

CRANFIELD UNIVERSITY

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Family Support Plan for Middle Eastern Countries Following Aircraft Accidents

School of Engineering

Department of Air Transport

Safety and Accident Investigation Centre

PhD THESIS

Academic Year: 2006- 2010

Supervisor: Prof. Graham Braithwaite

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ABSTRACT

Recent years have seen increasing acknowledgment that aircraft accidents affect not only those who are killed or injured, but also the families and friends of victims. Survivors, victims and their families require sensitive treatment in order to help them cope with what has occurred. Following high profile accidents including USAir 427 and TWA 800, the United State of America started a new program which they call it Family Assistance after Air Disaster. After that a several documents providing guidance for dealing with victims and their families were published in Australia, the UK and the EU.

However, in the Middle East, there is no region-specific family assistance guidance for dealing with aircraft accidents. As such, operators tend to use plans which have been designed from a western perspective. This means that the impact of culture, ethical sensitivities and religion have not been addressed fully. This thesis explores the differences in dealing with the families of victims after an accident in the Middle East focusing on the Muslim population.

Interviews were conducted with experts from airlines, family assistance providers, religious leaders and victim support groups. These were supplemented by a survey of passengers and family members in USA, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia to compare and contrast the expectations and needs of those who may be affected by an aircraft accident. Over 300 responses were received and the data were validated through further expert interviews. The results supported the findings of the literature review and matched with the bad experiences documented within case study accidents such as the mid-air collision involving Saudi Arabian Airlines flight 763. The study found that the three factors are inextricably linked, with religion being a strong factor in determining individual's response to their loss; how they relate to others and the type of support they should be given. Suggestions are made regarding the design of a Family Assistance Centre, staff training, words that should / should not be used; and to explain how people may react.

Keywords: aircraft accident, crisis management, humanitarian assistance, disaster, family assistance, family support plan, culture, religion.

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CHAPTER  **INTRODUCTION**

1. Introduction

Aircraft accidents often result in pain, trauma and suffering for the families of victims, both immediately and, for most of them, for the rest of their lives. Under such conditions, families of victims are in need of guidance, information, assistance and compassion from the operator and other accident responders.

The researcher works in the safety department of Saudi Arabian Airlines. In 1996, a Saudi Arabian airliner suffered a mid-air collision with a Kazakhstan Air aircraft over India with the loss of all on board. The accident was a terrible experience and both the airline and the victims' families suffered greatly as a result of that accident. The families of victims were from different countries such as India, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Tunisia, Nepal, Pakistan, the UK, the U.S. and the Philippines. Therefore, the 312 victims were from different religious, cultural, ethnic, geographic, linguistic and economic backgrounds. The diversity of backgrounds of victims' families put the airline's employees in a very difficult situation. For example, untrained employees were facing difficulties in communication (language), what to do with mixed and unidentified remains, differences in religious needs (burial or cremation), legal differences, and expectations and anger from the families. Furthermore, the Indians, where the accident occurred, themselves were of different cultures and religions, as well as speaking different languages. Victims' families, who also came from different nationalities, were another major issue as they were depending on the airline to assist them but the airline itself faced difficulties. For example, the airline did not have a sufficient number of trained employees who could help or assist them. Not only did that, but the groups that came from Saudi Arabia to assist the families not know India or how to work there. Most of the supporters worked in the safety department or were volunteers from different departments in Saudi Arabian Airlines. These groups could not stay long in India because of the difficulties they faced such as dealing with decomposing human remains, difficulties in coping with Indian food, accommodation, transportation and, in general, their lack of experience in confronting such a situation. On the other hand, many families of victims did not know anything about India or Indian

cultures, languages, food, transportation costs, access to telephones (or any kind of communication), and the Indian laws.

One of the worst problems highlighted by this accident was that victims' bodies were left in an open area for days until they decomposed as there were no freezers in which to keep the corpses. Dogs and other animals ate victims' bodies as they remained at the accident site until the next day when they were taken to the hospital or temporary mortuary. There was no security personnel at the site to protect the belongings of the victims and local villagers started to take valuables. Some of the families of victims were abused. For example, they had to pay the villagers to dig out their relatives' bodies. Also, hospital employees asked the families of victims for money to speed up the issue of death certificates. In some cultures, such an amount of money is regarded as a tip which is habitually paid by anyone who receives a service, whereas in other cultures it is considered as bribery and against tradition, religion and law; such is the case with Muslims. Saudi Arabian Airline employees had to pay large amounts of money to a telephone owner near the site to make urgent phone calls. Otherwise, they would have had to queue for a long time. On the other hand, the airline had to send all the families of Indian victims to Indian lawyers to deal with their affairs because the airline did not have a sufficient number of family support team members, there were difficulties in communication (language barriers), and laws were different. The families of victims were upset and angry because they thought that the airline's employees were too ignorant to deal with them directly. Another difficulty was the lack of DNA examination which meant that many victims' bodies and remains could not be identified. Two DNA examiners from the UK were brought in by Saudi Arabian Airlines to India but they could not do anything because the victims' bodies had been left in an open area for a long time only surrounded by blocks of ice and were in a bad state.

Muslims and Hindus had a problem regarding what to do with unidentified bodies or remains. Islam forbids Muslims to cremate their dead but Hindus cremate dead bodies as a part of their religious rituals. Some of the Muslim

victims were cremated and this also upset the families of Muslim victims while Hindu families were similarly upset and angry because some of the Hindu victims were buried. Later, the airline found out that 38 passengers held forged visas and passports, and had used false names. This made the task of treating victims' families appropriately even more difficult as some families gave the airline the name of their loved one but the airline could not find these names on the passenger list because the names were false.

Saudi Arabian Airlines operates scheduled flights to many different countries around the world, including the U.S.A, Canada, the UK, France, Switzerland, Germany, Italy, the Czech Republic, Spain, Greece (i.e. almost all European countries), Turkey, all the Arab countries, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Nigeria, Senegal, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan and South Africa. Every day Saudi Arabian Airlines operates between 100-120 international and 250-300 domestic flights. In 2009, this represented some 17,000,000 passengers travelling with the airline.

Following the midair collision, the airline wanted to improve its current family assistance programme, which was based on those used in western countries. With its diverse network and customer base, the airline wanted to be able to provide the most appropriate type of family assistance, should it ever face an accident in the future. This was the motivation behind this research study.

After a disaster, in order to assist the families of victims, airlines need a large family assistance team. ICAO (2001), NTSB family assistance (2000) and the Australian Family Assistance Act (2008) mention that, after a disaster, airlines should have family assistance teams who operate 24 hours a day in supporting the families of victims for up to 10-15 days. As larger aircraft are used for international or long-haul journeys, airlines should therefore have a large number of employees trained and available to assist. For example, a Boeing 747 accommodates around 400 passengers. Therefore, if a family assistance team needs to be able to support the families of victims for 24 hours a day that will mean a B747 with 400 passengers needs at least 1,200 employees after a

disaster, based on working three shifts. With the arrival of new, larger aircraft, such as the Airbus A380, which can take 555 passengers, the need for trained family assistance staff will grow.

Currently, Saudi Arabian Airlines uses a family assistance programme which was designed by a western recovery company. As such, it is limited in terms of its consideration of local customs and practices, especially with respect to the importance of religious and national differences. Therefore, the aim of this research is to examine the current situation, explore specific cultural requirements, and suggest improvements to the current family assistance programme. Its aim is also to address the sensitive and important issues of culture, religion and ethical sensitivities in general, and specifically for Muslims, relating to the current family assistance plan, in order to help families and to provide suitable and rapid support for Muslim families of victims in the Middle East after aviation accidents.

According to the above, it is essential to understand what family assistance is and what is the best available practice is. Therefore, to achieve the aims of this research, it is essential to undertake the following research steps:

1.1 Research Steps

1.1.1 Research Objectives

The main objectives of this research are summarised as follows:

1. To review the quality of family assistance provided following aircraft accidents and incidents, and to synthesise the best practices.
2. To elucidate the importance and the impact of issues such as culture, religion and ethical sensitivities on the current family assistance programme, bearing in mind that these aspects must be considered in any family assistance process involving Muslims in the Middle Eastern countries.

3. To understand the expectations of Muslim families of victims after aviation disasters in order to provide them with the best support services.
4. To define the support services required by airline companies for the families of victims.
5. Finally, to ensure that culture, religion and ethical sensitivities are carefully considered in the current family assistance plans, which will be customised to be suitable for Middle Eastern countries.

1.1.2 Research Questions

As a study of family assistance, the aim of this work is to answer the following questions:

- ***What makes the Middle East different?***
- ***Does family assistance need to be tailored to deal with culture, religion and ethical sensitivities?***
- ***What is the gap and how could it be filled?***
- ***Will considering these three factors improve family assistance?***
- ***Will considering culture, religion and ethical sensitivities have a positive effect on family assistance for Middle Eastern countries?***

1.1.3 Research Hypotheses

1. The current family assistance plans in the Middle East countries do not reflect the needs of families of victims.
2. Airlines are not aware of the importance of religion, ethical sensitivities and culture, and the needs of families from other cultures.

3. Religion, ethical sensitivities and culture positively influence people's satisfaction with a family assistance process.

1.1.4 Rationale

Air transport is considered to be the safest method of transport. Hall acknowledged: *"As we know, aviation is one of the safest modes of transportation available to the world's travellers"* (Hall, 2000b). Also, aircraft have turned the world into a seemingly smaller place. The ICAO stated that: *"Aviation is responsible for creating the "global village"*" (ICAO, 2004). However disasters do happen from time to time due to various reasons including bad weather, mechanical faults, human errors or terrorism. Dealing with the injured, the deceased victims and their families is critically important after a disaster yet, in general, the current family assistance plans do not address the issues of religion, culture and ethical sensitivities in a manner that is appropriate to the backgrounds of the families. Until recently, there has been no published evidence concerning a specific plan to deal with the families of victims regarding the three factors mentioned above. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this issue has not been addressed effectively by the airlines operating in the Middle East or by any other airlines around the world, while these factors play a major role in providing support and comfort to the victims' families, as well as showing respect for the bodies and dignity of the victims. This research addresses such important issues in family assistance in Middle Eastern countries.

1.1.5 Outcomes

This research is expected to have the following results:

- The importance of factors concerning cultural, religious and ethical sensitivities will be considered in any family assistance provided to Muslims in Middle Eastern countries, based on the survey results.

- The current family assistance plan will be extended or improved to include the influence of culture, religion and ethical sensitivities.

1.1.6 Summary of Contribution

A family assistance plan after an air disaster was first applied in the U.S. in 1996 for domestic airlines and in 1997 for foreign airlines. Hall, the acting chairman of the NTSB, acknowledged that *“as a result, Congress passed the Foreign Air Carrier Family Support Act of 1997 that requires foreign carriers to develop family assistance plans and fulfil the same requirements as U.S. domestic airlines”* (Hall, 2000b). Most of the airlines apply family assistance plans developed by the U.S. and Western countries but, as mentioned earlier, these do not work effectively for Muslims in the Middle Eastern countries because the three factors noted above are not considered. Middle Eastern countries have their own cultures, religion and ethical sensitivities, such as languages, food, education, economies, and views regarding right and wrong. Almost all airlines in the Middle East use a contractor, an international recovery company which will carry out recovery work for them after a disaster. This work is carried out for Muslims in Middle Eastern countries as they must apply these family assistance plans in order to be certified to fly to the U.S. However, in order to design suitable family assistance plans for Muslims in Middle Eastern countries, the impact of the important factors of culture, religion and ethical sensitivity must be addressed.

This work begins with an intensive literature review on the following family assistance plans currently in use. These include:

- ❖ Saudi Arabian Airline’s Corporate Emergency Response Manual (CERM).
- ❖ Oman’s Air Emergency Response Manual.
- ❖ Alaska Airlines / Horizon Air Family Assistance Plan.
- ❖ International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) circular 285-AN/166. Guidance on Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims and Their Families.

- ❖ Emergency Response Planning Guidebook. Prepared by Kenyon International Emergency Service Inc. for the support of members of the Arab Air Carriers' Organisation.
- ❖ Australian Family Assistance Code.
- ❖ Federal Family Assistance Plan for Aviation Disasters (NTSB).
- ❖ England, Wales and N. Ireland Humanitarian Assistance in an Emergency.
- ❖ Eva Airways (EVAAIR) Family Assistance Plan.
- ❖ Federative Republic of Brazil Civil Aviation Instruction, (Assistance Plan for Aeronautical Accident Victims and Support to Their Families).
- ❖ Belair Airline Amended Family Assistance Plan.
- ❖ Provisions on the Emergency Response and Family Assistance Relating to Civil Aircraft Flight Accident (Civil Aviation Administration of China).
- ❖ Gulf Air Family Assistance Team Manual.

Also, a number of previous accidents are reviewed and experts in the field are consulted. Furthermore, an intensive literature review concerning culture, religion and ethical sensitivities is offered in order to clarify their importance and their impact on family assistance, as measuring these factors will help in proposing a suitable layout for a Family Support Centre (FSC) in Middle Eastern countries, as well as extending and improving the current family assistance guidelines for such countries by considering their culture, religion and ethical sensitivities.

This research uses two types of survey designed to address the importance of culture, ethical sensitivities and religion and their impact on the currently deployed family assistance plans in Middle Eastern countries, as well as to underline the services and support provided by airlines. These surveys are as follows:

1. Populations in Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and the USA were surveyed (Appendix **A**).
2. Two questions were designed especially for experts who have experience of aviation accidents and who are working for airlines in Middle Eastern countries. Also, the same questions were sent to experts who work for companies which offer services and support after a disaster, as they were involved in previous accidents (Appendix **B**).

The outcomes of the surveys were validated through structured interviews with a religious leader in the Middle East, as well as with experts from different airlines who had experience of aviation accidents as presented in Chapter **8**.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2 Literature Review

The aim of this chapter is to understand what family assistance is. This will be achieved through offering definitions; aims, a history, background, airlines' responsibilities, a history of family assistance, and the growth of airlines in the Middle Eastern countries, are presented. The chapter also explains the relationships between an airline and their customers before and after a disaster, and will seek to offer an understanding of the needs of families of victims after a disaster.

2.1 Definitions

2.1.1 Family Assistance

According to the International Civil Aviation Organization, family assistance is "*the help and guidance provided to the families and to the survivors of an aircraft accident*" (ICAO, 2001 pp, 2). The U.S government's Aviation Disaster Family Assistance Act (1996) defines family assistance as: "*the responsibilities of air carriers to address the needs of domestic aviation disaster victims and their families, including notification*" (National Transportation Safety Board, 1996). Also, the 1996 act was extended to cover foreign aircraft and therefore any aircraft planning to go in or out of U.S. territory must submit a family assistance plan to the NTSB. In 1997 the U.S government's Department of Transportation defined family assistance as: "*plans to address the needs of families of passengers involved in a foreign air carrier accident*" (DOT, 1997).

Coarsey (2004) defines family assistance thus: "*Human services response is an approach to helping others by remembering our own humanity. It is not based on our intellect, but on our feeling of connection to the human race. HSR is not about "showing" power; it is about "sharing" power. Wisdom is more important in HSR than simply "being smart"* (Coarsey, 2004).

The Australian government's Department of Transport and Regional Services (2008) in their family assistance code states: *"The code sets out Australia's minimum standards with regard to airlines operating to, from, and within Australia in rendering assistance through their Family Assistance Plan to victims, and the families of victims, in the event of a major civil aircraft accident involving loss of life, and serious injury."* It also states: *"The Family Assistance Plans of Australian international airlines should provide, as far as is possible, similar assistance to victims and/or families of victims in the event of an accident in a foreign country"* (Australian Government, Department of Transport and Regional Services, 2008). Such support should include financial help, visiting the accident site, providing information and advice to the families, returning the remains, and offering accommodation, sympathy and respect.

The Civil Aviation Administration of China (2006) defines family assistance as *"Providing the victims, survivors, missing persons and their families in such accidents with necessary assistance. These provisions are formulated in accordance with the Civil Aviation Law of the People's Republic of China"*.

The Federative Republic of Brazil (2005) states: *"National and foreign Airline Companies that use public air transport in Brazil should elaborate their respective Corporate Assistance Plans for Aeronautical Accident Victims and Support to their Families where the actions under their responsibility for providing assistance, services and information to victims and the support measures to their families will be established."*

According to the above definitions, family assistance is the help provided by airlines to victims, the injured and the families of victims after a disaster. This help includes all kind of support, such as respect, financial support, accommodation, transportation, compensation, treating victims (i.e. their remains, belongings and bodies with dignity and respect), returning the bodies and remains home, offering consultation and information, and organising DNA examinations and notifications. Air Safety Week (1998) published the recommendations issued by the Task Force on Assistance to Families of Aviation Disasters and acknowledged the following points:

- *“Airlines should assist family members with travel to the accident site and accommodation”.*
- *“Airlines should provide proper training for personnel who interact with family members”.*
- *“The importance of the return of personal property should be stressed”.*
- *“There should be better interaction between the American Red Cross and airlines in assisting victims of aviation disasters”.*
- *“It should be ensured that families of non-U.S. citizens receive appropriate assistance from the airline and the U.S. government”.*

2.1.2 Accident

According to the ICAO, an accident is: “An occurrence associated with the operation of an aircraft which takes place between the time any person boards the aircraft with the intention of flight until such time as all persons have disembarked, in which:

- A) a person is fatally or seriously injured as a result of:
- Being in the aircraft, or
 - Being in direct contact with any part of the aircraft, including parts which have become detached from the aircraft” (ICAO, 2001 pp, 1).

2.1.3 Family of Victim

“U.S. Federal and state laws define who constitutes a family member from a legal point of view. These legal definitions may also vary from state to state. The traditional view included spouse, children, mother, father, brother and

sister. Terms such as step-parents, step siblings and life partners have become more common in recent years in defining some family environments” (ICAO, 2001 pp, 66).

The Gulf Air Family Assistance Manual define victim family as *“Spouse, Children, Father/Mother or Legal Guardian (where passenger is legally a minor), Brother/Sister, Fiancée or long-term companion, including same sex companions, Stepfather/stepmother” (Gulf Air, 2004, p61).*

In another definition reported in the document *“Humanitarian Assistance in Emergency”*, produced by the Department for Culture, Media and Sports (HM Government, 2006), and the Federal Family Assistance Plan for Aviation Disaster (NTSB, 2008) the term family includes: partners, parents, siblings, children, guardians, friends, and others who might have a direct, close relationship with the missing, injured or deceased person. As per this document, it is important to recognise the potentially wide variations of the ‘family’, which can be influenced by culture, lifestyle and by preference.

2.1.4 Victim

“For the purposes of this Code, a victim is an occupant of a civil aircraft, or any person outside the aircraft, who is unintentionally directly involved in the aircraft accident. Victims may include the crew, paying passengers, non-paying passengers and third parties. A survivor is a person who is not fatally injured as a result of the accident” (ICAO, 2001 pp, 3). Also the Australian family assistance Code use the same definition (2008)

2.1.5 Family Assistance Centre

“The Family Assistance Centre (FAC), which is to be set-up by representatives of the involved airline, will be located at a hotel or other meeting facility. The hotel will be selected with special consideration toward security, quality of

rooms, and availability of privacy for families, and other matters that will be of interest to the arriving family members. For security issues and to control who has access to grieving families, a badging system will be implemented for admittance into the FAC” (Rollman, 2001).

2.1.6 Family Assistance Team

Rollman, answering the question of ‘What is a family assistance team?’ noted: *“In order to properly respond to an aircraft accident and to assist families, friends, victims, and survivors, airlines have created special teams of trained volunteers interested in compassionately caring for and helping to meet the immediate needs of grieving relatives. Sometimes referred to by the more generic term “escorts,” members of Family Assistance Teams (which have different names in different airlines), are deployed as part of the initial response of the airline to the accident. In many airlines, the team has the full authority needed from the company to quickly respond to virtually any need they see an accident family member has. From arranging transportation to the accident site, child care, and errands, to paying all expenses of the family while in the city where the accident occurred and helping quickly gather information on the family’s behalf, team members seek to remove stressful externalities from the event and allow the family members the privacy they need to grieve” (Rollman, 2001).*

2.2 Introduction of Family Assistance

The result of an aircraft accident is pain, trauma and suffering for the families of victims and the injured, as well as the employees of the airline. The Australian Department of Transportation notes: *“Recent years have seen an acknowledgment that an aircraft accident involves not only victims of the accident, but also extends to the distress and pain suffered by the families of victims” (Australian Department of Transportation, 2008).* Under such

conditions, families are mostly in need of guidance, information, assistance and compassion from the operator and other accident responders.

According to the above definitions, family assistance is helping others by providing all kinds of respect and care. Also, Coarsey (2004) noted that: *“Human service response is an approach to helping others by remembering our own humanity. It is not based in our intellect, but on our feelings of connection to the human race”*. The Federal Family Assistance Plan for Aviation Disaster notes: *“The airline continues to have a fundamental responsibility to the victims and their families affected by an aviation crash. The airline is primarily responsible for family notification and all aspects of victim and family logistical support. Although their major responsibilities have not changed, the “Aviation Disaster Family Assistance Act of 1996” and the “Foreign Air Carrier Family Support Act” places the airline, as well as other support organizations, in a more collaborative relationship with families”* (The National Transportation Safety Board, August 1, 2000).

Also the NTSB emphasises: *“All personnel involved in providing services to assist the victims and their family members should be trained in crisis response and must demonstrate compassion, sympathy, technical expertise, and professionalism. Information provided by family members and victims through discussions, interviews, counselling, and any other form of exchange of personal information must remain confidential and shall not be used for future litigation purposes”* (The National Transportation Safety Board, August 1, 2000).

Family assistance is the help provided by an airline to the families of victims after a disaster through the family support teams and other agencies/ organisations; it is the airline's obligation and responsibility to provide such help. The airline should be ready and prepared for immediate action to help the families of victims and also whoever is involved in the accident. This support will be offered at a critical time, especially if the accident occurs away from home.

The following information concerns the needs of families of victims, the airlines' responsibilities and the challenges that may face the support process.

1. Needs of the families of victims:

One of the most important things for the families of victims after a disaster is to obtain vital information through daily briefings. Coarsey (2001), cited in Air Safety Week (Jan. 8, 2008), acknowledged: *“Information is so important to helping people being able to gain a sense of control over their lives after trauma and even those not involved directly get a sense of “empowerment” when they are given facts and information”*. For example, families need confirmation of whether their loved was on the flight or not; if their loved one is alive, injured or dead; what happened; where it happened and why the accident happened. Hans Ephraimson, the chairman of the American Association for Families of the KAL 007 Victims, acknowledged: *“The family centre has to be ready to answer all questions as far as it can. Some of the questions we cannot answer until the investigation has finished. Information that we deliver to the families can be of great help and support to the families of casualties”* (World Airline News, 1998).

Also, the families of victims will be anxious to get back the bodies of their loved ones. Ephraimson emphasised: *“These families want their loved ones’ bodies and belongings back. They do not want to be involved in legalities”* (World Airline News, 1998). The body is usually most important for the families of victims and therefore the airline, or whoever is responsible, should speed up the process of body identification, as well as delivering the body as quickly as possible. However, such as when an accident or criminal act has taken place, other factors, such as the needs of the pathologist, coroner, medical examiner or the accident investigators, may cause a delay. According to the above definitions, families of victims will need guidance, assistance, compassion, sympathy and transport; they will also need the bodies, and the remains and belongings of their loved ones to be treated with dignity. Generally, the families of victims will not know what to do, where to go, or what their rights are; they therefore need someone to be at their side. Airlines are expected to support these families financially, for example, meeting their immediate needs. As stated by the ICAO (2001): *“The family and the survivors may require immediate financial assistance. In particular, they may need to be provided with*

sufficient funds to meet their immediate needs as well as advice on how to take advantage of the other forms of family assistance available". For example, Hall (1998) noted: "Swissair and its code-share partner, Delta, had a plan in place which allowed them to quickly and effectively respond to the needs of the victims' families. Notification went quickly and family members were provided with information as soon as it was available. The airline also tried to anticipate the families' needs – even offering them \$20,000 with no strings attached, to cover immediate expenditures" (Hall, 1998). Also, in another example, the Australian Government Department of Transport and Regional Service (2008) stated: "The amount of the advance payment would depend on the circumstances, but airlines are encouraged to give sympathetic consideration to the needs of the families of victims. As an example, the European Community has mandated a minimum advance payment, in the event of death, of approximately \$30,000". Also Eyre (2006) acknowledged: "In many emergencies, charitable assistance can provide essential financial support to victims in the immediate aftermath of an emergency, before any statutory compensation or insurance scheme is able to pay out" (Eyre, 2006).

2. Airline's responsibility:

According to the ICAO (2001) and NTSB (2000), the airline is responsible for assisting families of victims with travel, transportation, financial support (first payment) and accommodation to go to the nearest place or city to the accident site. The ICAO (2001) stated: "Assistance may include the return of personal effects, counselling, privacy, legal advice, visits to the accident site, assistance with travel and accommodation, and liaison with relevant agencies and organisations". Abe, the Deputy Director of the Office of Family Affairs at the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board (2000), mentioned that, in the United States, an aircraft that has 60 or more seats will have a family assistance plan and each plan will address the following requirements: "Setting up a toll free number for enquiries, providing timely family notification, assisting families to travel to the accident site, providing logistical support to family members, and

handling personal property and human remains" (Abe, 2000). After a disaster, not all family members will go to the family assistance centre, either because of the distance, or because the telephone is a faster way to get information. Therefore, airlines should provide a sufficient number of telephone lines to avoid "busy signals" when people try to call in. Bearing in mind that in the initial hours following an accident, information is limited and often inaccurate, many people will call in because they do not know exactly which flight their friend or relative is on. Hall acknowledged: *"Experience has shown that this can lead to a total failure of an airline's telephone network, due to the level of calls"* (Hall, 2000b). The family assistance team are the ones who must interact directly with the families of victims and therefore, the airline must have very well trained employees both for the families' sake and for the sake of the employees. The NTSB (2008) stated that: *"All personnel involved in providing services to assist victims and their family members should be trained in crisis response and must demonstrate compassion, technical expertise, and professionalism. Personal information provided by family members and victims through discussions, interviews, counselling, or any other form of information exchange, should remain confidential and shall not be used for future litigation purposes"* (NTSB, 2008). Also, the U.S Department of Transportation (11 March, 1999) stated: *"Accordingly, each agency should screen personnel to ensure the best people are available to work in such a situation, train them properly in advance, and prepare for the possibility of a crash rather than react only once it has happened"* (DOT, 1999) .

After a disaster, the airline must expedite the notification to families of victims face-to-face, (in other words, personally), as well as informing relevant embassies. The National Transportation Safety Board (2000) stated that: *"Family members will be notified personally and privately by personnel trained in crisis response and death notification that their loved one was on the plane."* Also, the NTSB suggested that airlines should *"provide the DOS representative with necessary information on foreign passengers to facilitate interaction with appropriate foreign government embassies"* (NTSB, 1 August, 2000). Also Chiarichiaro (1998) noted *"The dominant issue addressed in the report was the*

timely, sensitive notification to family members of the accident victims". On the other hand Kenyon International Emergency Services Inc (2008) in their Emergency Response Planning Guidebook Prepared by Kenyon International Emergency Services For the support of Arab Air Carriers Organisation and Members stated "*Notification can come from various sources, however, Operations should act as the 24 hour contact point for notification (provided there is a 24 hour facility – if not provide out of hours emergency contact). Plans should clearly guide the person notifying the airline to call the Operations department (or 24 hour emergency contact number)*". The Air Transport World (2010) noted "*EU airlines, as well as non-EU airlines departing from an EU airport, will be obliged to produce a list of all those on board an aircraft "as soon as possible, and at the latest within two hours of the notification of the occurrence of an accident to the aircraft". Their names can only be made public after the families or close relatives of the passengers have been informed by the authorities and only if they do not object. Furthermore, a list of any dangerous goods on board the aircraft will have to be released by the airline immediately after the accident*"

After any disaster, a family needs their loved ones' bodies or remains and so an airline must speed up the process of identification of victims' bodies. The ICAO (2001) admitted that: "*The identification, custody and return of human remains are very important forms of family assistance*". In the family assistance centre, the airline must make secure and protect the families of the victims, and offer all means of communication such as phones, Internet access and faxes. Also the centre should provide mental health care and spiritual counselling (i.e. access to religious leaders). For example, in 1985, following the accident involving Delta Airlines Flight 191, Black (1987) mentioned: "*The clergy were helpful in advising families on compliance with religious codes for burial*". Also, in the accident involving Egypt Air Flight 990 in New York in 1999, two religious leaders were brought in to assist the families of victims and were very helpful, as acknowledged by CNN (CNN, 1999). The family support centre should include a "*quiet room, first aid, a private room for meetings, food and ensure the victim's privacy*" (Eyre, 2006; Hall, 1998).

3. *Organisations involved after a disaster:*

After any disaster, a number of different personnel, such as the finance, safety and top management departments from the airline will be involved in the support. One of the most important departments is the family support team who will be dealing directly with the families of the victims. The Australian Government Department of Transportation stated: *“The airline family support coordinator is an essential part of the immediate response to the accident. The family support coordinator provides the communication link between the airline, relevant emergency and welfare services, victims and their families, as well providing service direct to victims and families”* (Australian Government Department of Transportation, 2008). On the other hand, there will also be a number of different organisations which will be involved directly and indirectly. These include: air traffic control, airport staff (departure and arrival), local aviation authorities, police, the military, airline security, fire and emergency services, the media, accident investigators, lawyers and insurance companies, mortuary and funeral personnel, experts and specialists, hospitals and first aid, and the victims’ governments and embassies (National Transportation Safety Board, 2000). All the above organisations will have different points of view and different ways of thinking about the accident, as well as what is important and what is not. All of these have a job to do and to finish and so will have different interests and concerns according to what they are required to do; this may cause problems since they will also come from different backgrounds, cultures, religions and have different ethical sensitivities. The different organisations with different interests could add further challenges to the airline’s responsibilities and may serve to slow down the services they are trying to provide.

4. *Challenges that could face responders:*

Airlines will face different challenges, such as the large numbers of phone calls on the first day. The ICAO (2001) stated that: *“confirmation of the involvement of a family member requires sufficient telephone lines to cater for upwards of*

50,000 calls in the first 24 hours after a major accident” (ICAO, 2001). On the other hand, there will be different challenges, from sources such as the news media, which may know about the accident before the airline itself, from families and friends of victims, from survivors, and from a multiplicity of involved parties. There will also be a need for victim identification, as well as financial difficulties, the provision of facilities and accommodation for large numbers of family support team members at the accident location, the disposal of remains and personal effects, as well as possible criminal investigations and legal settlements (National Transportation Safety Board, 2000).

2.3 FSP Background

An aircraft accident is unexpected; it can happen anywhere, at any time and can be due to many different causes. Recent years have witnessed an acknowledgment that not only do the victims involved in such tragic events suffer from distress and pain, but also their families and friends, and airline employees. Dan Rollman noted: *“Since the beginning of passenger aviation to the 1980s, with few exceptions, almost no airline family assistance response to aircraft crashes took place. In fact, right up until the 1980’s it seems aircraft crashes took on a sort of “hush up deal” according to Erik Grosf of the National Transportation Safety Board’ (Rollman, 2001).*

The concept of ‘family assistance’ was developed as guidelines following a number of major aircraft accidents, in particular TWA Flight No. 800 off Long Island, USA in 1996. In October of that year, the US Congress passed the Aviation Disaster Family Assistance Act which was then signed into a law by President Clinton (Chiarchiaro, 1998). In 1997, legislation was enacted to extend the family assistance act to foreign airlines flying into and out of the United States, following the accident involving Korean Airlines Flight 801 in Guam which involved American passengers (Hall, 2000b; NTSB 1998). Mr. Hall, the NTSB chairman, noted: *“Together, the 1996 and 1997 acts ensure that*

all victims and their families will be treated fairly and equally regardless of the carrier they use” (Hall, 2000b).

Family assistance was therefore established by the U.S. government in 1996 for domestic flights and, in 1997, the act was extended to include international flights. This was done in order to ensure that families of victims would receive proper support such as *“financial support, treating the victim and their belongings with dignity, transportation, accommodation, notification, victim identification, family counselling and the most important is information”* (Hall, 1996). After this, family assistance was adopted by other countries so, as with other airlines around the world, Middle Eastern airlines adopted the U.S. family support plan in 1997 in order to be able to fly to the U.S. However, there is no evidence as to whether such airlines started their own formal family assistance programmes as they signed contracts with specialist international companies to render support to victims’ families in the event of an accident, particularly if an accident were to occur in the U.S. which requires airlines to submit their plans to the NTSB within a certain time. As the U.S. Department of State for Foreign Affairs (2007) stated: *“Most U.S. air carriers and their foreign code sharers have retained private companies to provide assistance to families of victims of aviation disasters. The private companies implement airline family assistance plans mandated by U.S law for carriers landing or taking off in the United States”* (U.S. Department of State for Foreign Affairs, 2007).

2.4 History of Family Assistance

Family assistance centres were first established in the army in the U.S.A. in 1965. They existed in every military base and provided support to family members in matters relating to military life, such as relocation, separation, crisis support and information. In the USA, Congress passed the Military Family Act 1985, which was designed to underline the importance of providing support and assistance to military families (Huleatt, 2002).

Dan Rollman (2001) observed that, in the 1980s, there was little or no assistance from the airlines themselves to such accidents as:

- *“The Delta Airlines L-1011 crash near Dallas, Texas, that killed 135 people in 1985”.*
- *“The bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 in 1988 that killed 270 people”.*
- *“The United Airlines DC-10 crash in Sioux City, Iowa, that killed 111 persons in 1989”.*

He acknowledged that the 1990s also witnessed limited family assistance after such disasters as:

- *“The US Air 737 crash that killed 132 people outside Pittsburg, Pennsylvania in 1994”.*
- *“The ValuJet DC-9 in the Florida Everglades that killed 110 people in 1996”.*

However, in 1994, the US Air (Flight 427) accident did focus attention on US civilians (Huleatt, 2002). Under President Clinton, Congress passed the Federal Aviation Disaster Family Assistance Act of 1996 after the TWA 800 accident in which 230 died. The act required domestic operators to ensure that appropriate support was provided for the family members of passengers involved in aircraft accidents. This legislation specified the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) as the Federal agency responsible for the establishment of family support services in the event of an aviation disaster in the U.S. Jones (1996) noted that not everybody was happy about the new family support plan act. He said that: *“Airline trade associations and regulators agree that the industry initially resisted plans for a new law that raised the level of assistance that must be given to relatives of people killed in plane crashes”* (Jones, 1996). However, Jones also mentioned that some airlines felt they were in a good position and that they were doing an adequate job, while other airlines felt that they were not prepared. Jones went on to argue that the expectations of the families of victims

in terms of support were rising quickly and the airlines found it hard to keep up (Jones, 1996).

After the accident involving Korean Air Flight 801 in Guam (a US territory) in August 1997, the Foreign Air Carrier Family Support Act (FACFSA) was signed into law to address the importance of supporting the families of the victims after an aviation accident. The Guam accident showed the need to expand family assistance to foreign airlines operating to and from the United States. By 2000, approximately 200 domestic and 230 foreign airlines submitted plans to the U.S Department of Transportation and the NTSB (Abe, 2000). Before the acts of 1996 and 1997, almost all airlines did not have a formal family support plan. When an accident happened, the airlines would try to help the families of victims but they sometimes also tended to hide information or give no information at all. Furthermore, there were sometimes late notifications, busy phone signals, no identifications, abuse of the families, and a failure to secure accommodation for families of victims...etc. (Hall, 1998). The family support plan came into operation to ease the suffering and pain of the families of victims after disasters (Hall, 1998).

