The Image of Islam in the Eyes of the Tourists in Jordan

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to demonstrate the stereotypes of Islam through the attitudes of tourists from different nationalities; and to provide practical steps in order to eliminate these wrong images. A survey was prepared and distributed to 100 tourists in order to explore the diverse images of Islam. This study has come to the conclusion that Islam is still misunderstood and misrepresented, so it is required to study seriously the reasons behind these stereotypes in order to reach the solutions that promote the real image of Islam. In addition, both Muslims and non-Muslims should cooperate in order to eliminate these stereotypes and to create an atmosphere full of understanding, tolerance, peace, love, and coexistence.

Keywords: Image, Islam, Tourists.

INTRODUCTION

In the Name of Allah, the All-Compassionate, All-Merciful Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds. May the peace and the blessings of Allah be upon his messenger Muhammad, his family and his companions, and those who follow his guidance until the Day of Judgement.

Allah, the All-Mighty, bestowed Muslim lands with numerous archeological sites, like shrines and tombs, where millions of tourists from around the world come to visit. Unfortunately, the image of Islam and Muslims is misunderstood, misrepresented, and distorted. The increasing level of tourist activity gives the Muslim population a golden opportunity to represent the true nature of Islam; its' tolerant principles and exalted values. Accordingly, the main aim of these papers is to debunk the stereotypes about the image of Islam in the eyes of the tourists, and provide practical steps in order to eliminate these negative images. A questionnaire which is in the form of a constructed survey was used as a tool in order to explore the image of Islam from different point of views of the tourists. The researchers divide their papers as the following:

- Viewing the image of Islam in the West, including media, TV, journals, etc.
- Analyzing the tourist’s perceptions towards the image of Islam through the questionnaire.
- Correcting the image of Islam.
- Conclusion.
- References.
- Appendix.

Diverse Images of Islam

The image of Islam has been negatively seen by the West till the recent days because of the distortion, misrepresentation, and misunderstanding throughout the history although a few of the westerners surveyed were objective in describing Islam specifically today, through technology, that can reach large of audience, not to mention in the books and novels, journals, shows on TV films, and radio especially those of Arab descent Muslims and Islam are mostly negatively viewed. Common stereotypes include: terrorism, backwardness, anti-western sentiments, fundamentalism, oppression of women, barbaric customs, violence, extremism, threats, etc.(1) These misconceptions and stereotypes are results of [ignorance, prejudice, media, and Muslim practices], which are results of most people’s perceptions of Islam and Muslims in Europe and USA, are shaped by media coverage. Akel points out that:

A major factor which contributes to Islamic stereotyping in the West is due to the media’s ignorance of selecting their words that describe Muslims. Some common names heard or seen in the news about Muslims are "extremists" or "terrorists"…, the Western media is

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also very influential to its audiences in making negative Islamic stereotypes\(^{(2)}\).

It is the time for the West to acknowledge Islam and its teachings to stop the stereotypes about Islam and treat Muslims with respect as they do in dealing with any other religion, doctrine, or ideology. It has been pointed out that if we wish to establish intercultural cooperation, we should avoid any form of generalization or categorization of peoples, cultures, or races, and we should focus on the common interests, most particularly, the most common conditions we experienced.\(^{(3)}\)

The researcher would like to indicate that although we are reviewing the attitude of the West towards the image of Islam, we do not hate them, nor do we fail to acknowledge their progress in various fields. On the contrary, we do respect them and we look forward to coming together on a common ground that allows us and to share in the prosperity and welfare. In addition, we do not reflect all western opinions regarding the image of Islam, because there are some who love to interact with others, eagerly intent to know their culture and keep connections with them. Amara confirms that we do not have a problem with western people themselves, yet they could become advocates for our issues if they will become informed about them. The better informed they are, the better will understand Islam, and may embrace it if we present it in a good manner, eliminating the distorted images in regard with Islam with our arguments.\(^{(4)}\)

Accordingly, this chapter will explore the diverse images of Islam, through the tourist’s attitude towards it, and how tourism can play a great role in informing the tourists about the right image. Also we will see how to use strategies to correct negative stereotypes through tourism sector. This was done through a questionnaire which is in the form of a constructed survey; it consists of

necessary questions, with appropriate assessment by the researcher’s supervisor to ensure its validity and reliability.\(^{(5)}\) The researcher would like to draw attention that the attitude of those tourists towards the image of Islam did not reflect the opinion of the majority of western people. In addition, if the results were positive, that means according to the researcher experience in the tourism area, most of the tourists, who come to visit Jordan can be considered open minded, and would like to know other’s traditions, norms, and beliefs.

