Rethinking Islamic Hospitality:

Managing Hosts and Guests in *Diyafa* Tradition

Dr. Shin Yasuda

Teikyo University, Japan

syasuda@main.teikyo-u.ac.jp, shinmarcie@gmail.com

Biographies

Shin Yasuda is Lecture at Teikyo University in Tokyo, Japan. Yasuda received his Bachelor of Arts degree in history from Sophia University in Tokyo, Japan. He obtained his master's and Ph.D. degrees in area study from Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies in Kyoto University, Japan.

Abstract

This presentation explored the essence of Islamic hospitality by analysing *ḍiyāfa* practices in *adab* literature. The practical level of ḍiyāfa and its philosophy were of special focus by analyzing *Revival of Religious Science* written by Imām al-Ghazālī, which still seems to be a model for *diyāfa* practices, and other related *adab* literatures and writings.

On a practical level, Islamic hospitality is described as the practical norms or standards for both host and guest. On a philosophical level, *ḍiyāfa* practices reflect ethics (*akhlāq*), generosity (*karam*), rewards (*faḍl*), and religious duties (*ḥaqq*, *wājib*, *farīḍa*, or *dayn*) in the Islamic way, and promote Islamic piety and righteousness (*īmām* and *birr*).

In conclusion, the paper summarize that the essence of Islamic hospitality is described as the practice of deepening the Islamic way of piety and righteousness for both hosts and guests 'in the God's way (*fī sabīl Allāh*)' and 'love one another in God.'

Introduction

Hospitality is a core practice in any religion. Inviting any guest to one's home promotes communication and strengthens ties among religious followers, and even human beings as a whole. This tradition strongly impacts tourist behaviours and tourism activities in contemporary tourism and hospitality industry.

Recently, Islamic hospitality has been one of the central topics of the tourism and hospitality industry inside and outside Islamic countries. Recent discussions about tourism and hospitality in Islam mainly focus on practical level of hospitality activities, and the motivations and demands of Muslim tourists, showing the importance of the development of the halal environment and prayer facilities. Marketing and service management studies strongly correlate with Muslims' demands regarding the embodiment of these services. With the development of the tourism industry in Islamic countries, the hospitality tradition in Islam has dramatically changed.

Literature Review

Studies on Islamic hospitality are promoted in hospitality management and marketing studies. In their discussion, Islamic hospitality is defined as the management and marketing strategies focusing on the motivations and demands of consumer analysis, and they mainly focus on the motivations and demands of Muslim tourists and show the importance of the development of halal environments and prayer facilities in the tourism industry (Stephenson et al., 2010; Stephenson, 2014; Alserhan, 2015). These studies, therefore, focus on the development of Muslim consumer environments like the spread of halal products, infrastructures, and human resources.

Previous studies based on marketing and hospitality strategies, however, do not clarify the religious identity of Islamic hospitality; rather, they trivialize Islamic hospitality as activities in service management, and they focus on the practical level of hospitality by promoting related products and services. Although previous studies describe *ḍiyāfa* practices in *adab* literature as the origin of Islamic hospitality in the contemporary tourism and hospitality activities (Alserhan, 2015), their arguments are based on marketing principles in the economic activities. Mona Siddique, however, criticised these studies by saying that hospitality is not defined as simple pleasure or entertainment or private activities; rather, hospitality can be described as a way of life, as a way of being, and a way of social and religious activities (Siddique, 2015). Moreover, hospitality is not just acts of kindness, but moral imperatives and ethical commands. Toshihiko

Izutsu also mentioned, Islamic ethics can be analysed from the interaction between the descriptive and evaluative discourses in Qur'an, or in other words, practical level and philosophical level behind the practice (Izutsu, 2002).