2.5 Family assistance in the Middle East

Formalised family assistance in the Middle Eastern countries started when the United States enacted the Foreign Air Carrier Family Support Act (FACFSA) in 1997. Based on the research conducted here, no family assistance guidelines were implemented by airlines in the Middle Eastern countries prior to 1997. Hall noted: *"In 1997, legislation was enacted to extend the family assistance Act to foreign carriers flying into and out of the United States"*. He also mentioned how family assistance improved after the acts of 1996 and 1997 when some countries started to formulate their own family assistance plans and he acknowledged that: *"Many other countries are beginning to establish their own policies and procedures for improving how families will be treated following a transportation accident"* (Hall, 2000a). A midair collision between a Saudi

Arabian airliner and a Kazakhstan plane over India on 12th November 1996 was a good example of where there was no formal family assistance plan before 1997. India, too, did not have a family assistance plan. However, after the act of 1997, most of the airlines in the Middle East formed a contract with recovery companies in the U.S., such as the international recovery company, Kenyon, that could provide support to families of victims if an event occurred. As mentioned previously, without these contracts, Middle Eastern airlines and other airlines around the world would not be able to fly to or from the USA. Until the present, most of the airlines in the Middle East still depend on such international companies. This applies to Saudi Airlines, Egypt Air, Qatar Airways, Oman Air, United Arab Emirates (Etihad), Jordanian Airlines and all other airlines that fly to the U.S. However, these contractor companies not only provide the necessary support, they also train the employees of these airlines in how to support families of victims after disasters. The Middle Eastern airlines tend to apply frameworks which are obtained from the UK, the EU, the U.S. and Australia. These frameworks have been designed by groups of people who have different religions, ethical sensitivities, traditions, languages, education, economies and cultures from those in the Middle East. So far, there is no evidence of any airline in the Middle East having its own family assistance guidelines which consider their culture, religion and ethical sensitivities; if such guidelines do exist, they are not published, which may be the case as they consider their family assistance plans as confidential documents. Other countries, such as the US, the UK and Australia, publish their family assistance guidelines.

Any disaster is very bad and hurtful but at the same time, airlines should learn from them regarding how to assist the families of victims. Hall noted: *“The tremendous growth in, and increasingly global nature of, passenger transportation will require all of us to work together, to share lessons learned, and to ensure that everyone that travels on our transportation systems and their families receive the assistance and support that they may require following an accident”* (Hall, 2000b).

Because of this, it is important to reassess previous accidents in order to evaluate the positive and negative aspects of the relevant airlines' responses to

them. However, before this, it is important to highlight the relationship between an airline and its customers before and after an accident which could lead to the employment of family assistance if a disaster should occur.

2.6 Relations between the Airline Company and Customers

To understand how assistance to the families of victims will be triggered after a disaster, it is very important to highlight how the relationship between the airline and the customer starts. Family assistance is offered after a disaster so the relationship between the families of victims and the family assistance team of airline employees will also start from this point. However, before a disaster, there is a relationship between the airline and its customers or passengers which can be called a contract. Coarsey (2004) drew up a plan of the relationship between the airline company and its customers from the time they enter the departure area (Terminal A) until they reach their destination (Terminal B). The stages of this relationship can be summarised as providing and receiving (business), then transportation and responsibilities, including safety and family support. Coarsey's (2004) words and plan were modified by the researcher, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Start of the relationship

The business relationship starts between the airline and the customer after the customer buys the ticket. Therefore, once the airline has received payment for the ticket, an unseen contract exists between both parties (the agreement). It is the airline's responsibility to transport the customer from point A to B safely, whether this is travelling from one city to another or from one country to another; this is why the customer buys the ticket. Generally, travellers will have family or friends either with them when they depart or waiting for them where they are to land.

✚ **Responsibility for safety**

The responsibility for customers' safety starts once they are sitting in their seats of the airplane after boarding. The airline is responsible for transporting the customer safely from point A to point B. Also, the customer has to follow the airline's safety policy.

✚ **Reaching the destination**

If the airline transports the customer safely from point A to point B, then the service is completed and there is no further responsibility for the airline as the contract is finished. Also, there will be no further relationship between the families the passenger and the airline.

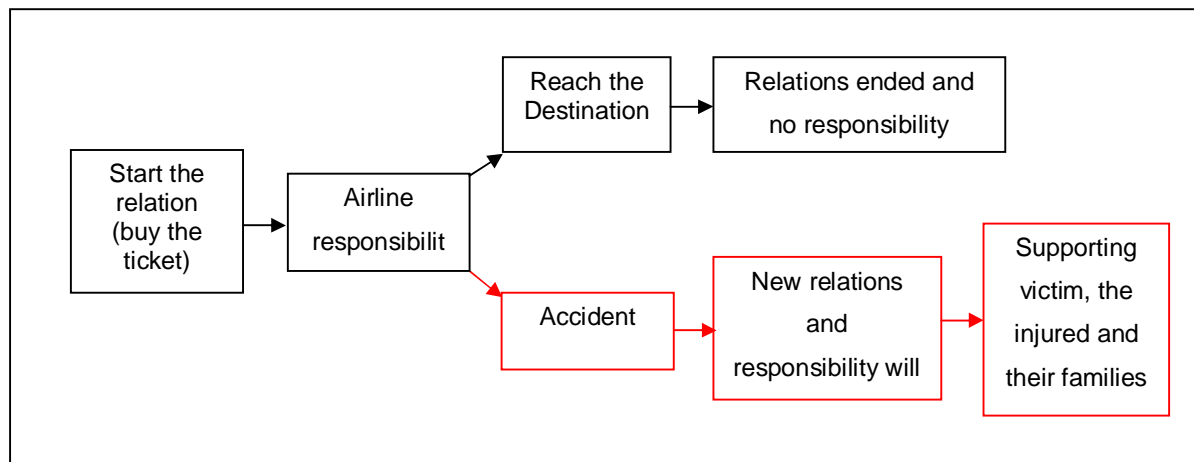


Figure 1: Airline and Customer Business Relations (Adapted from Coarsey; 2004)

The Occurrence of an Aviation Accident

If an accident occurs and the airline fails to transport the customer from point A to point B safely, then another relationship will start but this time between the families of victims, the injured or whoever is affected, and the airline. Then, the airline will initiate a process to support the victims and their families. In such matters the airline should have a group of people who are well trained to support a large group of people either at the point of departure (point A), at the

arrival location (point B), or wherever the victims' families may be located. However, the families of victims may come from different religions and cultures, and may also have different ethical sensitivities. For example, an accident involving Singapore Airlines Flight SQ006 in 2000 had victims from different countries and backgrounds including: 55 Taiwanese, 47 from the United States, 11 Singaporeans, 11 Indians, 8 Malaysians, 5 Indonesians, 4 Mexicans, 4 British, 2 from Thailand, 2 from New Zealand, 2 Vietnamese, 1 Australian, 1 Canadian, 1 from Cambodia, 1 from Germany, 1 Japanese, 1 from the Philippines, 1 from Ireland, and 1 from the Canary Island/Spain (CNN, 1 November, 2001).

The family support team should provide help, support, condolences, financial and psychological support, guidance and sympathy. The injured and the families of victims will be looking for such support and it is the airline's responsibility to provide it. This support will come at a very critical time for the families of victims, as well as for the airline. An accident can happen at any time and anywhere as accidents by their very nature are unexpected. However, an accident will lead to a relationship between a large number of people and the family assistance team. The ICAO stated: "*An aircraft accident involving a collision between two wide-bodied aircraft, or occurring in a heavily built-up area, has the potential to involve over 1000 victims*" (ICAO, 2001).

2.7 The Impact of Culture, Religion and Ethical Sensitivities on Current Family Assistance Plans

In 1999, an Egypt Air B767 crashed into the Atlantic with the loss of all on board during a flight from New York (Flight 990). The family support team came from an international recovery company which was confused about how to deal with the Egyptian families of victims. Egypt is Muslim country with an Arab culture. When the families of the victims arrived at New York JFK Airport, the supporters went to the aircraft to welcome them but they did not know what to do with them. They could not decide whether to shake hands or not, smile at them or

not, hug them or not. What could they say and what could they not say? Should they, give them flowers or not? Clearly, the first approach that is made to the families of victims is very sensitive as they may or may not accept the supporter's approach (Coarsey, 2004).

During a symposium on Family and Victim Assistance for Transportation Disasters in Arlington, Hall (Chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) between 1994 and 2001, and who had experience of a number of accidents including TWA Flight 800, Egypt Air Flight 990, USAir Swiss 427), recounted some of the stories that he had heard from families of victims and said: *"Shortly after becoming NTSB Chairman in 1994, I became personally aware of the need for (family) assistance. During an aviation accident public hearing I chaired, numerous family members related their experiences to me. They told me of continuous busy signals from the airline's 800 accident information number, lack of information, untimely notification, misidentified remains, personal effects being mishandled, unidentified remains not being handled with dignity, and the use of confidential information obtained during the grieving process in the litigation that inevitably followed. In short, at a time when they most needed guidance, assistance, and compassion, they felt abandoned and, in some cases, abused. Later, after a meeting with family members from nine different aviation accidents and various industry representatives during two groundbreaking sessions, I learned that these feelings were not unique; they were shared by family members from almost every other accident. This sad truth was further confirmed during a public meeting of the White House Commission on Aviation Safety and Security, when I and the other commissioners heard story after tragic story from family members. I want to share two of them with you"* (Hall, 1998).

He said that, after 18 hours, the sister of one of the victims of American Eagle Flight 4184 in Roselawn, was still on hold or getting busy phone signals from the airline's "emergency assistance" line. Two weeks after the accident, the airline said to her it would take four to six weeks to give her the remains of her sister. After two days the airline in a phone call told her the remains could be

collected within 24 hours. She called the airline after the funeral to get information regarding her sister's personal belongings that she had with her on board and she also wanted to know how her sister had been identified. It was only after a few months that they informed her that her sister's belongings would shortly be obtainable. She later found out that most of the victim's personal belongings were burned during the second week of recovery. She also discovered that, during the night, the airline's personnel buried all unidentified human remains in one area without informing their families. However, the airline was not willing to inform victims' families or render any kind of service to them. Also the airline did not have a plan to mark the graves (Hall, 1998).

Another event took place in 1994 following the U.S Air Flight 427 crash in Pittsburgh. Victims' family members, who later gave evidence before Congress, reported that 38 caskets containing unidentified victims' remains had been buried without informing the concerned families. Just one day before a special service took place, two more caskets of unidentified victims' remains were discovered. The airline spokesperson said that the airline did not tell the families of victims about the other 38 caskets until they asked because the company sensed that it might have been "too distressing" for them to know. Six months after the accident, some of the families disclosed that they had found some of their relatives' belongings in the refuse outside the hangar where the wreckage of the plane was stored. The belongings included address books, planners, watches, wallets and rings that were in a bad condition since they had been buried in a rubbish container for more than six months (Hall, 1998).

This research centres on family assistance the Middle East countries and, as such, focuses primarily on Muslims. The concepts of family assistance following aviation accidents that have been adopted by several airlines in the Middle East are usually imitations of European, UK, US and Australian plans. These have been designed by, and for, groups of people who have different beliefs, backgrounds, languages, cultures, economies and education from those in the Middle East. This is because family assistance was started by the US government and afterwards adopted by other countries around the world.

2.8 Current Family Assistance According to Culture, Religion and Ethical Sensitivities

As yet, there is no evidence of the existence of published family assistance plans or studies that take notice of specific cultures, religions or ethical sensitivity factors in any detail. Some of the current family assistance plans acknowledge that culture and religion are important but only in **general**, not in specific detail. So, although the need to focus on the importance of culture has been stated in some of the family assistance guidelines which are available for review, these guidelines do not really introduce culture in any detail, only in general. They may suggest that culture is very important and that attention must be paid to it but the questions then arise of which culture or which religion. What is important and what is not important after a disaster, according a specific culture and religion? What is ethical and what is not, according a specific culture and religion? The family assistance guidance currently available suggests only that culture and religion are important; they go no further than that and state the following:

- **Australian Government Family Assistance Code**
“A Family Assistance Plan needs to be particularly sensitive to cultural issues associated with the loss of loved ones. Airlines are encouraged to take special steps to understand the cultural issues applying to the main markets in which they operate”. They also acknowledged: *“Airlines should remain mindful of the cultural/religious needs of the family”* (Department of Transport, 2008).
- **International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO)**
“Family assistance providers must recognise that the families and the survivors may have diverse cultural backgrounds and values that require special understanding and consideration. These considerations may include the grieving process, the form of, and attendance at, religious

service, the treatment of human remains and the design of a memorial' (ICAO, 2001).

- ***International Criminal Police Organisation (Interpol)***

"Religious and cultural customs differ considerably throughout the world and this fact must be taken into account when planning the response to disaster scenarios. Experience proves that this factor is of particular relevance when dealing with survivors, relatives and the remains of the victims" (International Criminal Police Organisation (Interpol), 1997).

- ***London Humanitarian Assistance Centre***

It is recognised that: *"The wide interpretations of the term 'family' are influenced by culture, lifestyle and preference"*. They also emphasised that: *"Communities can be identified in many ways: geography, shared language, shared culture, shared identity, etc. It will be necessary to analyse the nature of possible impact: How might the event affect particular communities? How severe will that impact be? How likely is the impact to happen?"* (Eyre, 2006).

All the above organisations acknowledge that culture and religion are very important in family assistance and that attention should be paid to them. However, so far, there is no approved evidence or published family assistance guidance that explains the impact or the importance after a disaster of these three factors in detail. To understand culture, it is important to define it and realise its impact. Also, because this study mainly focuses on Muslims in the Middle East, it is important to define the culture in the Middle Eastern countries in order to understand the particular needs of these regions.

Family assistance was started by the U.S. in 1996 for domestic flights and in 1997 for foreign ones; this was called the Family Assistance Plan for Aviation Disasters. After that, having a formal family assistance became worldwide law. Air Safety Week acknowledged: *"More than 80 domestic and at least 150 foreign flag carriers have now submitted their plans to provide adequate*

assistance for families and victims of aviation disasters" (Air Safety Week, Oct. 5, 1998). Family assistance has different names according to different organisations. However, mostly family assistance has the same aim which is to assist victims, the injured and their families. Different companies, organisations and governments call such assistance by different names, however, such as:

- **Kenyon International Emergency Service Inc:** Worldwide Disaster Management. This is an international service company which calls family assistance a Human Support Service.
- **International Civil Aviation Organization:**
This organisation calls it Guidance on Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims and Their Families.
- **United Kingdom:**
The UK has different organisations such as the Media and Sport Humanitarian Assistance in Emergencies and also the London Humanitarian Assistance Centre Plan.
- **Australia:**
The Australian Government Department of Transport and Regional Services call their support the Family Assistance Plan.
- **United States of America:**
The National Transportation Safety Board calls this the Federal Family Assistance Plan for Aviation Disasters.

Mostly there is no difference in their aim as family assistance or support is a humanitarian matter. The result or aim is how to assist the injured, victims, families of victims or whoever is affected by a disaster.

2.9 Difference between a Natural Disaster and an Aircraft Disaster

Aircraft disasters and natural disasters are the same in terms of their consequences or results such as trauma, sadness and the loss of loved ones. Also, they are similar from the point of view of the needs of the families of victims who will need support, assistance and help. However, aircraft disasters are unexpected events which can occur in almost any location while natural disasters can sometimes be detected beforehand; this then offers greater opportunity for the affected people to take precautions and/or evacuate the area as, for example, in cases such as hurricanes, heavy rain, tornadoes or floods. For unexpected natural disasters, such as earthquakes, there is less time for people to find a safe place but, in such cases, those affected may know each other (i.e. they may be neighbours and friends), know the culture and know where to go or what to do. Hence, many of the first responders and supporters will come from a similar background. This is not always the case, however, as the 2004 Asian tsunami demonstrated, when a large number of tourists were affected far away from home. Conversely, an aircraft is a closed place; passengers can go nowhere to escape if there is an emergency and the only thing they can do is to stay in their place and wait.

Victims of an air disaster may be exposed to severely injured or deceased passengers, scattered human remains, and fire. Unlike in a natural disaster, victims' relatives and next of kin may blame the airlines or the handling company for causing the disaster. This blame may be accompanied with great anger which will require a sensitive response and a high level of understanding on the part of the special assistance team members. In natural disasters, however, families of victims will perhaps accept the cause as being beyond their control but in aircraft accidents, families of victims will often focus on the airline to apportion blame but also to receive support and compensation.

2.10 Problem Statement

Family assistance is the help, support, guidance, assistance, information, respect and compassion provided by the ***airline through their family assistance teams to the injured and their families and to the families of victims***. Regarding these needs, the important question is how the airline will deliver the appropriate support to the family of a victim without adding any additional distress or pain. When delivering such a service, it is helpful to know the background of the people concerned, such as their culture, religion and whether these result in any particular ethical sensitivities, so that the right kind of support can be given. In identifying such needs and concerns, it is helpful to understand which factors are important and which are not.

Therefore, the purpose of this research is to investigate the key issues that concern Muslim families in the Middle Eastern countries, in terms of family support, after an aircraft accident. This is because most of the people in the Middle East are Muslim and they are directed by their religion in everything they do. Not only this, but Islam also has a very powerful influence on Muslim life in terms of aspects such as their food, their clothes, laws, communications and ways of dealing with death; Islam is also involved in their views on life after death. The support will be administered in a critical situation and often within a limited time-frame, meaning that an airline needs to be prepared, ready to act and must constantly improve its family assistance programme. This work will be helpful for other Muslim countries around the world, as well as for Muslims who live in non-Muslim countries. The Defence Language Institute's Foreign Language Centre (DLIFLC) (1997) stated that: *"To understand the Middle East countries whether in economy, politics, military, customs, or whatever, one must understand Islam. The variety inherent in Middle East culture expresses the variety of practice found within Islam"* (DLIFLC, 1997).

2.11 Airline Growth

2.11.1 Airline Growth in the Middle Eastern Countries

In terms of airline market growth, the Middle Eastern countries show strong growth potential, as illustrated in Figure 2. Based on a passenger per kilometre assessment between 1995 and 2008, it can be seen that the highest average growth forecast in 2007 was in the Middle East with values of 10.5% (ICAO, 2006). Moreover, in 2009, international traffic fell by about 3.9% while domestic traffic fell by 1.8%. Total (international and domestic) traffic declined in all regions except for the Middle East, where carriers posted a strong 10% growth (ICAO, 2009).

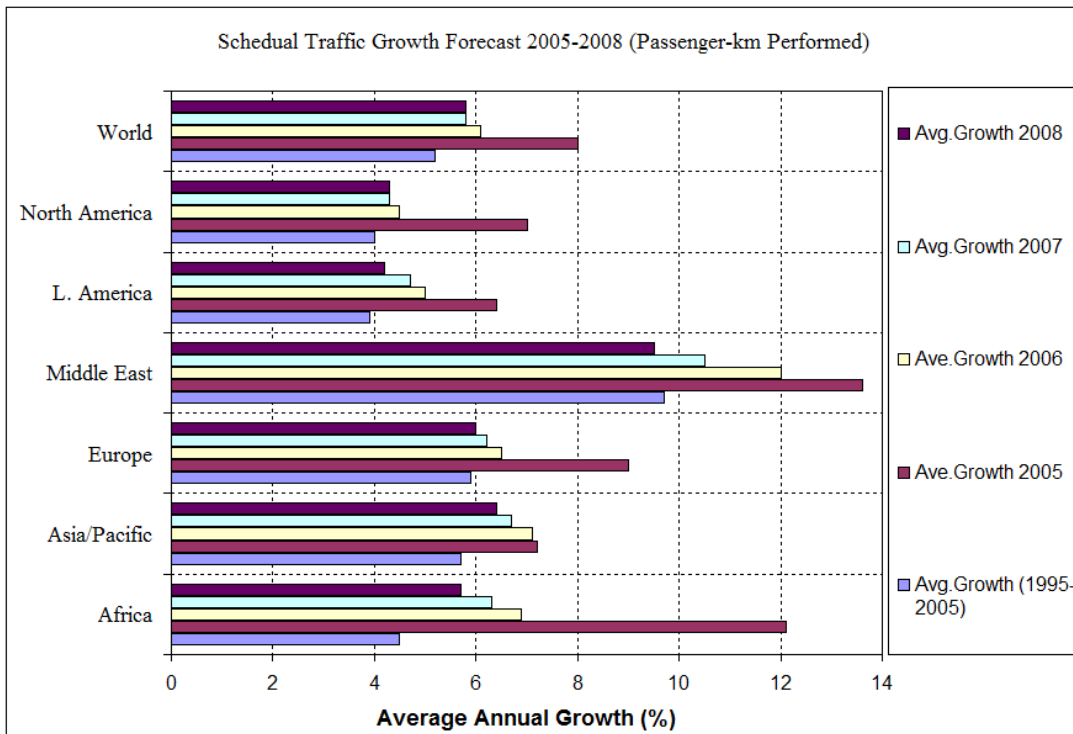


Figure 2 : Traffic Growth Forecast 2005-2008 (ICAO, 2006)

As the market grows, so the need to improve all aspects of operations and safety management also increases. Family Assistance (FA) is a good example of something that needs to develop in a specific way if it is required properly to meet its intended purpose. Hall (2000) said: *“I’d like to discuss what we – as a*

global aviation community – can do to improve aviation safety for all of our citizens”. He went on to acknowledge that: *“Aviation is one of the safest models of transportation available to the world’s travellers”* and in terms of the growth of airlines, he noted: *“In 1998, 126 million people travelled by commercial air carrier. In 2010, that number will increase to 230 million”* (Hall, 23 February, 2000). To provide support to families in the Middle East, it is argued that FA needs to focus clearly on the importance of cultural and religious factors.

Islam unites Muslims but, on the other hand, Muslims have different backgrounds (cultures, languages, education and economics). Muslims from all over the world fly to Saudi Arabia to perform Umrah (i.e. visit the Holy Mosques in Makah and the Holy Mosque in Medina). The numbers of Muslims passengers who arrived by air in Saudi Arabia for this reason between 10/01/2008 and 01/08/2008 was 1,711,733. Also, there is a high season for Muslims (pilgrims) to travel to Saudi Arabia to perform the pilgrimage every year; this is in the month of Thu-Hajja, the last month of the year in the Arabic calendar. The following table shows the number of pilgrims who arrived in Saudi Arabia between 1996 and 2009.

Table 1: Number of foreign pilgrims arriving in Saudi Arabia each year to perform the Hajj (Resource, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia’s Ministry of the Interior, General Directorate for Passports and Statistics Department)

| Year | Number of Pilgrims |
|------|--------------------|
| 1996 | 1,080,465 |
| 1997 | 1,168,591 |
| 1998 | 1,132,344 |
| 2001 | 1,363,992 |
| 2005 | 1,534,759 |
| 2006 | 1,654,407 |
| 2007 | 1,707,814 |
| 2008 | 1,729,841 |
| 2009 | 1,613,000 |

Making the pilgrimage is very important for Muslims and they must do this if they can, as they are advised by Islam. As Table 1 shows, using figures provided by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Ministry of the Interior, General Directorate for Passports and Statistics Department, the number of pilgrims who arrive in Saudi every year is increasing. Airlines are international businesses and should therefore be ready to support and satisfy the families of victims. To do this, the airline must know what is important and what is not so it is vital that the cultures, religions and ethical sensitivities of victims' families should be highlighted and acknowledged by any airline. Learning from previous accidents is very important as, mostly, airline accidents will involve passengers from a range of different backgrounds where there may be conflicts of culture, religion and ethical sensitivities.

The following section presents a review of a number of previous accidents in order to understand what is important and what is not; also, to improve the current family assistance plans, it is important to find out what was lacking and what was useful on these occasions. The following accidents were selected because some of them, such as USAir 427 in 1994 and TWA 800 in 1996, occurred before family assistance became law in 1996. These two accidents were largely the reason for creating and implementing family assistance plans. Other accidents examined here occurred after 1996, such as KAL 801 in 1997; after this accident, family assistance had also to be organised for international flights. Some international flights were involved in accidents in different countries, including: KAL801, Egyptian Air 990, Singapore SQ006, and Swiss Air 111, while some were domestic flights, such as TWA 800 and USAir 427. On the other hand, Egyptian Air Flight 990 in 1999 was selected because it was from the Middle East and Egypt is a Muslim country.

2.12 Lessons Learned from Previous Aviation Accidents

2.12.1 USAir Flight 427

A Boeing 737-300 operated by USAir Flight 427 crashed in Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, about 6 miles northwest of the Pittsburgh International Airport in 1994. At approximately 18:10 the plane left Chicago for Pittsburgh International Airport with two pilots, three flight attendants and 127 passengers on board; all were killed (NTSB, 1999). After the disaster, the families of the victims reported their bad experience of the operator, as summarised below:

- Continuous busy signals from the airline's "800" accident information number.
- Untimely notification, misidentified remains, personal effects being mishandled.
- Unidentified remains not being handled with dignity, and the use of confidential information obtained during the process of identification in the litigation that followed (Hall, 2000).
- At a time when the families were undergoing difficult and emotional experiences and were expecting help, assistance and compassion, they felt abandoned and, in some cases, abused (Hall, 2000).
- Unqualified response by USAir after the accident towards families of the victims. USAir Express concluded that: "*A lack of training among USAir personnel was evident*" (Air Safety Week, 1998).

2.12.2 TWA Flight 800

On July 17th 1996, at 20:31, a Boeing 747-131 of TWA Flight 800 crashed into the Atlantic Ocean near East Moriches, New York. TWA was operating under the provisions of Code Federal Regulation 14, scheduled as an international passenger flight from John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK), New York, to Charles De Gaulle International Airport, Paris, France (NTSB, 2000). The TWA flight left JFK at 20:19, with two pilots, two flight engineers, 14 flight attendants and 212 passengers on board. All 230 were killed in the crash (NTSB, 2000). NTSB (2000) determined that the probable cause of the TWA accident was an explosion in the central wing fuel tank, resulting from the ignition of the flammable fuel/air mixture in the tank. The experience of the families is summarised as follows:

- The families of the victims complained about the disorganised and very slow response from TWA (Carey, 1996).
- More volunteers were needed to support the families, as well as more foreign language speakers, and greater preparedness to deal with an accident was required.
- Hall (2000) stated that families told him about: *“...continuous busy signal line from the airline 800 accident information number, the lack of information, misidentified remains, personal effects being mishandled, unidentified remains not being handled with dignity, and the use of confidential information obtained during the grieving process in the litigation that followed. In short, at a time when they most needed guidance, assistance and compassion, they felt abandoned and, in some cases, abused”* (Hall, 2000). Also he noted that the victims’ remains and belongings were not treated with dignity.
- Some families were struggling for support or information from TWA and notification from the airline was slow due to a lack of passenger details

such as contact names and emergency phone numbers (Air Safety Week, 1997).

2.12.3 KAL Flight 801

Korean Air Flight 801 was scheduled to fly from Kimpo International Airport, South Seoul, to Guam International Airport on August 6th, 1997. The Boeing 747-300 aircraft crashed into high terrain about three miles southwest of Guam International Airport in Agana, Guam, at 01:59 am local time (NTSB, 2000). Flight 801 was operating under Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) while on the way from Kimpo International Airport in Seoul, Korea. The aircraft had two pilots, one flight engineer, 14 flight attendants and 237 passengers. The aircraft hit Nimitz Hill during the approach to runway 6L, resulting in an accident which killed 228 of the 254 people on board (NTSB, 2000).

The response from KAL Airlines and the government of Guam to the relatives of the victims and to the survivors was not fast; they could have helped more passengers who were on the site if they had responded more quickly to the accident. Although a member of navy personnel, with one flashlight, searched under the fuselage for survivors (because the crash happened at midnight), it was too dark. With such poor management and response, one of the officials at the rescue command centre in Guam put the number of confirmed survivors at 35, but Korean Air put the number at 49. Most of the passengers were Korean while 13 were from the USA (Milwaukee Journal, 1997). As KAL began to inform the families about the accident, some of the female relatives collapsed on the floor when they heard the news. One woman tried to hit one of the airline officials and he ran away from her. Ginger Cruz, a spokeswoman for Guam's governor, Carl T.C. Gutierrez, who lived just a few miles from the crash site, was the first person on the scene and she started to pull survivors from the burning wreckage. She said: *"It was frightening. As I got close to the scene, I could hear the screams. We only had a single flashlight. We had to follow the sounds to find them. There was no road to the crash scene so they used*

helicopters; after that they rescued dozens of survivors” (Milwaukee Journal, 1997).

The family support provided by the airline was, in general, very poor due to the following factors:

- The families who tried to contact the company faced communication difficulties. After KAL had posted their toll-free number, relatives of passengers tried to call the company but they could not reach anyone.
- There were also language barriers facing the families of casualties in communicating with the Korean officials at the airline when they arrived at Guam Airport.

Bill and Kathy Burke, whose son died in the accident, commented: *“We were not met by officials from Korean Air as we were promised upon arrival and conditions at the first hotel we were sent to were deplorable”*. Furthermore, they were looking for the passenger lists but could not find their son’s name. Burke said that: *“In the early hours, the airline could not even confirm if he (their son) was on the flight or not”* (Air Safety Week, 1998).

2.12.4 Egypt Air Flight 990

Egypt Air Flight 990 was scheduled to fly from John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK), New York (NY) to Cairo on 31st October, 1999. Egypt Air Flight 990 was being operated under the provisions of the Egyptian Civil Aviation Regulations Part 121 and US 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 129 (NTSB, 1999). The Boeing 767 arrived at NY coming from Los Angeles; passengers heading to Cairo International Airport boarded at NY. At 1:29 am. the aircraft departed from JFK NY to Cairo with 203 passengers, 4 flight crewmembers and 10 flight attendants. Twenty minutes after departure, the aircraft crashed into the Atlantic Ocean, 60 miles south of Nantucket Island, Massachusetts (NTSB, 1999). All the people who were on this flight were killed. Passengers were from different countries, namely Canada, Egypt, Germany, Sudan, Syria, the United

States and Zimbabwe. News of the accident was announced eight hours after the plane went down (Abdel-Hamid, 1999). Support for families of the crash victims came in terms of condolences from New York's Mayor, Rudolph Giuliani. He said that the plane was carrying passengers from all over the United States and he further stated that the majority of passengers were Americans (CNN, 1999). There were also Egyptian passengers and the Egyptian airline brought in Muslim religious leaders to meet the families of the casualties. Religious leaders can play a significant role in supporting families by providing emotional and mental support, helping them to talk through the situation, and advising them to make use of other mental health resources in their community, thus eventually helping them to come to terms with their loss (CNN, 1999). In his talk to console grieving family members of the victims of Flight 990, Khankan, the Imam of the Islamic Centre of Long Island in Westbury, New York, explained how people of the Muslim faith try to accept the death of loved ones (CNN, 1999). He stated: *"We are educated to feel patience and we are ordered to be patient under these circumstances. The moment we are born, God knows when we will die"* (CNN, 1999). Understanding this, the Imam chose his words based on the Qur'an and the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed. His speech brought relief, comfort and peace for the families.

2.12.5 **Swissair Flight 111**

Swissair Flight 111 was scheduled to fly from John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK), New York, to Geneva, Switzerland, on 2nd September, 1998. The flight departed at 21:18 Atlantic daylight time, with 215 passengers and 14 crew members on board (NTSBC, 2003).

The accident, according to the Transportation Safety Board of Canada (2003), occurred as a result of an attempted emergency landing of the aircraft, which hit the water sharply as a result. The attempted emergency landing occurred after the crew realised that there was a smell of smoke in the cockpit. After the aircraft crashed, an exclusion zone was implemented and the rescue operation

begun immediately. The rescue team worked around the clock, with help from local residents (Transportation Safety Board of Canada, 2003). The quick response provided by Swissair and Delta is summarised as follows (World Airline News, 1998):

- Less than one hour after the aircraft plunged into the waters off the coast of Nova Scotia, Walter Vollenweider, Swissair Vice President for North and South America, was at JFK and Delta had established its Passengers' Inquiry and Command Post.
- Within twenty-four hours of the crash, Swissair posted a passenger list on its website and set up a link from the site to a page dedicated to information on SR111; all the information was posted in English, German and French.
- Swissair was also able to provide more supporters than the number of family members involved.
- When the families arrived in Nova Scotia, the crisis management centre was already in place.

2.12.6 Singapore Airlines Flight SQ006

On October 31st, 2000, Singapore Airlines Flight SQ006 was scheduled to fly from Taipei to Los Angeles. At 23:00 the Boeing 747-400 started to taxi on the runway of Chang Kai-Chek Airport. There were 179 passengers on board. The weather conditions were poor, with a strong wind, heavy rain and visibility limited to 400 metres (Riddez, 2000). Part of the airport was under repair; the runway was closed and was being used as a taxiway. At 23:10 the aircraft started to accelerate to more than 150 miles/hour when, unexpectedly, the pilot saw a construction machine in front of him (Riddez, 2000). The surviving passengers experienced a massive explosion and the front of the aircraft separated from the rear. The aircraft then broke into three parts and fire broke

out in the middle section and in the wing of the aircraft (Riddez, 2000). 82 passengers were killed, including two casualties who were taken to hospital. On the other hand, 81 survivors were injured and 16 passengers, including the pilot and co-pilot, escaped with no injuries. Many of the passengers who died suffered burns (Cook, 2000). Singapore Airlines was well prepared and when the accident occurred, the response demonstrated the following points:

- There was a quick response from the top level chief of Singapore Airlines (CEO). His comments were very supportive and compassionate, and demonstrated genuine care towards the families.
- All families and surviving passengers were visited and respects were paid to the dead by going to the mortuary.
- The public was updated on the percentage of people who had been contacted and the relatives arriving at the crash site. Empowerment was given by providing information amid so many unknown details.
- The airline offered the families of passengers and crew \$400,000 for everyone who died in the accident. It also offered to meet the medical expenses of the injured and the crew.

Coarsey-Rader, President of Atlanta-based Higher Resources, Inc. commented on the effective response of Singapore Airlines, saying: *"It is obvious to me that someone understands that humans were killed and that for all of the people involved, life will never be the same. Every bit of information possible is being shared and the feelings of those involved are being considered before business - although this is good business"* (Air Safety Week, 2001).

Summary

From the aviation accidents discussed above, it can be concluded that the actions taken by the airline companies varied from bad to very good. The airline companies which were well prepared for such emergency crises included

Singapore Airlines, Egypt Air (the support was provided by an international recovery company) and Swissair (Delta airline was their partner and they initiated the support on behalf of Swissair), as illustrated in Figure 3. This figure shows a remarkable level of response; the airlines were very supportive and well organised in the way they dealt with the families of the victims. In contrast, airline companies whose emergency plans were not well prepared caused tremendous distress to the grieving families when what they needed at that painful time was care, compassion and support. In conclusion, in order to extend the current Family Assistance Plan used in Middle Eastern countries, cultural, religious and ethical sensitivities factors should be underlined and interrelationships between these factors should be understood.