Statistical Analysis

The reliability of the questionnaire used in this research has been calculated by using an arithmetical coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) at confidence level 95%, the results showed that Alpha is 84.5, since it is greater than 60% and this indicates that the value of Alpha is accepted and the questionnaire is reliable enough to achieve the results. The researchers give to 1 don’t know, 3 neutral, 2 disagree, 4 agree for the statements (4,5,6,8), and we give 1 neutral, 2 disagree, 3 agree for the statements (9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18), the results of the left statements according to their responds.

Sample Description

One hundred copies of the survey were distributed to tourists who visited Jordan this year, just seventy copies were returned. Those copies consist of thirteen different nationalities, from Europe, United States, and Far East. Some tourists added comments relevant to a few of the questions; the researcher will comment on them when it is come to discuss these questions. All the questions have been analyzed by the SPSS program.

Sample Description According to Gender

The following figure shows that the sample consists of 47% males and 53% of females, their aged from 20-over 45 years old:

![Sample Description According to Gender](image)

**Figure 1**
Sample Description according to Education

The following figure shows that half (50%) of the sample hold graduate studies degrees, which means their responses were well-informed:

![Sample Description according to Education](image)

**Figure 2**

Descriptive Analysis

This section of the research focuses on analyzing responses to the questions addressed in the questionnaire, so the questions are divided into four categories. Questions (1and2) were designed to investigate tourist’s level of information about Islam and their resources about it; questions (3-10) were designed to investigate the stereotypes about the image of Islam and their reasons. Questions (12-15) were designed to investigate the role of visiting Jordan in changing the attitude towards Islam. Questions (16-18) were designed to investigate the efforts which need to present the true image of Islam, does Islam deserve to be respected and acknowledged as other religions?

Statistical Analysis

As stated earlier, the first category (1and2) of this section was designed to investigate tourist’s level of information about Islam and their resources about it; Table 9 illustrates the responses of the question 1;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Knowledge Regarding Islam</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>47.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>47.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-depth</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the table above shows the percentage of tourists who know about Islam and the categories of “Basics” and “general” are equal (47.14), and unfortunately, just 5.71 of the tourists who know in depth about Islam, though most of the tourists in the sample held university degrees. Western people have a reputation for reading a lot, yet it seems that they are not interested in reading about Islam. Perhaps there are no attractive Islamic books available in the west, nor is there active promotion for good books that attract the western reader. This is a message for Muslims who write as well as to publishing houses they should produce Islamic materials which attract a western audience. Those surveyed who affirmed on in depth knowledge about Islam, shared that they were interested to read about it or they hold degree in Islamic studies.

The following table illustrates the responses of the Question 2, which was designed to investigate the tourists’ recourses about Islam:
Table (2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1- Knowledge’s Source</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media and Friends</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media and Book</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends and books</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media, Friends and Books</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results show, according to Table 2, most of the tourists’ (28.57%) knowledge about Islam comes from books, 17.14% of them knew about Islam through the media. Therefore, the image of Islam in their minds, whether good or bad, depends on the manner presented Islam in both. Actually, they read about Islam from the Orientlists’ books, most of them are not objective in describing Islam. Concerning the media, in reality and according to what we witness today, the image of Islam is still distorted, and most of the westerners accept this image. As Table 8 shows, 12.86% of the tourists know Islam through their friends. Two reasons contribute to this percentage not being greater: the first, generations of Muslims in the West and the United States have isolated themselves from contacting with society out of losing their religion and traditions. Secondly, some Muslims practices bother the Westerners, and reaffirm westerner’s stereotypes. Actually, we are optimistic concerning the new generations, who will be able to improve the image of Islam in the West.

Accordingly, the tourism sector, with its constituents, should contribute in representing the real image of Islam, because tourism is an important factor that enables peoples to contact directly with each other, and know their situations, traditions, etc. It has been stated that tourism sector is considered a vital means by which to enable different nations to meet each other, and gather a lot of information on the patterns, cultures, and traditions of another nation. Therefore, it should be multi-efforts organized trips which encourage Westerners to visit Islamic countries, utilizing tourism to present the real image of Islam and Muslims. In addition, we should not forget that we have to behave ourselves before the tourists, in order not to reflect a negative image of Jordanian Muslims.

