC) than the group of Muslims residing in non-Muslim countries. This again suggests that when choosing a tourist destination, Muslims residing in Muslim countries pay more attention than Muslims residing in non-Muslim countries to the existence of all destination attributes and to most of the items composing them; a finding that is worth further investigation in future.

Priority of attributes:

This part demonstrates the findings of section two in the survey.

As mentioned previously, it aimed to explore the priority that each Muslim group would give to the Muslim-friendly attributes versus the other general value attributes if asked to favor between them when choosing among tourist destinations. Results of this section support the previous findings in section one and support the hypotheses of the current study.

The majority of Muslims who reside in Muslim countries (53%) strongly agree and (5. 6%) agree that they would sacrifice general value attributes, quality; price; attractions or general services, within the destination if it offers Muslim-friendly services, this share is substantially lower in Muslims who reside in non-Muslim countries with only (7. 5%) strongly agree and (22. 4%) agree.

This supports the second hypothesis of the current study, H2, that Muslims residing in Muslim countries put a greater emphasis on the availability of Muslim-friendly attributes when choosing a destination than Muslims residing in non–Muslim countries.

A substantial percentage of Muslims residing in non-Muslim countries (37.8%) agree and (12.7%) strongly agree that it doesn't matter if the tourist destination offers Muslim-friendly services or not if quality, price, attractions and general services are available, while (37.2%) of this group their opinion was neutral. conversely, (71.9%) of the Muslims residing in Muslim countries disagreed and (26.1%) strongly disagreed with this statement.

This supports the third hypothesis of the current study, H3, that Muslims residing in non–Muslim countries are more concerned with the availability of the general value attributes than the presence of Muslim-friendly attributes when choosing a destination.

Finally, both groups declared that if a Muslim-friendly destination would offer them good quality, price, attractions and services, they would favor it on any other destination; with the majority of Muslims who reside in Muslim countries (86.8%) agree and (11.2%) strongly agree, while (39.1%) of Muslims who reside in non-Muslim countries agree, (38.2%) strongly agree and (16.3%) were neutral.

This indicates that both Muslim groups would choose a certain tourist destination and favor it on other destinations if it succeeds to combine both types of attributes and offer them to the

Muslim tourist with a high level of proficiency that would give the destination a competitive advantage and satisfy both groups**.**

DISCUSSION

The current study provides empirical evidence that the place of residence has a moderating effect on The Muslim Overall Destination Choice (MODC). A second-order model, in particular, identified a broader construct of (MODC) that, to date, has not been investigated in previous studies, specifically, those concerned with Muslim tourists and destination attributes such as Battour *et al.* (2011), Battour *et al.* (2014), Battour & Ismail (2015) and Eid & El-Gohary (2015a,b).

In the proposed model , (MODC) performs as a second-order construct formed by five first-order factors or attributes: Attractions and Services (factor 1), Worship facilities, Halal food and Segregated pools (factor 2), Other Islamic moralities and Alcoholic drinks & gambling free (factor 3), Quality (factor 4), and Price (factor 5), with these attributes in turn being measured based on set of items that compose key destination attributes as suggested by previous research (Zhou, 2005; Bajs**,** 2011; Battour *et al.*, 2014; Abooali *et al.*, 2015; Eid & El-Gohary, 2015a,b).

The analysis of items standardized factor loadings on first order factors and regression coefficients between first-order dimensions and higher-order factor (MODC) revealed that all attributes identified in this research contribute to forming Muslim Overall Destination Choice and explain 42% of its variance.

The current study contributes to empirical research of Muslim overall destination choice in several ways. First, this work has succeeded in validating a proposed model of Muslim Overall Destination Choice in two independent sample representatives featured in Muslims residing in Muslim countries and Muslims residing in non-Muslim countries. The results indicated a reasonable fit of this suggested model to the data, for the total sample on one side and for each Muslims group on the other side. Second, the study was the first to provide evidence for a second-order [MODC] model based on place of residence using multigroup CFA method. The [MODC] model emerged as invariant across groups. The results indicated that in both Muslims residing in Muslim countries and Muslims residing in non-Muslim countries, the [MODC] may be measuring the same constructs and that the groups likely share a common frame of reference for selecting their destination. Therefore, it is possible to conduct a comparison of scores for each dimension across Muslims' country of residence without bias (Meredith & Teresi, 2006; Liu *et al.,* 2015).

Concerning the Muslim groups' preferences when choosing among tourist destinations based on the available attributes, results revealed that factor 2: Worship facilities, Halal food and Segregated pools, factor 1: Attractions and Services and factor 3: Other Islamic moralities and Alcoholic drinks & gambling free are the major factors affecting destination choice for Muslims residing in Muslim countries. On the other hand, factor 1: Attractions and Services, factor 4: Quality and factor 5: Price, are considered the key factors influencing destination choice for Muslims residing in non-Muslim countries.