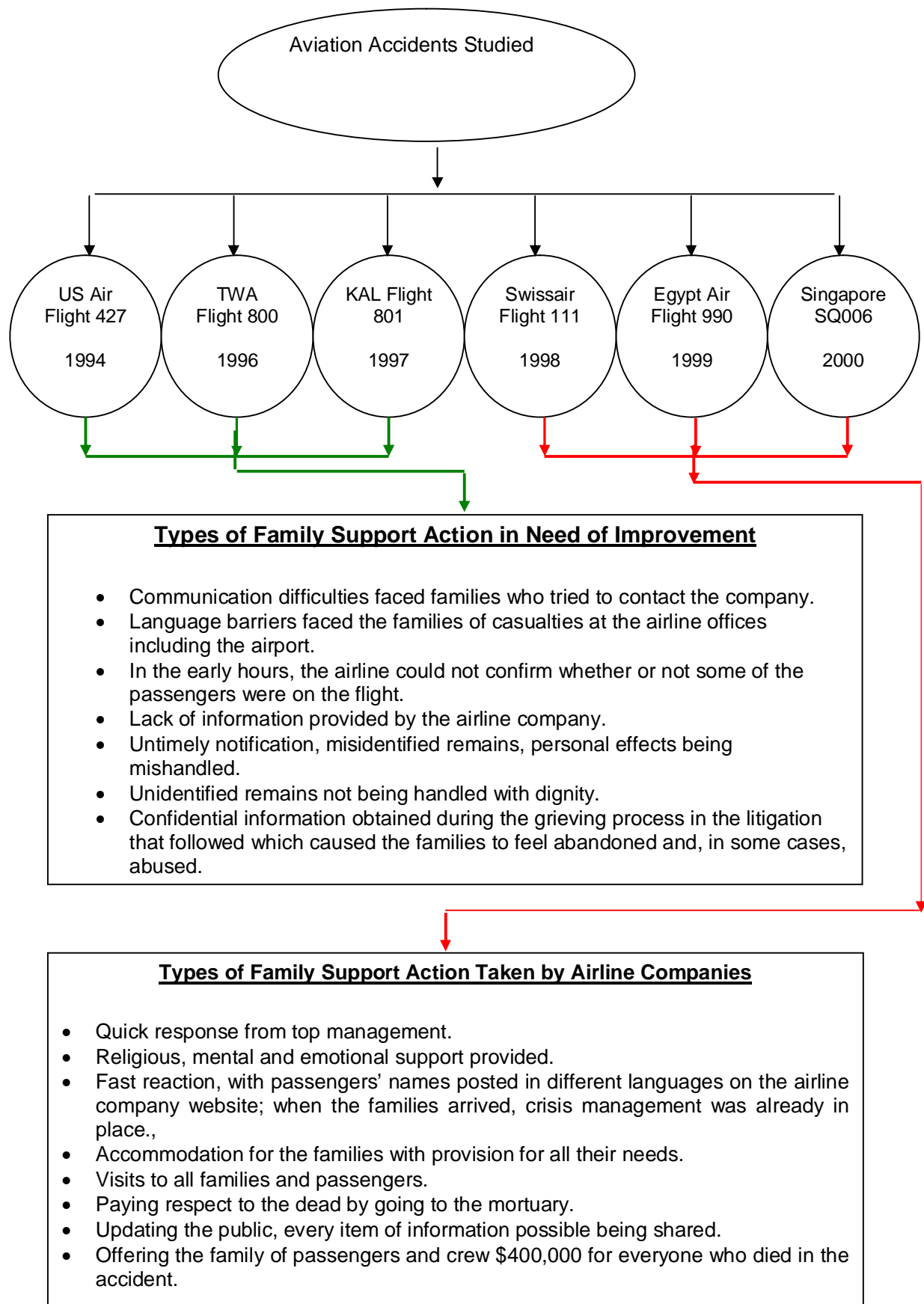


Figure 3: Aviation Accidents: Family Support Plan Summary

This research concerns Middle Eastern countries and it is therefore important to concentrate on accidents involving airlines from such countries. The following examples of disasters are useful in demonstrating the need for family assistance, well-trained employees to support the families of victims, and the impact and importance of considering culture, religion and ethical sensitivities in the creation of any family assistance plan. The midair collision involving a Saudi Arabian airliner was a serious accident but provided a useful opportunity for the researcher to collect detailed information from the airline. Also, Saudi Arabian Airlines is a company in a Muslim country in the Middle East and has an Arab culture and this research focuses specifically on Muslim countries in the Middle East. Also, the accident took place before 1997; the year when having a family assistance plan became a legal necessity; (Saudi Arabian Airlines did not have formal family assistance guidelines in 1996). The following details explain the importance of an airline being prepared and also of having a large number of well trained employees. This accident involved a large number of people of different religions, cultures and ethical sensitivities, in terms of the families of victims, the airline employees, and personnel from other organisations in India and from the different embassies. As a result, there was both positive and negative support from the airline and other organisations since culture and religion have a significant effect on the families of victims, the family assistance team and other organisations.

2.13 Accident Involving Saudi Arabian Airlines Flight SV763: Sequence of Events

This mid-air collision took place on 12th November 1996 at 18:45 in Delhi, India, between Saudi Arabian Airlines Flight SV763 and Air Kazakhstan Flight 1907. The ATC controller (in Delhi) reported that the aircraft disappeared from the radar at 19:14. There were no survivors from either flight; 312 victims were in the Saudi aircraft and 37 victims were in the Air Kazakhstan plane. The disaster occurred in 1996 when a family assistance plan was not required by the U.S. At that time Saudi Arabian Airlines did not have formal family assistance guidelines or a family assistance team; their first family assistance plan was implemented in 1997. Other countries in the Middle East followed suit in the same year after the U.S. required any aircraft flying to or out of the U.S. to submit family assistance guidelines to the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB). This accident is a good example of the importance of family assistance, besides the importance of considering cultural and religious factors, and ethical sensitivities.

The information was collected from internal documents of Saudi Arabian Airlines and from newspapers collected by S. A. Airline's safety department. The airline saved the newspapers at that time for many different reasons:

- To be aware of the public's and the government's opinions, as well as in order to respond to the media.
- To be aware of the responses of the Indian ATC and the civil aviation representative.
- To collect information that would help the airline in court.
- Most importantly, to learn from the accident; so that it could avoid any misunderstanding in the future.

The following information gives, in detail, what happened regarding the accident from day one, together with what actions, whether positive or negative, were

taken by the airlines, governments and other organisations. Also, the needs of the large number of families of victims, which had a serious impact on the airline, are examined below.

13 November, 1996

- The Indian government acted one hour after the crash occurred. However, the villagers in the vicinity were there before anyone else and the victims' relatives complained that some of these villagers were walking away from the crash site with valuable items (The Hindu, 1996).
- At 23:00, after news of the accident had been announced, relatives of the victims went to the hospital, the crash site, the airport and to the offices of Saudi Arabian Airlines, but could not find anyone to tell them where to go and what to do (The Hindu, 1996).
- The Indian government did not seal off or secure the crash site immediately. Furthermore, the crash site was open all night with no guards. After the Saudi Arabian Airline officials arrived the next day, they found children and people wandering all over the crash site.
- 289 of the passengers were Indian, and the 17 foreigners consisted of nine Nepalese, three Pakistanis, two Americans, one Bangladeshi, one Briton and one Saudi. Saudi Airlines official announced that the airline was willing to settle all compensation claims. Saudi families arrived in India and obtained their visas at the airport after a long wait there (New Delhi, 1996).
- Saudi Arabia Airlines urged anyone who had information on the identities of the victims to come forward.
- The dead bodies were transported by car from the accident site to the civil hospital in Charkhi Dadri town in Bhiwani district of Haryana.

Families of the victims went to this hospital to identify the bodies (New Delhi, 1996).

- The Indian government stated that some of the belongings found were secured by the police (New Delhi, 1996).
- The bodies of the victims were still lying unidentified on the hospital floor, surrounded with blocks of ice (Sangwan, 1996).
- Indian officials said 30 of the 250 bodies brought to the hospital had been identified by relatives so far (The Hindustan Times, 1996).
- In an official letter, the Pakistani government asked Saudi Arabian Airlines to send the bodies and the remains of Pakistani victims to Islamabad. Saudi Arabian Airline teams arrived to support the families and to help with the investigations.

14 November, 1996

- During the night when the police left the crash site, the villagers came and started to search for valuables. An airline official complained that the crash site should be secured until the investigation had been undertaken and the belongings removed (Ajaysuri, 1996).
- Family members were searching for their relatives among the bodies which were still lying in the hospital rooms. The courtyards were covered with victims' bodies, and newly-discovered bodies were brought in from the crash site (The Times of India, 1996).
- People from the neighbourhood continued to gather near the boundary walls after the police were partly successful in restricting entry to the crash site (Statesman News Service, 1996).

- Muslim and Hindu leaders started to argue regarding the unidentified bodies. One Muslim leader said, *“The airplane was going to Saudi Arabia; that means there are no Hindus in the airplane, so why are the bodies being cremated?”* (Statesman News Service, 1996).
- Relatives of the passengers were walking among the victims’ bodies to identify their loved ones (The Times of India News, 1996).
- The relatives were not sure where they could claim the bodies or death certificates, and many families were not able to find the bodies of their relatives (Nagarajan, 1996).
- The families of the victims were left alone; no meals and water had been arranged for them (The Times of India News, 1996).

15 November, 1996

- The families of victims were complaining that belongings were missing and the relatives claimed to the police that villagers were walking away with valuable belongings (Delhi News, 1996).
- Some of the families were told by Saudi Airlines that their relatives were not on the flight, as 38 of the passengers were carrying fake passports and travel documents. Because of this, the families of the victims who were travelling on fake passports could not claim payment or compensation (Indian Express, New Delhi, 1996).
- The Saudi officials came to the hospital with 11 coffins for their crew, while the relatives of victims were not able to afford the high cost of coffins (The Times of India News, 1996).
- Many relatives complained of harassment at the hands of the hospital staff and claimed that staff in the hospital were asking for an enormous sum of money to hand over the bodies (Statesman News Service, 1996).

- Families faced difficulties in transferring the bodies to their homes because they could not afford the price of a car or plane ticket. The airline announced that they would refund the cost for anyone who had a receipt for an air ticket, train or accommodation. Furthermore, the Indian government asked SAA to pay compensation to the relatives (The Asian Age, 1996).
- Fifty-two bodies were still at the hospital. The families said that those who paid the mortuary staff were given the bodies first and faster, while the bodies were transported by car for a long distance (Kumar, 1996).
- Some relatives took bodies not belonging to them, and other relatives found the documentation belonging to their loved ones but were told that other people had already claimed the bodies (Statesman News Service, 1996).

16 November, 1996

- The grief of the relatives soon turned to anger. The cause of their anger was the Saudi Airline authorities; they said that none of the Saudi staff wanted to deal with them (The Hindustan Times, 1996).
- Saudi Airlines was to make arrangements for the bodies to be sent back to Bihar. However, there was no Saudi official at the airport to assist the relatives (The Hindustan Times, 1996).

17 November, 1996

- Some of the families were digging for four days searching for their relatives amid the smell of decaying bodies. 52 bodies were still on the hospital floor, packed with melted ice (Srivastava, 1996).

18 November, 1996

- A Saudi Arabian Airline official said: *“More than 95 claim forms have already been distributed to individuals who have suffered a personal loss of a close family member”*. He also said: *“We are eager to assist those affected by the disaster and will do our best to make the claim procedure as convenient as possible”* (The Hindustan Times, 1996).

19 November, 1996

- A Saudi official said: *“There will be no discrimination at all between nationalities and the compensation will be the same”* (Sinha, 1996).
- The Saudi Arabian Airlines official told the relatives that there should not be any hurry in performing the last rites and that time should be given for the proper identification of the 52 bodies in the hospital (Das, 1996).
- The airline cited compensation of \$10,000 to 20,000 per ticket (Delhi Mid Day, 1996).
- The airline asked for the certificate of death to be attached to the compensation form, along with proof of the next of kin relationship (Sinha, 1996).

20 November, 1996

- The airport authority of India appealed to the relatives of the passengers to come forward to identify the bodies kept in the hospital (Statesman News Service, 1996).
- The Indian government stated: *“It is becoming increasingly difficult to identify the bodies as they are in an advanced stage of decomposition”* (Statesman News Service, 1996).

- An Indian official said: *“The Saudis, who were noticeable by their absence while the bodies of the Indian workers were being taken by their relatives, apparently made an exception for an American who was looking for the body of her mother, also a passenger of the aircraft”* (Statesman News Service, 1996).
- Saudi Airlines claimed five bodies, but they found that one of the bodies was not one of their crew members.
- An Indian official said: *“The remaining bodies at the hospital were mostly of males and so those bodies which were still unidentified will be kept aside for a Muslim burial while the others will be cremated in joint Christian, Hindu and Muslim rituals after consulting the respective religious leaders”* (Statesman News Service, 1996).
- The Indian official stated: *“Most of the families are poor, which is why they not only had to think how to get to Delhi to claim the bodies, but also how to take the body back home. These people clearly have a problem to deal with the situation”* (Express News Service, 1996).
- Some of the relatives said that they did not hear about the accident and no one informed them. The worst was when some of the relatives *“found that a body was claimed and buried by someone else in Dadri”* (Express News Service, 1996).
- Saudi Arabian Airlines brought in a team of experts from the UK to speed up the identification of the bodies of the crash victims (Express News Service, 1996).
- The official spokesperson of the airline said: *“It is our duty to help with the speedy identification and the return of bodies of victims to their families as quickly as is physically possible”* (The Economic Times Mumbai, 1996).

- The Indian government sent an appreciation letter to Saudi Airlines for their efforts in extending their cooperation to the hospital and other agencies of the state (The Hindu, 1996).
- Saudi Arabian Airlines stated that they were trying to do their best to help with identifying and returning the maximum number of bodies to the relatives for the last rites (The Hindu, 1996).

21 November, 1996

- The bodies, which had started to decompose, were kept at the hospital with no storage (The Hindu, 1996).
- Saudi Arabian Airlines said that they could not deal with the Indians because of differences in languages, culture, laws and education. The airline transferred all the Indian relatives of the victims to a lawyer who could speak the language and had the same culture (The Asian Age 5, 1996).
- A public notice was released by Saudi Arabian Airlines to the effect that there were three offices from which compensation forms could be obtained: Saudi Arabian Airlines Control Room in Indira Gandhi International Airport, New Delhi; Saudi Airlines City Office, New Delhi; and the office of the lawyer who was going to deal with all the legal papers (The Hindustan News, 1996).

22 November, 1996

- The lawyer for Saudi Arabian Airlines said: *“We are going by the Warsaw Convention which stipulates that a maximum of \$20,000 has to be paid for compensation”*. He continued: *“We are, however, not going to take a strictly legalistic approach to paying compensation and will speed up the process of payment”* (Ali, 1996).

- The Indian official said that Indian law would not allow Saudi Airlines to get away with paying only a small amount of compensation (The Times of India, 1996).
- Fifty-two unidentified bodies were still lying rotting and unclaimed in the mortuary (The Times of India, 1996).

24 November, 1996

- An official from Saudi Airlines confirmed that the airline would cover the funeral costs for the Indian victims (The News Time, 1996).
- He went on to say: *“The gesture was purely humanitarian and had nothing to do with the demands for compensation from the families of the victims; it is the least the company can do to ease the suffering of the families”* (The Asian Age, 1996).

25 November, 1996

- An Indian official stated that family members were finding it quite difficult to overcome procedural difficulties while dealing with the Saudi authorities (Business Standard, 1996).
- Saudi Arabian Airlines announced that it would offer all help to the farmers in Charkhi Dadri whose fields were damaged as a result of the oil spillage from its Boeing 747 after the crash (Express News Service, 1996).
- The airline’s support team had already secured death certificates for all the victims from the authorities at the crash site. This would help in speeding up the compensation (Express News Service, 1996).
- The tragedy of the relatives of the 351 dead passengers continued. The impossibility of correctly identifying the charred bodies of the victims

added to their loss as they were even denied the comfort of performing the last rites (The Hindu, 1996).

28 November, 1996

- The last rites were performed for the 41 unidentified and unclaimed bodies of the Charkhi Dadri air crash victims (The Hindustan Times, 1996).
- There was one burial where there were only volunteers surrounding the dead, and no families. As bodies were brought in trucks, coffins were brought down and carried to the burial site where large graves had been dug for mass burial (The Time of India, 1996).
- Talking about the Islamic burial practice, the Imam said: *“Normally a body is wrapped in a piece of cloth (kafan) but if a person dies a death that disfigures the body, coffins are used”* (The Time of India, 1996).
- Police stated that one of the families came to Delhi to claim the body after the burial and cremation were over but the body had already been claimed by someone from Charkhi Dadri (The Pioneer, 1996).
- The Civil Aviation Minister, C.M. Ibrahim, regretted that Saudi Arabian Airlines did not perform its duty to the victims and their relatives (The Free Press Journal, 1996).

30 November, 1996

- The Muslim committees informed Saudi Arabian Airlines that the religious ceremonies held 40 days after the death of an individual, had been fixed for 22nd December 1996. They added: *“We expect Saudi Arabian Airlines personnel to attend this religious ceremony”*.

1 December, 1996

- A Supreme Court lawyer had written in the Indian Express News that the *“assessment of compensation normally made by lawyers should be changed to take into account that poor persons stand to lose more by the death of their breadwinners”*. He also said that *“the pain and suffering aspect of the passengers following to the accident should be considered as well”*.

10 December, 1996

- An Indian official asked the airline to send a condolence message to the relatives to *“inform them about this disastrous incident and send condolences which could be a good support for the relatives”*.
- He also stated that most of the victims belonged to poor families who might not have sufficient money to meet the travelling expenses.

26 February, 1997

The Indian Muslims asked Saudi Arabian airlines for:

- A boundary wall to be constructed at Charkhi Dadri Yard where about 80 crash victims of Saudi Arabian Airlines had been buried.
- The repair of Masjid (Mosque) at Charkhi Dadri town.
- The construction of a monument in memory of the air crash victims at Charkhi Dadri.
- A Madarasa (Islamic School) for religious and science teaching to be built at Charkhi Dadri.

- The lawyer for the airline said: *“Families are fighting over the compensation and are trying to edge out the widow in the share of the compensation”* (Sinha, 1997).
- The definition of the family, given in the Carriage by Air Act (which governs the settlement claims), includes the husband, wife, parents, children, grandparents, stepchildren, sisters, brothers, half-brothers and half-sisters (Sinha, 1997).

9 May, 1997

- An Indian official said: *“The Saudis discriminate against Hindu Indians in terms of refusing visas for entering their country”*. He went on to say that job opportunities were limited only to Muslims and Christians. An official pointed out that if an Indian went to Saudi Arabia and died there, his body could not be buried there. The body had to go back to India (The Indian Express, 1997).
- The Indian official also stated that no Saudi official was present to help the relatives to identify and retrieve the bodies of the crash victims. Even compensation paid to the relatives was not enough (The Indian Express, 1997).

In the above accident there was no formal family assistance because the family assistance concept was new and was not established in most of the countries in the Middle East and other countries around the world. The airline was not ready and not prepared to respond to a disaster. However, it did its best to assist the families of victims but, since the accident occurred in a different country, the accident site was under the control of the Indian Civil Aviation authorities and the Indian Police. Nonetheless, a great deal was lacking, including:

1. The response from the Indian government was not timely and the victims' belongings were not safeguarded (there was no security at the accident site).
2. The victims' bodies stayed too long in an open area (no body storage).
3. There was no body identification, transportation, phones or food, and families of victims were abused.
4. Families of victims had to pay high prices for coffins and to speed up the death certificates issuance (i.e. bribery).
5. The airline did not have a sufficient number of family assistance team members and was not prepared.
6. There were difficulties regarding communication (language barriers).
7. Differences of culture, religion and ethical sensitivities existed.
8. Pressure was placed on the airline, employees from the media and the large number of families who were looking for information.
9. There were problems with the families of victims with regard to identification and applicable laws.
10. The families of victims had to be transferred to a lawyer due to differences in legal practices and language, as well as culture.
11. 38 of the passengers were carrying fake passports and travel documents.

From the details of the Delhi accident, as outlined above, airlines should be ready to respond to accidents by assisting the families of victims at any time. Responses to an accident will involve the airline and different organisations and

agencies although the airline will be responsible for the accident and for assisting the families of victims. Therefore, having a formal family assistance plan and a well trained family assistance team is very important. Saudi Arabian Airlines learned a lesson from that accident and started work on the implementation of a family assistance plan. However, the airline applied a family support plan that had been designed by countries that have different cultures, religions, ethical sensitivities, education, economies and traditions. After the accident, Saudi Arabian Airlines started to train its employees to design its own family assistance team and family assistance guidelines. At this time, the airline trained more than 500 employees to be ready to respond to an accident. However, these employees were trained by an international company whose trainers also had different religions, cultures and ethical sensitivities, even though a failure to consider these three factors might well add more pain and distress to the families of victims and adversely affect the airline. Therefore studying and reviewing culture, religion and ethical sensitivities could be helpful and could clarify their importance and their impact on family assistance. These factors are discussed in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

2.14 Summary

From the definitions of family assistance offered above, from the aims of this research and from examinations of previous accidents, it is clear that a formal family assistance plan is one of the most important requirements after a disaster. Thus, applying family assistance guidelines designed by countries that have different cultures, religions, ethical sensitivities, education systems, economies and traditions without making modifications could be wrong or might affect the support that is offered. Al-Omari acknowledged that: "*Culture must become a factor in considering business options, solutions, tactics, and potential challenges*" (Al-Omari, 2003, p.8). For example, making a computer in Japan with the Japanese alphabet and then giving it to someone who speaks English or another different language is not be helpful. Family assistance is a humanitarian issue and families of victims need all kinds of support, such as

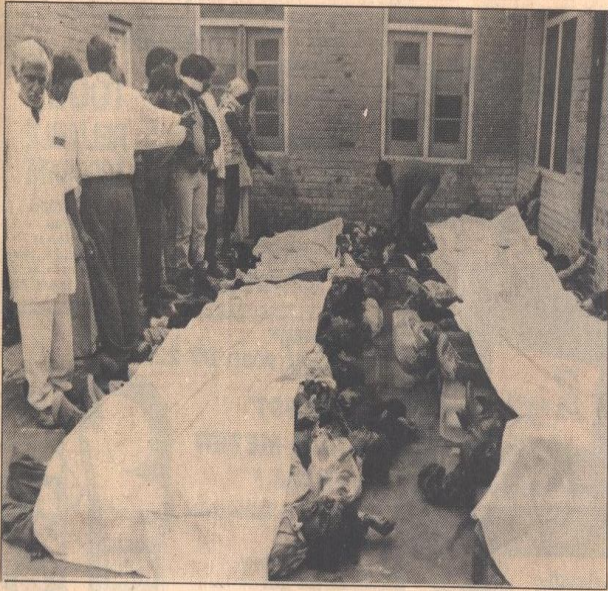
guidance, assistance, financial support and compassion so, giving due consideration to their culture, religion and ethical sensitivities will be helpful and will prevent confusion.

People revert to their religion and culture in happiness, sickness and death. For example, in death, people follow their religion in cleaning and preparing the body. In sickness, people pray for the sick person or sometimes they may bring in a religious person to offer prayers. In times of happiness, such as marriage, people go to the Massjed (the place of prayer for Muslims, known in English as a Mosque or Church) and some times they may invite a religious leader to a wedding. The International Criminal Police Organisation (Interpol) (1997) noted: *“Each religious faith and ethnic culture has its own ethical considerations when dealing with the dead and dying. It is not possible to list the requirements and expectations of each individual denomination or persuasion in this Guide, but the importance of sensitivity and understanding when dealing with all victims should never be overlooked”* (Criminal Police Organisation Interpol, 1997). However, airlines should be prepared to respond to accidents by providing well-trained employees (i.e. family assistance team members). The family assistance team should be trained in how to deal with the families of victims after a disaster with a consideration of their cultures, religions and ethical sensitivities. The team members should also be open-minded while dealing with families of victims who come from different backgrounds and are passing through a critical time. The impact of culture, religion and ethical sensitivities have been studied in many different areas, such as in management, business, health, international relations, aviation, human factors and customer interaction. The above three factors have a strong effect on people’s interactions and are important in studying and understanding their impact on the provision of family assistance after a disaster. However, there is no evidence that the current family assistance guidelines used by airline companies in Muslim countries in the Middle East that the influence of the above three factors is considered. The researcher confidentially viewed a number of family assistance guidelines used by airlines in the Middle East but none of those available considered culture,

religion or ethical sensitivities. To improve the current family assistance guidelines the above three factors should be studied and carefully considered.

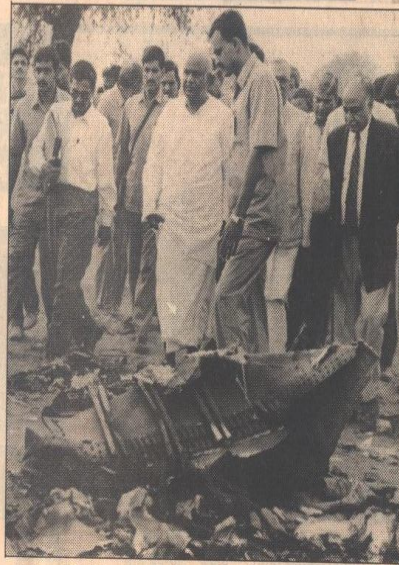
However, as mentioned previously, there is currently no evidence of any published family assistance guidelines that consider specifically culture, religion or ethical sensitivities. Therefore, to find out whether or not these three factors are important, it is necessary to talk to people in the field (i.e. experts) who were involved in previous accidents in order to obtain their opinions and, ask if they think that these three factors are indeed important. It is crucial to ask why and what experience they have in this regard.

**The following section
contains pictures
from the accident of
flight 763, which may
be upsetting**



Relatives of crash victims identifying bodies at the civil hospital in Charkhi Dadri town in Bhiwani district of Haryana on Wednesday. — HT photo by Sanjay Sharma

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES, NEW DELHI, THURSDAY NOVEMBER 14 1996 CITY 3

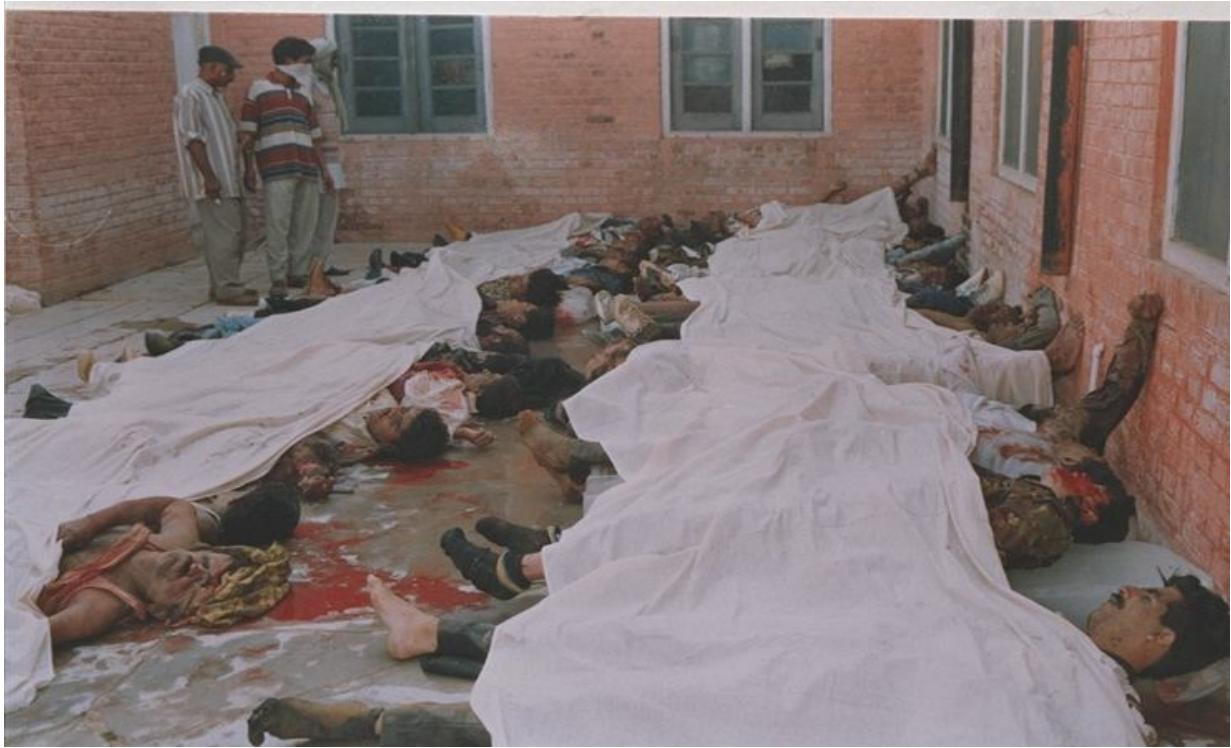


Prime Minister H. D. Deve Gowda inspecting the air crash site at Charkhi Dadri on Wednesday. — HT photo

Newspaper Clipping
The Hindustan Times

14 November 1996





THE HINDUSTAN TIMES, NEW DELHI, TUESDAY NOVEMBER 19 1996

Crash victims' bodies lying unclaimed

HT Correspondent

NEW DELHI, Nov. 18
Fifty-eight bodies from among the 351 victims of the mid-air collision between a Saudi Arabian Boeing 747 and a chartered Kazakh IL-76 on Nov. 12 are lying unclaimed at the mortuaries of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) and the Lady Hardinge Medical College.

There are 41 unclaimed bodies at AIIMS, while 17 bodies are lying at the Lady Hardinge Medical College.

A spokesman of the Airports Authority of India said that relatives of crash victims were requested to identify the bodies at the two hospitals by tomorrow morning.

The last rites of the unclaimed bodies would be performed tomorrow afternoon.

Control rooms have been set up at both hospitals to answer queries of relatives and friends of the crash victims wanting to identify the bodies. The telephone numbers of the control rooms are: 6862279 (AIIMS) and 3362088 (Lady Hardinge).

Meanwhile, an AIIMS spokesman said eight bodies and two packets containing mutilated parts of bodies were received by the institute last night. With this, the total number of bodies sent to the AIIMS mortuary since Nov. 14 has risen to 114. Of these, only 36 have been identified and handed over to the relatives.

CONTROL ROOM: The Saudia Airlines has set up a special control room at Room No. 9 of the admi-





A looting spree at accident site

ATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

ARKHI DADRI (Haryana),
13. — At a time when
the entire population of
villages were engaged in
retrieving bodies of the
killed passengers of the two
planes, there was a group of
hoodlums who were busy
looting the area and robbing
the dead of their
valuables.

A few of the relatives of the
victims, who visited the site to
identify the bodies, alleged that
a looting spree had taken
place by the local residents
who were allegedly seen taking
valuables from the bodies.
They did not even spare the
clothes. In the name of collecting
valuables, they ransacked the area
over four square kilo-
metres where bodies and parts

of the 747 Boeing of the Saudi
Arabian Airlines were strewn",
alleged Shekh Mohammad
Abdullah, who lost his sister
Farah in the plane crash.

Mr Abdullah could not get
the body of his sister since most
of the bodies were charred
beyond recognition. "I could
only recognize her leather
purse, which had been left with
no money and valuables inside
it," he said.

Even the senior police offi-
cers supervising the areas ad-
mitted that there have been
stray incidents of "robbing the
dead". "We do not rule out the
possibility. Since the villagers
were the first to reach the
accident site last night, there
are every possibility that some
of them resorted to such act,"
said the Deputy
Inspector-General, Bhiwani
Range, Mr Virender Bahadur

Singh.

Empty wallets lying in the
radius of three kilometres
where bodies were strewn gives
testimony to this disgrace. "I
saw schoolchildren exchanging
notes of 100 Riyal with some
rupees with the shopkeepers",
said Mr Mansoor who was
searching for the body of his
wife.

"It was only after the Army
cordoned off the area at 9.30
a.m. today, that the intrusion of
villagers stopped. They should
search the neighbouring area
from where the hoodlums had
come", demanded Mohammad
Abdul.


Another, Mr Rahman, whose
brother going for overseas em-
ployment lost his life in the
crash, alleged, "I noticed a man
pocketing a gold chain from a
dead woman. And when I

objected a constable came for-
ward and asked the man to go
away".

Explaining their position, the
area police blamed the circum-
stances under which the crash
took place. "By the time police
reached, the hoodlums might
have taken away the valuables
taking advantage of the night.
To cordon off the four square
kilometre spread area we need
at least five to six companies.
We had no option but to
depend upon the villagers for
the clearing up operation. And
all the villagers were not as bad
as projected. They worked the
whole night helping the police.
Somebody got a purse contain-
ing \$1,400 and he gave the
money to the police officials.
You cannot blame the entire
community for a few
aberrations", a senior police
officer said.



of those on board the Saudi Arabian Airlines being brought to the Dadri General Hospital in a trailer by volunteers on Wednesday.

CHAPTER 

**RESEARCH
METHODOLOGY**

3 Research Methodology

As discussed in Chapter 1, this research aims to help Saudi Arabian Airlines and other airlines improve their current family assistance guidelines. Having reviewed the available family assistance guidelines adopted by Saudi Arabian Airlines, the researcher noted that culture, religion and ethical sensitivities are not considered in the current family support plan and researcher has, therefore, chosen to undertake further research work into this issue. The researcher discovered that other airlines in the Middle East do not accord any consideration to culture, religion and ethical sensitivities; researcher also found that airlines in Muslim countries around the world have the same problem, as almost all airline companies in Muslim countries use family assistance guidelines developed by international companies whose instructors train airline employees in the Middle East and the Muslim world. Hence, the researcher has found no evidence of any family assistance plans worldwide that acknowledge the three factors in detail.

The study obtained this information from airline employees in the Middle Eastern countries, as well as from employees of other airlines in Muslim countries outside the Middle East. Some airlines refused to allow the researcher to view their family assistance guidelines as they consider them confidential documents. The researcher attended a family assistance training course in Malaysia organised by the Family Assistance Foundation (an American company) for Malaysian Airlines and other employees from other different airlines in Asia, as well as another course in London for Saudi Arabian Airlines organised by Kenyon International (another American company).

The findings of this study suit the needs of Muslim people in the Middle Eastern region who share the same religion, as Islam directs their lives. Not only that, but this study will be very helpful for all Muslims around the world. To be successful in assisting Muslim families, the airline has to be aware of the fact that Islam is a key issue. The primary goal of this research is to promote an understanding of the family support philosophy, as well as the importance of

culture, religion and ethical sensitivities, which play a key role in the lives of all people. Underlining the impact of these issues on the current family assistance guidelines will help the airlines to provide better services, and to improve the assistance offered to the families of victims in aviation accidents by improving their current family assistance guidelines. The second goal of this research is to upgrade or enhance the family assistance plans that are currently used by Middle Eastern airlines.

The methodology developed in this study is largely determined by the research objectives stated in Section 1.1.1; it seeks to answer the following research questions:

Question 1: *What is the performance of the family assistance framework currently implemented by airline companies in Middle Eastern countries?*

Question 2: *What are the critical success factors for implementing a family assistance framework designed by international service companies for Muslims in the Middle Eastern countries?*

Question 3: *What are the importance, impact and sensitivity of the critical factors (i.e. culture, religion and ethical sensitivities) on the current family assistance?*

Question 4: *What kinds of relationships exist between the critical success factors and the assistance of families that could be considered in order to create a more suitable family assistance framework for Muslims in the Middle Eastern countries?*

Three types of survey are required (see Figure 4) in order to answer the four main questions in this research study and, as a result, to improve or perhaps extend the family assistance guidelines which are currently used by the Middle Eastern airline companies. The first survey was directed at populations to discover their needs and expectations after an aviation accident and also to find out what they felt was important and what was not. The second survey, or

interviews, focused on experts from different airline companies in the Middle Eastern countries. Religious leaders from different countries in the Middle East were also interviewed in order to validate the collected data. The third survey was sent to experts from different airlines and recovery companies who provide services after a disaster in order to show the importance and impact of culture, religion and ethical sensitivities in general after an aviation disaster.

