

What is the Ideal Accommodation Facility for Muslims?

1. Reason and Purpose of the Research

In recent years, the population of Muslims (believers of Islam) has dramatically increased and subsequently the number of people visiting Japan from Muslim-majority countries in Southeast Asia has increased, and because of the influence of the coming Tokyo Olympic Games in 2020. However, we think that hospitality for Muslims in Japan is not sufficient because there are many rules for Muslims in daily life and Japanese are not approaching these rules well enough because there are not so many Muslims in Japan. We consider that providing safe and comfortable places for increasing amount of Muslim visitors to stay will lead to further increase of visitors as well as prosperity of the tourism business. That is why we looked at accommodation facilities which we could determine that Muslim tourists certainly use when they visit Japan. We conducted research to come up with the ideal accommodation facility and planned to propose it for promotion throughout Japan.

2. Method of Research

- 1) To learn the basic knowledge about Muslims, we read documents and previous studies.
- 2) To learn about detailed approaches for Muslim visitors, we conducted fieldwork visits to 2 out of 26 hotels in Japan that the Japan Halal Business Association introduces to Muslims and we also conducted a questionnaire survey to 5 hotels by mail.
- 3) To learn about what Muslims actually want from Japanese accommodations, we conducted a questionnaire survey to 15 Muslims who regularly visit the Ibaraki Mosque.

Based on the above research, we examined the ideal accommodation facility for Muslims and we will try to promote this idea.

3. Content of the Research

1) Muslim Friendly

From various documents and previous studies we could learn about the Halal Certificate system, which is one of the indicators to show whether the product or service is Halal (allowed among Islam). In the beginning, we simply thought accommodation facilities should receive this certification but we reconsidered this idea after discovering that there are many Halal certifying bodies in the world and they do not have unified methods of screening or the same degree of strictness. Furthermore, it takes quite some time and a heavy

cost to obtain these certifications and therefore it does not fit our original purpose of trying to promote the result of our study to more accommodation facilities. Moreover, the degree of how much the individual can accept certain services or not is different among Muslims. Even if a service obtains the Halal Certification, it does not mean the service completely follows the rules of the individual Muslims.

Thus, we looked at the concept of “Muslim friendly.” This is the thought that service providers understand what Muslims need and provide the service as much as possible in a proper manner. They clearly show the information about their service and let Muslim users decide whether they want to receive the service or not. When you adopt this concept, the hotel side does not need to put a huge initial investment and Muslims can select the service by themselves. We believed it fit the concept of this study and decided to proceed with the research on hospitality (the approach) for Muslims based on the “Muslim friendly” concept.

2) Approach for Muslims

In detail, it is important to look at what to consider when we approach Muslims. We conducted fieldwork at 2 hotels and sent a questionnaire to 5 hotels that are providing services to Muslims. The result showed that they mainly place emphasis on 2 matters: meals and worship.

① Meals

In Islam, pigs are considered to be an impure animal, so Muslims are prohibited to eat or even touch pigs. That means that not only pork but food materials derived from pigs/pork are also not allowed to be used. Also, when eating animals that have tusks to kill other animals, they must be processed and cooked in a specific way determined by the rules of Islam. Furthermore, Muslim people are not allowed to drink alcoholic beverages and are not allowed to use materials containing alcohol for cooking.

Additionally, not only food materials but cooking methods and dishes must be separated by Halal and non-Halal. When something Halal thing touches something non-Halal, the former becomes no longer Halal.

It is also important to properly provide information about how much services for Muslims the hotel is providing, such as through preparing the menu in multiple languages and showing the ingredients of all foods.

② Worship

Muslims are required to worship 5 times a day, and accommodation facilities ought to give consideration for them to worship in a way close to their ordinary days. Because Muslims worship facing Mecca, many hotels set Qibla signs that show the direction of Mecca and have rental Qibla compasses as well as prayer mats in response to requests. However, some hotels answered they did not receive such requests because the information was not well delivered to

Muslim guests. Through this we learned that good provision of information is vital.

3) Japanese Culture

From the answers to the questionnaire to Muslims and published literature we learned that Muslims were looking for a cultural experience in Japan. That is why we thought accommodation facilities should serve Japanese dishes and provide Japanese style rooms.