Moreover, Findings regarding the latent mean differences across the two groups indicated that the highest factor mean differences between the two groups were in factor 2: Worship facilities,

Halal food and Segregated pools then in factor mean differences of factor 3: Other Islamic moralities and Alcoholic drinks & gambling free.

This confirms that the place of residence has a moderating effect on the Muslim's destination choice as Muslims residing in Muslim countries have significantly higher perceptions of Muslim–friendly attributes than Muslims residing in non–Muslim countries; and they put a greater emphasis on the availability of Muslim-friendly attributes when choosing a destination than Muslims residing in non–Muslim countries. On the other hand, Muslims residing in non–Muslim countries are more concerned with the availability of the general value attributes than the presence of Muslim-friendly attributes when choosing a destination. Thus, the three hypotheses of the current study are accepted.

Results have also provided additional empirical support for assessing the weight of each attribute in influencing the overall destination choice for both Muslim tourists groups and provide partial support to findings from previous exploratory studies. For example, Eid and El-Gohary (2015a) revealed in their study that Islamic attributes are considered a key factor influencing Muslim tourist's behavior when purchasing tourism products. Additionally, in their study of measuring the influence of availability of Islamic attributes on overall tourist satisfaction, Battour *et al*. (2014) provided evidence that offering Islamic attributes in a destination has a positive impact on Muslim tourist's satisfaction. Then they concluded that offering conventional destination attributes along with Islamic attributes contributes in making the Muslim tourist enjoy his vacation.

Furthermore, findings revealed that the Muslim's place of residence affects his destination choice when it comes to choosing between destinations that offer Muslim-friendly attributes and those that do not. These findings align with cross-cultural research that shows the impact of diversity of cultural backgrounds, including place of residence, on customer behavior (McCleary *et al.*, 2006; Forgas-Coll *et al.*, 2012; Oha, & Hsub, 2014).

On the other hand, previous Halal tourism and Muslim tourist research (Battour *et al.*, 2011, Battour *et al.*, 2014) revealed that Muslim-friendly attributes have a positive impact on Muslim destination preference that was strongly associated with satisfaction; yet these studies dealt with all Muslims as one segment regardless of their cultural differences. The current study explained that when a cross-cultural aspect, such as the place of residence, is taken into account, Muslims may vary in perceiving and choosing their visited destination and hence, the association between Muslim-friendly attributes, Muslim's destination choice and satisfaction becomes less powerful. This was clearly apparent here in the case of Muslims residing in non-Muslim countries as these Muslims have a fairly high degree of self-dependence in fulfilling their religious requirements without the need for external services, thus, they give less concern to the presence of the Muslim-friendly attributes as an essential requirement for choosing a tourist destination and consequently achieving satisfaction.

Besides that, the concept of cultural differences and its potential impact on Muslim destination choice as a predictive factor affecting the Muslim tourist destination selection and experience has not been directly or clearly researched in previous studies concerned with Muslim travel or Halal tourism, such as Battour *et al.*, 2011; Battour *et al.*, 2014, Nassar, *et al.*, 2015. Thus, more emphasis was given in the current study to the role that the place of residence specifically plays in the Muslims' tourism destination selection. It was revealed that the difference in the place of residence, Muslim countries and non-Muslims countries, leads to differences in the Muslim tourists' perception; as Muslim tourists residing in Muslim countries consider Muslim-

friendly attributes main determinants of choosing a destination, hence, their destination preference is built mainly on the availability of such attributes in the first place compared to the other general value attributes.

This was further emphasized when the majority of Muslims residing in Muslim countries agreed that they would sacrifice any of the general value attributes within a destination if it offers Muslim-friendly services, while a small percentage of the Muslims residing in non-Muslim countries agreed with this statement. Accordingly, the second hypothesis of the current study was once again confirmed.

Additionally, a substantial percentage of Muslims residing in non-Muslim countries agreed that it doesn't matter if the tourist destination offers Muslim-friendly services or not if the other general value attributes are available, while the majority of Muslims residing in Muslim countries disagreed with this statement. Hence, the third hypothesis was again confirmed.

These findings are reasonable when considering the religious environment that surrounds Muslims residing in a Muslim country and shapes their everyday life. This religious environment affects the perceived importance of the availability of Muslim-friendly facilities and services that these Muslims may require while in a vacation.

On the other hand, Muslims who reside in non-Muslim countries are not publicly surrounded by the same religious atmosphere. The social, cultural and religion differences in non-Muslim countries have led those Muslims, as mentioned previously in the literature review section, to get used to depending on their own selves in addressing and arranging their religious practices and requirements. In other words, they do not rely on the place offerings to practice their religion. This might be the reason they place less emphasis on the presence of Muslim-friendly attributes when choosing a tourist destination.