The aim of the surveys was, as highlighted in the questions above, to identify the needs of the families of victims in Middle Eastern countries after an air disaster. The surveys also attempted to discover the impact of culture, religion and ethical sensitivities on the way the families of victims are supported after such an accident. Furthermore, identifying the needs of those populations in the Middle East will improve the current family assistance guidelines. After any disaster, a relationship will exist between the families of victims and the airline's family assistance teams as the family will need assistance and support at such a difficult time and the airline will provide that support. However, the support should be tailored to suit the families of victims and to respect their culture, their ethical sensitivities and their religion. Airlines should be ready and should have knowledge of their passengers' backgrounds, as that knowledge will help the airline to understand the families' needs. Airlines should be prepared and should obtain this knowledge before a disaster occurs, not during or after the accident. The following figure explains the steps of the methodology:

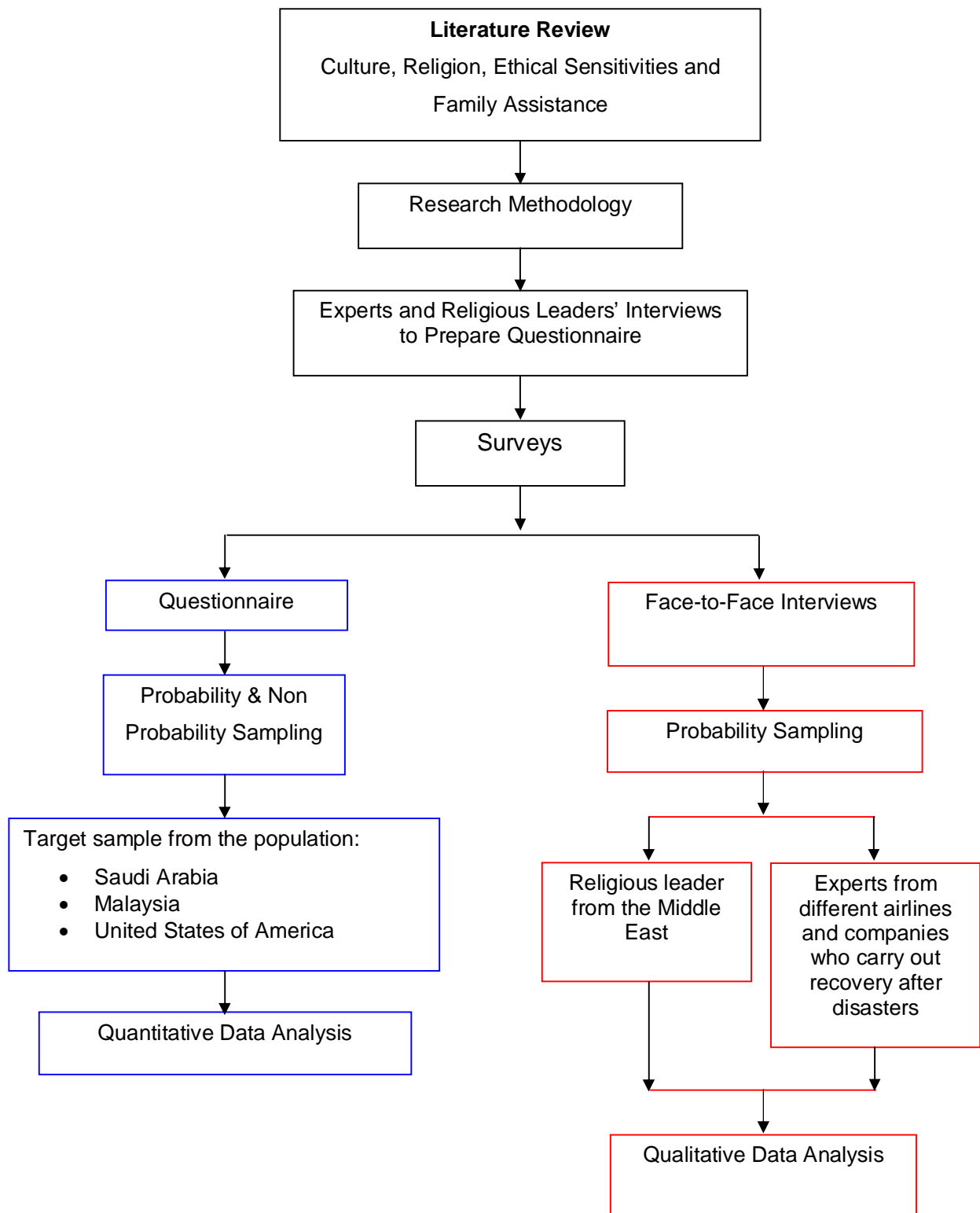


Figure 4: Research Methodology and the Designed Surveys

The following sections include the definitions of the steps of the research methodology:

3.1 Survey

According to Tanur (1982), a survey means: “*gathering information about the characteristics, actions, or opinions of a large group of people, referred to as a population*”. Surveys use questionnaires or interviews for data collection with the intention of estimating the characteristics of a large population of interest based on a smaller sample from that population. Surveys can measure attitudes and preferences, past experiences, beliefs, future predictions, levels of knowledge and census information. For surveys to provide useful information, care must be taken in their development and use for a number of reasons, discussed below. Limits are imposed by the time, resources and budget available.

Taking account of the study’s purpose and objectives, as a result of the literature review, and talking to people in the field regarding investigating the impact of critical factors on family assistance in Middle Eastern countries, the researcher decided to use both quantitative and qualitative survey methods in a design in which each plays its own special part. A combination of research methods is often used in order to improve both the reliability and the validity of the data gathered. Kaplan and Duchon (1988) noted that: “*No one approach to research can provide the richness needed to cover the whole research context*” (Kaplan and Duchon, 1988).

3.2 Questionnaire

Questionnaires are the best means to use in order to obtain information from a large number of people. Martyn (1998) defined questionnaires as a way to “*gather information by asking people directly about the points concerned with*

the research. Questionnaires work on the premise that if you want to find out something about people and their attitudes you simply go and ask them what it is you want to know, and get the information (straight from the horse's mouth)" (Martyn, 1998).

There are two types of questionnaire:

3.2.1 Open questions

An open question gives respondents a chance to write their answers in their own words. The answers may be long or short, and the researcher does not control the respondents' answers. Martyn (1998) acknowledged that: "*Open questions are those that leave the respondent to decide the wording of the answer, the length of the answer and the kind of matters to be raised in the answer*". Martyn also noted: "*The questions tend to be short and the answers tend to be long*" (Martyn, 1998, pp 155). The respondents will, therefore, give rich information that the researcher might not have thought about.

3.2.2 Closed questions

A closed question controls the answer of the respondent, such as: Yes, No, Age, Choose one of the following; this helps the researcher to obtain the exact information he/she is looking for. Martyn (1998) noted that: "*The researcher, in this case, instructs the respondent to answer by selecting from a range of two or more options supplied on the questionnaire*" (Martyn, 1998, pp 155).

3.2.3 Questionnaire design

The purpose of the questionnaire design is to change the research objectives into exact questions. The replies to those questions should provide data which

can answer all or some of the research questions. Yin (2002) described research design as “*an action plan for getting from here to there*”. Therefore, “here” could be defined as the first set of questions to be answered and “there” as a set of conclusions (i.e. the response) to these questions. The planning and design of the questionnaire is very important and there is a routine for questionnaire design involving:

- Background information about the questionnaire:
 1. The sponsor: Under whose auspices is the research being undertaken?
 2. The purpose: What is the questionnaire for, and how will the information be used?
 3. Confidentiality.
 4. Voluntary responses.
 5. Thanks to the respondent.

A thorough literature review concerning the needs of families of victims after an aviation disaster had been presented and a number of the currently available family assistance plans applied by Middle Eastern airline companies in different countries have been cited, in order to elicit significant information. However, this was not enough to design the questionnaires so the researcher decided to investigate the findings with experts in the field and with religious leaders in the Middle Eastern countries, in order to ensure that the questions were properly prepared to obtain reliable data. The researcher therefore carried out thorough interviews with experts from different countries in the Middle East to learn what is important and what is not for Muslim families of victims after a disaster. For example, experts from airlines were asked about the current family assistance plans, whether or not these included considerations of culture and religion, and if these factors were important or not. Also, previous accidents, such as the case of the Saudi Arabian Airline accident in India, and the current family

assistance guidelines, were reviewed in order to find what was missing. This was very helpful in designing appropriate questions for experts and for the surveyed populations.

3.2.4 Creating a Valid Questionnaire

A valid questionnaire design is important to the success of a survey. Unsuitable questions, inaccurate ordering of questions, wrong scaling, or an inadequate questionnaire format can render the survey worthless. A poorly designed questionnaire can be the main source of non-sampling errors and can influence the response rate achieved in the survey. Robson (1993) and Fowler (1984) acknowledged that the key points of a good questionnaire are as follows:

- *“Questions should be understandable, exact, short, simple and fast to fill in.*
- *Questions should be interesting to the respondents and stimulate them to give the required information.*
- *A good question leaves no confusion in the mind of the respondent.*
- *Questions should not be intimidating.*
- *Good questions will give reliable and suitable information.*
- *The questionnaire should respect respondents’ dignity and privacy.*
- *The questionnaire should not “re-invent the wheel” where previous studies have provided satisfactory question design models.”*

Thus, the questionnaires in this research were planned to collect information about what is important and what is not, as well as the impact of culture, religion and ethical sensitivities on the current family support plans used by Middle Eastern countries. This is very important in assessing the needs of the families of victims after a disaster.

3.3 Sampling

There are two kinds of sampling that can be used by social researchers:

3.3.1 Probability Sampling:

This kind of sampling is chosen because the researcher is somewhat familiar with the three populations with regard to, for instance, their culture and religion. Probability sampling is defined by Martyn (1998) as: *“Probability sampling as the name suggests, is based on the idea that the people or events that are chosen as the sample are chosen because the researcher has some notion of the probability that these will be a representative cross-section of people or events in the whole population being studied”* (Martyn, 1998, pp 12).

3.3.2 Non-Probability Sampling:

Martyn (1998) stated that: *“Non-probability sampling is conducted without such knowledge about whether those included in the sample are representative of the overall population”* (Martyn, 1998, pp12).

3.4 Quantitative Surveys for the Population

This research uses both quantitative and qualitative survey methods. Quantitative methods involve making an inquiry into an identified problem with the aim of producing data in the form of numbers. These data are then analysed using statistical techniques. Babbie (1995) defined the quantitative method as: *“The numerical representation and manipulation of observations for the purpose of describing and explaining the phenomena that those observations reflect”*. Such research tends to involve a large number of individuals drawn from a population and selected in a controlled way. Quantitative methods provide a

base for making formal conclusions about populations while qualitative methods often provide important insights into factors underlying quantitative findings.

This survey was designed to discover the needs and expectations of people in Middle Eastern countries who share the same religion, (Islam), and, in some ways, the same culture. From the Middle East, the researcher selected Saudi Arabia because it is a Muslim country and largely similar to other Muslim countries around the world; it is also the land where Islam started and it has the two holy cities and the Holy Mosque. The researcher also selected Malaysia in order to consider the differences between the two populations (Malaysian and Saudi Arabia) which share the same religion (Islam) but have totally different cultures. These selections helped to ascertain whether it is worthwhile considering culture, religion or both in dealing with the dead. Furthermore, the differences between the cultures, religions and ethical sensitivities of the three countries (the U.S, Saudi Arabia and Malaysia) are also highlighted. From the surveys, the following direct questions are answered with the aim of improving or extending the current family assistance guidelines. These questions include:

- What kind of support will the families of the victims of an aviation disaster be looking for?
- What is important and what is not?
- Does it make any difference if the family is supported by males or females?
- What is the importance of religious leaders?
- What are the influences of culture, ethical sensitivities and religion on the way families are supported?

The reason for choosing the above mentioned countries is that Saudi Arabia is a Muslim country where an entirely Arab culture is dominant; Malaysia is also a Muslim country, as is Saudi Arabia, but it has a totally different culture. The U.S. is a country with different religions, ethical sensitivities and culture when

compared with both Saudi Arabia and Malaysia. Nevertheless, the family assistance plans used by Saudi Arabian Airlines and Malaysian Airlines are both based on family assistance plans developed by and for the U.S. airline companies, and, as previously mentioned, employees of Saudi Arabian Airlines and Malaysian Airlines are trained by American companies. Cultural, religious and ethical sensitivity factors are, consequently, not considered in any family assistance guidelines or related training programmes of Saudi Arabian Airlines and Malaysian Airlines.

Family support following aircraft accidents clearly has the potential to be a sensitive subject. Therefore care was needed to ensure that data were collected ethically and by causing no harm to the people involved in this study. It was very important to have the ethical clearance as explained in appendix A.

3.4.1 Saudi Arabian Population

First of all, the designed survey was translated from English into Arabic as this is the language spoken by respondents from Saudi Arabia. Based on the pilot study, the researcher found that it was difficult for some participants to understand some of the vocabulary in the survey which made it difficult for them to answer most of the questions. Thus, the translation was carried out in order to make it much easier for the respondents to read and answer the questions confidently.

It was predicted that conducting the survey in Saudi Arabia would face some difficulties due to the Kingdom's culture and religion, such as the segregation of females from males in all public places, such as schools, government offices, banks and private companies. It is also culturally unacceptable for Saudis to have any sort of contact with someone from the opposite sex in public places; this made it impossible to distribute the surveys in such places as shopping centres and mosques. Furthermore, it is not allowed for a man to converse with women in public places due to restrictions relating to cultural, religious and

ethical sensitivity factors. As a result, the only workplaces where males and females can work together are hospitals. Therefore, the researcher decided to conduct the population survey in a hospital. A hospital has a large number of employees with different levels of education, different social levels and from different backgrounds. Their participation therefore enhanced the credibility of the survey.

The chosen hospital was King Faysal Hospital in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, which is considered to be one of the biggest hospitals in Jeddah. The Managing Director of King Faysal Hospital agreed to distribute the survey to the hospital's employees. The number of Saudi employees totalled 638, comprising 322 females and 316 males. The survey was distributed to two hundred employees from 54 departments.

3.4.2 Malaysian Population

As mentioned previously, Malaysia is a Muslim country, as is Saudi Arabia, but with a different culture (the Asian culture). This helped in discovering the importance of religion and culture, and finding out which is more important. It also eventually gave a clear indication of what people are most concerned about after an aviation accident, as well as helping to find out if Muslims should be treated according to their religion or culture.

Between the 29th and 30th of November 2007, the researcher attended a Family Assistance Foundation workshop (organised by American companies) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Then, it was agreed with the senior manager of the emergency management centre and operation control division in the Malaysian airline, Mohd Fuad Mohdsharuji, to distribute the survey among Malaysians at Kuala Lumpur airport. Therefore, 200 surveys were also distributed in Malaysia.

3.4.3 U.S. Population

The United States of America is a country with different cultures, religions and ethical sensitivities in comparison to both Saudi Arabia and Malaysia. Generally, most of the airline companies in the Middle Eastern countries have contracts with American companies (i.e. international recovery companies) in order to respond to and assist families of victims on behalf of the airline if an accident occurs. Also, these companies provide family assistance training to the employees of Middle Eastern airlines.

Between the 12th and 13th of February 2008, the researcher attended a training course provided by an international recovery company (a worldwide company) in London, UK. The training course was especially designed for airlines from Middle Eastern countries. From the training course materials, the researcher concluded that there was a general failure to highlight cultural, religious and ethical sensitivity factors in the course material. Therefore, the survey aimed to highlight the differences between the three populations (i.e. the U.S., Saudi and Malaysia respondents) with the aim of explaining the importance of cultural, religious and ethical sensitivity factors in supporting the families of victims after an aviation accident.

Carolyn V. Coarsey is the Manager of the Family Assistance Foundation Company, a non-profitable organisation, in Atlanta, U.S. Her organisation provides support to the families of victims after aviation disasters and therefore she has a good relationship with the families of victims who have experienced such an accident. The researcher was invited to attend a symposium between the 8th and 9th of April 2008. Coarsey kindly agreed to distribute the survey during that symposium which was attended by a large number of American families who had experienced previous accidents and were, therefore, capable of providing valid information. They were also able to contribute to underlining the importance of cultural, religious and ethical sensitivity factors after a disaster. Moreover, the audience could identify the differences in the needs of families in the U.S. versus the needs of families from the Middle East in terms of

culture, ethical sensitivities and religion. Also they were able to help indicate whether or not culture and religion are important in providing help after a disaster.

The three representative populations came from different demographic groups: the Malaysians were airline passengers, the Saudis were employees from different levels and departments in a hospital, and the U.S respondents were actually family members of victims. These differences may or may not have affected the results but this was out of the researcher's hands and so, finally, it can only be said that these data will help in offering a greater understanding of the focus of the research.

However, the U.S representatives had first-hand experience of previous accidents, as they came from the families of accident victims. This was therefore very helpful as these people had actually faced the situation and knew what was important and what was not; in short, they knew exactly what they needed after a disaster.

3.4.4 Pilot Study

For the pilot study, the researcher prepared a number of questions based on the literature review concerning family assistance, previous accidents and interviews with experts and religious leaders from Middle Eastern countries. The researcher included 75 questions in the design of the questionnaire but, after distributing the questionnaire to 20 people, it was found that a number did not respond to all the questions. Generally, they responded to 20 – 35 questions and only three respondents finished the questionnaire. Therefore the researcher reduced the number of questions in the questionnaire to 25; these were selected carefully and took into account the opinions of the experts and the religious leaders. Furthermore, some questions were not clear to the respondents and, in such cases, the researcher changed the way the question

was asked. The questionnaire was sent to Saudi Arabia to be translated from English to Arabic by a company which specialises in this kind of translation.

3.5 Sampling and Data Collection

Individuals from Saudi Arabia, the United States of America and Malaysia were selected for the above mentioned reasons to participate in this research. Specifically, every attempt was made to accomplish a broad distribution across the demographic categories of gender, age and education. A total of 600 surveys were initially distributed, 200 survey for each country. Martyn (1998) acknowledged that: "*The use of the survey in social research does not necessarily have to involve samples of 1,000 or 2,000 people or events*" (Martyn, 1998 pp 24). Therefore the researcher sent 200 surveys to each country. Martyn also suggested that: "*Whatever the theoretical issues, the sample fact is that survey and sampling are frequently used in small-scale research involving **between 30 and 250 cases***" (Martyn, 1998, pp 24). From the total of 600 distributed surveys, 324 were returned usable, yielding an overall response rate of 54%. The sample sizes and response rates for each country were as follows: 90 Saudi Arabian surveys elicited a response rate of 45%, the 94 USA surveys had a response rate of 47% and, for Malaysia, 140 surveys were returned: a 70% response rate. Regarding response rate, Martyn (1998) noted: "*As rough guide, any social researcher will be lucky to get 20 per cent of the questionnaires returned*" (Martyn, 1998). The response rate from the three populations was very good and well above 20%.

The outcomes from the population survey, from the interviews with experts and religious leaders, and from the surveys of experts from different international recovery companies and from airlines world-wide, enabled the researcher to obtain valid information. Furthermore, the literature review concerning culture, religion, ethical sensitivities and current family assistance also added a sound understanding of the importance of considering these factors in the current family assistance plans since it is necessary to find out what kind of support the

families of victims need or look for. The importance of the involvement of both genders in an airline's family support team is investigated here, as well as whether it is important to have a female in the family support team or to separate genders in the support centre and why. An exploration of to what extent it is important to know how to communicate with the families of victims is also offered. Finally, the importance of knowing how to assist Muslim families or families of victims who embrace other religions is examined.

3.6 Qualitative Research Methods

Qualitative research is based on the idea that the most valuable information is obtained from a relatively small group of people or individuals who are significantly involved in the topic or issue in which the researcher is interested. This information provides an understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Qualitative research is defined by Strauss and Corbin (1990) as "*any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification*". Qualitative data is more "rich" but is time-consuming to obtain and less able to be generalised (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

Miles and Huberman (1994) acknowledged the importance of reliability and validity in qualitative research, just as much as in quantitative research. To enhance the reliability of qualitative research, sufficient time should be spent with the participants to get reliable information and to verify the accuracy of the responses (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). To maximise the validity of qualitative research, Scott (2003) recommended that multiple sources of information should be used to check for discrepancies in responses.

3.7 Quantitative Data Analysis

The researcher used a quantitative data analysis. This stage used statistical analysis for the responses of the survey data, and a variety of methods were applied in this stage. All returned questionnaires from the respondents were reviewed for the accuracy and quality of data. Total of 324 useable questionnaires were coded and entered into a preset SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) (version 17). Basic statistical analyses were conducted for the observation of frequencies average, percentages, (weighted) means, and standard deviations, relative weigh, as a method of data analysis.

3.7.1 Qualitative Survey Interviews for Experts and a Religious Leader

Asking experts about the importance and the impact of culture, religion and ethical sensitivities after aviation disasters adds more valid information to the research. Different airlines in the Middle East were targeted to obtain reliable information through conferring with experts who work for airlines that have experienced accidents in the past, such as Saudi Arabian Airlines, Gulf Air and Egypt Air. Furthermore, experts from Middle Eastern countries validated the collected data in order to obtain their opinions concerning whether or not the collected information would be helpful after a disaster.

The researcher also sought the counsel of various companies which specialise in assisting the families of victims after an aviation accident, as well as airlines and experts who responded to the survey from different countries around the world. The two questions were specially designed to examine the importance of culture, religion and ethical sensitivities, and how considering these three factors would improve the current family support plans. These companies were targeted as professionals in this survey, as shown in Appendix **C**.

An interview was conducted with religious leaders from Muslim countries in the Middle East. Since they were involved in previous aviation accidents, the information obtained from them effectively contributed to the findings of the research. They also played a major role in previous family assistance activities, due to their close relations with the people of the Middle Eastern region who both respect and trust them. Due to their religious education, religious leaders know how to deal appropriately with the families of victims as they generally know a lot about their society and how to deal with families in this situation.

Questionnaires were sent to and responses were received from experts by email. Some of the experts spoke English as their first language and therefore their responses are presented verbatim. Other experts came from the Middle Eastern countries and so the researcher went to see them face-to-face and conducted interviews with them based on the two questions.

First, the researcher recorded their responses by tape-recorder. All of these participants spoke English as second language but it was much easier to speak to them in Arabic. As a result, the recorded conversation was written on paper in Arabic and afterwards translated by the researcher into English; this took a great deal of time. Afterwards, the researcher took the translations to an expert to review and correct them. After this, all the responses from the airline experts were sent for proof reading.

3.7.2 Religious Leaders

Interviews with religious leaders from Muslim countries in the Middle East were conducted in order to determine the needs of the families of victims of aviation accidents. Religious leaders have different opinions and different ways of looking at things; also, they generally enjoy good relationships with their public. The interviews were carried out in an attempt to obtain valid information by asking questions regarding the importance and impact of culture, religion and ethical sensitivities on the families of victims. Religious leaders were also able

to validate the data collected from the populations. The main reason behind interviewing religious leaders was that they played a key role in helping the families of the victims of almost all previous aviation accidents. They are also acknowledged by all recovery companies, as well as by other organisations, such as the ICAO, NTSB and the Australian Family Assistance organisation.

For people in the Middle East, religion is very important. Capt. Saad, the Vice President the Safety Division of Saudi Arabian Airlines, recommended that recovery companies and western airlines should seek the help of psychologists and religious leaders to support the families of victims. However, in the Middle East, the involvement of a psychologist is usually undesirable as it is generally perceived that psychological disorders are closely related to mental ailments. It is mostly considered offensive to tell a person in the Middle East to seek the help of a psychologist. However, this depends on an individual's background, as Capt. Saad said in an interview.

Based on the literature review, it is evident that culture, religion and ethical sensitivities are very important but also difficult, particularly when interacting with people in a critical situation such as an aviation accident. Also, it is obvious from the review of the previous accidents that ignoring these factors may negatively affect the support provided by family assistance teams to the families of victims, as well as the airline business.

3.8 Data Sources used in the Research

The required data and related information were obtained from the following sources:

1. Operators:

- Saudi Arabian Airlines provided internal documents and reports pertaining to the accident that occurred in 1996. That accident is treated as a case study.

- Interviews were conducted with a number of managers from safety departments and family assistance centres in Middle Eastern airlines, namely Saudi Arabian Airlines and Egypt Air. Interviews were also conducted with a number of experts from different recovery companies and international airlines. The selection of managers for interviews was based on age, work experience and, most importantly, their involvement in support for previous aviation accidents.
2. Different organisations have different regulations regarding the provision of family assistance after a disaster. These organisations include the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) while the regulators include Saudi Arabia Civil Aviation Regulations, Egyptian Civil Aviation Regulations, National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), and the Department of Transport and Regional Services (the Australian Government). Reviewing these documents helped the researcher to understand what family assistance is and what is currently available. It also helped the researcher to discover what aspects, such as the three factors, were lacking.
 3. Literature reviews included research reports, previous accident reports, books (on research methodology, social science, transportation disasters and psychology), and conferences such as those organised by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC), Family Assistance Foundations Symposium, ICAO journals, Department of Transportation (DOT) papers, and electronic journals such as CNN.com, *The Wall Street Journal*, *World Airline News*, and *Air Safety Week*.

3.9 Limitations of the Thesis

This is a sensitive subject and therefore the research faced many limitations. Air transport is a business that depends to a great extent on the airline's reputation.

Different airlines in the Middle East and in some other countries refused to give the researcher access to their family assistance manual or any information regarding previous accidents; they were, according to them, “confidential documents”. It is therefore difficult to obtain the minimum necessary data regarding how the airline dealt with the victims and their families, what was missing, or what was important or unimportant after an accident (i.e. both negative and positive responses).

One of the limitations in the Middle East comes from the blame culture. For example, some of the airlines promised to give their data regarding previous accidents but when they found out that the information would be published, they changed their mind. On the other hand, some airlines agreed to give the data, provided that it would not be published without their consent. In addition, most of the airlines in the Middle East do not record or maintain their data regarding previous accidents, as a number of experts pointed out. In an interview with an airline’s safety department manager regarding a previous accident, he would say it was very difficult to give all the information, as it would affect the airline in many different ways, given that it involved several parties, such as government agencies, insurance companies, families of victims, lawyers and other countries, since the victims are often from different nationalities. One manager said that giving information like that would affect his job.

One of the most important points is to interview the families of victims who have experienced previous accidents. However, they were very difficult to reach and there were issues of sensitivity. A manager of one of the airlines in the Middle East believed that it was unacceptable and unethical to interview them because it would remind them of the hard times they had gone through, particularly for those families who did not manage to retrieve the bodies of their loved ones. He went on to say that it was extremely distressing for a family to be unable to find the body of a relative after an accident. In addition, one airline official admitted that they did not have a record of the names or addresses of the families of victims because the accident happened around 11 years ago; he added that all the names could be obtained from the insurance companies. In a phone

conversation with the insurance company they refused to give out any kind of information regarding the victims or the accident, as it was, according to the insurance company, illegal to disseminate such information.

The researcher tried to find family assistance guidelines from different airlines in the Middle Eastern countries but most of the airlines said that these were confidential documents and could not therefore be given out. Some airlines agreed to let the researcher view their family assistance guidelines under their vigilance but without allowing him to take any notes or mentioning the airline's name in his research. Those airlines that allowed the researcher to view their family assistance guidelines did so because of friends' "connections" with airline safety managers. The researcher viewed family assistance guidelines pertaining to three airlines, all of which were more or less identical. The guidelines of each of these airlines comprised two pages about how the airline could interact with the international company that extended family support to the airline when an accident occurred, along with the provisions of the contract concluded between the airline and the company. Most of the civil aviation authorities in the Middle Eastern countries refused to give the researcher any kind of information.

Most of the airlines in the Middle East are owned and sponsored by their governments, and if any kind of unfavourable information is published, it will adversely affect the airline's business and the reputation of the government. However, the only airline that agreed to give data regarding a previous accident was Saudi Arabian Airlines, which is in the process of improving its family assistance guidelines and upgrading the efficiency of its family assistance team. On the other hand, the researcher obtained a number of family assistance guidelines from different airlines in the Middle East with the help of friends and personal connections.

On the other hand the researcher thought that refusal could be only from the Middle East countries. The researcher subsequently met with number of airlines' safety managers and family assistance team managers from the U.S.A, South America and EU. He asked them for their family assistance plan and

some of them promised to send it but never did so in spite of several reminders. Others said that it was confidential and could not be shared.

One expert from a western-based company which provides family assistance for a country in the Middle East refused to let the researcher see their plans. This was because family assistance is their business and is sold to clients for a lot of money.

3.10 Data Validation

The collection of data from the three populations was validated by experts, including religious leaders and airline experts from the Middle Eastern countries. Obtaining their opinions of the comments from the respondents helped in deciding if the findings were accurate or not. Hence, the researcher asked the experts the same questions and showed them the responses that had previously been obtained. For this purpose, a number of airline experts and religious leaders were selected. These included:

1. Capt. Saad Al-shehri

Job title: VP Safety and Security, Saudi Arabian Airlines. Capt. Al-shehri has worked as a pilot for Saudi Airlines for 40 years and has flown different types of aircraft such as DC.3, CVR340, B.737, L-1011, B.747 and B.777. In the matter of accidents and family assistance, he has investigated more than 100 accidents, incidents and significant events.

2. Mr Magdy Abdellatif

Mr Abdellatif has worked for Egypt Air since 1985 as a Flight Operation Controller for about eight years and as a duty supervisor for seven years. After that he became the manager of the emergency management until the present time. He has been involved in two emergency cases: MS990 CAI/JFK and

MS843 CAI/TUN. He took part in establishing the Egypt Air Emergency Response Manual ERP and the Special Assistance manual which concerns family care.

3. Capt. Abdulhameed S. Alghamdi

Capt. Alghamdi worked for thirty years as a pilot for Saudi Arabian Airlines. He is also an Ex-General Manager of Corporate Safety and has investigated a number of aircraft accidents, incidents and events. Three of the accidents involved the total loss of the aircrafts, the major one being the midair collision involving SVA 763 in India in 1996.

4. Turkish Religious Leader: Burhan M. Aygun

Burhan M. Aygun has been the Imam of Suleymaniye Mosque, London, since 1998. He comes from Turkey and graduated from the Islamic School in Istanbul. Before 1998, he worked as an Imam in the Eskishir Mosque, Istanbul, and was also a school teacher teaching religious studies during that time.

5. Egyptian Religious Leader: Professor Taha M. Abu-Kiraishah

Professor Taha M. Abu-Kiraishah is the former Vice President of Teaching and Student Affairs at Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt. He gained a PhD in the critique of literature in 1973 and achieved first-class honours for his thesis from the School of Ancient Arabic Critique and Modern Criticism. He has held a variety of professional posts including those of Instructor, Assistant Lecturer, Lecturer, Associate Professor, Professor, Assistant Dean, Dean, Vice President of the Women's branch at Al-Azhar University, Vice President of the Department of Teaching and Student Affairs at Al-Azhar University, full-time Professor, and part-time Professor in the College of the Arabic Language also at Al-Azhar University in Cairo. He has published ten books, as well as articles for a number of publications including Al-Azhar Magazine, Egyptian newspapers, Manar Al-Islam, and the Voice of Al-Azhar. He also contributes to the media, having written articles for Egyptian and Arab newspapers, and having given statements to national and foreign radio stations and to national

and foreign TV channels. Professor Taha has participated in conferences as a representative of Al-Azhar University in the following countries: the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Tunisia, Morocco, Nigeria, Sweden, Germany and Chad. He is a member of the Islamic Research Congregation at the Noble Azhar, a member of Specialised National Boards (the Azhari Education Department), and a Member of the Authors' Association.

3.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter presents an overview of the methodology used in this research. It is driven mainly by the research objectives, and was planned to answer the research questions. Various strategies and methods have been considered, including literature reviews, talking to experts in the field, attending training courses, and surveys (questionnaires and face to face interviews).

The three populations and samples were carefully selected, and the questionnaire was designed to ensure response rate as much as possible. Data analysis was carried out using SPSS software to conduct statistical analysis and content analysis for qualitative data.

The next chapter, Chapter (4), will present the results of the study for quantitative data.

CHAPTER 4

EXPERTS' OPINIONS AND EXPERIENCE

4 Experts' Opinions and Experience

Every subject has its own experts who have knowledge about what is important, what is not, and what that subject lacks or needs. In this study the unique experiences of the experts come from their involvement in the previously described accidents and the long time they have spent in that business. In this matter, the researcher selected a number of experts in order to gain useful information about the difficulties that can face family support teams after disasters regarding culture, religion and ethical sensitivities; this was necessary because of the limited extent of published literature. Thus, the researcher interviewed the experts about their experiences and about the relative importance of culture, religion and ethical sensitivities. They were asked whether those factors can have any kind of influence on the family support that is provided after a disaster. They were asked two key questions, as follows:

1. What are the influences of culture, religion and ethical sensitivities on family support?
2. From your experience, would you please share with us some of the stories regarding culture and religion that have had an impact on supporting the families of victims?

The family assistance team and the way it supports the families of victims is the face of the airline after a disaster. Thus, logically, if the airline supports the families properly, it will achieve positive feed back and will win the respect of the victims' families and of other organisations such as the media or governments. Also, the airline will establish a good reputation that could help its business. On the other hand, if it reacts negatively, it will get negative feed back. However, there is insufficient or, at best, limited published material or information regarding what is important and what is not after a disaster when it is clear that culture, religion and ethical sensitivities are important considerations in the aftermath of an air disaster. Talking with experts and obtaining their opinions was very important; they also

provided important and valid information which the researcher found very supportive and useful. As a result, their responses are presented in full.

4.1 Capt. Saad Al-shehri

Job title: VP Safety and Security, Saudi Arabian Airlines. Captain Al-shehri worked as pilot for Saudi Airlines for 40 years and has flown different types of aircraft such as DC.3, CVR340, B.737, L-1011, B.747 and B.777. In the matter of accidents and family assistance, he has investigated more than 100 accidents, incidents and significant events.

The first question the researcher asked Capt. Saad was: What are the influences of culture, religion and ethical sensitivities on family support? His response was as follows:

“Culture, religion and ethical sensitivities are important issues after a disaster as these three factors could have a strong effect on people's behaviour after such an event. Also, these three factors should be taken in consideration when dealing with families of victims as their emotions are likely to be very intense. Some of these emotions might be strange, unexpected or not normal to the family support team members but respect is very important in these kinds of situation. After a disaster, people are very shocked and distressed; anyone who deals with them should understand their feelings. Therefore, to be able to respond to these feelings, the family assistance team should understand the influence of the following three factors on the victim's family.

Culture:

In some cultures, people may consider a certain act as important or even mandatory whereas in other cultures the same act is deemed unacceptable and may sometimes be considered as wrong. For example, in some cultures, women can shake hands with men, but in other cultures that is not acceptable. Air transport is an international business and it is difficult for people to understand all cultures in every country they fly to. Therefore, the airline should

have local employees in every country as local employees can speak the local language(s) and know the culture of the people. Also, the airline should have a strong relationship with community services, such as the Red Cross, the church and concerned government agencies, in any of the countries they operate to and from.

Religion:

Religion has a very strong influence and effect on people's lives in general. Most people are directed by their religion in everything they do, especially in death, as they may have important steps to follow such as cleaning or "preparing" the body, or in the method of burial. In the Saudi Airlines' accident in India, people such as Muslims, Christians, Hindus and Sikhs, were very concerned about their religion. So, family support team members should consider and respect religious sensitivities even if they contradict their own. An airline should always seek the help of religious leaders from the same country. Religious leaders can help a lot in any disaster and can help in avoiding conflict or problems. Also they can guide the family support team to what they should or should not say, as well as to what they can or cannot do.

In the accident involving Flight SV763 in India there were many victims' remains that could not be identified and there was a problem in deciding what to do with them, as it could not be determined which procedure or which religion should be followed. It was very difficult to separate the victims' remains which were a mass of human flesh in a pallet; also body parts were mixed and were carried from the accident site to an open area in the hospital. As the time passed, it became very difficult to separate the remains or to identify the victims' bodies because there were no refrigerators in which to store them. This ended with one of the worst problems that can be faced in an accident: what to do with the remains of unidentified bodies. Muslims, Christians, Buddhists and Sikhs urged officials to follow their way (i.e. in terms of their religion and culture) of how to treat and dispose of the victims' bodies or remains. Also, there were different ways of saying good-bye to the victim which depended on the people's culture and religion. The Muslims did not want their loved ones to be cremated and the

Hindus did not want their loved ones to be buried. This also applied to Christians and the Sikhs. For them all, it was a must to follow their culture and religion but this was not possible. In a situation such as this, a reasonable compromise has to be found and so, in this situation, the best way was to go to the community services and religious leaders in India who were asked for help in solving this problem. They met in one room and finally decided to cremate the unidentified bodies. This decision was made according to the country's religion. However, not all the families of victims agreed or were happy with this, but the airline had to follow Indian law as the accident was in their territory.