4) Questionnaires used in this study and the answer data

① Questionnaire to Muslims

「こんにちは。私たちは大阪府立豊中高等学校の2年生です。現在、課題研究という授業の一環として、日本の宿泊施設のムスリム対応について研究しています。この研究調査用データとしてモスクにお越しのムスリムの皆様にアンケートにご協力頂きたいと思ひます。つきましてはお忙しいところ大変恐縮ではございますが、以下のアンケートにご回答頂きますようお願い申し上げます。」

記入によって得られた個人情報は一切外部に口外することはない、また本研究以外に使用することはございませんのでご理解のほどお願い申し上げます。」

「以下、アンケート」

「○質問1：日本にどちらからお越しになりましたか。また、来日してどのくらいですか。」

「○質問2：日本の宿泊施設を利用したことはありますか。」
はい ・ いいえ」

「○質問3：質問2で「はい」と答えた方にお聞きします。」
①日本の宿泊施設を何回利用したことがありますか。」
②それはどのような施設ですか。例）ビジネスホテル、カプセルホテル、旅館、民宿、など。」
③あって良かったと感じたサービスはなんですか。」
④不便だ、必要ないと感じたサービスはなんですか。」
⑤あれば良いと思ったサービスはなんですか。」
⑥自国の宿泊施設と違うと感じた点はなんですか。」

「○質問4：質問2で「いいえ」と答えた方にお聞きします。」
①家族や友人などお知り合いが利用されたことはありますか。」
あればその方の感想などを教えてください。」
②日本の宿泊施設にどのようなイメージを持っていますか。」

「○質問5：日本の宿泊施設にムスリムのお客様に対する何か特別な対応（食事、礼拝、アメニティーなどの面において）があったほうが良いと思ひますか。また、あったほうが良いと思ひう方はどのくらいの厳格な基準を求めますか。」

「○質問6：日本の宿泊施設に日本文化（畳、襦、障子などの和室や和食など）を体験できるものがあったほうが良いと思ひますか。また、あったほうが良いと思ひう方は何を体験してみたいですか。」

「○質問7：もし日本の宿泊施設を利用するとしたら、どれくらいの子算を考えていますか。」

「○質問8：日本の宿泊施設を選ぶ際の大事な条件はなんですか。」

「アンケートは以上です。ご協力ありがとうございました。」

② Questionnaire to hotels (sample)

We are Yuka Ohashi and Shiho Ohara, second year students of Osaka Prefectural Toyonaka high School. Currently, we are conducting research about how hotels are handling Muslim guests for one of our classes. As a part of collecting data for this research, we are conducting a questionnaire survey and would like a staff member of ** Hotel to answer the attached questionnaire.

The contents of your answer and personal information will not be used outside of the school and will not be used for any purposes other than this research.

Please return the questionnaire by (date). We appreciate your understanding and cooperation.

Following is the content of the questionnaire:

Q1. What motivated you to start providing services for Muslims?

Q2. How many customers use your Muslim approach services per year?

Q3. Please tell us the detail of your services for Muslims.

- 1) Do you serve Halal food? If so, what are the dishes you serve? If not, please tell us why.
- 2) Do you provide a place for worship, things like a prayer mat and a compass to show the direction of Mecca? If so, please write down what you provide. If not, please tell us why.
- 3) Do you provide any other services than the ones mentioned above? If you do, please explain in detail.
- 4) If you have any services for Muslims that you are not providing now but thinking about providing in future, please explain in detail.

Q4. Please write down the responses of your Muslim customers in regard to your services aimed at Muslims.

Q5. What is the ideal approach to services for Muslims that your hotel considers?

That is the end of our questionnaire. Thank you very much for your cooperation.

③ Summary of the answers to the hotel questionnaire.

Results of the questionnaire survey to 5 hotels (Parenthesis shows the number of hotels that selected the answer. They could choose multiple answers.)

- Q1. What motivated you to start providing services for Muslims?
 - The increase of Muslim tourists along with increase of the Muslim population. (3)
 - Because of the tendency towards globalization in the world. (1)
 - To obtain new types of customers since the number of customers decreased after the influence of the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011. (1)
- Q2. How many customers use your Muslim approach service per year?
 - We cannot tell because we do not count customers by religion. (5)
- Q3. Please tell us the detail of your service for Muslims.
 - 1) Do you serve Halal food? If so, what are the dishes you serve? If not, please tell us why.
 - Yes, we serve Halal food. (5)
 - 2) Do you provide a place for worship, mat, and compass to show the direction of Mecca? If so, please write down what you provide in detail. If not, please tell us why.
 - Place: Worshipping room (1)
Offering banquet hall in daytime (1)
 - Things providing: Mat (4)
Qibla compass or Qibla sign (5)
Rental water bucket (1)
Rental Koran (1)
 - 3) Do you provide any other services than the ones mentioned above? If you do, please give us the detail.
 - Introducing Halal restaurants (2)
 - Study session to have more knowledge about Muslims in cooperation with the ward office (1)
 - 4) If you have any services for Muslims that you are not providing now but are thinking about providing it in future, please write down the detail.
 - Halal amenity goods in bathroom (1)
 - Establishing a special place for worship (1)
- Q4. Please write down the responses of your Muslim customers in regard to

your services aimed at Muslims.