One can achieve what has been mentioned tourism by providing the tour guides, archeological sites, museums, and hotels with good books, leaflets, and CDs which contains the important and basic information on the true image of Islam.

As mentioned earlier, the second category of the questions (3-11) were designed to investigate the stereotypes about the image of Islam and its reasons. The following tables illustrate the responses:

Table (3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stereotypes about the image of Islam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Table 3 (Q8) 1.43% of the tourists agreed that Arab equals Muslim, 5.71% were neutral, and 2.86% said they didn’t know. Interestingly, 90% of the tourists recognize that not all Muslims are from Arab
descent, and they have previous idea that Islam is a religion not bound by races, color, and etc. According to my humble knowledge, Islam currently reaches almost every country in the world. Many westerners mix up Muslims with Arabs because of the media which equates all Muslims with Arabs. Al-Banna states that they mix-up Islam with the political movements in the Arab world. Indeed, only 12%, of Muslims are Arab, and in the Arab countries there are millions of Christians. 

In Arabic, the word “Islam” means submission or surrender - however, it was derived from the root word “Salam.” From this root word, you can also derive the words “peace” and “safety,” contrary to terrorism and violence, the crucial essence of Islam is to call for peace, not hostility. The prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) states: “If anyone harms (others), God will harm him, and if anyone shows hostility to others, God will show hostility to him.”

Therefore, according to Table 3 (Q4), 50% of the tourists believe that Islam promotes peace and tolerance, which means that they have been exposed to an accurate representation of Islam. 4.29% of them still believe so, they may still take what was said in the media means as facts, or misbehavior in the name of Islam affirmed what they had in their minds. 37.14% of the responses were neutral and 8.57% they didn’t know. These tourists, who mire with confusion, or perhaps conflicting ideas about the image of Islam, present the ideal opportunities for who work in the tourism sector to change these bad images in a good manner. For example, a tour guide might start his trip by an Islamic greeting “Peace be upon you,” and explain its meaning to the tourists, linking it with peace and the original meaning of Islam.

As Table 3(Q5) shows, 58.57% of the tourists state that Islam commands Muslims to treat all creatures in a merciful way. It seems that they have looked at the Islamic teachings, which are distinguished by their principles of compassion and sensitivity, human feelings, and a mercy to deal with animals and even with environment. Any kind of creatures are entitled to kindness and mercy as just as humans are, the Prophet (P.B.U.H) states that “Those who are merciful will be shown mercy by the Most Merciful.” According to Table 3, 4.29% of them don’t believe that Islam commands Muslims to treat all creatures in a merciful way; one can guess that their negative attitude is due to Muslims’ practice. As narrated, the Prophet (P.B.U.H) said: “Kindness is not be found in anything but that it adds to its beauty and it is not withdrawn from anything but it makes it defective.” 20% of the tourists were neutral in their responses, and 17.14% they did not know. May be they don’t have knowledge about Islamic teachings with regards to this. Allah has made his sending forth of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) as a mercy to all of creation, as He says:

{And We have sent you (O Muhammad SAW) not but as a mercy for the 'Alamin (mankind, jinn and all that exists) 21:107}

The word "worlds" (al-Ameen) is general and thus includes the world of the humans, the world of the jinn, the world of the animals, and the world of the birds, as well as the nations found on land and the nations found on sea. Indeed Allah has commanded that mercy be applied to everything and in every action. And Allah has named Himself Ar-Raheem and Ar-Raheem, so He is the Most Merciful of this world and the Hereafter (i.e. Ar-Rahmaan) and the bestower and giver of mercy (i.e. Raheem). This is why He has commanded mercy in every place and in every situation. The Muslim begins every action by saying in the Name of Allah the All-Compassionate, All-Merciful so that Allah can bless him in his action. So every action that is void of mercy is void of blessing and good. And the servants of Allah showing mercy towards one another is a cause for Allah sending His mercy down on them.