Family support team members should be open-minded and must not insist on rigidly abiding by their own religion or culture when supporting families of victims. Also they should be trained to respect other people's religions no matter how strange that religion may be in the way of burial or showing grief. In crises, you need a team willing to help and support the families of victims and one that can understand that people are different. Religion is a very important issue after any disaster and the family assistance team will not satisfy people if they ignore their religion. Not only that, but people will be against the assistance team; also there will be no more trust from the family of a victim. If you do everything and offer all kinds of support to the family of a victim without acknowledging their religion, it is as if you are doing nothing. If the families of victims feel that you ignore or do not respect their religion, it means that you will build a barrier between you and them. Once that barrier is built, no one can eliminate it afterwards.

Ethical Sensitivities:

Every group, people or society has a different way of observing ethical issues. This depends on their background such as their culture, religion and education. A family assistance team should evaluate the need for what they are supposed to do; sometimes they may do something against their own beliefs in order to help the families of victims. For example, the SV763 accident in Delhi happened in a small village and there was only one public phone in the whole village. Sometimes I had to make a phone call. Therefore, to make that phone call I had

to pay the owner of the phone extra money to avoid staying for hours in a long queue. As a Muslim, this is bribery, but in a situation like that people will try to exploit you as much as they can. Also, they will push you to bribe them. In some religions and cultures they call it a tip and it is acceptable. Also, in such a situation, if you do not bribe people you will never accomplish a job.

As a family support team manager it was my duty to do whatever I could to help the families of victims. However, I was not happy to do that and it was against my culture and religion. It is unethical to bribe people but to do the job we were forced to do that. Furthermore, the families of victims should be treated equally in all matters. Poor or rich, white or black, Muslims or followers of any religion should all be treated with respect. Some families of victims were from Nepal and all of them were from poor families; they were not well-dressed and their clothes did not look good. The ambassador of Nepal called me and he was very upset because his people who came from Nepal were not provided with accommodation. I sent them to the hotel but the hotel did not accept them because of how they looked, which was considered to be lower than the hotel's standard. For the hotel it was good business to have 70 employees from the Saudi Airlines team to stay in the hotel, as well as renting some of the hotel's other facilities. We used that to force the hotel to accommodate the Nepalese families or we said we would leave. This is an example of what we had to do in the way of using our business power to press the hotel to change their customer acceptance conditions. It was very difficult to be in a five star hotel while the families of victims were in the street with no accommodation. After a disaster, it is very important to provide for the families of victims whatever they need. The families of victims who have lost their loved ones always look for help, support and guidance.”

The second question the researcher asked Capt. Saad was: From your experience, would you please share with us some of the stories regarding culture and religion that have had an impact on supporting the families of victims? He acknowledged the following:

“Accommodation, food, transportation, money, phones, information, culture, language and respect are all very important after a disaster. Some families were abused in many ways, such as when getting coffins, receiving bodies, obtaining death certificates, recovering the victims' belongings... etc. They had to tip people to get anything they needed and, as an airline, we were not happy about this but we could do nothing about it. That was the culture in India. The accident occurred in a different country and so nothing was under our control. A family lost their daughter in the accident and could not find her body. They told me that she was their only daughter and said: “She had been working as a flight attendant and we did not have the chance to be with her since she became a flight attendant. She was very nice to us in her life time and even after her death. When she was alive she used to send us money and gifts. After her death we flew on first class to Saudi Arabia and to India which we had never imagined to do. We were looking for anything from her belongings just to remember her. It is very hurtful to lose a loved one and not to have anything from her belongings”. However everything was under the control of the Indian police. In a situation like that you cannot do anything, and it is very hurtful.

There were two females among the victims' families. We called to inform their embassy that their mother was in the accident and if they wished to come to India, we would offer them transportation, accommodation and all expenses. In the beginning, they refused to come to India. After two days, they called us and said that they wanted to come. We paid for their trip and all their expenses. Also, we gave them the choice to go to the accident site, but they refused and said they wanted to keep the last picture in their memory. Also we designated a person who shared the same nationality, culture and religion to be with them and support them. However, on the second day, they called me and asked if I could change their supporter. We changed their supporter as they requested.

They did not look grieved or sad as we expected. However, on the second day, they asked me if they could go shopping so we gave them pocket money for shopping. Also they asked us if we could pay their expenses in the hotel, such as the bar, club and other hotel facilities. We ordered the hotel to give them everything they needed and pass the receipts to us. After a few days, they asked if they could go to the Taj Mahal. We offered them a car, a driver and an escort to support them. The Taj Mahal was far away from the hotel; it was nearly a five-hour drive. After that they asked us if their supporter could be with them to take them back to their country. He went with them to their country and came back after a few days. After a few days the airline received an appreciation letter from them and from their embassy. Most of the employees were not happy about what happened but, as a manager, I had to do all I could for the families of victims and for the airline. We did more than we should have done but that was the right thing to do. However, from that accident we learnt positive lessons; the family support team should do whatever it can do to build a good relationship with the families of victims. Most families came with a negative image of the airline in their minds, but we did our best to support them and families who received a good service, they left as good friends to us. But some families were not happy as they felt that we (the airline) were not prepared to respond to the accident.

Some were happy about the services offered to them and the compensation they received. On the other hand, they signed a declaration that they had received everything and they did not have any further claims on the airline. People may forget the accident some day but they will never forget how the airline treated them. Not all families of victims came just for their loved ones; for some of them, the most important issue was the body of the victim, while some came for the compensation. Every family came with a different thing in their mind. Also they came from different backgrounds: i.e. different cultures, religions and ethical sensitivities. People may come with a certain impression about the airline or the country it belongs to. For example, Saudi Airlines is from a Muslim country and people who do not like the country or that religion may speak out against the airline in the media.

Supporting families of victims after disasters is not an easy job to do in a short time, especially if the accident happens in a different country. The airline should be prepared by having a large number of well-trained employees. Culture, religion and ethical sensitivities should be considered in the support. Ignoring these three factors will add more pain and suffering to the families of victims, as well as to the family support team.”

4.2 Graham Williams:

Currently and for the past two years, Graham Williams has worked for Kenyon International Emergency Service Inc. in Human Support Services and Worldwide Disaster Management; he has also been involved with and has supported 15-20 accidents. His job title is Regional Vice President of Operations for the UK, Europe, Africa and the Middle East. In terms of previous service, he worked for the police force for over 30 years.

Also the researcher asked Graham Williams: What are the influences of culture, religion and ethical sensitivities on family support? His answer to this question was as follows:

“We all have to recognise that we now live in a much more cosmopolitan, multi-cultural society, with a diversity of ethnic religions. No longer, in western society, do we have the ‘nuclear’ family that once existed, both in the UK and generally. There is a strong argument, from a social science basis, that this dissection of the traditional family structure has and is leading to increases in violence and decreases in tolerance, social manners and general behaviour as there are no longer grandparents from whom to learn social skills.

In a mass fatality situation, we need to recognise that in these extreme cases people might well turn to a faith for assistance, as the fabric of their normal life has been torn away. Equally, we need also to recognise that there will be those who lose their faith, their faith in life and, from a religious perspective, a loss of

their own belief. This has to be acknowledged as a most serious loss; the bereaved fail to understand why it is them and may think that their faith has let down. Obviously, in disaster situations there is no prior knowledge as to the composition of the fatalities. If the disaster is a 'technological' event involving some form of mass transportation system, there might or might not be a passenger manifest but there will not be any immediate intelligence as to the cultural requirements of the deceased; this information normally becomes available only once the identification process has been completed, by which time some of the religious/cultural requirements will have expired, as in the Muslim or Jewish religions with regards to the need to bury victims within a certain timeframe. Additionally, the bodies in these cases might have been through quite extensive forensic investigations and examinations to determine the cause of death, or to recover material that might be used subsequently as evidence, or where the examinations have been carried out to assist in the identification process.

Few people appreciate that, in mass fatality situations, there is a delay from the recovery of the remains until the process enabling the family to have their loved one repatriated. By this time, as previously mentioned, certain religious requirements have not been met or might have been compromised: e.g. a male body might have been handled by females. These are issues that might cause further anxiety to the family members. In this context we need to appreciate how supportive a faith is. We also need to recognise how supportive a religious leader might be. Such people, persons who provide for the religious needs of the families in these situations, often have vast experience of dealing with bereavement, of being able to offer a few words of comfort and support, and generally have had some significant experience of dealing with the various bureaucracies and terminologies that are used when somebody dies. Also, significantly, the religious leader is frequently the only person available who has the knowledge and skills necessary to orchestrate and conduct the services that a death entails, as well as giving a spiritual meaning to the death, especially in circumstances where this is untimely or premature.”

From your experience, would you please share with us some of the stories regarding culture and religion that have had an impact on supporting the families of victims?

“I suppose the most significant example is from the Bali Bombing. The two night clubs that were blown up were full of Western tourists, generally youngsters, from both the UK and other European countries and Australia enjoying a gap year and travelling. The Balinese initially collected all of the bodies and visually identified those that were believed to be indigenous. For these, they had a ceremony befitting their cultural needs. It was proposed to clear the bomb sites, using large, heavy machinery to bulldoze the remains into the sea.

Those from Western cultures opposed this course of action as they wanted and needed to collect all of the human remains that were still contained within the bomb sites, remembering that in such circumstances there is mass fragmentation due to the explosion. The Balinese could not understand why there was this requirement or why those from Western cultures needed to collect, what were in essence, rotting pieces of meat. They explained that, in their religion, the spirit had left the body so why bother to collect the remains when there was nothing left, the spirit having departed.

There was a certain sympathy with this religious doctrine but there is the need, religiously and culturally, to have the entire person repatriated and to say goodbye in a more formal, traditional fashion.”

4.3 William Durring:

William Durring is the Manager of the Delta Care Team who has worked in this field for nine years. He also has experienced two accidents: Swissair Flight 111 and Comair Flight 5191.

He responded to the first question: What are the influences of culture, religion and ethical sensitivities on family support? as follows:

“Care Team members (CTMs) must be very aware of the survivors’/family members’ culture, religion and ethnicity in order to provide proper support in a time of crisis. The family members are going to be in such pain, the last thing they need to do is step out of their “comfort zone” to handle external factors. The Care Team members must familiarise themselves with their particular family member’s “make-up”; it takes initiative to do this. In all likelihood, the accident will occur in an environment that is not familiar to the family. If they can stay within their own particular “life structure”, it will ease their transition to their “new normal” without their loved one in it. It is our role, as CTMs, to facilitate that transition.”

From your experience, would you please share with us some of the stories regarding culture and religion that have had an impact on supporting the families of victims?

“In a recent crash, there was a couple from Japan on the flight and someone “assumed” they were Buddhist and summoned a Buddhist priest. Both families were actually Christian. NEVER assume to know of what religion people are, ALWAYS ask. Try to assign a CTM to the family that is familiar with that culture/religion. With the same Japanese family mentioned above, we assigned a Japanese CTM to work with them. In their culture, they wanted to have the remains cremated for transport back to Japan. We did not realise that when carrying the remains, they had to have a shroud over the container. Our Japanese CTM was aware of that and so the night before she went and purchased a sewing machine and material and made the appropriate covers.”

4.4 Bobby Bonds:

Bobby Bonds is a Director of the Employee Assistance Program and Operation Red Block Amtrak (ORB). He has been working in this business (i.e. of family assistance) for 25 years and has been involved in approximately 30 catastrophic events: i.e. derailments, employee fatalities, massive fires, 9/11.

What are the influences of culture, religion and ethical sensitivities on family support? He noted:

"It is always important to weigh the cultural background of the individuals you are dealing with. Even if you think you know how they may react it is important always to be looking for specifics to determine how the family may react, especially regarding religion and religious traditions. Often, culture and religion are personal beliefs and on many occasions the family may be uncomfortable with having you share in them. Background information is critical in assessing how to address these issues."

From your experience, would you please share with us some of the stories regarding culture and religion that have had an impact on supporting the families of victims?

"I have experienced southern evangelical traditionalists and very secular families whose beliefs are quite subtle. No two are the same. Again it goes back to taking the time to create some comfort with those who you are working with and not forming any pre-disposed opinions regarding their beliefs. I remember having an oriental family. This was very uncommon to those who were working with them. I had them talk to the Japanese consulate to make all the arrangements; I attempted to understand the culture before making contact with the family. In addition, there was no one who knew the language and I requested that the embassy should provide us with a translator to help interpret the needs of the family. I found that the consulate was very willing to help."

4.5 Lynne Martellino:

Lynne Martellino is a Supervisor in the Delta Airlines family assistance care team and has worked for 27 ½ years with Delta Airlines. She too experienced two disaster events: Swissair YHZ in 1998 and Comair in Lexington.

What are the influences of culture, religion and ethical sensitivities on family support?

She asserted that it is important that *“you make sure you show compassion along with an understanding that different cultures react differently to these situations. Give space where space is needed. Always make yourself available, yet don’t push yourself upon family members. Realise that different religions have different grieving processes. For example:*

- *Haitians may cry uncontrollably and excessively.*
- *Koreans may cry, chant, pray and even burn incense.*
- *Arabs make their family grief open, loud and at times also uncontrollable.*

One of the most important things to remember is to “LISTEN” and let them repeat themselves as often as they wish. UNDERSTAND that grief is a very personal emotion that not everyone wishes to share with strangers.”

From your experience, would you please share with us some of the stories regarding culture and religion that have had an impact on supporting the families of victims?

“I dealt with a Haitian family in the Swissair incident. They were Catholic and were very anxious to have the bodies flown home so their loved ones could have a decent funeral. Of course, we only had one body that was intact and of the three children that died, they were not identifiable. I chose to have four rocks from Peggy’s Cove inscribed with the names of all these family members, along with the date of the incident. This touched them deeply.

There were many different religions and cultures that the DELTA Care Team Members had to deal with; they all had to be mindful of the do and don'ts!

For example, the Greek culture requires that the woman of the house wears black for an entire year after the death of a family member. Therefore, we needed to respect that and if they needed additional clothing while they were with us, we had to make sure we only purchased black. Greek American funeral events take place in a specific order and consist of a viewing, a funeral at the church, burial, a meal after the ceremony, a forty day memorial service, and annual memorial services. The entire community is invited to attend the viewing and the funeral, while the other successive events primarily include those family and friends closest to the deceased. With this in mind, we might have to fly in people from different parts of the world.

Muslims are always buried and never cremated. This is difficult to deal with when the person has died in a crash and there is no body to bury.

As a sign of respect, anyone who visits a Muslim should not wear jewellery or flashy clothing. To use a coffin (a box) is not allowed, unless this is a necessity: for example, if the body of the deceased is damaged, or for health reasons, or when the grave is wet and cannot be dried. The deceased should be buried in the locality in which he/she lived. It is undesirable to take the body to the person's own country or to another city.

These are but a few examples of being prepared as much as possible when assisting with families who have lost loved ones to an untimely death."

4.6 Sharon LeBow:

Sharon LeBow is the Performance Leader from Delta Airlines, Inc. and has worked as family support member for 10 years. She has also experienced three previous accidents.

What are the influences of culture, religion and ethical sensitivities on family support? She reported that:

“Language, getting people’s names right, bereavement and mourning practices, needs and perspectives of various age groups (e.g. the elderly, children, adults), stereo-typing, racial discrimination, racial equality, religious beliefs and practices, medicine and pain relief practices, personal countenance and smiles, are a few of the influences of culture, religion and ethical sensitivities on family support that come to mind.

These influences on family support, and the response to them, are paramount to the end result of the quality of care provided to victims of an air disaster. Culture is the essence of family living. It is woven into the very fabric of people’s lives and it is essential that culture be respected in a family support response. Religion is, well, sacred, holy and intimate; it is of the utmost importance. Religion is how people commune with their God. Everything possible should be done to pair up people, survivors and responders of similar religions, so that every effort is made to honour and not show disrespect, nor offend family members in the aftermath of an air disaster. Understanding is key between the responder and the religion and culture. People who have lost a loved one will be in grief and distress. To show disrespect or dishonour their religion would be a serious second assault. It follows that the true merit of our human response will be revealed in the speed and quality of the care and compassion we show to those involved. A responder’s keen awareness of culture and religion is the optimum, ethically sensitive response desired. Obviously, we cannot predict when or where future disasters will occur, but we can pre-plan and equip responders of all nationalities and religions with a heightened awareness of

ethical sensitivities, and the importance of the service they can provide at a time of need for a fellow human being.”

From your experience, would you please share with us some of the stories regarding culture and religion that have had an impact on supporting the families of victims?

“In reference to my response to the Comair 5191 disaster in August 2006, I remember an interesting note about Japanese family members who came to the United States; this was a cultural barrier that needed to be overcome. One memory of mine was that the Japanese family’s culture required a certain formality be shown when meeting a new person; it is required that a business card is presented by the new person. Business card presentation is held in very high esteem within their culture, a notion that is not widely known in the standard American culture, especially in a distressing situation, such as the aftermath of an air crash.

The words below in bold print are not my own but are from a newspaper article about the Japanese victims from the Lexington Herald-Leader, posted on August 27, 2007, one year after the crash of Comair 5191.”

Tetsuya and Nahoko Kono

34 and 31, Lexington

In the year since Tetsuya “Tetsu” Kono and his wife, Nahoko Kono were victims of the crash of Comair Flight 5191 in Lexington, their family, friends and co-workers have strived to honor and respect their memory.

Tetsu and Nahoko, Japanese citizens from the prefecture of Gifu, were in the United States for an extended stay as Tetsu worked as an engineer with LBX Co. in Lexington, Ky., where the couple made their home.

Following the tragedy, their families travelled to the United States to meet with Tetsu and Nahoko’s friends and co-workers to share photographs, stories and memories. When the family returned to Japan, they completed a Buddhist ritual called “49 days,” which sends the departed back to Buddha.

After the ritual, the families received shadow boxes from their friends and co-workers in the United States that were filled with items representing their life here, one of which included the softball uniform that Tetsu wore as a part of his employer’s team. This year, the family will host a memorial service for family and friends in Gifu, Japan, on Aug. 25.

In Lexington, the most visible, daily reminder of their vibrant lives is the growing branches of the Japanese cherry tree that was planted on the grounds of LBX Co. The tree, just 1 year old, has survived late-spring snow and an early June drought — just as the memory of Tetsu and Nahoko will survive.

Submitted by LBX Co.

4.7 Timothy Whitaker, MBAC MIOD

Timothy Whitaker is Director of Planning for Kenyon Worldwide Management Company; Timothy Whitaker has worked for nine years in the field, to begin with at first hand as an Emergency Response Manager. He works with a company that supports quite a few accidents every year.

What are the influences of culture, religion and ethical sensitivities on family support? He explained:

“One key item is language. If the friend or relative cannot communicate with the airline it causes deep frustration. Cultural awareness is vital – as it is easy to offend by accident while it is difficult to get things right every time. A team capable of looking after people from various parts of the world is a real asset and using local skills is vital.”

From your experience, would you please share with us some of the stories regarding culture and religion that have had an impact on supporting the families of victims?

“Anti-mortem information may need to be gathered from the relative during a fatal incident. This is a very sensitive area as each group may see the questions as highly intrusive or insulting. It is important that full briefings are held before doing this work to try and smooth the way, and that this work is carried out by trained personnel wherever possible. It is important to understand that each person’s space is important and that cultural and religious etiquettes need to be observed. For example, a simple touch, meant in good faith, can offend.

Personal effects are most important but again, cultural or religious needs must be taken into account when returning or identifying some effects.”

“Treating everyone with dignity and respect is essential”.

4.8 Abdulfattah Malhas:

Abdulfattah Malhas reported that he worked as a Chief Safety and Security System Support Services for Saudi Airlines. He had 28 years of experience with Saudi Arabian Airlines and managed the Saudi Emergency Coordination Centre at Delhi, India, to support the unfortunate accident involving a Saudi Arabian airliner in Delhi on 12 November 1996 under the directive and the command of Captain Saad Al-shehri, who was, at that time, the Saudi Airlines' Executive Representative and General Manager of Corporate Safety.

What are the influences of culture, religion and ethical sensitivities on family support? He explained:

“Factors such as culture, religion and ethical sensitivities have great influences on the success of a family support plan in the event of an aircraft accident. Different religions and even different sects of the same religion of the deceased or injured must be carefully considered. This has a great effect in comforting the families and the injured during religious rituals and practices such as prayers and burial ceremonies. In the event of an aircraft accident it is very difficult to segregate the deceased according to their religions, especially when the corpses are charred and/or have similar skin colours and/or similar features. In some Islamic countries, compensation to the next of kin of the Muslim deceased is based on Islamic law. Also, finding suitable religious services and clergymen at the accident site, especially in different countries, can be an obstacle and may require the airline to obtain clergymen from other countries to provide the required services. Various forms of support must be considered for these families, whether financial or emotional.

Cultural and religious backgrounds play a huge role in the way that families must be approached. For example, in the cultures of some Arab countries, it is not usually appreciated or expected that anyone offers psychological support and/or therapy sessions to the family of the deceased. Families tend to deal with mourning and the rebuilding of their family in their own way, often

preferring financial aid to any other kind of incentive. Families are also accustomed to having three special days of mourning, where those who knew or heard of the deceased, or who simply wish to pay their respects to the family may come to certain homes and pray for the lost ones. The airline company may help this by paying for the funeral and the costs of the mourning ceremonies; they may also publish the addresses of these mourning areas and pray to show respect and consideration for these families. Some families may believe in organ donation, or incarcerating the body of the deceased and sprinkling these ashes over certain areas. In general, what an airline can do for the families of the deceased is limited to and based on the backgrounds of the families. In order to successfully aid these families, sufficient research on the religions, customs and traditions of each family, as well as obtaining an opinion from the family itself can help the airline to ensure it is providing the proper aid for each and every family.”

From your experience, would you please share with us some of the stories regarding culture and religion that have had an impact on supporting the families of victims? He noted:

“From the accident involving Saudi Arabian Airlines Flight SV763 in India, it was learned:

Transportation:

The accident scene was in a rural area, about three hours from Delhi. Team members had great difficulties regarding transportation, especially since they had to commute everyday to the accident scene where no hotels were available. Besides which, some of the roads were not even paved which made their trip even harder, especially because they started very early in the morning and came back very late at night after a hectic and tiring day.

Facilities at the Scene:

The accident scene was in a village and the facilities were very primitive. No specialised services and equipment were available. For example, staff had to

buy ice, in very large quantities daily, to preserve the corpses since no cold stores were available.

Communication:

No cellular telephone service was available at the accident scene. Team members had to walk a long distance to one of the stores in the village to communicate with the emergency Coordination Centre in Delhi, India, and in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, with great difficulty. The connections were unreliable and not very clear, especially the international connection.

Food and drinks:

The team members were supported with a daily supply of food and drinks (including water) from Delhi since useful supplies were not available at the scene. We had to choose non-perishable items since no refrigeration facilities were available.

Team Members' Health:

Most of the team members became ill due to exhaustion, lack of sleep, weather pollution and food poisoning. A medical officer was sent from Jeddah and was on duty, ready with all the major medication for the team members, besides undertaking duties by providing medical support to the accident initiatives.

Psychological Status of Team Members:

Some of the team members suffered from psychological shock. They could not take in the scene and the handling of the bodies and blood of victims. Some felt the shock during the first few days while others felt it later. Some went through phases of depression and had great difficulty sleeping and eating, and had to be provided with medical attention. Some of the members could not eat or smell meat for a long time after the date of the accident.

Media:

We had to review all local and international newspapers to check the integrity of the news about the accident. As usual, the media either exaggerated or gave false, misleading information, data or facts. Therefore, we had to prepare local and international press releases to correct the news by supplying valid, strong and convincing evidence. Later, we had to outsource this work to a media agency to carry out this tedious task.”

4.9 Linda Tavlin:

Linda Tavlin has been an aviation communication consultant since April, 1989. For 20 years, she has worked as a communication specialist in helping the aviation industry communicate its messages with expertise concerning issues including safety, accident investigation, flight standards, manufacturing, security, air traffic, and environments, both foreign and domestic. Her knowledge expands beyond the United States and she has worked to train carriers, manufacturers, regulators and accident investigators. Her expertise has also been sought by foreign carriers who have experienced the tragedy of an airline crash, including Saudi Arabian Airline's 747 crash in New Delhi in November 1996, Swissair prior to their tragedy in September 1998, and Air France prior to their Concorde tragedy of July 2000. She has conducted courses at the Federal Aviation Administration's Aeronautical Academy and teaches on the accident investigation program at the University of Southern California, the aviation emergency response program at the University of California, Davis, and has lectured at both Cranfield University in England, as well as the NTSB Academy. Prior to becoming a consultant, Ms Tavlin was the Director of Press and Communications for the largest agency in the United States' Department of Labour. With employees numbering over 4,000, she designed, developed and conducted communication projects that helped her agency communicate its message to its customers.

What are the influences of culture, religion and ethical sensitivities on family support?

"The different influences of culture cannot be minimised. Many cultures have a fault culture and many do not. These are always multi-national events. Therefore, even though it may be a Saudi flight within the Kingdom with all Saudi passengers, it will have other cultural involvement. Most companies fly either Boeing or Airbus, or both. The reality of these cultures can contribute to the distress of the families. Many cultures use the media to incite the anger of the families, using them as a tool."

From your experience, would you please share with us some of the stories regarding culture and religion that have had an impact on supporting the families of victims?

“In the Saudi Arabian airlines crash in Delhi, it was leaked that the Saudi pilot deviated altitude and caused the crash. This was not true but any family members who saw this could then be extra stressed to think that the airline was at fault. If it is said by some of these “experts” in the media that the airline might have prevented this, then the families’ first question will be: “Are you telling us that this airline might have known something that would have prevented the death of my loved one?”

The two questions the families want answered are:

- 1. Why is my loved one dead?*
- 2. Could the airline have prevented it?*

All these things are determined by what country the accident happened in, who was on board, what the circumstances were (i.e. human factors or a technical event), and what cultures were involved.

Things go wrong for one of two reasons. First, the issues begin to arise and the company cannot/does not answer for them or, second, the company fuels the adversary of one of the parties to the event. Regarding my experience, I have two examples I would like to share. The first is me explaining to an accident investigation conference how you have to humanise. Someone came up to me afterward and said: “That is interesting but isn’t your message meant for a western audience?” The answer was: “Do you think the relatives of the Korean Airlines plane shot down by the Russians or the JAL plane that crashed into the mountain did not appreciate sympathy on behalf of their lost loved ones? If so, you should go back and review the films of those relatives crying hysterically.

The other is that, after the Saudi crash, people were saying to me that “The Saudis just accept it because they believe it is God’s will”. I said, “You should have been in Delhi to see the distress the employees felt at this tragedy”.”

4.10 Capt. Abdulhameed S. Alghamdi:

Capt. Alghamdi said that he worked for thirty years as a pilot for Saudi Arabian Airlines and is also an Ex-General Manager of Corporate Safety. He has investigated 67 aircraft accidents, incidents and events. Three of the accidents resulted in the total loss of aircrafts, the most major of which was the midair collision of SVA 763 in India in 1996.

What are the influences of culture, religion and ethical sensitivities on family support?

Capt. Alghamdi said that: "Culture, religion and ethical sensitivities are the most important factors that will face the special assistance team after a disaster. These three factors play a major role and ignoring them or not understanding them will cause pain to the families of victims and to the airline. In the Middle East Countries, particularly in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia which is a model to other Muslim countries around the world, people believe that any calamity that happens to any person is pre-planned by Allah (God). This belief lessens the influence of culture when anything happens. However, any mistreatment to that person by those concerned after the disaster will be hard to be forgiven by the victim's family, especially when that shortcoming relates to religion and the ethical system in the way the victims and their belongings are handled."

From your experience, would you please share with us some of the stories regarding culture and religion that have had an impact on supporting the families of victims?

"The accident concerning Saudi Arabian Airlines in India was the most horrible experience of my life. We faced a lot of different issues regarding culture, religion, ethics, economics and education and were confronted by disrespect to the victims, discrimination and abuse.

In November, 1996, I was responsible for the crash site when a Kazakhstan IL-76TD collided with an SV Boeing 747 at Delhi, resulting in the complete

destruction of both aircraft and a total of 349 multi-cultural and multi-religious fatalities in both aircrafts. One day, while we were digging underneath the ground, (where the aircraft nose hit the ground and penetrated more than two meters deep into soft sand), a female victim's hand with a golden ring appeared to us. Suddenly, one of the Indian labourers gripped the finger with the ring, which was separated easily from the hand, and put the ring in his pocket. When I shouted at him he replied calmly, "Gold, Gold". On the same day, I was doubtful about another Indian person digging in the same area. When I asked him about what he was doing, his answer was, "I'm searching for the remains and belongings of my wife and daughter." Stealing, bribery and disrespect were evident in the site. When we arrived at the scene, which was not under our control, we faced the following difficulties:

- We were not allowed easily to access the crash site.*
- The command centre was not sufficiently active.*
- The crash area was not surrounded by a red striped cordon.*
- There were no security guards or responsible personnel to control the crash site.*
- There were no means of communication at the crash site. We had to drive for about 40 minutes to the nearest village to update our emergency control centre with our findings.*
- There were many people at the crash site; some of them were looking for their relatives' remains and most of them were stealing the passengers' belongings. All valuable belongings were stolen from the crash site.*
- With the absence of an investigator in charge, most evidence was eliminated at the crash site because people were moving the aircraft parts searching for things that were not related to it.*

- *Victims' remains were collected randomly and placed on ordinary trucks.*
- *There were no means of identifying bodies, such as teeth identification ...etc.*
- *There were insufficient refrigerators to maintain body remains; bodies were placed in an open area covered by ice cubes. After a few days the bodies had already disintegrated.*
- *Remains were mixed and it was difficult to identify some of the passengers.*
- *Finally it was decided to bury and cremate them together, regardless of their religions.*
- *Every group of people tried to follow their religion in dealing with their loved ones.*
- *At sunset, we had to leave the crash site until next day morning because there were no electricity generators or other means of lighting. Dogs and other animals were free to eat the remains of the passengers.*

Culture and religion are important after disasters and these two factors were a big challenge for us. Moreover, after a disaster, there will be other issues such as economics, education, language, food, communication, trained employees and logistics. However, in any circumstances, a family support team should follow the victim's family's culture and religion to support them and in the ways they treat the families, the victims and the injured. Also, if the accident happens in a different country, the airline employees should know how to deal with other agencies in that country. In any accident you will be involved with people from different cultures and religions, and if the airline does not pay attention to this, it will face a lot of problems. Sometimes, people from other cultures do things that are not acceptable to you, but it is normal to them. The family assistance team

and the airline employees should consider culture, religion and ethical sensitivities.”

The following interview was carried out with Dr Mahjoubi who specialises in how to support Muslim families of victims after a disaster/death. Also, in this section, the importance of culture, religion and ethical sensitivities for Muslims after a disaster is clarified.

4.11 Specialists in Funerals for Muslims and Arabs in the United Kingdom

Dr. Mahjoubi has been working for the last nine years as the director of Rowland Brothers, an international company that specialises in arranging funerals for Muslims and Arabs in the United Kingdom. In the course of his career, he has been involved in the handling of the remains of victims of various air accidents and criminal acts, as well as their DNA testing processes. In consideration of his experience in dealing with death among Muslim and Arab families in a non-Muslim country, the researcher conducted an interview with him. He stated that a supporter must always be keen to abide by Islamic teachings and rituals in rendering services to Muslim customers. It must always be borne in mind that Muslims believe death is a departure from our worldly life but is not the end of a person's existence. An eternal life will come after death and Muslims pray for (Allah) God's mercy to be with the deceased in the hope that they may find peace and happiness in the life to come. The most important thing is to perform the same rituals that are commonly practised by the vast majority of Muslim communities in both Arab and non-Arab countries. Those rites comprise five core phases: care for the dying, washing and shrouding, saying funeral prayers, burial, and mourning. He elucidated these phases as follows:

Care for the Dying:

When a Muslim is dying, those around him or her are called upon to give comfort and reminders of God's mercy and forgiveness. If the dying person is a male, only males are called upon for this purpose and if the dying person is a female, only females should be called upon. This tradition stems from the aforementioned concept of sex segregation which is, to a great extent, observed by Muslim populations. The people around the dying person may recite verses from the Holy Qur'an, give physical comfort and encourage the dying person to recite words of remembrance and prayer. The last words of a Muslim should preferably be the declaration of faith: "I bear witness that there is no God but Allah and that Mohammad is the last messenger of Allah". Muslims strive to bury the deceased as soon as possible, avoiding the need for embalming or otherwise disturbing the body. This is significant because of the need to make immediate identification of the remains of Muslim air accident victims, as families insist on burying them as soon as possible. However, the airline, or whoever is responsible, cannot always speed up this process and therefore the burial as there are many legal issues an airline or government should confront before releasing the body.

Washing and Shrouding:

In preparation for burial, the body is washed respectfully with clean and scented water, in a manner similar to how Muslims make ablutions for prayer. The body is then wrapped in sheets of clean, white cloth called a kafan. Again, this stage must be carried out by males only if the deceased is a male and by females only if the deceased is a female. Also, the preparation of the body should be carried out only by Muslims. There should be privacy and the body should not be exposed by any one out of respect for the dead. Muslims are forbidden to expose themselves to others (i.e. the private parts of a male or female should not be exposed to others such as in a shower or in cleaning a body after death).

Funeral Prayers:

Immediately after washing and shrouding, the body is transported to the site where funeral prayers are said, commonly inside a mosque. The community gathers and the Imam (the prayer leader) stands behind the corpse with his back to the worshippers. The funeral prayer differs from the five daily prayers in that it does not include bowing or prostration; the entire prayer is said silently except for a few phrases. Muslims believe that if many people attend the prayer or the funeral, this is a blessing, and shows honour and respect.

Burial:

The deceased is then taken to the cemetery for burial which, according to the teachings of Islam, is the only permissible method of disposing of a human body. While all members of the community can attend the funeral prayers, only males can accompany the body to the gravesite. It is preferable for a Muslim to be buried where he or she dies, and not to be transported to another location or country, in order to avoid delays or the need for embalming the body. However, most, or even all Muslims, will seek to send the body back to the homeland. Also, it is very important to bury a Muslim's body in a cemetery, or a section of a cemetery, that is entirely designated for Muslims. The deceased is laid in the grave on his or her right side, facing Makkah (the holy city in Saudi Arabia). At the gravesite, it is objectionable to erect decorated tombstones or place flowers or other mementos. One should humbly remember Allah (God) and His mercy and pray for the deceased. If a Muslim dies in a locality where no cemetery or a section thereof is designated for Muslims, his or her family will usually require the transportation of the body to his or her homeland or another Muslim country. However, most Muslim families believe it is more desirable to have their loved ones who die abroad transported to their homelands.

Mourning:

According to Muslim traditions, the family of the deceased observes a three-day mourning period. Mourning is observed in Islam by increased devotion, receiving visitors and condolences, and avoiding decorative clothing or jewellery. Widows observe an extended mourning period of four months and ten days, during which they should not re-marry or wear decorative clothing or jewellery. Therefore, if the widow is the next of kin she will not be able to go out of her home or meet with a male who is not related to her during this time.

