

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**THE TRAVELLING PATTERN AND
THE PREFERENCES / INCLINATION
OF THE ARAB TOURISTS TOWARDS
HOTEL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES**

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ABSTRACT

This empirical study investigates the Arab tourists' travelling pattern, preferences and inclination towards hotel products and services. The inclination of the Arab tourists towards hotel attributes such as front office, room, food and beverages and other amenities and services are identified.

An adaptation of the triangulation approach through a self completed survey among the Arab tourists at selected hotels and short interviews with Arab embassy attaché was used to gather the information for this study. This study has given a significant meaning and further insights on the issue being investigated.

The results revealed that the majority of the Arab tourists in Malaysia were among married man with family and spouses visiting for a holiday. In addition, the majority of them are from the oil producing countries in the Middle East region such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates and Syria. The results also signified that the major activities engaged by the respondents were sightseeing plus other activities such as visiting beaches, theme parks, walking/hiking and shopping.

On hotel products and services, the majority of the Arab tourists are very concerned about these attributes. The findings showed that besides other food, Arab dishes appeared to be the high preferences/inclination among the Arab tourists. In addition, they explicitly agreed that a good restaurant atmosphere and ambience should be complemented with the efficiency of service staff. With regard to other services, the Arabs tourists preferred to have the newspaper and TV channels, hotel information and room service menu in Arabic. In fact higher expectation also goes to rooms especially pertaining to cleanliness and hygiene, courtesy of the bellman, receptionist plus the fast check-in, friendly, personalized service and ability in terms of communication.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter signifies the background of the research. It illustrates the dramatic growth of the tourism industry in the international global market. It also describes the remarkable growth of the West Asian market and the importance of this market segment contribution to Malaysia's revenue and exchange earnings from the tourism industry. The problem statement, the aims and objectives and research questions which illustrate the direction of the study is discussed in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

1.1 Background of the Research

Tourism is increasingly becoming an important sector in most countries in the world and is considered to be one of the world's key economic activities and fastest growing elements of the global trade (World Tourism Organization, 2003). The dramatic growth of this industry is characterised by the increasing number of international tourists. The World Tourism Organization (WTO) forecasted that around 1 billion international travellers are expected to travel in 2010 and 1.6 billion in 2020. According to Smith (1999) this represents nearly a threefold increase in international travel since 1996.

Buhalis (1998) argued that the significant changes to the tourism industry are also due to the adoption and development of internet applications. This new media has evolved from a technological curiosity among the travellers and the result can be seen as millions of people around the globe stop everyday at certain points for various travel-related activities (Travel Industry Association, 2002). All in all, the internet revolution has created the emergence of numerous online travel facilities and tourism marketing organizations.