According to the results in Table 3 (Q9), indicate that 57.14% of the tourists’ attitudes were positive towards the image of Islam, that it does respect other cultures and religions. Few of them (8.57%) don’t believe so, 27.14% were neutral, and 7.14% they didn’t know. In fact, tourists still have those distorted images that Islam spread by sword, a religion of terror, which commands its adherents to kill the unbelievers. One can comment on what has been said about Muslims, they convert other to Islam by their good manners, such as the Muslims merchants did in India, Indonesia, and the Far East. No true Muslim would force someone to convert, and no forced conversion would be true. In fact, recent days Islam is the second fastest growing religion in the world. Simply, because conversion must come by conviction and acceptance, Allah the All-Mighty says:

{No compulsion is there in religion...} 2:256

It is not permissible to be rude towards those who hold different views, or to insult their beliefs, even if they...
are idolaters; it has been commented on the following verse that it recognizes the freedom of religion and belief, which unparalleled in any law or book.\textsuperscript{(13)} Allah the All-Mighty says

\begin{verbatim}
{And insult not those whom they (disbelievers) worship besides Allah, lest they insult Allah wrongfully without knowledge. Thus We have made farseeing to each people its own doings; then to their Lord is their return and He shall then inform them of all that they used to do.}6:108
\end{verbatim}

A best model ever of this is Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H), who upon ending Madinah established a treaty with Jews, protecting their lives and beliefs. Another example was under Islamic Spain, where religious minorities had flourished.\textsuperscript{(14)}

In practice, regarding travel, under the Islamic state (khilafah) anyone could travel peacefully through earth, without visa or any kind of restrictions and freely; it has been stated that “Geographically, Islam created a civilization where a person could travel safely from Europe through North Africa, the Arab countries, Iran, India, and all the way to China and Indonesia.”\textsuperscript{(15)} Some of the tourists comment that this is not true in current practice; one can draw attention that nowadays most of the Muslims don’t adhere to the Islamic teachings. In the same vein, it is a call for tourists in particular and non-Muslims in general, to read Islam from its sources, and not to judge Islam as a religion according to misapplication from a few individuals. Table (4) illustrates the responses in regard with: does Islam respects women’s rights?

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|}
\hline
Options & Islam respects women and preserves her rights \\
\hline
Agree & 14.29\% \\
Disagree & 34.29\% \\
Neutral & 17.14\% \\
I don’t know & 34.29\% \\
\hline
Have you heard in 1Corinthians (Bible, 11:3-10) the verses that Paul wrote regarding the Hijab (head scarf): “… every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head… she should cover her head.” & \\
Yes, I do & 18.57\% \\
No, I don’t & 81.43\% \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Stereotypes regarding Women}
\end{table}

Unfortunately, according to Table 4(Q7) the results show that 34.29\% of the tourists don’t believe that Islam respects women and preserves their rights, the same percentage who didn’t know so, only 14.29\% of them who think so. The media has portrayed Muslim women as insignificant people under cruelty and abuse. One can clarify that Islam achieved a comprehensive system for women’s rights 1400 years ago which defies all the popular stereotypes of the oppressed Muslim’s woman. What is more, the biggest number of converts is made up of Western women. Certainly these women do not choose Islam because they find it oppressive or unfair. Most female converts, in fact, are attracted to Islam for the respect and dignity that Islam demands for women.

Bringing the concept of equality among both genders, Islam had revolutionized the lives of women by replacing their rights and dignity; under the Islamic Law, they had the opportunity to vote, own property, earn money, inherit, initiate divorce, control their wealth, and receive equal pay and respect as men did.\textsuperscript{(16)} In addition, the prophet (P.B.U.H) urges Muslims to treat women kindly in his last sermon, He stated that “I advise you to take care of the women, for they are created from a rib and the most crooked portion of the rib is its Upper part…”\textsuperscript{(17)}