One of our primary duties is to follow up arrangements with local authorities to speed up the issue of death certificates in order to transport the bodies of deceased Muslims to their countries as soon as possible. Our clients are from different Muslim communities and include British citizens, Arabs from the Middle East and North Africa, as well as non-Arab Muslims from various continents with diverse cultures, linguistic backgrounds and ethical sensitivities. Despite the fact that they are all Muslims, there are still many variants that have to be taken in consideration in order to deal with each family according to its culture and ethical sensitivities. When a Muslim dies in the UK, his or her family may depend on our company to organise the above-mentioned rituals as they know that we are fellow Muslims and, in the Muslim religion, it is required that the body of a Muslim should be handled by a Muslim. A Muslim's body should also be buried within twenty-four hours of the death.

Sometimes it is difficult to bury the dead within twenty-four hours, as required by the teachings of Islam, particularly when death occurs at the beginning of a weekend, before a bank holiday, as a result of a crime, or because of an accident. In such cases, it may be impossible to register the death and obtain the necessary certificates in time. Even in such cases, however, people from the Middle East and from Muslim countries in general often insist on speeding up burial procedures. This is because it is habitual in the Middle East and in most Muslim countries to obtain the approval of concerned personnel in municipalities or other local authorities to turn a blind eye to the regulations. This may come from a sense of mercy to the family of a victim but is achieved

mainly through personal contacts or through someone in power or in a high position. Usually, we find it difficult to convince a client that such practices are not tolerated in Britain. The need to send a body back to the dead person's homeland creates yet another problem, as this entails the embalming of the body, which is commonly unacceptable to Muslims due to ethical sensitivities, rather than the teachings of Islam.

Some Muslims insist that the bodies of their female loved ones should be dealt with by a female. This requirement is sometimes difficult to fulfil in non-Muslim countries, particularly in accidents that result in mass-fatalities. Even inside hospitals, Muslim families sometimes demand that the bodies of their loved ones should be handled by Muslims of the same gender and this creates yet another problem.

Regarding an aviation accident, first it is necessary to obtain permission from the authority concerned to start identifying the bodies. After that, the passenger list is checked which helps in identifying victims by, for instance, their seat numbers, nationalities and their passport data. The passenger list can be helpful in identifying the victims if their bodies are not decomposed, entirely burnt or fragmented. Victim identification processes are performed in the following sequence, starting with the simplest:

- First, the bodies of the victims whose relatives are present and can physically identify them are dealt with;
- Second, we look for people who have dental records;
- Third, we go back to the passenger list to mark those who are still not identified;
- Fourth, we check the seats, as sometimes the victim's body is burnt but is still in the designated seat, and one can find the victim's

passport or any other clue that can help the victim's family to recognise him or her.

- As a final resort, we shift to the most challenging process: i.e. trying to identify fragmented human remains that, in most cases, require DNA testing. Sometimes we seek the help of the victims' families to find some clues like scars on the victim's skin, rings, traces of previous surgery etc. We often end with a heap of unidentifiable decomposed human flesh that has to be disposed of as it is. This entails many difficulties with the families of the victims as, according to the teachings of Islam, the body of the deceased must be buried and different Islamic steps must be followed before burial. In such cases, the families of the victims are informed of the situation and are required to decide upon the manner in which the unidentifiable remains are to be disposed of: whether to bury or cremate them, and where they are going to be buried or cremated. They also have to decide on what ceremony is to be conducted. This kind of situation creates various problems, such as how to interact with:

1. Families of the same nationality and different religions,
2. Families of the same religions and different nationalities,
3. Families of different nationalities and religions.

1. Families of the same nationality and different religions:

In this situation it is very difficult to reach a compromise between the families. If religion is involved, all kind of problems can be expected. Every family desires to follow their religion and their rituals but that is impossible, especially with burned remains. Religion is very important for people and it is very distressing for them to do something that conflict with their religion, particularly with regard to the handling of the bodies of their loved ones. The death of a relative in an aviation accident is painful, and it is not possible to imagine the feelings of a victim's family when they receive that kind of news. It is very upsetting, difficult

and intolerable to learn that a loved one has been killed in an aviation accident, that his or her body could not be identified or has not been found, and that he or she is going to be buried or cremated in a manner that may be unacceptable according to their religion or culture. Some people can understand this sort of situation and can, therefore, be flexible, but others can never accept it, particularly Muslims and Jews. For Muslims and Jews, cremation is absolutely objectionable and forbidden under any circumstances. Their dead have to be buried in a graveyard or a section of a graveyard solely designated for Muslim or Jews and all related rites should be performed and attended by either Muslims or Jews.

2. Families of different nationalities and the same religion:

In this kind of situation it is much easier to reach a compromise between the families of the victims. The families follow the same religion and, consequently, practise the same rituals when dealing with the dead. The only knotty problem in such a situation is that some of the families may refuse to have their loved ones buried in a foreign country and insist on having all the unidentified remains flown to their homeland. In this case, all the families have to reach an agreement though this is, in so many cases, a time-consuming and difficult practice. However, with the involvement of a religious leader, this problem can be solved.

3. Families of different nationalities and different religions:

This is an exceptionally difficult situation as it is virtually impossible to reach a consensus between the families as regards how and where to dispose of the unidentified remains. This is certainly an extremely intricate situation for the families of the victims as well as for all the agencies and individuals involved in the family assistance process.

In all the above situations, it is necessary to coordinate actions closely with the local authorities at the accident site. If the victims are of different nationalities and different religions, the airline should communicate with the personnel concerned at the relevant embassies, as well as with religious leaders. All these parties have to decide how and where the unidentified remains are to be

disposed of. People have a strong trust in religious leaders and most of the families consent to their advice, especially Muslims and Jews. If the families of the victims fail to reach an agreement, then the local authorities at the accident site have to make the final decision.

The impact of culture:

There are diverse burial rituals and funerary customs that stem from different religions and cultures. When death occurs in any community, the body is either buried or cremated respectfully to honour the deceased. Different cultures and religions have different beliefs regarding what happens to a person after he or she dies. According to Islam and most other religions, the soul leaves the body and goes on to another world. This belief significantly affects the manner in which the dead are prepared for either burial or cremation. The teachings of Islam with regard to burial are invariable, but there are some deviations that result from the cultural backgrounds of Muslim communities in various areas of the world. Therefore, some Muslims may desire to follow certain burial rituals related to their cultures and traditions rather than the authentic teachings of Islam. For example, a family may maintain that the body of their loved one should be washed in a certain mosque as a good omen. However, that mosque may not have the facility to wash the body or those in charge of it may not positively respond to the family's desire. In the Muslim world, when people know that you are a fellow Muslim, they expect a lot of favours from you even if what they ask for is unlawful. In the UK, we have to abide by the law and this usually leads to conflicts with our Muslim clients. For example, if the family of the deceased wishes to send the body back home, Muslims would require that to be done quickly, mainly due to the religious requirements. On the other hand if the reason of death is alcohol or drug, the family of the deceased will ask us not to mention that in the death certificate. This is, however, usually not possible because we have to go through a lengthy procedure involving the issuance of a death certificate, preparing the body, making shipping arrangements etc. Furthermore, the embassy of the country where the body is to be flown to, will

require sufficient documentation. If the cause of death is related to drugs certificate due to ethical sensitivities. We certainly appreciate the stress the family of the deceased is suffering, the significance of speeding up the burial or the transportation of the body back to the dead person's homeland, but we have to adhere to local laws.

Another problem arises when a victim's relatives come to negotiate their loved one's burial arrangements as there are usually too many persons to argue with. Each of them wants to be informed of all details and we have to repeatedly answer so many questions. We prefer to negotiate with one person from the family, usually an elderly male. Sometimes that older person may be uneducated and cannot even fill in the necessary forms although, culturally, the older person is in charge. Owing to cultural and ethical sensitivities, it is not possible for us to negotiate with the deceased's next of kin if that next of kin is a female. One has to be knowledgeable about the people's culture, religion and ethical sensitivities to effectively negotiate with them.

Sending the body back home is costly and when it comes to cost, people will start to bargain. This is also due to their culture. However, we are not in a position to determine the cost but we are required to bargain with the airline companies concerned.

Dr Kareem pointed out that the best course of action to deal with a victim's family is as follows:

1. Ask for one person to talk with.
2. Ask him/her what precisely they need.
3. If you have to talk to a woman, you have to obtain prior permission.
4. Explain to them everything clearly, such as the law of the country, that they are in a non-Muslim country, and that you cannot consequently realise all their requirements or minimise relevant expenses.

5. Ask them about whether they want to see the body or not. If the body is decomposed, explain that to them, as families often will ask for your advice.
6. If they request to see the body, they have to sign a paper to do so. Back home, people never have to sign a paper to see the bodies of their loved ones. This requirement is usually unacceptable to them so you need to seek the help of someone who lives in the UK and knows the local laws.
7. Sometimes, members of the same family may have different views with regard to minor details, so it is very important to ask them to consult a religious leader as religious leaders are generally trusted and respected.
8. Always ask the family to bring along a religious leader because he is very important and can solve most problems. Mostly, families of victims will listen to him and they also need him to answer their questions or to take decisions according to Islam.

Dr Mahjoubi also pointed out that there are certain issues that have to be borne in mind when dealing with the Muslim family of a victim, such as:

1. Embalming the body is forbidden by Islam and a Muslim should avoid it in any circumstances.
2. Cremation is absolutely prohibited and forbidden by Islam.
3. A woman's body should be washed by a woman and a man's body should be washed by a man.
4. Never view the private parts of the body of a male or a female.

5. A Muslim should be buried in a graveyard or in a part of a graveyard designated for Muslims.

It is crucially significant to pay heed to religious and cultural factors in dealing with the families of victims as, because of the diversity of cultures and ethical sensitivities, people have different methods of dealing with the dead. The family support team should be suitably trained and should be prepared to accommodate the families of victims with respect to their cultures, religions and ethical sensitivities. According to Islam, it is mandatory for a Muslim to help others regardless of their ethnic or cultural backgrounds; as such, the family support team should treat all families of the victims even-handedly. When dealing with the families of victims, it should constantly be borne in mind that the ultimate goal is to mitigate their stress and anguish by offering them all respect, guidance, support, sympathy, dignity, love and mercy.

Culture, religion and ethical sensitivities are very important and every society has its own ways in daily life. Therefore, from the information noted above concerning the aforementioned accident, and the responses and opinions of family assistance team members and experts, these three factors are very important so the following chapters offer definitions of them and discuss their importance.

Summary

All the experts who responded and shared their experiences were selected carefully and were chosen because of their long experience in the field. Also, they had been involved in responding to major accidents including Swissair 111, Comair 5191, Saudi Arabian Airlines 763, and Egypt Air 990. Their responses were very helpful for this research because there is limited published information in this area. Also, directly and indirectly, they answered Question 3 in the research objectives by explaining the importance and the sensitivity of culture, religion and ethical factors after a disaster.

Question 3: *What are the importance, impact and sensitivity of the critical factors (i.e. culture, religion and ethical sensitivities) on the current family assistance?*

Human beings behave differently in different situations according to their backgrounds and so culture, religion and ethical sensitivities are very important and related to each other, as experts acknowledged. Also, the experts noted these three factors have a strong relation to the provision of family assistance after a disaster. In fact, they generally agreed these three factors must be considered in any family assistance provision; furthermore, they thought that considering them would positively improve the family assistance currently available. Some of them said: *"It is a disaster to ignore the mentioned factors"*. Their response also indirectly answered Question 4 of the research objectives.

Question 4: *What kinds of relationships exist between the critical success factors and the assistance of families that could be considered in order to create a more suitable family assistance framework for Muslims in the Middle Eastern countries?*

Finally, their response helped the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of family assistance as their responses clarified the research which argues that these three factors are important and have a significant impact on family assistance. Thus, it is very important to study and understand culture, religion and ethical sensitivities.

CHAPTER 5
CULTURE

5 Culture

Culture is a very important aspect in every society, region and country. Its impact has been studied in many different subjects such as management, economics, business, health, international relations, aviation safety, human factors, and customer and organisational interactions. The significance and the influence of culture in the family assistance process requires clarification.

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO, 2004), Human Factors Digest No.16 highlighted the importance of cross-cultural factors in aviation safety. Thus, aviation safety issues concerning cross-cultural interactions and cultural interfaces specifically identify those areas that have the greatest potential to threaten the safety and efficiency of aviation operations. The main objective of the ICAO document was to provide those involved in decision-making processes in the aviation industry, including regulatory authorities and airline personnel, with an awareness of the importance of cross-cultural interactions as an impact factor in aviation safety in order to prevent future aviation incidents and accidents. However, this document did not offer solutions because, as ICAO stated, "*These solutions will only emerge as consequences of cross-cultural research in operational settings*" (ICAO, 2004).

As discussed in the literature review, the current family assistance plan, which is concerned with providing assistance to the victims of aviation accidents and their families, was initiated and developed in the U.S. A number of airlines then also implemented family assistance plans, including those operating in the Middle Eastern countries and the Islamic world, designed by international companies in order to be able to fly to the U.S. However, there is no evidence that specific cultural and religious issues were addressed in detail as essential factors in any family assistance plan or in the developed guidance to apply to the victims of aviation accidents and their families.

5.1 Definitions of Culture

A range of definitions from different sources and different subjects have been collected to sketch out various approaches to aspects of “culture”. The aim of presenting all these definitions is to gain an awareness of the deeper meanings of culture and then to build this into an understanding of the importance of culture as an influencing factor regarding family assistance in Middle Eastern countries.

Useem and Useem (1963) defined culture thus: “*Culture has been defined in a number of ways, but most simply, as the learned and shared behaviour of a community of interacting human beings*”. On the other hand, Hofstede (1984) acknowledged that: “*Culture is the collective programming of the human mind that distinguishes the members of one human group from those of another. Culture in this sense is a system of collectively held values*”. Damen (1987) defined culture as: “*learned and shared human patterns or models for living; day-to-day living patterns. These patterns and models pervade all aspects of human social interaction. Culture is mankind’s primary adaptive mechanism*” (Damen, 1987).

Banks, Banks and McGee (1989) defined culture as follows: “*The essence of a culture is not its artefacts, tools, or other tangible cultural elements but how the members of the group interpret, use, and perceive them*”. People from similar backgrounds may follow their own culture and religion but also, at the same time, act differently. This will depend on their society, their education or where they grew up. For example, in the Middle East, wearing the same clothes, growing a beard, or women covering the faces may be taken as a religious matter whereas others may look on it as an aspect of culture. Hofstede (1991) argued: “*Culture refers to the systems of meaning - values, beliefs, expectations and goals - shared by members of a particular group of people and that distinguish them from members of other groups. It is a product of “the collective programming of the mind”, that is, it is acquired through regular interaction with other members of the group*”. People share things that make them united or

closer to each other. For example, Arabs from the Middle East and North Africa are unified by the Arabic language. Similarly, Islam unifies diverse nations from numerous countries around the world, such as Pakistan, Iran, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Nigeria, Algeria, Yemen and Turkey...etc.

Merritt (1993) defined culture as: *“The values and practices we share with others that help us define us as a group, especially in relation to other groups”*. It is very important to understand how people perceive or respond to a situation. Also, people are strongly connected to their society and they do whatever they learn from their families. Lederach (1995) defined culture as: *“The shared knowledge and schemes created by a set of people for perceiving, interpreting, expressing, and responding to the social realities around them”*. Mostly people do the things that they are brought up to consider as customary. For example, boyfriend-girlfriend relationships are unacceptable in the Middle East, but are conventional in the Western World. In the Muslim world it is considered sinful to manufacture, sell or drink alcohol. Every society has its own style of costumes, method of prayers, types of food, ways of greeting ...etc. In the Middle East it is a common practice for male friends to walk holding hands, though this practice is regarded in Western countries as “queer”. Parkes, Laungani and Young, (1997) acknowledge culture is: *“The sum total of the possessions, ways of thinking and behaviour that distinguish a group of people from another and which tend to be passed down from generation to generation”*.

Braithwaite (2001) defined culture thus: *“Culture seems a very visual and easily defined characteristic that is represented through the artistic disciplines of music, visual arts and literature”*. He proceeded to say: *“This perhaps develops a misconception that a certain group can have “more culture” or even “no culture”*. On the other hand, Braithwaite (2001) noted: *“Culture becomes an essential part of a child’s education as soon as he/she becomes capable of learning and communicating with different activities within his/her surroundings*. He added: *“Experience of other cultures, particularly national cultures, contributes to a level of understanding that is all too often incomplete and laced*

with misinterpretation" (Braithwaite, 2001). So, it can be said that culture is a very important aspect of people's lives and it starts from childhood. It is not something that people can invent but it is part of their background; also, many things are involved, such as religion and education.

Culture is important and so must be both considered and respected. Usually, service providers in any business will try to understand their customers' culture or needs in order to have a successful business and satisfied customers. Al-Omari (2003) acknowledged: "*Our understanding and respect for other cultures must be based on respect for other people's values no matter how alien, strange or unreal they may appear to us*" (Al-Omari, 2003, p 14). Macfarlane, an expert in assisting families of victims and employed by South African Airways, stated: "*What might be accepted as a normal behaviour to one group might be shocking and totally unacceptable to another*" (Macfarlane, undated). This implies that family support teams should be trained to be familiar with and accept other cultures and treat the families of victims with all respect to their cultures, no matter where they are from and regardless of their culture, religion, traditions, beliefs, body language or the way they talk. Based on the definitions presented above, the meaning of shared culture can be summarised as follows:

- Culture refers to the cumulative heritage of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, concepts, hierarchies, religion and rules acquired by a group of people.
- Culture is communication, and communication is culture. Communication is the way people talk to each other and so their behaviour, their expectations, acceptance and their communication are also built on culture. People communicate according to their culture, for example, their greeting (e.g. Hi, Hello and the Muslim greeting, Al-salaam Alaykum). For some societies, shaking hands is respectful, important and a good way of starting an interaction, such as for Muslims in the Middle East.

- A culture is a way of life of a group of people: the behaviour, beliefs, values and symbols that they generally accept without thinking about them; these are passed along by communication and imitation from one generation to the next.
- Culture is symbolic communication. Some of its symbols include a group's skills, knowledge, attitudes, values and motives. The meanings of the symbols are learned and deliberately perpetuated in a society through its institutions.
- Culture is the sum total of the learned behaviour of a group of people that is generally considered to be the tradition of that people and which is transmitted from generation to generation.

Therefore, based on the shared meaning that culture is related to people, it can be understood that culture represents a sensitive and vitally important factor that should be considered in designing any family assistance plan for providing support and guidance to the families of victims (Hall, 2000). From these definitions, and from what Hall had to say, the method of treating the victims and their families should be based on their background. The ICAO (2004) stated: "*The aim is not to eliminate culture or make us all the same. The goal is to recognize and manage the potential threats posed by different cultural interfaces*". Ignoring culture as an influencing factor while dealing with the families of victims may add to the pain and suffering of such families, as could be sensed from the accident involving Saudi Airlines Flight SV763 in 1996 in Delhi, India.

5.2 Cultural Interface and Moderating Factors

According to the ICAO (2004), the cultural distance between interacting cultures, similarities and differences in the resources available to every culture, and the experience of the receptive members at the interface, are factors that

foster both matches and mismatches to the cultural interface during daily cross-cultural interactions. A common language, a shared history, similar religion or political system can make two cultures match despite national and geographical distance. For example, Malaysian, Pakistani, Nigerian and Saudi people have different languages, cultures and economies but they generally share the same religion (Islam) which makes them Muslims. The Arabic language unites Arab populations therefore people may say he/she is an Arab, but Arabs also have different cultures. Moreover, the bigger the difference in a social and economic context between two cultures, the greater the mismatch will be. Although experience and exposure makes culture predictable and certain, because adaptation is a talent of human nature that creates cosmetic behaviours, under stress, such adaptation will revert to the natural behaviour (ICAO, 2004).

Table 2: Four ways to behave cross-culturally:

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Option 1:</p> <p>ASSIMILATION</p> <p>A>B</p> | <p>Option 3:</p> <p>INTEGRATION</p> <p>B+A</p> |
| <p>Members of Culture A learn and adopt the ways of Culture B, in whole or in part.</p> | <p>Members of Culture A and Culture B learn each other's ways and compromise.</p> |
| <p>Option 2:</p> <p>ASSIMILATION</p> <p>B>A</p> | <p>Option 4:</p> <p>SEPARATION</p> <p>B I A</p> |
| <p>Members of Culture B learn and adopt the ways of Culture A, in whole or in part.</p> | <p>Members of Culture A and Culture B ignore each other's ways and do not change.</p> |

Source: Redrawn from ICAO, 2004

According to the ICAO (2004), as illustrated in Table 2, there are four ways to behave cross-culturally. The first and second ways are by assimilation. This reflects a willingness to accept the ways of other cultures; these show mirror images with either members of Culture A adopting and learning the ways of Culture B, or vice versa. The third form of cross-cultural behaviour is integration. It is the most effective of the cultural interfaces because members of Cultures A and B learn and compare each other's ways to find the most effective interface. The final way is separation, as shown in both Culture A and B ignoring each other's ways, either by necessity or choice, and maintaining their own way of doing business (ICAO, 2004).

Table 2 effectively shows what could happen in interactions between a family assistance team and the family of a victim. For example, if we call "A" the family assistance team and "B" the family of a victim, the relationship will be as follows:

- **Option 1, ASSIMILATION (A>B)**

Members of Culture A learn and adopt the ways of Culture B, in whole or in part.

The family assistance team should learn and try to understand the culture and religion of the families of victims ***before a disaster***. Such an understanding may be considered to be the *best practice* when supporting families of victims. During the disaster it might be difficult and there may well be no time to learn about the culture, religion and ethical sensitivities of the families. However, during the disaster, it is the airline's duty to assist the families of victims. After a disaster, the families of victims need someone who can deal with them, understand them and help them according to their culture and religion.

- **Option 2, ASSIMILATION (B>A)**

Members of Culture B learn and adopt the ways of Culture A, in whole or in part.

Assimilation would require the families of victims to adopt the ways of the family assistance team; this may not help them because of pressure, timing, emotion, grieving and shock. In fact, such a situation could cause confusion between the family assistance team and the families of victims as the families are not in a position to learn or adopt the culture of the family assistance team. The families will be looking for support from someone who will understand them and feel for them. Hence, the provider (the family assistance team) should adopt the culture of the families of victims as they are the people who need to be served and such service can only be helpful if the culture and religion of the families is considered.

- **Option 3, INTEGRATION (A+B)**

Members of Culture A and Culture B learn each other's ways and compromise.

The family assistance team and the families of victims might learn each other's ways and compromise but this might cause conflict. The airline should be ready to act after a disaster, not to learn, and therefore any learning should take place before a disaster occurs. Not only that, but the airline should know the cultures and religions of its customers in order to provide the best support and service. The support after a disaster will be critical and will be needed in a short time so there will be no time to learn each other's ways.

- **Option 4, SEPARATION (A | B)**

Members of Culture A and Culture B ignore each other's ways and do not change.

There will be a gulf between the families of victims and the family support team if the team does not adopt and understand the culture and religion of the families of victims, and such a gulf will only add to the pain and suffering of the

families, especially if the family of a victim is sensitive or must do something their religion and culture requires. This will build a barrier between the two parties. The factors of cross-culture interactions influence the quality of the interface between two cultures while the adoption and understanding of other cultures can be either conscious or unconscious; in other words, people may not be aware of adapting their behaviour, yet may still do it. However, unconscious adoption can be problematic as it is dependent on behaviour and the success in adopting other cultures will be different from person to person, or from one society to another. This depends on someone behaving like a native of the other culture and understanding that culture's organising principles in order to predict the behaviour of the other culture.

5.3 Airlines and National Cultures

Air travel makes it possible for people to travel comfortably and quickly from one place to another; it has in fact turned the globe into a small village. People from different countries, cultures, religions and backgrounds travel everyday to and from different countries. As such, air travel has become an influencing factor in cross-cultural interactions. Airlines are international businesses as people travel every day on hundreds of international flights from country to country and from city to city. The consequences of the correlation between culture and aviation have been studied by Braithwaite (2001). He noted: "*It is difficult to imagine any air operation that does not involve some form of multinational collaboration, whether it is in the design, construction or maintenance of aircraft or the supply of flight planning information, air traffic services or operational crew*". The conclusion of Braithwaite's work can be extended to flight passengers who have different nationalities and different backgrounds (i.e. different cultures, religions and ethical sensitivities). This can also be extended to accident investigators and family assistance teams. For example, Egypt Air Flight 990 had people on it from Canada, Egypt, Germany, Sudan, Syria, the United States and Zimbabwe (Abdel-Hamid, 1999). Also, Singapore Airlines Flight SQ006 had people from 19

different countries including: Taiwan, the United States, Singapore, India, Malaysia, Indonesia, Mexico, Britain, Thailand, New Zealand, Vietnam, Australia, Canada, Cambodia, Germany, Japan, The Philippines, Ireland and Spain (CNN, November 1, 2000). The Saudi Arabian Airlines accident in Delhi concerning Flight 763 involved passengers from India, Nepal, Pakistan, America, Bangladesh, Britain and Saudi Arabia; there were also flight attendants from different countries such as Morocco, Tunisia, The Philippines, India and Saudi Arabia (Sinha, 1997). The people involved in the above accidents had different cultures, ethical sensitivities and religions.

5.4 Islamic Culture in the Middle East

Studying the culture of Middle Eastern countries is very important in this context because this research focuses on Muslims in these countries. The Middle East has a number of countries with different cultures while most of their inhabitants are Muslims. Islam has a strong influence on their daily lives and their cultures and it unifies Muslims even if they come from different sects, in the same way that the Arabic language unifies Arabs. Almost everything Muslims do is related to their religion: they do whatever their religion allows them to do and refrain from doing anything that is prohibited by and/or contradicts their religion. Qutb (1988) noted: *“According to Islam, people worship one God, who is distinguished by this divinity, creatorship and omnipotence in the full meaning of the words”*. He continued: *“They derive their conception, values and standards, institutions, legislature and laws, orientation, ethics and morals from him (Allah) alone”* (Qutb, 1988, p. 11). Therefore Muslims believe that they will be punished by Allah during their life time or after their death on the Judgement Day if they contravene the teachings of Islam. Like other cultures worldwide, the cultures prevailing in the Middle East countries are also affected by education, economics, history and technology. Hence, in the Middle East, culture is strongly influenced by religion.

In death or happiness people may revert back to their religion and culture. As mentioned previously in the section on the Islamic culture in the Middle East, it is of crucial significance to understand the cultural effect of Islam on the people of the Middle Eastern countries in order successfully to interact with them in business, politics or in any other sphere. However, the Middle East consists of different countries: some of them are Arab and others are not. The following table offers a map of the Middle East.

Source: University of Notre Dame (2010)

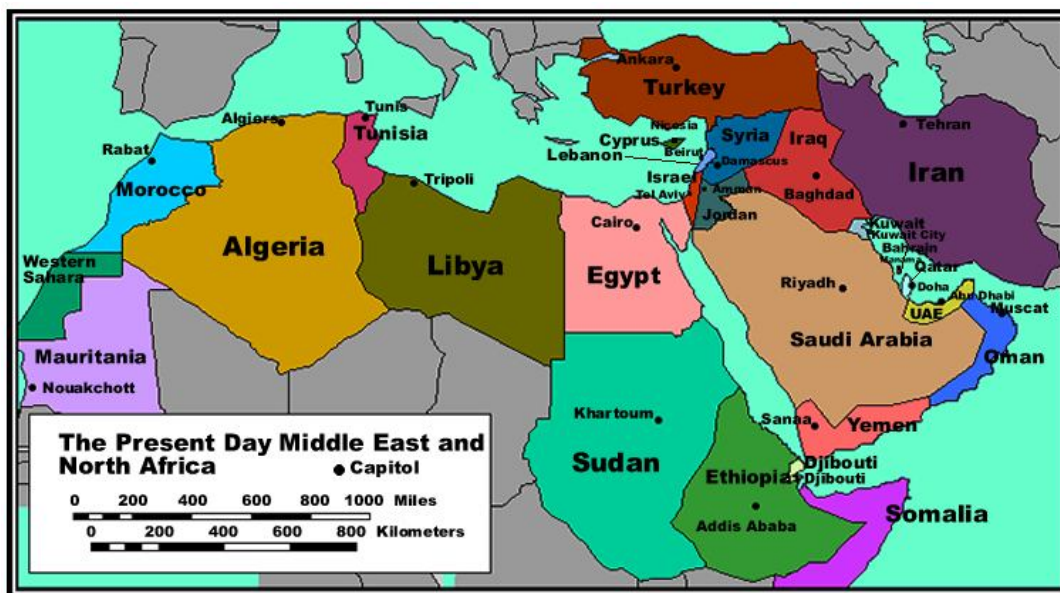


Figure 5 : Map of the Middle Eastern countries:

The Middle East can be divided into two major categories: Arabs and non-Arabs. The Arab countries, where Arabic is the dominant language, include Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Oman, Iraq, Kuwait, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, Palestine and Jordan. Non-Arab countries include Iran, Turkey, Cyprus and Israel, where Persian, Turkish, Greek, Hebrew, Arabic and English are spoken.

In addition to the aforesaid countries, the geographical zone known as the Greater Middle East comprises Afghanistan, Pakistan, Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Djibouti, Eritrea, Somalia and Sudan. The Arabic-speaking countries

among these are Libya, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Djibouti, Eritrea (Arabic / Tigrinya), Somalia (Arabic / Somali), and Sudan (Arabic and various local vernaculars). As mentioned previously, Islam unifies Muslims while the Arabic language unifies Arabs. The following table classifies the Middle Eastern countries and those of the Greater Middle East according to language and religion. The following table (Table 4) is published by the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), cited in MidEast Web (2010).

Table 3: Middle East Countries According to their Religion and Language (MidEast Web (2010))

| Middle Eastern Countries: Name | Religion | Language |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Egypt | 90% Muslim | Arabic |
| Saudi Arabia | 100% Muslim | Arabic |
| Qatar | 76% Muslim | Arabic |
| United Arab Emirates | 76% Muslim | Arabic |
| Bahrain | 81% Muslim | Arabic |
| Oman | 93% Muslim | Arabic |
| Iraq | 97% Muslim | Arabic |
| Kuwait | 85% Muslim | Arabic |
| Syria | 90% Muslim | Arabic |
| Lebanon | 60% Muslim | Arabic |
| Yemen | 99% Muslim | Arabic |
| Palestine | 87% Muslim | Arabic |
| Jordan | 95% Muslim | Arabic |
| Israel | 80% Jewish | Hebrew, Arabic, English |
| Iran | 98% Muslim | Persian |
| Cyprus | 79.3 Christian and 18% Muslim | Greek, Turkish |
| Afghanistan | 99% Muslim | Persian, Pashtu |
| Pakistan | 97% Muslim | Urdu / Pashto |
| Algeria | 99% Muslim | Arabic / French |
| Libya | 97% Muslim | Arabic |
| Morocco | 99% Muslim | Arabic |
| Tunisia | 98% Muslim | Arabic |
| Djibouti | 94% Muslim | Arabic, French, Somali, Afar |
| Eritrea | 60% Muslim | Tigrinya / Arabic |
| Somalia | 99.9% Muslim | Somalia Arabic |
| Sudan | 70% Muslim | Arabic |
| Azerbaijan | 93.4% Muslim | Azerbaijani |
| Turkey | 99.8% Muslim | Turkish |

Commenting on the dominance of the Arabic language in Arab countries of the Middle East, Al-Omari acknowledged: *“There is the Arabic language, which is not only a means of communication, but also the prime media for exchanging information and the transfer of ideas and concepts, from Morocco to Oman (Al-Omari, 2003, p 1).*

Of the Muslim countries in the Middle East (i.e. Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Oman, Iraq, Kuwait, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, Palestine, Jordan, Iran, Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Djibouti, Eritrea, Somalia and Sudan), Al-Omari noted: *“There is Islam, which is the main moral code that underpins the Arab way of life in every minute detail”* (Al-Omari, 2003, p 1). Islam is a religion, not just for Arabs, but for all people. Mostly, Muslims from all over the world share the same main concepts and practices with regard to behaviour and conduct, virtues, food, clothing, burial and rituals. However, it is important to acknowledge that Muslims have different cultures and sects. For example, all Muslims pray five times a day but some Muslim groups do this in slightly different ways. Thus, the following outlines some of the different Muslim creeds and sects, together with some of their differences, as noted by Whetter (2000):

1. Sunni (and different sub-groups)
2. Shia (and different sub-groups)
3. Ibadis.

The worldwide Muslim population is 1.2 billion, of which the majority are Sunnis, while Shiites account for around 15% of the Muslim population. Blanchard (2009) acknowledged that: *“The Ibadi sect is centred mostly in Oman, East Africa, and in parts of Algeria, Libya, and Tunisia, and has been sometimes misrepresented as a Sunni sect”*. There are some differences between Shia and Sunni Muslims in the way they practise their religion. Haddonfield (2007) noted: *“Sunni and Shiite Muslims continue to influence funeral rites and mourning practices throughout the Islamic world and, in particular, how they continue to transform gendered expressions of grief”*. Aghaie (2005) stated:

“Practices may vary on the basis of personal preferences, religious interpretations, popular culture practices, ideals or norms of gender interaction / segregation, regional customs, education level, or socioeconomic background”.

On the subject of Ibadis, Whetter (2000) noted: *“This sect derives from the moderate branch of the Kharjites (wiped out within a few centuries of their establishment due to their belligerent actions and beliefs). They treat true believers with amity (wilaya) and all others with enmity (bara’s). Unlike the Kharjites, Ibadis do not agree with the slaughtering of other Muslims solely on the basis of religious beliefs. Within their worship a puritanical style code is upheld.”*

With regard to the Shi’a, Whetter (2000) observed: *“The Shi’a derive their name from ‘Shi’at Ali’ or ‘Party of Ali’. They hold the opinion that the Imamate (the leadership of Islam) rightfully belongs within the family of Ali, the prophet’s son-in-law who challenged the Orthodox Caliphate and was killed in AD 661. The majority of Shiites are convinced that the line of Imams descended from Ali came to an end in the ninth century when the twelfth Imam seemed to have disappeared but that he is still in some way present and will return to lead Islam again. The Shi’a prevail in Iran and are the majority sect in Iraq, the Yemen Arab Republic, Bahrain and Lebanon. They also have a notable presence in Kuwait and the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia”.*

Whetter also noted that Sunnis are: *“the orthodox Muslim group. ‘Sunni’ translated from Arabic Means ‘customary procedure’. The vast majority of Muslims belong to this sect. With the exception of Iraq, Bahrain, Lebanon and the Yemen Arab Republic, Sunnis prevail in all other Arab countries. They consider that the Shiites place a certain divinity on Imams which is sacrilegious”* (Whetter, 2000).

Specific differences include:

- ❖ Sunnis and Shiites pray behind an Imam (the leader of prayers) from the same sect. Most Sunnis do not pray behind an Imam from the Shiite sect but a small number of the Sunni sub-groups do. Also, some of the Shiite

sub-groups pray behind a Sunni Imam. *“Sunnis have a less elaborate and arguably less powerful religious hierarchy than Shiites. In contrast to Shiites, Sunni religious teachers historically have been under state control. At the same time, Sunni Islam tends to be more flexible in allowing lay persons to serve as prayer leaders and preachers. In their day-to-day practices, Sunnis and Shiites exhibit subtle differences in the performance of their obligatory prayers. Both groups share a similar understanding of basic Islamic beliefs”* (Blanchard, 2009).

- ❖ Mostly, Sunni women do not go to graveyards as they believe it is forbidden but Shiite women do visit graveyards. On the other hand, some Sunnis in Egypt, Morocco, Syria and other Muslim countries will visit graveyards. Haddonfield (2007) explained that Shiite women go to the *“grave and bury the dead”*.
- ❖ Shiite and some of the Sunnis women express their grief through wailing, making heartrending cries and hitting their head and face with their hand; the Sunni sect does not allow this. Haddonfield (2007) wrote: *“The prophet Muhammad strictly forbids wailing, condemning these heartrending cries as an uncivilized, pagan ritual. The prophet was said to be particularly critical of women who tore their clothes”*.
- ❖ There are differences between Sunnis and Shiites when cleaning and preparing a dead body.
- ❖ All Muslim sects depend on their scholar (religious leader) from the same sect to explain or to teach them something they do not understand or that is not clear to them. Therefore, having a religious leader from the same sect is very important as, if a religious person from one sect gives advice or explains something, members from another sect may not listen to him.