- Surprised to receive these services in Japan, which is a non-Islam country. General responses of appreciation, etc.



○ Q5. What is the ideal approach to services for Muslims that your hotel considers?

- A hotel where all staff members have knowledge about Muslims and can flexibly handle the requests from each customer.
- Staff members do not push themselves to provide the service but also do not become defensive towards Muslims.
- Making Muslims feel safe and comfortable.
- Provide services to Muslims as ordinary and daily, but not in a specific manner.
- Complying with basic service for Muslims while letting them feel, experience and enjoy Japanese culture.

4. Conclusion

From the results of this research, we are going to propose the concept of “Muslim friendly” to more hotels that have not provided any Muslim approaches or services and appeal to them to start providing services based on this concept while also bringing in Japanese culture to such service. For that purpose, we have made a handbook that explains the concept of “Muslim friendly” in a plain manner with examples of service. When we made this handbook, we referred to the websites of hotels currently providing Muslim approach services to explain about Muslims and Islam. We also emphasized the delivery of correct information to Muslims because this booklet is based on the concept of “Muslim friendly” which does not necessarily equate to “Halal certified.”

↓ Handbook (excerpt)

<p>Introduction</p> <p>In the past several years, the population of Muslims and number of Muslim visitors to Japan has dramatically increased and it is expected to continue increasing toward coming Tokyo Olympic Games in 2020. Therefore, it is required to provide services so that Muslims can stay comfortably in Japan.</p> <p>We focused our attention on accommodation facilities that almost all Muslims visiting Japan stay at. We researched about what could be ideal services for Muslims visiting Japan and we realized there were a lot of rules in Islam life which we needed to consider. Concluded from the results of our research, we would like to propose a way for how hotels can provide service to Muslims with the concept of a “Muslim Friendly Hotel”</p> <p>What is a Muslim Friendly Hotel?</p> <p>These hotels do not have to have Halal Certification issued by authorities. Hotels can provide services within the range that they can handle and make it so that visiting Muslims can choose whether they want to take their service or not.</p> <p>Hotels must make it clear that their service may not be completely Halal, so it is up to the people if they choose to accept these services or not.</p>	<p>To Be a Muslim Friendly Hotel</p> <p>● Meals</p> <p>There are food materials that Muslims cannot eat and cooking methods they cannot use. The interpretation of these matters is up to the individuals, so it is difficult for us to completely understand them. However, we can set certain standards and ask the individuals to make their own decision. This is the concept of Muslim friendly.</p> <p><Example></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Serving a menu without using non-Halal food materials (pork, alcohol, etc.) - Listing all food ingredients used in each dish in the menu in multiple languages so that Muslims can select the dish easily. - Preparing separate dishes and cooking methods for Muslims. - Introduce Halal restaurants. 	<p>● Worship</p> <p>In Islam, people worship facing the Holy City of Mecca every day. It is important to respect this ritual and prepare conditions close to their ordinary ritual.</p> <p><Example></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Setting Qibla signs in each room, or providing rental Qibla compasses. - Giving information about mosques. <p>● Japanese Culture</p> <p>Muslims visiting Japan want to have cultural experiences in Japan as a part of their tour.</p> <p><Example></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Serving Halal Japanese style dish - Letting them stay in a Japanese style room (with tatami mats, fusuma sliding doors, and/or a wall scroll) <p>A Hotel Where Everyone can stay comfortably Stay</p> 
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5. Results of the Research and Future Assignment

When we started this research, we thought we would suggest ideas of a hotel with complete service for Muslims. However, as we found out, that undertaking would require huge amounts of money and time and so we thought it would be better to promote the concept of “Muslim friendly.” At this time, we have worked on making a handbook as one of the ways to promote what Islam and Muslim means, and we are willing to listen to opinions to improve this handbook and think about other ways to promote this issue. However, even if we provide ways to approach Muslims, it cannot work if Muslims do not know about these approaches and services. Therefore, it is very important to show the appeal of these services for Muslims by providing information in a proper manner.

6. Reference

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