Regarding one of the largest controversies surrounding the oppression of women in Islam(the Hijab), the researcher would like to indicate that she quoted the verse (in Table 4) from the Holy Bible regarding head scarf, in order to clarify that head coverings are common to Judaism and Christianity as well, see the virgin Mary and nuns as examples. Muslim women should be allowed the freedom of choice to wear Hijab, and they deserve having that choice respected. If a woman does wear a Hijab, her motivation is to represent
modesty that so others will focus more on her personality rather than her appearance. Surprisingly, 81.43% of the tourists haven’t heard of that verse in the Bible about head coverings and had never read it, according to the comments from seven of the tourists on the survey; not mention that nowadays most of westerners don’t adhere to Christianity; Some tourists believe that women should wear it just in praying, others commented that it was for that time. Table (5) illustrates the factors which play a great role in the stereotypes about the image of Islam;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table (5)</th>
<th>Factors that play a great Role in Stereotyping about Islam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q3 -I believe that Islam is linked to terrorism because:</td>
<td>Percentage %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It really supports terrorism</td>
<td>1.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some extremists reflect the wrong image</td>
<td>64.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of Ignorance</td>
<td>8.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misrepresentations</td>
<td>25.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q10-One of the following factors play a great role in the stereotypes about the image of Islam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media generalization</td>
<td>45.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Muslims behavior</td>
<td>31.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignorance about others</td>
<td>17.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misrepresentations by the decision makers</td>
<td>5.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Actually, according to the results in table 5(Q3), the most crucial factors which play a vital role in creating the stereotypes about the image of Islam are extremists and misrepresentations. As table 5 shows, just 1.43% of the respondents, believe that Islam does support terrorism, which means few numbers believe so. Interestingly, 64.26% of the responses confirmed what we believe, in that extremists are one of the crucial factors which contribute in reflecting the negative image about Islam. One can add that those people do not represent all Muslims; moreover, their horrible acts contradict Islamic teachings, which command Muslims not to harm, kill, or even terrify the innocent people, regardless of their race, ideology, doctrine, etc. A total of 8.57% of them see that one of the additional factors is ignorance about Islam; no one can blame them because of the propaganda from media. Al-Banna confirms that the media campaigns have succeed in spreading the terror concerning Islam that it imposes its followers to bear arms in order to fight non-Muslims. Also, he states that terrorism is portrayed as the Islamic alternative to subjugate the whole world to embrace it, a threat to western civilization…(18) Furthermore, Muslims are not active in introducing the correct image of Islam, and therefore, westerners believe that it really is so.

The results show that 25.71% of the tourists see that Islam linked to terrorism due to misrepresentations; the researcher means here misrepresentations whether by media means, books, or Muslim misbehaviors. According to the tourist’s comments, all of the factors mentioned lead to giving a bad impression in regards to the image of Islam; some of them don’t believe that Islam is a religion of terrorism or it really supports it, and that simply the acts of some individuals don’t represent the whole group.

The results show according to Table 5 above (Q10), 45.71% of the responses agreed upon the huge role of media in the stereotypes about the image of Islam, which means they realize how the media hides the realities and misleads peoples. Also, the media based on the negative images, which exist in the Orientalist’s books, and it also uses the misleading language. According to Edward Sa’id, the narrow expression of defining Islam in the Western media is deeply rooted in an "Orientalist" context.(19) The media is also a profit-seeking organization which often seeks to create a false image of reality, so it hunts the words which attracts the hearts of the audiences, and it exploits the unknown information in order to confuse the audience. The audience has no time to read about the correct image of Islam, therefore, they believe whatever they are told.

According to Table 5, the results (31.43%) show that the second factor, which creates bad images related to Islam is some Muslims’ behaviors; actually, most of the Muslims in the world are not practicing in accordance with the Islamic teachings, and as the researcher stated previously, in general, the non-Muslims judge Islam according to the actual behavior and the conducts of the Muslims. In fact, those individuals do not represent...
correct Islam, and western people should not judge Islam due to misbehaviors of a few ignorant Muslims.

Undoubtedly, ignorance about others creates a kind of misunderstanding, which lead to shape a negative images about others, 17.14% of the tourists believe that ignorance about others contributes in stereotypes about Islam, the lack of knowledge about others leads to prejudices; the greater ignorance the higher degree of prejudice. If western people become aware of the real nature of Islamic teachings, principles, and systems, they will stop believing these bad images.

As Table 5 shows, 5.71% of the respondents see that Islam is misrepresented by the decision makers, who are responsible in dividing the world into west and the rest, they create a game (Islam) to get the whole world involved, and to justify their wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, and other areas in the Arab world. Furthermore, it promotes their status as a superpower which controls the resources in the whole world. As a result of this misrepresentation, the West and the Western model of democracy end up working against the democratization effort of the Arab societies.