In the literature review, it was mentioned that the majority of airline companies in the Middle East apply family assistance guidelines designed in Australia, the USA, the UK, and the EU. It seems that Eastern cultures have not been considered when designing these guidelines as they clearly concentrate on

regulatory, rather than cultural aspects relating to airline companies' responses to disasters and their family assistance plans. However, it is now generally perceived that culture is a very important influencing factor in any family assistance process and that the airline or recovery company should pay attention to it. As yet, the specific requirements of the Middle Eastern cultures have not been addressed in the current family assistance guidelines or in the layout of Family Assistance Centres (FSC) in Middle Eastern countries. This has been demonstrated by the review of the family assistance guidelines used by different airlines in the Middle East. Furthermore, in the interviews with a number of experts from the Middle East, the participants felt there was a need for their family assistance plans to consider culture and religion. In addition to the reviews, the training programmes for airline employees (and family support teams) in the Middle East are provided by western companies. In general, these companies do not consider the impact of Middle Eastern cultures or religion on the family assistance plan. The ICAO's (2001) 'Guidance on Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims and Their Families' addressed culture in general as it mentioned "paying attention to other cultures". The aviation accidents, and the information concerning Saudi Arabian Airlines highlighted in Chapter 2, clearly indicated that the support provided by the airline companies concerned to the families of victims could have been improved to a great extent if the cultures, religions and ethical sensitivities of the victims' families had been taken into consideration. Al-Omari emphasised that: "*Culture must become a factor in considering business options, solutions, tactics, and potential challenges*" (Al-Omari, 2003, p.8).

Aviation is a flourishing business with at least one airline company operating in each country worldwide. Like all other means of transport, aviation is vulnerable to accidents and disasters which lead to interactions between the families of victims who receive a service and the related airline's family assistance team who provide it. In order to deliver family assistance services in an appropriate way, the family assistance team should understand the culture of the people: i.e. the families of victims receiving these services. Hofstede (1994) acknowledged: "*Understanding people means understanding their background,*

from which present and future behaviour can be predicted". Also, Al-Omari noted that: *"Culture is about values and beliefs, food and arts, costumes and customs. It is visible and invisible; it is trans-generational and ever-changing"* (Al-Omari, 2003, pp12).

In the accident involving Saudi Arabian Airlines in Delhi, India, in 1996, the Saudi assistance team could not deal with Indians because of differences in language, culture, laws, mentality (i.e. ethical sensitivities) and education. The airline transferred all the Indian relatives of the victims to a lawyer who could speak the language and had the same culture. Saudi Airlines found that this was very important and helpful for them and for the families of victims (The Asian Age 15, 1996). On the other hand, however, many Indian families were not happy with this; they thought it inappropriate and attributed it to the airline's ignorance. However, at that time Saudi Arabian Airlines did not have formal family assistance guidelines or a recovery company to carry out the support for them, as was the case with other airlines around the world.

Muslims generally share certain concepts and practices that can be called the 'Islamic culture'; they include:

1. Dress: all men and women must wear modest clothes. Women in public should cover their hair and wear baggy clothes. They should not reveal their shoulders, stomachs, hips or thighs. Men should wear long pants and shirts, preferably, with long sleeves. Also, men should avoid wearing visible jewellery around the neck (Hofstede, 1994).
2. Sex segregation is the separation of people according to gender. In some Muslim countries, sex segregation is a prime issue and is enforced by law. Segregation can be practised in shops, offices, hospitals, schools and banks....etc. Sex segregation is part of the teachings of Islam but, as mentioned before, this is not strictly observed in many Muslim countries. In public places in some Muslim countries there are usually posters with the phrase "For Women Only" (Al-Omar, 2003).

3. Pork and alcohol are prohibited by Islam. It is not permissible for a Muslim to sit with a person while that person is drinking alcohol, nor is it permissible for a Muslim to sell or buy alcohol or even handle a bottle or a glass of alcohol.
4. Muslims all over the globe fast from sundown to sunset on every day during the holy month of Ramadan, the ninth month of the Hijra year. Generally, Muslims are not affected by someone eating in front of them but, in countries like Saudi Arabia, non-Muslims are not allowed to eat or drink in public during the fasting time. This does not apply to other Muslim countries where non-Muslims can eat during the fast. During the holy month of Ramadan, Muslims tend to eat dates for breakfast as they are easily digested and are a good source of sugar. Sick people, travellers or children have the right not to fast.
5. Muslims are expected to pray five times a day; it is very important for them to perform these five daily prayers no matter where they may be, what they may be doing or what situation they may be in. A Muslim should suspend any kind of activity to perform prayers at appropriate times. The mosque is usually the place where Muslims pray, although a Muslim may pray in any clean spot. There is usually a room designated for prayers in every government office, company, workshop, marketplace, etc. On the other hand, Muslims who are involved in an emergency, or who must to be at work for something urgent, can delay their prayers.
6. Muslims have two holidays to commemorate every year: "Eid Alfitr" or the fast-breaking Eid, which is on the first day following the holy month of Ramadan, and "Eid Aladha", or the sacrifice Eid, on the tenth day of the twelfth month of the Hijra year, which coincides with "Hajj" or the Muslim pilgrimage.
7. All Muslims greet each other by saying "Alslam Alaykum" which means "May peace be upon you".

8. The vast majority of Muslims all over the world abide by their divine law, “the Sharia”, particularly in issues pertaining to marriage.
9. Muslims observe certain burial rituals and, generally, the same mourning practices. Mostly they follow their religion in burial or anything related to the dead. However, there are some differences in the way of doing things which come from differences of sect and culture.

5.5 Hofstede’s Measured Dimensions for National Cultures

Hofstede's four dimensions explain the differences between cultures prevailing in different countries. They also explain the way people treat each other and how they anticipate being treated by others. The four dimensions illustrate the necessity of paying heed to cultural factors in drawing up any family assistance guidelines. Al-Omari (2003), in his book about the Arab world, asserts: “*Cultural knowledge needs to be applied in a creative way to derive new processes that the organization can apply both internally and externally*” (Al-Omari, 2003, p 13). From this, it can be concluded that, if an organisation uses any programme drawn up in another country, that programme has to be customised in order to focus on cultural aspects, particularly with regard to hypotheses, ways of thinking, and anticipated actions’.

5.5.1 Hofstede’s Four Dimensions

Hofstede, in his study on culture (1991), noted that: “*explaining any foreign culture is potentially a never-ending exercise*”. A number of studies have been carried out by several researchers to classify national cultures in relation to one another by using the four basic dimensional definitions proposed by Hofstede (1984). In his survey of 116,000 IBM employees over 72 countries, Hofstede (1980) used a questionnaire containing roughly 150 questions; 20 of these were used to create four value dimensions along which he compared the national cultures in his sample. The four dimensions are described below:

- Power Distance
- Uncertainty Avoidance
- Individualism vs. Collectivism
- Masculinity vs. Femininity.

5.5.1.1 Power Distance (PD)

Hofstede (1980) states that this dimension: “*indicates the extent to which a society expects and accepts a high degree of inequality in institutions and organisations.*” Based on this definition, Hofstede (1980) also classified countries in terms of their *Power Distance*, labelling this as high or low. So, for example, in a country deemed by Hofstede (1980) to have a high level of *Power Distance*, its organisations tend to have formal hierarchies in control; those on lower levels are unlikely to challenge those above them. Those in positions of power attempt to look as powerful as possible and tend to view others as potential threats, rarely trusting anyone. On the other hand, in countries with low *Power Distance*, those in the lower levels of an organisation expect to have a say in what happens while those in positions of power, who try to look less powerful than they actually are, tend to behave democratically, rather than autocratically. Thus, people at all levels are more prepared to trust others because they feel less threatened.

5.5.1.2 Uncertainty Avoidance (UA)

As defined by Hofstede (1980), *Uncertainty Avoidance*, “*refers to the degree to which a society prefers predictability, security and stability.*” Using this definition, Hofstede (1980) classified *Uncertainty Avoidance* as either weak or strong. With weak levels of *Uncertainty Avoidance*, people are more willing to take risks because the situations that are uncertain are viewed as being acceptable while, with strong levels of *Uncertainty Avoidance*, people are very concerned with issues of security and require stability in their lives and in their careers. In

countries where there are high levels of *Uncertainty Avoidance*, people need rules which are both written and unwritten, so organisations will wish to create a system of highly structured, formal rules to ensure that roles and responsibilities are very clearly defined; ideas and behaviour that are individual and “different” are not tolerated and the high levels of anxiety produced in such organisations often result in people needing to work hard.

5.5.1.3 Individualism vs. Collectivism

The *individualistic versus collectivistic* dimension relates to how far people wish to focus on looking after their own interests and those of their families, as opposed to a wider responsibility for others such as the extended family, for example. In organisations in countries that are highly individualistic, work and personal life are often sharply divided, with work often coming before personal relationships; workers are likely to prefer organisations where they can make decisions for themselves.

5.5.1.4 Masculinity vs. Femininity

In this fourth dimension, Hofstede (1980) noted that masculine societies tend to value qualities such as assertiveness, competition and materialism while feminine societies show a preference for relationships and the quality of life. “Feminine” organisations emphasise working together, partnerships and peaceful working relationships while “masculine” organisations concentrate more on motivation, material aspects of work and are more task-oriented. In such organisations, assertiveness and individuality are not only acceptable, they are often highly valued and appreciated; it is worth noting that, in nearly all societies, men score higher than women on the masculinity dimension.

5.5.2 Importance of Culture using the Four Dimensions

Hofstede's dimensions of culture are often used to explain different ways of structuring organisations, the different motivations of people within organisations, and the different issues people and organisations face within society. By developing an understanding of the dimensions of culture, the current family assistance guidelines, which have been based on guidelines developed by Western people for Western communities and therefore apply to different cultures, religions and ethical sensitivities, could be extended to suit the Middle Eastern populations and the Middle East airline companies as organisations. From the definitions of the four dimensions above, the following points are generated. These can be further used to understand the differences in culture between Middle Eastern and Western countries as follows:

In cultures where *Power Distance* is high (Middle Eastern countries, for example), the following characteristics are likely to be common:

- Large differences in income.
- People in authority have absolute power and control.
- People in powerful positions are shown respect; their judgments are not questioned.
- Those in authority view subordinates as different.

In cultures where *Power Distance* is low (the United States, for example), the following characteristics are likely to be common:

- Small differences in income.
- Those in authority view subordinates as "people like me".
- People generally believe that everyone should have equal rights in society.
- People generally believe that everyone should have equal access to money and equal opportunities.

In cultures where *Uncertainty Avoidance* is high (Mexico, Spain, Greece, Portugal, Peru and Japan, for example, together with some countries in the Middle East including Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, where the Muslim faith plays a significant role in the people's lives), the following characteristics are likely to be prevalent:

- There are many formal, prescriptive rules and laws.
- Protests on the part of citizens are repressed.
- Society tends to be conservative.
- Law and order are tightly controlled.
- Religious, ideological and political fundamentalism is likely to exist.
- There is often intolerance.
- Emotion is not generally shown openly.

In cultures where *Uncertainty Avoidance* is low (the United States, Norway, Great Britain, Sweden and Denmark, for example), the following characteristics are likely to be prevalent:

- There are few laws and rules.
- It is acceptable for citizens to protest.
- There is often tolerance.
- People tend to be moderate.
- Those with different beliefs are not persecuted.
- Emotion is often shown openly.

In the *individualist* cultures (the United States, for example), the following characteristics are likely to be prevalent:

- The interests of an individual are likely to take precedence over the interests of a group and individuals are more likely to take care of themselves instead of relying on a group.

- A sense of independence is taught to children.
- Personal freedom and challenge are sought at work.
- An individual tends to see him/herself as independent of the work organisation.

In *collectivist* cultures (the Middle East countries and Latin America, for example), the following characteristics are likely to be prevalent:

- It is expected that individuals will support their families financially.
- There is an intense sense of belonging.
- People outside the family or who are not close friends are often mistrusted.
- Individuals are expected to interact at work.
- Training is emphasised and using skills effectively is considered important.
- An individual tends to see him/herself as dependent on the work organisation.
- Managing groups is seen as very important.
- Relationships take precedence over work tasks.
- The manager's role is to support his/her group.

In highly *masculine* cultures (the Middle Eastern countries, the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia), the following characteristics that are generally perceived as masculine are likely to be prevalent:

- Aggression.
- Strongly ambitious tendencies and very hard work; these are driven by necessity.

- Materialistic traits.

Characteristics that generally are perceived as *feminine* include:

- Focusing on people and relationships.
- Defensive behaviour due to sensitivity to insult.
- Criticism in public is frowned upon and discouraged.
- Friendliness is favoured over competition in the workplace.
- A desire to avoid upsetting superiors.

Having considered these four dimensions, the importance of culture can be clearly seen as crucial in any family support plan framework. Consequently, airline family support teams in family support centres and in safety departments need to take into account the following:

- Culture strongly influences an individual's core values.
- These core values affect the general attitudes and beliefs of individuals about issues such as competition, success and failure, authority, wealth, survival etc.
- These values also govern how individuals wish to be treated and how they, in turn, treat others.

The above-mentioned family assistance guidelines are designed by and for Western peoples, who have different cultures, religions, education, customs, traditions, ethical sensitivities, etc. from those prevailing in Middle Eastern countries. Hofstede's four dimensions of culture explain differences between Middle Eastern countries (Arab / Muslim) and Western countries so, for the purpose of this study, the researcher selected some Western countries and certain other countries from both the Arab world and Muslim countries in order to explore this further.

| Western countries | PDI | IDV | MAS | UAI | Muslim Countries | PDI | IDV | MAS | UAI |
|-------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| United States | 40 | 91 | 62 | 46 | Arab World | 80 | 38 | 52 | 68 |
| United Kingdom | 35 | 89 | 66 | 35 | Indonesia | 78 | 14 | 46 | 48 |
| Australia | 36 | 90 | 61 | 51 | Iran | 58 | 41 | 43 | 59 |
| Canada | 39 | 80 | 52 | 48 | Malaysia | 104 | 26 | 50 | 36 |
| Sweden | 31 | 71 | 5 | 29 | Pakistan | 55 | 14 | 50 | 70 |
| Germany | 35 | 67 | 66 | 65 | Turkey | 66 | 37 | 45 | 85 |
| Average | 36 | 81 | 52 | 46 | Average | 74 | 28 | 48 | 61 |

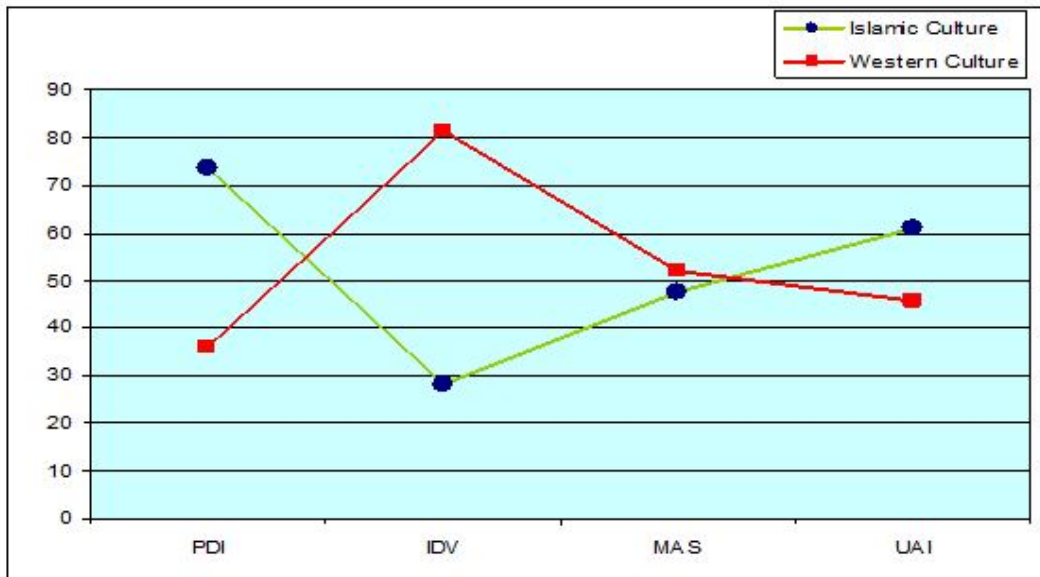


Figure 6: Differences between Muslim and Western Cultures According to Hofstede's Four Dimensions (Hofstede, 1980)

The chart above shows the differences between the Muslim / Arab and Western cultures. So, because every society has its own concepts and commonly agreed practices, this means that not everything made for one society will suit another. Even if another society uses something, it will adjust it to be in harmony with its concepts and commonly accepted practices. Family assistance guidelines designed for Western societies should therefore be modified to be suitable for people in the Middle Eastern countries. For example, Bjerke and Al-Meer (1993) were teachers at a Saudi business school that used an American textbook. They were interested in finding out the merits and demerits of teaching using that textbook outside the U.S. Their study involved a comparison

of Saudi and American cultures and ascertained major differences between them, emphasising that: *“Satisfactory management theories developed in the USA may not be suitable for the Saudi culture”* (Bjerke and Al-Meer, 1993). They concluded that: *“The American management theories are not appropriate for the Saudi culture. So, Saudi managers should adapt them to the Saudi culture rather than vice versa”*.

Bjerke and Al-Meer (1993) also cited Kiggundu *et al.* (1993) who reviewed 94 articles on organisations in developing countries and concluded: *“History, both ancient and recent, has fundamentally altered the values of developing and industrialized countries shaping, in each, largely different attitudes toward the managerial implications of industrialization. This explains why theory developed in a modern Western setting may be irrelevant or inadequate in the setting of a developing country”* (Kiggundu *et al.* 1993, cited by Bjerke and Al-Meer 1993).

From the information above, it can be concluded that it may not appropriate for the airlines in the Middle Eastern countries to implement the current family assistance plans without modifying them in order to take in cultural, religious and ethical sensitivity factors. However, airlines are not for one nation; they are international companies and are for international use. Most of the time air accidents involve people from different nationalities, cultures, religions, and with different ethical sensitivities. So, culture is one of the most important issues in every business, especially when there are interactions between people from different societies (family assistance team members and families of the dead or injured). Ignoring people’s cultures is inappropriate and can add more pain and suffering to the families of victims, especially if they are away from their home and at a critical time. The Australian Government (2008) stated: *“A Family Assistance Plan needs to be particularly sensitive to cultural issues associated with the loss of loved ones. Airlines are encouraged to take special steps to understand the cultural issues applying to the main markets in which they operate”* (Australian Government Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, 16June, 2008). Culture should be considered in any family assistance guidelines, not only for the Middle Eastern countries, but also for every region. Every airline could develop its

family assistance plan or guidelines paying due attention to the diverse cultures of its passengers, and exchange information and expertise in this respect with other airlines. The difference between Middle Eastern and Western is not only in culture, religion, ethical sensitivity, language, education, economy and food but in the social life. For example the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (2006) stated the following about the “**Arab** Perspective vs. **Western** Perspective”:

❖ **Arab:**

1. *“Family – Centre of everything. (Father has first and last word.)”*
2. *“Friends – Periphery, but courteous to all”.*
3. *“Honour is very important amongst Arabs. Honour will be protected and defended at all costs”.*
4. *“Shame, (especially against family), should be avoided at all costs, insults and criticism taken very seriously”.*
5. *“Time is less rigid. Approach to time is much more relaxed and slower than that in Western cultures”.*
6. *“Religion – Central to all things”.*
7. *“Society – Family / tribe is most important”.*
8. *“Government – Most governments are secular, but still emphasize religion”.*
9. *“Age and Wisdom honoured”.*
10. *“Wealth honoured in both cultures”.*

❖ **Western**

1. *“Family – Important but not as central to individual”.*
2. *“Friends – Core to some, important to most”.*
3. *“Honour – Typically not as important”.*
4. *“Shame typically is not as important”.*
5. *“Time- Very structured, deadlines must be met”.*
6. *“Religion – Varies by individual, very personal, not discussed in polite conversation”.*

7. *“Society – Individual rights”*.
8. *“Government – Purpose is to protect rights and improve standard of living”*.
9. *“Youth and Beauty praised”*.
10. *“Wealth honoured in both cultures”*.

Islam has a strong effect on the Muslim life therefore the above can apply to most Muslim country. The Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (2006) stated *“Arab countries are religiously and ethnically diverse with Islam being the dominant religion in most countries”*.

CHAPTER 
RELIGION

6 Religion

Different religions and cultures have different approaches for dealing with death and so certain religious or cultural rituals are followed when a death occurs. It is only natural, therefore, that families of the victims of an aviation accident may wish to comply with the rituals of their religion or culture, but may find it difficult to do so because of the unexpected nature of the death. Understanding the requirements of different religions is an important step in ensuring that a family assistance plan is able to accommodate the different priorities of the cultures involved. After an aviation accident, families of victims may find it difficult to accept the fact of death but will have their own ways of dealing with it. All airline accidents, such as those concerning Saudi Airlines Flight 763, Swiss Air Flight 111, Egypt Air Flight 990 and Korean Air Flight 801, involved people from different backgrounds, cultures and religions. Thus, a recognised person from that religion has to perform all the expected rites and rituals and must engage in acts of piety and charity to ensure victims are dealt with appropriately.

Kurtus (2002) defined religion as: *“The provided answers to or explanations of the most important concerns, such as survival in a harsh environment, moral and social rules, overcoming disease and the mysteries of life, including life-after-death beliefs that people hold”*. As such, the guidance provided by various religions following a death has an important bearing on how airlines can prepare to assist victims and their families.

Paul (1996) acknowledged: *“Religion originates in an attempt to represent and order beliefs, feelings, imaginings and actions that arise in response to direct experience of the sacred and the spiritual. As this attempt expands in its formulation and elaboration, it becomes a process that creates meaning for itself on a sustaining basis, in terms of both its originating experiences and its own continuing responses”*.

Parkes, Laungani and Young (1997) carried out a very important study in their book *“Death and Bereavement across Cultures”*. They explained how every society has its own customs and beliefs surrounding death. The book describes

the “*rituals and beliefs of major world religion, explains their psychology and historical context, shows how custom are changed by contact with the west, and considers the implications for the future*”. It is a handbook which can be used by doctors, nurses, social workers, hospital chaplains and counsellors. The following section offers a useful example of the importance of religion after death. Different religions have been selected to offer a wide view of the range of sensitivities and the importance of religion in death; this also shows the ways in which these religions direct their own followers. There are many different religions and each has its own religious leaders, books or holy book to explain to followers how to do things, including customs to be followed in the event of a death.

All the following sections concerning key religions discussed below are summarised from one text: “*Death and Bereavement across Cultures*” (Parkes, Laungani and Young, 1997).

6.1 Hindu views and customs regarding death:

Hinduism, an ancient religion, originates from the sub-continent of India and can be traced back for about 4,000 years to a civilisation in the Indus valley. Hinduism has many different sacred books, unlike religions which have one main sacred text such as the Bible or the Qur’an, and followers believe in rebirth and reincarnation. Because of this, death is viewed as a natural process in which the soul, a separate entity, returns to earth after death, changes its course, and continues its journey. Thus, in Hinduism, death is not considered to be a terrible calamity. When someone dies, there are ceremonies to prepare the body and this is followed by a procession to the place where the body is either to be burned or buried. This involves only the male family members and relatives of the deceased person. At the site, in the company of these mourners, the nearest male relative will take charge and conduct the final rites. Generally, for most Hindus, cremation is the preferred method of disposing of the body and so, in this case, the closest relative will light the funeral pyre. However, it is

often very difficult to conduct such procedures outside of India and then compromise is necessary if a person dies abroad; if relatives are able to afford it, therefore, they often prefer to return the body to India by air but for those who are unable to meet the cost, the services of a Hindu funeral director, or someone who is able to fulfil the particular needs of such a group, should be made available (Parkes *et al.*, 1997).

6.2 Christian views and customs regarding death:

Christians believe in the continuation and resurrection of the soul; this continuation depends on how the life of the deceased has been lived on earth. Ideas of this afterlife vary from a conventional view of heaven and hell to a more liberal notion of a different existence for the soul in a world to come. Christian funeral rituals generally consist of a visitation, the funeral itself, and then burial or cremation which immediately follows the funeral service. A procession consisting of close family members and other mourners passes from the place where the funeral service was held to the site of the burial or cremation. Generally, coffins are kept closed during the ceremony but occasionally, these are reopened before the burial so that family members can look at and say their goodbyes to the deceased person for the last time (Parkes *et al.*, 1997).

6.3 Jewish views and customs regarding death:

Judaism is one of the oldest religions still practised today and is the first faith recorded as having only one God; its history and doctrines have had a great influence on other religions such as Christianity and Islam. Funerals in the Jewish faith are conducted soon after death, usually within 24-48 hours; the body is never displayed. Furthermore, it is forbidden to embalm the body, cremation is not allowed, and flowers are not sent to the family as this would be a reminder that a life has been lost. Jewish funerals are conducted according to certain rituals and traditionally these involve close family members: the husband

or wife, the mother and father, and sons, daughters, brothers and sisters. Burial may be delayed if the members of the immediate family mentioned above have to travel a long distance (Parkes *et al.*, 1997).

6.4 Islamic views and customs regarding death:

Islam is not just a religion but a complete way of life. Muslims believe the Qur'an (the Holy book in Arabic) is the word of God, spoken to Muhammad by the Angel Gabriel. Also Muslims believe Muhammad is the perfect model of how people are to live. Therefore, to say or do anything which shows lack of respect to God, to the Prophet Muhammad, or to any of the prophets, is considered offensive and deeply hurtful to Muslims. Supporting this, William (2005) noted: *"Showing respect for a Muslim client would include using words and language to talk about Allah or Muhammad in terms which are respectful and appropriate. Using religiously offensive language, which would include swearing or cursing, being casual in relation to something sacred (e.g. the Ka'aba in Mecca) would be inappropriate"*. Muslims see death as the end of the present life followed by life thereafter. They believe that everybody will be brought back to life on the Day of Judgment and, if God wills, be reunited with their families once more. However, there are cultural differences in expressing loss and in mourning within Muslim populations. Immediately after death, the body is laid on a flat board, feet together, arms to the side and eyes closed; the chin is wrapped in a cloth to prevent the mouth opening. If no Muslims are present, these duties should be carried out by healthcare staff. Moreover, there are four funeral rites in Islam: washing, covering with cloth or any other material commonly worn by man, the saying of prayers over the dead body, and burial. The four rites must be carried out in that order. Washing the body should be done in a special way by the family or by specialised washers of the same sex as the deceased; the body should not be washed by non-Muslims. It is then shrouded in white linen made without knots. It is very important to know that Muslims must not be cremated or have their dead body embalmed (Parkes *et al.*, 1997). When a

Muslim (male or female) dies, it is incumbent upon the community to perform the funeral rites immediately. The dead must be buried as soon as possible, preferably within twenty-four hours. In a case when the death occurs in a place where there are no Muslims, the body should be brought to the nearest place where the Muslim funeral rites can be performed. The body is ritually washed by a Muslim of the same sex, preferably covered with white cotton sheets and laid on its right facing Mecca. Mostly all Muslim are eager to return died body back home. Therefore Parkes *et al.*, (1997) noted “Most Muslims who die overseas want their body returned to their ‘home’. In doing so they leave their family ‘in exile’. As a consequence, those left behind feel all the more foreign, bound only by their religion, which may therefore take on particular importance”.

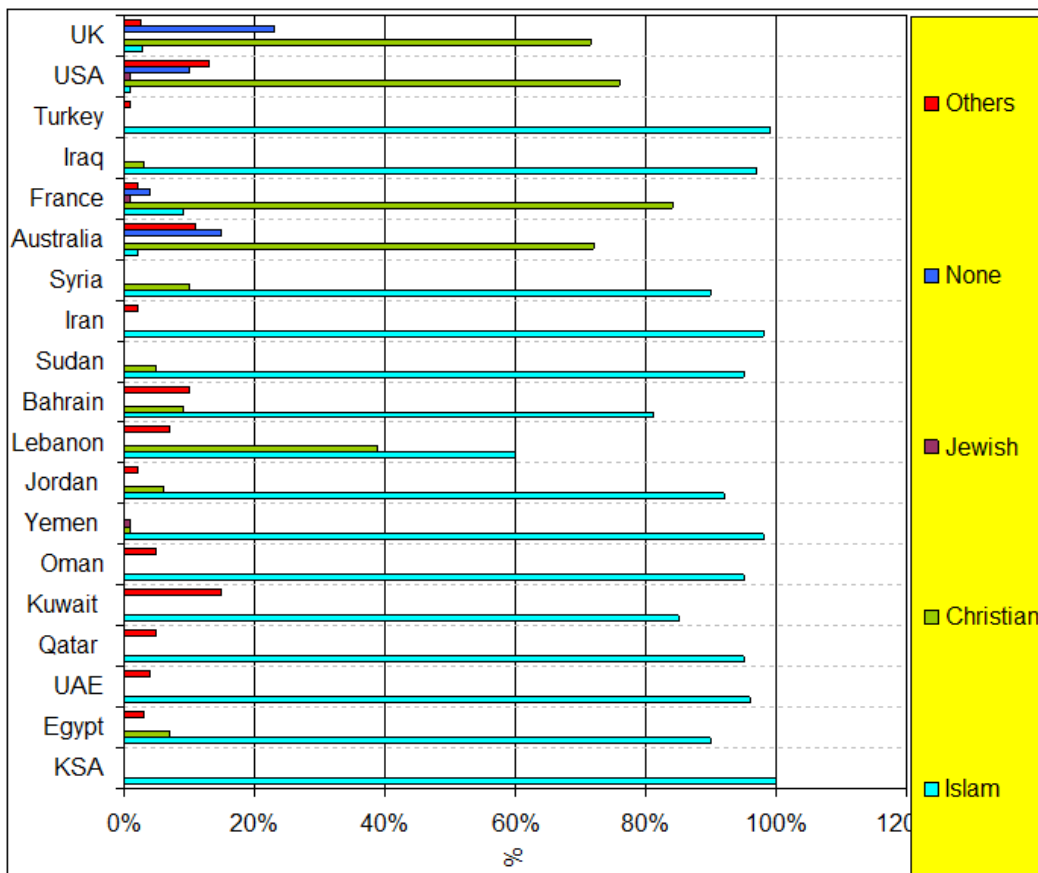


Figure 7: Distribution of Religions in the Middle East and in Other Countries (Source: redrawn from [infoplease, 2007](#))

Islam is a religion that stems from Allah (God) for the whole of mankind and the name of Islam was given to the Muslims by Allah himself in the Holy Qur'an, Al-Maida chapter, verse 3: *"This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed my favour upon you and have chosen for you Islam as your religion"*. In the Middle Eastern countries, the most commonly practised religion is Islam and this has a strong effect on everyday life (Figure 6).

Because of the considerable growth in airlines in this region (as illustrated in Figure 2) and because of the widespread practice of the Islamic religion in the Middle East (as shown in Figure 6), it is clearly important to understand certain aspects of Islam since it has such a strong influence on people's daily lives. The Defence Language Institute Foreign Language Centre (DLIFLC) (1997) stated that: *"To understand the Middle East countries whether in economy, politics, military, customs, or whatever, one must understand Islam. The variety inherent in Middle East culture expresses the variety of practice found within Islam."* Also Whetter (2000) acknowledged that: *"To understand the lifestyle and culture of the Arabs in the Gulf it is essential to gain some knowledge of their religion, Islam, which permeates every aspect of their daily lives"* (Whetter, 2000, pp 24).

Therefore, it is important to be sensitive to elements such as death and life after death, which could influence a family support plan framework. For example, in 1996, in the accident involving Saudi Airlines Flight 763 in Delhi, there was a conflict between Hindu and Muslim religious leaders over the unidentified bodies. The Muslim leaders required the bodies of Muslims to be buried while the Hindu religious leaders wanted the bodies of unidentified victims to be cremated. In matters of life, death, life after death and happiness, Muslims are strongly dependent on their religious principles obtained from the Holy Qur'an and the teachings of the Prophet Mohammad. Muslims believe that the Qur'an was revealed to Prophet Mohammad in the Arabic language, as stated in the Holy Qur'an, Yusuf chapter, and verse 2: *"... We have sent it down As an Arabic Qur'an. In order that ye may learn wisdom."*

Therefore it is very important to consider Islam when dealing with Muslims, especially in a critical situation such as an emergency. William (2005) acknowledged: *“Not showing respect for beliefs of Islam may for a Muslim client, mean that the therapy will be incomplete and not fully valid because a key element in the reflective process is missing: their underlying frame of reference. Also, crossing boundaries which are forbidden by Islam or by specific sects may cause mistrust and distress (e.g., a female client working alone with a male therapist would not be acceptable within some Muslim sects, offering a Muslim client tea or coffee during a time of fasting, wearing inappropriate or revealing clothing when working with clients, or talking in depth about sexual issues would also be unacceptable for some clients and some groups). Respect and acceptance need to be given to fast days and religious festivals as times when a Muslim client may not be able to work therapeutically”*.

The following paragraphs offer translations of the meanings of some verses from the Holy Qur'an. Muslims have been advised that life and death are created by the mighty Lord, as stated in the Holy Qur'an, Al-Mulk chapter, verses 1 and 2: *“Blessed be He in Whose hands is Dominion; And He over all things. (1) He Who created Death and Life, that He May try which of you is best in deed; and He is the Exalted in Might, Oft-Forgiving (2)”*. Also in the Holy Qur'an, Anbiyaa chapter, verse 35, it is stated that all mankind will face death and eventually return to Allah: *“Every soul shall have a taste of death: And We test you by evil and by good by way of trial. To us must ye return (35)”*. Muslims who lose a loved one in an accident are asked to be patient, as mentioned in many chapters in the Holy Qur'an, such as in Al-Anfal chapter, verse 46: *“And be patient and persevering: For God is with those who patiently persevere (46)”*. So, if Muslims accept a death, the Lord will reward them with blessing and mercy, as stated in the Holy Qur'an, Al-Baqara chapter, verses 156 and 157: *“Who says, when afflicted with calamity: “To God we belong, and to Him is our return (156). They are those on whom (Descend) blessings from God, and mercy, and they are the ones that received guidance (157)”*. The Prophet Mohammad in his teachings advised Muslims to be patient when they heard about the death of one of their beloveds. As a result, he stated that the mighty

Lord would reward Muslims with mercy, blessings and heaven, as stated in his saying: “*Endurance is to be shown at the first blow.*”

From the review of religious literature offered above, from experts’ acknowledgments and from the experience of previous accidents, religious leaders can contribute to bringing comfort and easing the pain and sufferings of the families of victims by:

- Reminding the families of victims of the Mighty Lord’s sayings in the Holy Qur’an.
- Reminding the families of victims of the teachings of the Prophet Mohammad regarding death and also of the reward that Muslims will gain by being patient as well as by accepting the death of their beloved.
- Offering insight to the families of victims about life after death, telling them that heaven is the reward of their lost beloved.
- Encouraging the families of victims to pray for their dead beloved.

Religion is one of the most important and strongest aspects of people’s lives as they depend on their religion in death, happiness and sickness. Kurtus (2002) noted: “*The basis for most religions is to provide answers or explanation of the important concerns that people have*”. He continued: “*When some people become ill or diseased, they may turn to their religion or even go to another religion that will help them achieve a cure*”. Silberman (2005) noted that: “*The importance of religion in people’s lives around the globe has been reported in numerous books (e.g., *The Dalai Lama*, 1999; *Kushner*, 1989; *Lewis*, 2003), insightful documentaries such as “*Faith & Doubt at Ground Zero*” (*Whitney & Rosenbaum*, 2002), and in some countries on a regular basis in the daily news (e.g., *www.cnn.com*, *www.arabnews.com*, and *www.haaretz.com*)”.*

In most cases, people get to know about what is right and what is wrong from their religions and are keen to observe what they learn. A follower obtains

answers to questions regarding life, death and life after death from religion. Some religions even lay down rules about a follower's food and drink, communications, clothes, law and businesses. Family assistance teams should pay attention to the religions of families of victims; also religion should be considered in any family assistance guidelines.