In the Islamic tradition, the religious aspect of hospitality is reflected in so called *ḍiyāfa* practices, which generally means 'hospitality' or 'entertainment' in English. The essence of *ḍiyāfa* practices is written in *adab* (Islamic etiquette or manner in this context) literature, which expresses the Muslim practices of refinement, good manners, morals, decorum, decency, and humaneness; its Islamic meanings and significance are coming from the quotation and summary of the texts in the Qur'ān, the *ḥadīths*, and other Islamic writings. *Adab* literature is used as a reference for Islamic individual and socially hospitable behaviours by reflecting Islamic ethics. Although the *ḍiyāfa* tradition still determines Islamic individual and social norms and behaviours, recent discussions about Islamic hospitality do not deepen it. However, some studies focus on the *ḍiyāfa* tradition in *adab* literatures in the bibliographical collection and analysis.

Methodology

This presentation, therefore, explores the essence of Islamic hospitality by analysing *ḍiyāfa* practices in *adab* literature. The practical level of *ḍiyāfa* and its philosophy are of special focus. Sources for this presentation include 'On the Manners relating to Eating' (*Kitāb al-Adab al-Akl*) in Revival of Religious Sciences (*Iḥyā' Ulūm al-Dīn*) written by Imām al-Ghazālī (al-Gazālī 1986), which still seems to be a model for *diyāfa* practices; other related *adab* literatures and writings are also examined.

Results

On a practical level, Islamic hospitality is described as the practical norms or standards for both host and guest. Many standardized codes of *ḍiyāfa* have been promoted to enhance the ordinal practices of welcoming guests of all backgrounds into one's home and the management of communication between guests and hosts by formalising socialisation patterns and hospitable behaviours for both guests and hosts. Moreover, *ḍiyāfa* manages communication between hosts and guests by formalising socialisation patterns in hospitable behaviors. The embodiment of hospitable behaviors and communication diminish the uncertainty of hospitality behaviors

between hosts and guests and promote the construction and continuity of their relationship within a certain social context. As a result, these characteristics of *ḍiyāfa* show the importance of temporal negotiation and the construction of social networks between guests and hosts by promoting micro-level communication between them.

On a philosophical level, *ḍiyāfa* practices reflect ethics (*akhlāq*), generosity (*karam*), rewards (*faḍl*), and religious duties (*ḥaqq*, *wājib*, *farīḍa*, or *dayn*) in the Islamic way, and promote Islamic piety and righteousness (*īmām* and *birr*). These religious meanings strongly regulate the way of hospitality practices. As a result, the enhancement of piety and righteousness in hospitality makes Muslims pious people and Islamic society righteous.

Conclusion and Discussion

In conclusion, therefore, the essence of Islamic hospitality is described as the practice of deepening the Islamic way of piety and righteousness for both hosts and guests 'in the God's way (*fī sabīl Allāh*)' and 'love one another in God,' as well as micro-level communication between them.

However, this essence of Islamic hospitality has declined with the development of the contemporary tourism and hospitality industry; it is now based more on marketing analysis and economic sustainability, rather than this tendency makes a religious significance. However, there are still various issues that reflect the essence of Islamic hospitality that have continued in the tourism field, and it is a future challenge to promote Islamic way of hospitality in this world.

Bibliography

Alserhan, B. A. (2015) *The Principles of Islamic Marketing 2nd Edition*. Surrey: Gower.

Ghazālī, A. Ḥ. (1986) *Iḥyā' Ulūm al-Dīn*. vol.2. Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmīya.

Izutsu, T. (2002) *Ethno-Religious Concepts in the Qur'ān*. Montreal & Kingston, London & Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Siddique, M. (2015) *Islam and Hospitality: Welcoming in God's Name*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press.

Stephenson, M. L. (2014) Deciphering 'Islamic Hospitality': Developments, Challenges and Opportunities, *Tourism Management*, 40, 155-164.

Stephenson, M. L., Russell, K. A. and Edgar, D. (2010) Islamic Hospitality in UAE: Indigenization of Products and Human Capital, *Journal of Islamic Marketing,* 1(1), 9-24.