As indicated earlier, this category of questions (12-15) was designed to investigate the role of visiting Jordan in changing the attitude towards Islam; Table (6) illustrates the responses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with Muslims in Jordan changed my attitudes towards Islam</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>47.14%</td>
<td>64.26%</td>
<td>67.14%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>17.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>42.36%</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
<td>22.86%</td>
<td>72.86%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Visiting a country like Jordan for a while and dealing with its people, may change one’s attitude towards Islam and Muslims, so (Q12) 47.14% of the tourists agreed on that dealing with Jordanian Muslims changed their impressions towards the image of Islam, which reflects the good manners they have in general. However, 42.36% of the tourists were neutral in their responses, and 10% of the respondents disagreed, which may some of the local people they dealt with, didn’t act in a good manner towards the tourists, and this affected negatively image. Or perhaps, the guests still are influenced by the prejudices in their minds which prevent them to accept others, or maybe the period of time they spent in Jordan, was not sufficient to give them the chance to judge the locals accurately, or there was no chance for them to know more about them. Or, maybe they already had a good impression and their visit to Jordan confirmed this? It is important to look at it from every angle.

According to Table 6 (Q13), it shows that visiting Jordan encourages the guests to deepen their knowledge about Islam and gives them a broader idea about it (statements 13, 64.24% and 14, 67.14%). This positively affects the image of Jordan in general and the image of Islam in particular. In addition, it reflects how the tourism process plays a vital role in changing the perspectives towards the image of Islam and motivates people to seek true information about it.

Unfortunately, (Q15) just 10% of the tourists agreed that the idea of the character of Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) has changed due to their visit to Jordan, 17.14% of them disagree, and 72.86% of them were neutral. These results lead the researcher to deduce that the tourists are still influenced by misrepresentations which portrayed the image of the Prophet, since tour guides neither discuss the personality of the prophet nor try defending him against some campaigns which spare no efforts to distort his image.

In practice, Jordanian Muslims today need to revive the good attributes in them, in order to be able to deal in kindness and hospitality with guests, and to reflect the correct manner of the real Muslims. Haddad confirms that we as Arabs in general and Jordanians in particular, are characterized by a high level of ethics, generosity, hospitality, magnanimity, and chivalry; all of these civilized attributes are rooted in the Arab people. Therefore, it is necessary to employ these in the tourism
process as a modern movement has an unlimited impact on the economic, cultural, and social level. This requires practical steps from all members in Jordanian’s society to deal with guests in a good manner that has the great effect on them.

The following Table 7 illustrates the fourth category of the questions (16-18) which were designed to investigate the efforts needed to present the true image of Islam and whether or not Islam deserves to be respected and acknowledged as other religion;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table (7)</th>
<th>Efforts which need to present the true image of Islam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Options</strong></td>
<td>16 I still believe more efforts are need to represent the correct image of Islam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>84.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>15.71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interestingly, 84.29% of the responses (statements 16and17) believe that more efforts (which means here to exploit all available means) should be taken in order to clarify the real image of Islam, and, according to their point of view, that Muslims share the responsibility to represent the correct image of Islam in an acceptable way. So, we as Muslims agree with them that our priority is to show the people the beauty of the Islamic teachings, scholars and individuals, and that governments should cooperate together in order to develop strategies to introduce the real image of Islam to the whole world.

Sadly, according to Table 7(Q18), only 10% of the responses acknowledge that Islam should be treated with respect as an internationally recognized religion, deserving respect like any other religion, doctrine or ideology. 17.14% of the respondents disagree that Islam should be treated as other religions, and 72.86% of the sample was neutral in their responses. One can comment that such responses would be taken very unkindly by Muslims. Doesn’t our religion deserve to be recognized and respected as other religions and ideologies, since it is basic human rights that everyone has the freedom to choose the religion he/she adopted? It seems that when it comes to Islam a double standard is taken into consideration. Though, according to the UN International Covenant Civil and Political Rights, we should eliminate all discrimination based on religions or beliefs.

Correcting the Image of Islam

Stereotypes are common to all human beings’ minds, but the problem with stereotypes is when we begin using them to give negative characteristics to categorize groups, so we accept a stereotype as a real image of them and start applying it to the whole group. Accordingly, the researcher blames both sides in creating negative stereotypes and they should take it upon their shoulders to cooperate in order to eliminate these stereotypes and to create an atmosphere full of understanding, tolerance, peace, loving, and coexistence.