In this concern, Sametoglu (2015) referred to what is called "Halascapes" which is a concept created by Muslims residing in non-Muslim countries in which they create their own joint leisure culture while respecting Islamic and moral principles and values.

Finally, results also revealed that both Muslim groups agreed on certain issues:

First, the attractions and services factor or attribute is a key dimension in the destination choice. This aligns with previous studies on destination choice (Bajs, 2011; Battour *et al.*, 2011; Eid & El-Gohary, 2015b).

Second, the price factor or attribute is one of the main determinants that affect the destination choice. This is also consistent with multiple studies that consider price one of the main dimensions in destination choice (Bajs, 2011; Battour *et al.*, 2011; Eid & El-Gohary, 2015b).

Third, both groups indicated that if a Muslim-friendly destination would offer them good quality, price, attractions and services, they would favor it on any other destination**.** This agrees with the conclusion of Battour *et al*. (2014) mentioned previously, that offering conventional destination attributes along with Islamic attributes to the Muslim tourist in general would lead to more enjoyment to his tourist vacation. However, it is subject here to the presence of high level of quality and proficiency.

Implication to research and practice

One of the important contributions of the current study is that it identifies to marketers and destination marketing organizations [DMOs] aiming to target the Muslim tourist segment, the most effective destination attributes as perceived and prioritized by each of the two Muslim groups. Hence, if a destination tends to target Muslims residing in Muslim countries, it needs to focus primarily on promoting its Muslim-friendly services and facilities. Conversely, if it aims to attain Muslims residing in non-Muslim countries, then it needs to concentrate more on the other general value destination attributes, especially services and attractions as well as quality.

Furthermore, marketers and [DMOs] should understand the Muslim overall destination choice process [MODC] in the market they tend to target. They should focus on understanding the main aspects that the Muslim tourists need based on their place of residence and according to the nature and characteristics of this specific market to be able to develop the tourist product and attributes that would suit the intended Muslim group on one side and decide which marketing and promotion activities would be the most effective in reaching out for the targeted group on the other side.

Moreover, a tourist destination that seeks gaining competitive advantage through establishing and marketing appropriate services and products to Muslim tourists may rely on the [MODC] model to assess the value of its product, facilities and services based on the different perceptions of both Muslim groups, then modify its current practices and offerings accordingly, to be able to provide the intended Muslim tourist segment with the Muslim-friendly attributes and general value attributes that would meet its individuals' expectations.

CONCLUSION

A destination can succeed in gaining the Muslim tourist when it provides him with the key attributes that he needs and upon which he selects his tourist destination. Previous studies concerned with Halal tourism and Muslim tourists showed that Muslim destination choice and Muslim tourists' satisfaction are affected by offering Muslim-friendly attributes (Battour *et al.*, 2014; Eid, 2015; Eid & El-Gohary, 2015a). However, these studies did not take into account the potential effect of cultural differences and in specific, the effect of place of residence as one of the main cultural factors identified in cross-cultural research that influence customer behavior (Forgas-Coll *et al*., 2012; McCleary *et al*., 2006; Oha & Hsub, 2014). Accordingly, the current study proposed that the place of residence may have an impact on Muslim overall destination choice, mainly assuming that Muslims residing in Muslim countries may adopt different criteria from Muslims residing in non-Muslim countries when selecting their visited destination.

Results confirmed that the place of residence has a moderating effect on Muslim destination choice by revealing the significant differences between Muslims residing in Muslim countries and Muslims residing in non-Muslim countries regarding their perception to the Muslim-friendly attributes in particular. Findings specifically verified that Muslims who reside in a Muslim country are more likely to choose a tourist destination that offers Muslim-friendly attributes in the first place while Muslims who reside in a non-Muslim country are more likely to choose a tourist destination that offers primarily the general value attributes.

The current study has also proposed and validated a Muslim Overall Destination Choice model [MODC] that can be generalized on both Muslim groups.

Future research

The current study is considered a first step in understanding the underlying second-order factor of (MODC) and testing the validity and reliability of destination Muslim-friendly attributes and the general value attributes within hierarchical factor orders. Future research should be directed to developing a strong empirical base to extend the results and include other destination attributes that could be important for Muslim tourists. Adding other dimensions that might have a potential impact on Muslim overall destination choice and that would better explain Muslim tourists' behavior should be considered as well.

Furthermore, the current study hypothesized that place of residence as a cross-cultural factor has a moderating effect on MODC, future research may build upon this study to include other cross-cultural factors that might have a potential effect on Muslim tourist behavior and perception.

For instance, Future research may look into the reasons that lead Muslims residing in Muslim countries to be generally more interested in the presence of all the attributes within a destination than Muslims residing in non-Muslim countries, as revealed in the findings.

The reason for this can be related to another cross-cultural force such as the practical lifestyle that Muslims residing in Western countries are accustomed to more than Muslims living in other regions; an assumption that is worth further investigation.

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