First of all, Muslims should adhere to the Islamic teachings, because the whole world will judge Islam through their practices, specifically the Muslim minorities in the West. This means the du’ats need to pay attention to the intellectual and education curricula, renewing the Islamic discourse in accordance with contemporary needs. Qualified du’ats that are acquainted with Islamic knowledge must be trained; they have the ability to speak one or more languages in order to talk with people in their tongue, and choose the influential among du’ats to take part in the media field to explain the beauty of the Islamic teachings instead of defending the distorted images. It has been confirmed that it is the time to reconsider the da’wah’s fiqh, and redraft it to include the content of da’wah that is able to adapt with the developments of modern era. This is achieved by guiding, educating, reforming, and creating a civilized equivalence between the preachers and the receivers.

Interactive meetings and conferences in interfaith
dialogues should be held in order to clarify the image of Islam and bring different nations closer together, scientific scholarships for the scholars and students from both sides should be exchanged enabling them to understand the nature of life for both of them. We must publish books about Islam in different languages.

The researchers would like to highlight on that the Holy Quran did not consider the differences of peoples and cultures as grounds for strife and division but for just the opposite. In the Islamic perspective, these differences are a starting point for acquaintance, harmony, and cooperation in all endeavors likely to bring about the wellbeing of all and prosperity, Allah the All-Mighty says:

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\text{\texttt{{O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honorable of you with Allah is that (believer) who has At-Taqwa [i.e. one of the Muttaqun (pious). Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.]} 49:13}}
\]

Islam has been accused of being backward, not accepting progress, and being against modernity, yet the opposite is the true, we don’t have problem with urbanized sciences. Indeed, they are considered wisdom, and wisdom is the purpose of Muslims whenever they find it, they are the most entitled with it. It has been stated that the urbanized sciences and techniques that lead to progress, development, and learning, if they are well-utilized and functioned them in accordance with our identity and values. We want a balance in interests and interactions between the cultures and civilizations that a part of global humanity.\(^{24}\)

Islam in its golden age –Islamic Spain- is a great evidence of their progress in all fields of life; in addition, there was no famine, conflicts, wars, and poverty, most of the earth inhabitants lived in peace, security, and prosperity. As Muslims, Islam commands us to love others and respect them regardless of their religion, belief, and race, as being brothers in humanity; originally we share the same father and mother.

The current age is one in which most of the Arab and Muslim countries’ resources are controlled by western policymakers, who deprive Muslims of enjoying their own resources. Instead, all parties should cooperate together to exchange and share the interests and benefits that promote goodness, welfare, and luxury for the whole world.

Additionally, western media (TV, movies, radio, newspapers, cartoons, journals) should stop promoting distorting stereotypes about the image of Islam, even in the curricula of the education. The West should stop judging the whole religion through extremists; simply because someone is a follower of a religion does not mean they are a true representative of that religion. Moreover, the extremists have been rejected by Muslim scholars and the vast majority of Muslim clerics. As long as westerners educate themselves about Islam, the stereotypes will fail to flourish. It has been stated “A Department of State fact sheet sees the remedy "through education, people-to-people exchanges, and by encouraging responsible reporting in the mass media and accurate portrayal in the movie industry.\(^{25}\)"

Finally, the West shouldn’t enfore its civic system on the Islamic world; their paradigm worked with them, but won’t necessarily work with us. Moreover, both sides should acknowledge that their civilizations are parts of an integrated whole and it is indispensable for both of them, to look for a common ground where they can come together. Consequently, their agreement will make the whole world lives in love, peace, security, stability, tolerance and prosperity.

Conclusion

Having completed this paper, we can formulate the conclusions in the following points:

- The image of Islam has been misunderstood and prejudiced due to many reasons, ignorance, media, double standards, and Muslim practices. A sample of tourists was investigated, and the outcomes indicate that the image of Islam is still distorted, so it is required to study seriously the reasons in order to reach the solutions that promote the real image of Islam.
- It is the time that the whole world should acknowledge Islam and treated it with respect as one would do with any religion, doctrine or ideology.
- Furthermore, both sides should cooperate in order to eliminate these stereotypes and to create an atmosphere full of understanding, tolerance, peace, love, and coexistence.
- The paper has proved that tourism can assist in better knowledge about other civilizations, among them is Islam.
To read about anything is good, but to know it physically by visiting it and to live for a while in it is something with a great value, such matters can assist in better understanding between people, thoughts and civilizations, at the end, to have more coexistence between people.

NOTES

(4) See Amara (2003), Fee Fiqh Al-Mwajaha bain Algarb wallIslam, p.185.
(5) Refer to appendix, p. 33.
(6) See Amara (2003), Fee Fiqh Al-Mwajaha bain Algarb wal Islam, p. 137.
(7) Refer to al-Banna (2003), Sina’at al-’Ada’ ilel Islam, p111.
(8) See Ibn Manzour, Lisan AlArab, ch, 4, p. 663.
(10) ATirmidhi, 28/15/1924, p. 548. Hadith is sound.
(11) Al-Jami’ al-Sagheer, 7964, Hadith is sound, p. 503.
(14) See Al_Sibaa’ie (2005), Civilization of Faith, translated by, Nasiruddin al-Khattab (1999), p. 123. “These are the principles of religious tolerance in Islam, on which our civilization is based. These principles oblige the Muslims to believe in all the Prophets and Messengers of Allah, to speak of all of them with respect, not to mistreat their followers, to deal with them all in a good and gentle manner, speaking kindly to them, being a good neighbor to them, accepting their hospitality, and marrying from among them so that the families and bloodlines will be mixed. Islam oblige the Muslims state to guard their places of worship and not to interfere in their beliefs or rule against them unfairly; they are to be treated equally with Muslims in term of rights and obligations; their honor, lives and futures are to be protected just as those of the Muslims are to be protected…. this tolerance remained the way of the Islamic civilization from the time its foundations were laid by Muhammad (P.B.U.H) until it began to decline, when these principles were lost and forgotten, and people became ignorant of their religion, and they abandoned this noble religious tolerance.
(17) ALBukhari, Kitab AlNikah /81/5186, p.314.
(19) It was said that the uninformed readers of the Western media can, at times, be forgiven for confusing the terms "Muslim" and "terrorist." A major factor, which contributes to Islamic stereotyping in the West, is due to the media's ignorance of selecting their words that describe Muslims. Some common names heard or seen in the news about Muslims are "extremist" or "terrorist". These words are misleading in different ways. Another factor was writing affirmation about this religion and its adherents without any proof or by using doubtful references. This affirmation is put in a very direct way so that the reader may not even ask for proof. The problem does not end with the selection of authentic sources but it continues to the point where these sources are also misquoted especially with regard to the Qur'an and Hadith; the truncation if the Qur'an and Hadith are not mentioned as a whole and interpreted by including the necessary contexts, the end result may indicate the opposite of what is really meant. The experts or the "communities of interpretations" play a crucial role here to highlight the most important concepts and realities that lie behind the quotations and texts. http://www.islamonline.net/en/IOLYouth_C/1278407316992/1278406711626/Covering-Islam--Muslims-in-the-Western-Media
(20) Refer to Haddad (1997), Al-Urdun walSiahah: Mushkelat wa Humoum, p, 57and58.
(21) In 1966 the UN passed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, expanding its prior statement to address the manifestation of religion or belief. Article 18 of this Covenant includes four paragraphs related to this issue: 1. everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his [her] choice, and freedom either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his [her] religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching. 2. No one shall be subject to coercion which
would impair his [her] freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his [her] choice. 3. Freedom to manifest one’s religion or belief may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health, morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others. 4. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians, to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions. Also in 1981 adopted without a vote the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion

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صوره الإسلام في عيون السياح في الأردن

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ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى توضيح النماذج والمعتقدات الشائعة حول صورة الإسلام من خلال عرض موقف السياح من مختلف الجنسيات، فضلا عن تقديم خطوات عملية للحد من تلك النماذج السلبية. تم العمل على إعداد استبانه خاصة بالسياح وتم توزيعها على مائة سائح، وذلك للخروج بوجهات نظر متنوعة حول صورة الإسلام. وقد خرجت هذه الدراسة بنتيجة أن الإسلام لا يزال يساء فهمه وعرضه، لذلك يتطلب أن تدرس الأسباب وراء هذه الصور المغلوطة بجدية، من أجل الوصول إلى حل تعكس الصورة الحقيقية للإسلام. يجب على كل من المسلمين وغير المسلمين أن يتعاونوا للحد من هذه المعتقدات الخاطئة، وخلق جو مليء بالتفاهم، والتسامح، والسلام، والمحبة، والتعايش.

الكلمات الدالة: صورة الإسلام، السياح.