Considering religion in the family assistance after an air disaster should help the injured, the victims and families of victims. This consideration will help to understand how a victim's body should be treated (for example, who cleans the body, where to bury the body or who should bury it), its final resting place (cremation or burial), the speed of the burial, and which religious leader the airline should bring in (for example, for Muslims, a Shiite or Sunni religious leader). Robben (2004) noted: *"It is important to know what religion and sect the deceased belonged to; this determines the type of coffin cover and other funeral materials"*. On the other hand the requirements of any religion are very important and may be sensitive. William (2005) suggests: *"Awareness of religious requirements / prohibitions in relation to drugs, alcohol and smoking and when working with clients with addiction issues, and for Muslim clients holding a religious belief which forbids alcohol, asking questions around consumption of alcohol can be insulting. In addition counsellors need to recognize the difficulty and shame that a Muslim faces in admitting to having alcohol related problems or seeking help because of the shame involved in breaking the Shari'ah or Islamic law"*. Airlines should know the victim's background and how to deal with him/her; they should also have very well trained family assistance teams. Regarding this, William (2005) noted a useful example: *"In working with bodily and physical issues counsellors need to be sensitive about religious requirements or prohibitions, including menstruation, not displaying certain parts of the body, giving birth and related matters. This is particularly important in relation to Muslim clients receiving counselling in relation to illness, hospital stays, maternity and when seeking medical help"*.

CHAPTER 

ETHICAL SENSITIVITIES

7 Ethical Sensitivities

Culture and religion are mostly responsible for directing ethical sensitivities (i.e. what is 'right and wrong'). For example, it is not permissible for Muslims to eat pork and, for Hindus, eating beef is forbidden by their religion. Muslims are forbidden by their religion to accept bribes and, in the western culture, it is also unethical to accept or bribe someone. However, in other cultures corruption is considered as a very common practice. After any aircraft disaster there will be interactions between the airline companies (the family assistance team), the injured and the families of victims. The family assistance team will extend assistance to the families of victims and, at the same time, the families of victims will be looking for all kinds of support. The difficulty is how the family assistance team will deliver such services. Every society has its own way of deciding what is right or wrong (i.e. has different ethical sensitivities) and these sensitivities stem from culture and religion. Clarkeburn (2002) noted: "*People may differ in their natural sensitivity to moral problems, but in general, ethical sensitivity is most likely acquired by exposure to, and experience with, moral problems*".

Culture and religion are related to each other as mentioned previously, but they also direct or influence ethical sensitivities. If people suggest something is unethical, that means it is against, or not acceptable to, their culture and religion or the normality of their daily life. The normal and ethical issues are what we do and what we do not do, and what is acceptable and what is not acceptable in one society.

It is unethical for Muslims to hold, sell or sit with someone drinking alcohol because they are forbidden. For them it is unethical according to their religion and culture, whereas it is normal and acceptable for people from other religions and cultures. Following a death, Muslims are forbidden to cremate or embalm the body, whereas in other religions and cultures, it is a requirement. Regarding this, the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) (1997) stated: "*Each religious faith and ethnic culture has its own ethical considerations when*

dealing with the dead and dying. It is not possible to list the requirements and expectations of each individual denomination or persuasion in this Guide, but the importance of sensitivity and understanding when dealing with all victims should never be overlooked'. Therefore people act, perceive, accept (or not), expect, think, talk and greet each other differently, according to their culture and religion. Also, every society is largely happy about its way of life and think it is the right way of doing things.

In an emergency, such as an aviation accident, it is crucial but also very difficult for the authority to make the best decisions. For example, the process of identifying the burned bodies of victims is sometimes hard and costly; sometimes, it is even impossible. The authority may have to decide whether to bury, cremate, or otherwise dispose of the bodies or remains, or even ascertain who should make that decision. On the other hand, the authority should take into account the appropriate burial procedures based on the religion, traditions, ethical (moral) values and culture of the victims' families. Furthermore, it is a very sensitive issue to deliver bad news or to know what to say to families of victims and therefore it is important to know the backgrounds of the families. Therefore the importance of culture is acknowledged by the Australian Government's Department of Transport and Regional Services (2008), in its family assistance code, states that: *"A family assistance plan needs to be particularly sensitive to cultural issues associated with the loss of loved ones. Airlines are encouraged to take special steps to understand the cultural issues applying to the markets in which they operate"*. Moreover, Clarkeburn (2002) emphasised: *"Ethical sensitivity is an element we cannot ignore"*. Victims' remains should be treated with dignity; the families of victims must be protected from abuse, and the issue of death certificates should be dealt with as quickly as possible. The airline company should, in addition, give accurate information and pay attention to different ways of communicating, such as language, gestures, shaking hands, making eye contact, and knowing what can and cannot be said. Hiding information that might affect the families of victims is unethical; the victims' bodies and belongings must also be treated with respect, bearing in mind that it is also unethical to treat victims' bodies according to the

culture and religion of the members of the family assistance team while ignoring the victims' own backgrounds. A family assistance team should check with the families what beliefs they hold and respect these; they must not see them as opinions to be challenged. The team should also not deal differently with families according to their skin colour, cultural or religious reputation, nationality, or how they look; it is vital to treat the families simply as other human beings. For example, in the disaster in Delhi, India, in 1996 involving Saudi Arabian Airlines, the airline faced the problem of dealing with different religions and cultures. Many victims' bodies could not be identified. Consequently, Muslim and Hindu religious leaders argued about whether to cremate or bury the unidentified bodies. As mentioned above, cremation is forbidden by Islam which regards it as unacceptable in any circumstances yet the Indian authorities decided to cremate the unidentified bodies regardless of their religion. Also the families of victims were abused. For example, they had to pay money to the hospital employees to release the victims' bodies or issue death certificates. This money was regarded by the hospital employees as a tip paid for their services, whereas others regarded it as bribery and profiteering. Also, they did not treat the victims' bodies or their belongings with dignity since most of the belongings were stolen by villagers where the accident occurred, and the bodies of victims remained in an open area for a long time. In general, organisations such as airlines adopt moral principles which establish ideals for the organisation and its members; typically, these are referred to as "*codes of ethics*" that are used as guidelines to direct behaviour within the organisation. Therefore, ethical knowledge, regarding carrying out business, whether locally or across borders, becomes an important issue to employees in general and managers in particular in order to gain a complete understanding of the cultural environment in which a firm operates (Al-Khatib et al., 1995).

Saudi Arabian Airlines, for instance, designates a place for prayers on board every international flight, and it is not permissible to sell alcohol or serve pork on any of their flights. All these rules are derived from Islamic teachings. So, Saudi Arabian Airlines has its own way of doing things which comes from religion and the sense of right and wrong according to this religion. It is customary for other

airlines, such as western airlines, to sell alcohol and serve pork on board their flights, since their cultures and religions do not prohibit them. However, the airlines of some Muslim countries also sell alcohol and serve pork on their flights. This comes from the adoption of other cultures in the same way an organisation might adopt other ways of doing things. The “*codes of ethics*” usually reflect shared cultural statements and beliefs about behaviours which lead to the maintenance of civil order, both within an organisation and in the broader society (Trevino, 1986). As a result, unethical behaviour within organisations, whether public, private or non-profit, can impose serious costs upon the organisation. Bebeau *et al.* (1985) defined ethical sensitivity as: “*the perception that something one might do or is doing can affect the welfare of someone else either directly or indirectly (by violating a general practice or commonly held social standard)*” (Bebeau *et al.*, 1985, p. 226). The costs include financial losses from corruption, as well as losses in efficiency and effectiveness resulting from the commission, investigation and correction of wrongdoing. In his study, Zajac (1996) acknowledged: “*Perhaps more importantly, unethical behaviour within organisations often impairs human relations within the organisation, and consumes the stock of public faith in the organisation*” (Zajac, 1996).

7.1 Ethical and Decision Making Processes:

After a disaster, it is vital but difficult for the airline company to make sensible decisions but any decisions made should be taken according to rules, as noted by Hofstede (2001): “*These rules are the society's traditions that formed the concepts of obligation and duty, and right and wrong*”. Thus, the rules become a part of an individual's ethical decision-making process through what is known as ‘moral standards’. Judging the natural rightness or wrongness of various acts and intentions, and weighing the cost of an act are determined by these moral standards (Hosmer, 1994). They can also play a part in training individuals to

adopt a prearranged way of thinking and acting, even though they may not be aware of it (Moschis and Churchill, 1978).

Nadler (2002) in his study noted: *“The goals (expected outcomes), norms (expectations of behaviours), beliefs (expectations of thought) and values (the priorities of goals, norms, and beliefs) differ due to variations in the religious attitudes, cultural values, economic status, and the social situations of the individuals involved. Thus, they play an essential part in moral standards. As individuals, groups, countries, and cultures vary with the passages of time the moral standards are variable, as well as personal”* (Nadler, 2002). Ferrell and Gresham (1985) noted: *“Individuals are influenced by moral standards which they gain from their society, traditions and education, and cultural and religious heritage”*.

Teaching and understanding ethics has been found to be applicable for business ethics in companies such as airlines. Such an understanding can result in better decision-making in situations with ethical issues (Hunt and Hanson, 2007). Therefore religion, culture, education, tradition and economics play a major role in ethical sensitivities and any decision that is made should be taken with these factors in mind.

7.1.1 Relationships between Religion and Ethical Sensitivities

Religious texts, such as the Bible and the Qur'an, provide guidance to their believers regarding the importance of ethical values through an established religious worldview. William (2005) noted: *“The following illustrate just some sensitive issues for Muslims of which counsellors should be aware. When working with Muslim clients around ethical or moral issues including care of elderly parents, business ethics, debt, theft, family issues and injustice, Qur'anic and Muslim law will be relevant as well as western or secular ethics. Cultural issues concerning, for example, dress, food, artistic expression etc. should not be confused with those that are religious. For example, the eating of foods which are culturally preferred is not the same as eating or not eating foods*

prescribed by the Qur'an as forbidden". Therefore individuals who are more religious have been found to be more likely to perceive an ethical problem than those who are less so (Stead *et al.*, 1990). This can apply to Muslims in the Middle East and in other Muslim countries because Islam is everything for Muslims; it is involved in their daily lives as everything they do or cannot do is related to their religion. Based upon the Islamic concepts of unity, justice and need of balance, it can be concluded that the ethical sensitivities followed in organisations for Muslims in the Middle Eastern countries are derived and strongly based on the Islamic ethical system. In Middle Eastern countries, such as Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, codes of ethics or ethical sensitivities are believed to be strongly created from both culture and religion (Ali, 1992); this also applies to other Muslim countries.

7.2 Ethical Sensitivities in Middle Eastern Organisations

Muslims derive their ethical standards from the teachings of the Holy Qur'an (which Muslims believe is a book revealed by Allah (God) to Prophet Muhammad in seventh century Arabia), and from the Sunnah (the recorded sayings and works of the Prophet Muhammad). Khan (1997) noted: "*The fundamental sources of Islamic ethical principles are essentially the Qur'an and the Sunna. Together they provide the sources for the Shari'a. Islam is the means to distinguish between the legal and the illegal, between the permitted (halal) and the forbidden (haram)*". The goals of Islam are not primarily materialistic; however, they are based on Islamic concepts of human well-being and leading a good life which stresses brotherhood/sisterhood and socio-economic justice. These goals require a balanced satisfaction of both the material and spiritual needs of all humans (Chapra, 1992). Islamic guidelines regarding ethical sensitivities are derived from the interrelated concepts of unity, justice and the need for balance, which are explained below.

7.2.1 Unity

Generally, Islam is simply a programme of life in accord with the “*laws of nature*” decreed by Allah; thus, a definite relationship between fellow humans is prescribed. This is the relationship of brotherhood or sisterhood and equality (Abu-Sulayman, 1976). Amrullah and Hadimi (1998) noted: “*Meekness (Rifq): the literal meaning of this word is pitying and helping others but its special meaning in the knowledge of ethics is obedience to the rules of Islam*”.

Muslims believe that because people are accountable to Allah, and their success in the hereafter depends on their performance in this life on earth, this adds a new dimension to the valuation of things and deeds in this life (Siddiqi, 1981). In terms of business philosophy, Islam lies in a person’s relationship with and belief in Allah, His universe and His people. In this sense, unity is a coin with two faces: one implies that Allah is the sole creator of the universe and the other implies that people are equal partners or that each person is a brother or sister to the other. As far as business is concerned, this means cooperation and equality of effort and opportunity. The concept of unity in Islam, with regard to any family assistance process or guidelines, can be summarised as follows:

1. Equal opportunities and non-discriminatory behaviour towards the families of victims. “*No Arab has superiority over any non-Arab and no non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; no dark person has superiority over a white person and no white person has any superiority over a dark person. The criterion of honour in the sight of God is righteousness and honest living.*” This is one of the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (Sallam and Hanafy, 1988, cited in Rice, 1999). When an accident occurs, the families of victims should all be treated in the same way (i.e. equally). They should not be treated differently by reason of their nationality, culture, religion, wealth or colour. Equality, however, cannot be applied all the time: a royal family, business people and top level government personnel will expect special and different assistance (VIP). For example, when they travel, they may stay in a special place in the airport; have a first class seat on the aircraft, a chauffeur-driven

car and a special room in the hotel; and may have people who work for them. Therefore, these people will expect a higher level of support from the airline or whoever is responsible. This kind of support may be understandable in Middle Eastern countries, and in other parts of the world, because it is part of their culture. However, this kind of treatment may not be made available in other parts of the world such as in the USA, the UK or other western countries.

2. Team work: the employees of an airline company at all management levels should work as a team to support the families of victims. The family assistance team should respect the families of victims; they should also be eager to support them with mercy and wisdom.

Excellence and quality of work should be achieved in supporting the families of victims. The sayings of Prophet Muhammad, such as: *“God likes that when someone does anything, it must be done perfectly well”* makes this clear (Sallam and Hanafy, 1988, cited in Rice, 1999). The family assistance team should offer support to the families of victims with honesty, respect, dignity, trust and love. As mentioned previously in Section 2.12, following the accident involving Swissair Flight 111, the airline supported the families of victims effectively by offering them information, treating the victims and the families of victims with respect, dealing with the belongings and remains with dignity, accommodating the families of victims, and by providing transportation and compensation. This was a good example of excellence and quality of work. On the other hand, this quality of service was not offered following the accidents of USAir Flight 427 and TWA Flight 800, where the families of victims complained that they were given no information, that airline employees hid information, that victims’ belongings were found in refuse, that human remains were buried without the families being informed and that employees were untrained. Clearly, an airline needs well trained employees to carry out such duties well.

7.2.2 Justice

Islam attempts to eliminate all aspects of inequality, oppression, exploitation and injustice from society (Rice, 1999). Therefore, a Muslim society must take care of the basic needs of anyone who is suffering pain or experiencing difficult circumstances. Thus, although the individual is responsible for his / her own spiritual destiny, the concept of society and of collaboration among people is of prime importance (Chapra, 1992). The Qur'an also teaches the importance of individual responsibility: *"No bearer of burdens can bear the burdens of another; man can have nothing but what he strives for."* (Qur'an 53:38–9). Justice is an important element in assisting families of victims through their difficult time. The airlines should be fair when dealing with the families of victims and must, therefore, avoid hiding any kind of information; they must also prevent families from being exploited or deprived of any of their rights. In the accident involving Saudi Arabian Airlines Flight 763 in Delhi, India, families of victims complained about what they were asked to pay for coffins, as the prices suddenly doubled or even quadrupled. Also, the families of victims complained about hospital employees who asked them for money in order to speed up the issuing of death certificates and the handing over of a victim's body to his / her family. In the Muslim faith people should not lie or cheat; they should uphold promises and fulfil contracts. The Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (2006) explained the **ARAB WORLDVIEW** and they stated the following:

- ✚ **FAITH**, *"Arabs usually believe that many, if not all, things in life are controlled by the will of God (fate) rather than by human beings"*.
- ✚ **WISH VERSUS REALITY** *"Arabs, much more than Westerners, express emotion in a forceful and animated fashion. Their desire for modernity is contradicted by a desire for tradition (especially Islamic tradition)"*.
- ✚ **IMPORTANCE OF JUSTICE AND EQUALITY**, *"Arabs value justice and equality among Muslims, and to a lesser degree to others. All actions*

taken by non-Arabs will be weighed in comparison to tradition and religious standards”.

✚ **FAMILY VERSUS SELF**, *“Arabic communities are tight-knit groups made up of even tighter family groups. Family pride and honour is more important than individual honour”*

After family assistance was developed in 1996, the essential assistance that was offered improved and brought justice for the families of victims. It clarified the airline’s responsibility in terms of compensation, providing accommodation and transportation, protecting belongings, providing information, transferring the bodies and making fast notifications... etc. With the new technology now available around the world (the media and the Internet), airlines can no longer hide information about accidents. Hence, airlines that do not now have family assistance plans may not be allowed to fly to different countries around the world. Moreover, it is simply unethical to hide information, abuse families by asking for money to complete a service, and to treat bodies or belongings without respect.

7.2.3 Need for Balance

Islam encourages Muslims to be fair in terms of their behaviour, to maintain social well-being and to allow the growth of human potential. In view of the above, the families of victims will seek **justice** to know what happened, why it happened and who is responsible. Also, they will need someone to bring whoever is responsible to justice; that is their right. People need to be together after an accident; in other words, they need **unity**. They need people to be with them, assist them, show them respect and mercy, and treat them with dignity. Also, people will feel safer if they have people around them who show they are with them to help and assist them. A victim's family also has a **need for balance**, particularly from the airline company (i.e. the family support team) in their dealings with them. The airline should treat the families equally with regard

to compensation, accommodation, transportation, information, etc. Victims' families should be adequately informed of the accident and have their lost loved ones promptly identified. They also require the airline to pay due attention to their cultures, religions and ethical sensitivities while interacting with them or in the process of rendering family assistance services to them. Williams (2005) noted: *"For most psychological therapy in relation to the Muslim community, an understanding of the beliefs from the Qur'an and Haddith concerning truthfulness, honesty, dishonesty and lying, jealousy, tolerance, suspicion, anger, pride, politeness, modesty, brotherhood and community, charity, contentment, kindness, learning, determination, forgiveness and care of the sick would be helpful"*.

Ethical sensitivities are very important and these may be different from one culture to another, from one religion to another, from one country to another, and from one society to another. For example, Muslims have their own customs as Williams (2005) acknowledged: *"Sensitivity is vital if a counsellor is to build rapport and trust and demonstrate empathy. If disregarded, a client may feel misunderstood and not heard, or at worst, insulted, disregarded, disempowered and disrespected. Basically it is about allowing Muslim clients, who follow their faith, to include "religious requirements, prohibitions or laws in any exploration of what choices or options they have, when making important decisions"*." On the other hand, Rest (1986), cited in Saat (2009), and noted: *"Ethical sensitivity is an awareness of how actions affect others and thus influence how situations are interpreted"*. People are closely associated with their religions and cultures and this intensely affects their inclination to accept or disapprove of any deed or hypothesis. In his study on Malaysian students, Saat (2009) examined whether religiosity influences ethical sensitivities; he found:

- ❖ *"There is a difference in the levels of ethical sensitivity between students who have a religious education/background as compared to secular education"*.
- ❖ *"There is a difference in the levels of ethical sensitivity between students in an Islamic university and students in a non-Islamic university"*.

Family assistance teams should be trained and educated about culture, religion and ethical sensitivities as this could improve the assistance they offer and the way they respond to a situation; this would also help the team to avoid any kinds of misunderstanding. Williams (2005) noted: *“When working with Muslim clients, counsellors without any religious belief or understanding and trained from a scientific positivist stance and secular view of life are most likely to make false assumptions both about a way of life based on religion and Islam”*. Also, Williams further acknowledged: *“Counsellors with a religious faith need to avoid making false assumptions about Islam based on their knowledge and experience of their own faith. Counselling needs to be about making assumptions visible so they can be seen and if necessary challenged”*.

As mentioned previously, air transport is an international business. The passengers of any flight may, therefore, comprise people of various nationalities, religions and cultures, and they may have different ethical sensitivities. For example, most of the people in the Middle East do not listen to any kind of music when dealing with sickness or death, therefore playing any kind of music in such contexts could affect the families of victims; they may even see this as unethical. Therefore, in order to avoid any conflict between the family assistance team and the victims’ families, the airline must enlighten its employees about ethical sensitivities in general. This will ensure that the airline’s employees and family assistance teams will be more helpful to the families of the victims and avoid any dispute with them. The following section explains the importance of educating and training family support teams to deal with issues concerning ethical sensitivities.

7.3 Education, Training and Ethical Sensitivities in Organisations

Family assistance centre employees need to be thoroughly trained in order to extend satisfactory support to the families of victims. Aircraft accident victims may have different cultures and religions and may use different criteria in

judging the rightness or wrongness of deeds and ideas (i.e. ethical sensitivities). For example, William (2005), in his study, indicated a number of points that should be considered when dealing with Muslims. He noted the following:

- ❖ *“Specifically, some general understanding of the following would also be helpful for counsellors working with Muslim clients: where and how Muslims pray, worship, celebrate and share in rituals; significant feasts, festivals and fast days, what happens and what they signify; dietary requirements or restrictions; beliefs and restrictions in relation to contraception, abortion and infertility; prescribed divisions within the community, the division of power, authority, beliefs, rituals, restrictions and requirements in relation to birth and early childhood, becoming an adult, marriage, divorce, death, social requirements of men, women and children (e.g. eating together, men and women’s roles, physical contact), washing, wearing required clothing, artefacts, and body related requirements. It will be important to have a knowledge of beliefs specific to times of illness and suffering, times of change or transformation, showing courage and strength, expressing feelings and thoughts, caring for others, relating to different members of the family, relating to others, the role of human effort and divine intervention, taking responsibility, valuing self and others, making decisions, having or not having choices and fighting or letting go”.*

To improve the performance of employees of a family support centre, the airline should train and educate them in this sphere. Lepper (2005), in his study of ethical sensitivities regarding organisational communication issues, found that perception levels concerning ethical sensitivities could be increased through education. Lepper also noted: *“There are significant differences in ethical sensitivity levels between adults; the major difference between those adults is their level of education”*. Bebeau (1994), in his research on a range of companies, found that different levels of perception regarding ethical sensitivities were likely to be due to differences in the levels of education of personnel in those companies. He also acknowledged that: *“By understanding*

how people perceive (or fail to perceive) ethical issues, people can be educated to be more sensitive to the ethical scope of decision making situations". Moreover, he found that: "Individuals in areas of the profession that require more education tend to demonstrate higher levels of ethical sensitivity". In another study, Lindsey (1986) also asserted that: "Level of education was positively correlated with moral sensitivity" while Bone and Corey (2000) noted: "There are many influences on a person's ability to perceive ethical issues, including culture, professional environment, industry environment, organisational environment, and personal characteristics" (Bone and Corey, 2000, cited in Lepper, 2005).

An appreciation of differences in terms of ethical sensitivity is very important for the family support teams that have to interact with families of victims from different cultural backgrounds and who, as mentioned previously, have different criteria for judging the rightness or wrongness of deeds or ideas. The family support team should be educated in culture, religion, ethical sensitivities and education in general. William (2005) recommended that there should be *"research, training and understanding for professional counsellors working with Muslim clients in the following areas":*

- ❖ *"It would be useful for counsellors to have some insight into how a member of the faith views the universe, holds beliefs about it, and understands their place within it; in other words their vision of life and reality. Also of relevance is how Muslims understand what it is to be human, what an 'acceptable' society means, what is acceptable and non-acceptable in relation to feelings, actions and thoughts. It would also be relevant for counsellors to have an understanding of how individual self-fulfilment within the faith is perceived and achieved in relation to the place and role of revelation, predestination and will of Allah in contrast to human drives, needs, wants and achievements, the community of the faith and how the community functions and views itself, and finally key spiritual and human values of the faith" (Grimmitt, 1987, cited in William, 2005).*

When an accident occurs, the family support team will not find enough time to ask the families of victims about what they deem right or wrong so the team should be very well trained and be prepared to avoid any conflict. If a family support team member behaves in any manner that disregards the religion, culture or ethical sensitivities of a victim's family, this will create a barrier between the support team and the victim's family. Such a barrier could have a detrimental effect on the whole family assistance process. It is for that reason this study underlines how significant it is for any family support centre to be aware of and pay heed to prevailing culture(s), religion(s) and ethical sensitivities. For example, people act or respond to sadness or death differently, depending on their background, which, in turn, is influenced by factors such as culture religion and ethical sensitivities. The following section explains how people grieve differently.

7.4 Grief

After any disaster, death or accident people will behave differently in the way they show their emotion and grief. When a loved one is lost, every society has its own way in dealing with it. This is acknowledged by Suwaed (2008), as follows: *"Every society built for itself a specific reference frame for mourning and coping with the loss"*. Even in one society, people may act differently in expressing their emotion. Klass and Doss (2003) mentioned that grief is *"controlled and regulated by society"*. Grief comes after a death or the loss of relatives, friends or loved ones, such as after an aircraft accident. Nancy et al. (2004) noted: *"When death and loss arrive, they arrive accompanied by grief"*. They also stated: *"The arrival stays with us, haunts us, wakes us at night, asks questions of us and needs to be answered and re-answered over time"*. Ng (2005) said that grief *"is a subjective state of psychological reaction of the loss of loved one"* while Neufeldt and Guralnik (1988), cited in Nancy et al. (2004), defined grief as *"sorrow and the emotional suffering caused by loss"*.

Dealing with people in a critical and difficult time is very sensitive so other people's reactions need to be understood and accepted. Their reactions may be difficult, unusual, strange or wrong to some people, but it is their natural way of dealing with grief. Nancy et al. (2004) stated: "*The work of helping people with grief is about knowing how to look for waves and knowing how to ride them rather than let them take you under*". In one society, in which the same religion, culture and ethical sensitivities might be shared, there might be different ways of dealing with grief. Abo-Lughod (1986), cited in Greenberg (2007), noted: "*In every language and behaviour, people react to death with anger and blame, sentiments closely associated with the impulse to avenge death, mirrored in or buttressed by the institutionalized complex of feuding...However in poetry and in 'crying' the same angry individuals communicate sorrow and the loss on their personal well-being*" (Abo-Lughod, 1996, cited in Greenberg, 2007). Culture and religion are generally involved strongly in grief and therefore Ng (2005) acknowledged: "*Religious and cultural rituals also comfort and reassure the mourners by helping them to make sense of death and personal loss*"; he also suggested: "*The practice and duration of mourning differs very widely from culture to culture*".

Muslims are directed by their religion and this has a very strong effect on their daily lives. In the manner of death and grief, Suwaed (2008) stated: "*The issue of death and mourning received special attention in the Muslim religion literature, the Quran and the Muslim books of rules*". Prophet Mohammed after the death of his son, Ibrahim, said: "*The eye is weeping and the heart is saddened, but we shall say only words that will please Allah, through we are very sad to have lost you, Ibrahim*" (Suwaed, 2008). Religion and culture have a strong influence on people's grief, which is part of every society, but some societies follow their culture more than religion in grief. This was clarified by Wikan (1988) who acknowledged: "*Culture more than religion, shapes and organizes responses to loss*". This comment stemmed from his study of grief in two different Muslim societies: Egypt and Bali. Selim (2000), in his study of the funeral and mourning rites of three Muslim countries, including Egypt, Iran and Indonesia, emphasised that there are different customs within Muslim societies

concerning the rituals of burial, expressing grief, and mourning. However, these differences come from the countries' different cultures; they share the same religion but have different cultures (Selim, 2000, cited in Greenberg and Haddonfield, 2007).

In his study about the expression of grief in Egypt, Selim (2000) also noted: "*Among the poor, crying and frenzied behaviour is intense. They cry as if they are pouring out their heart: the women yell and scream, beating their breasts and at times so are overcome with emotion that they fall into a faint*". However, such reactions to death, as described by Selim, are not acceptable in Islam. Greenberg and Haddonfield (2007) noted: "*The Prophet Mohammed strictly forbids wailing, condemning these heartrending cries as an uncivilized, pagan ritual. The prophet was said to be particularly critical of women who tore their clothes, recited funeral dirges, and incited blood revenge and civil unrest*" (Greenberg and Haddonfield, 2007). However, this depends on people's cultures and religions and, as a result, both culture and religion should be considered in understanding people's behaviour. Also, respecting the actions of the families of victims is very important.

After the accident concerning Egypt Air 1999 Flight 990 in New York, a Muslim couple lost their child. The family assistance personal, who worked with Egypt Air at the time of that accident as a family supporter, was worried about the mother of the child who was crying in hysterical way. She told the Muslim mental health professional who was there to assist the families of victims to help the lady. The Muslim counsellor told the supporter to "*sit and watch the natural dynamics of the couple*". Also, the counsellor told the chaplain that "*it would be inappropriate for anyone to interfere with the family's response*". The supporter explains: "*Within a few minutes, the husband came over and gently told the wife that she should stop her emotional display. 'You know this is God's will, so stop crying,' the husband said. She immediately stopped. A few minutes later, she started to cry again. The chaplain was bemused as she watched the same scenario enacted once more. Both parents were experiencing grief but they were responding according to what was natural to their culture and religion. The*

mother was expressing her grief while her husband was reminding her to view death in the context of their religion” (Coarsey, 2004). Concerning differences in attitudes to death in Turkey (a Muslim country), Parkes (1998) stated: “In a country like Turkey, where the practice of composing dirges is held in a high esteem, you will find elderly people, especially men, who question the custom, asking ‘why cry? It is not right. He or she has now gone to another world, is finally united with God, and has found a new life. Maybe one can laugh there, maybe not. At least life goes on, so why cry? Other people feel that the soul of the departed might be offended by the crying and the singing’. Parkes also stated: “Others prefer a quiet shedding of tears, and concentrate on the organization of Quran recitation” (Parkes, 1998).

Chittick (1992) noted: *“The Quran tells us in many verses that all things come from God and return to him. More particularly, human beings have been created by God for a specific purpose. The degree to which they succeed in fulfilling this purpose shapes their own selves, and their own self-nature then determines the mode in which they return to God after death”*. Irrespective of whether one believes this or not, reacting to death in a hysterical way is not acceptable in the Muslim religion.

If the family support team is not aware of these differences or do not accept them, it will bring more pain to the families of victims. Employees should be trained to deal with this kind of situation. Nancy et al. (2004) suggested: *“An absence of feeling of grief and the achievement of relinquished emotional connections with the deceased continue to create problems that increase suffering in the bereaved”*.

Islam has a strong effect on people’s lives and beliefs about life after death. On the other hand, not all Middle Eastern countries share the same culture and it is also clear that not all Middle Eastern populations follow their religion in grief. The family members of victims face a hard time that must be lived through so, if a Muslim woman collapses, slaps her face, pulls her hair or cries in a hysterical way, the family support team should deal with it in a professional manner, as happened in the Egypt Air accident mentioned previously. Also, a female from

the family support team should deal with Muslim women in these kinds of situation.

CHAPTER



**RESULTS AND
DISCUSSION**

8 Result and Discussion

8.1 Descriptive statistics:

The researcher used SPSS version 17 and includes the following:

1. Weighted Average (mean), Standard Deviation, Relative Weight and Frequency.
2. Cross tabulation
3. Chi-Square (the test is applied when we have two categorical variables from a single population. It is used to determine whether there is a significant association between the two variables).

8.2 Data Analysis

Table 4 Distribution of the individuals according to Nationality

| Nationality | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------|-----------|---------|
| USA | 94 | 29.0 |
| Malaysia | 140 | 43.2 |
| Saudi | 90 | 27.8 |
| Total | 324 | 100.0 |

This research targeted three different populations: USA, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia, to find the difference, impact, importance and the needs of culture, religion and ethical sensitivity. A total of six hundred surveys were sent to the above mentioned countries. A total of 200 surveys were sent to the each country, out of which the researcher received 94 (29 %) usable surveys from the USA, 140 (43.2 %) usable from Malaysia and 90 (27.8 %) usable surveys from the Saudi Arabia. That gives a total of 324 surveys. The reasons behind the choosing of these countries are discussed in chapter 3.4.

In social research it is important for the researcher to gather information regarding the participants' backgrounds. The participants in this survey were asked about their backgrounds in terms of their gender, language, education, age and religion; as the focus of this research is to acknowledge the needs of different people (such as the families of victims) from different backgrounds if a disaster has occurred. Therefore the background of the response can be significantly affected by the background (e.g. age group, language, gender, religion, level of education) of the respondent.

Table 5 distribution of the individuals according to Nationality and Gender

| Nationality * Gender Cross tabulation | | | | |
|--|----------------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|
| Nationality | | Male | Female | Total |
| USA | Count | 32 | 62 | 94 |
| | % within Nationality | 34.0 | 66.0 | 100.0 |
| | % within Gender | 18.7 | 40.5 | 29.0 |
| | % of Total | 9.9 | 19.1 | 29.0 |
| Malaysia | Count | 80 | 60 | 140 |
| | % within Nationality | 57.1 | 42.9 | 100.0 |
| | % within Gender | 46.8 | 39.2 | 43.2 |
| | % of Total | 24.7 | 18.5 | 43.2 |
| Saudi | Count | 59 | 31 | 90 |
| | % within Nationality | 65.6 | 34.4 | 100.0 |
| | % within Gender | 34.5 | 20.3 | 27.8 |
| | % of Total | 18.2 | 9.6 | 27.8 |
| Total | Count | 171 | 153 | 324 |
| | % within Nationality | 52.8 | 47.2 | 100.0 |
| | % within Gender | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| | % of Total | 52.8 | 47.2 | 100.0 |

Different genders may have different needs or opinions, different ways of looking at things, and different ways of doing things. They may also think differently: females may request something important for them but which may not be important for males. For example, some women may request to be

supported by someone of the same sex or they may feel more comfortable dealing with women than with men. In some societies, people may feel that women are more sensitive and supportive than males; others may feel men are stronger. The table above shows the total of 171 males responded to the survey (52.8% of the total respondents); 34.0 % males from the U.S., 57.1% males from Malaysia and 65.6 % males from Saudi. On the other hand there were a total of 153 (47.2 %) females took the surveys; 66.0% from US, 42.9 females from Malaysia and 34.4 % from Saudi Arabia. The highest percentages of females who participated in this survey were Americans followed by Malaysians whereas the female participation from Saudi was the lowest. Accordingly, there were higher percentage of Malaysians and Saudi males participated as compared to the U.S. In Malaysia and U.S. women have more opportunity to find jobs than women in Saudi Arabia as some jobs in Saudi are limited to men; also there is segregation between the genders in the workplace. However, the needs of women and men after a disaster may be different so it is useful to consider both opinions in this study.

Table 6 Distribution of the individuals according to Nationality and Age Categories

| Nationality * Age Category Cross tabulation | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------|
| | | Age Category | | | | Total |
| Nationality | | 18-24 years | 29-39 years | 40-49 years | 50 and above | |
| USA | Count | 5 | 20 | 31 | 38 | 94 |
| | % within Nationality | 5.3 | 21.3 | 33.0 | 40.4 | 100.0 |
| | % within Age Category | 12.5 | 16.3 | 36.5 | 50.0 | 29.0 |
| | % of Total | 1.5 | 6.2 | 9.6 | 11.7 | 29.0 |
| Malaysia | Count | 17 | 51 | 38 | 34 | 140 |
| | % within Nationality | 12.1 | 36.4 | 27.1 | 24.3 | 100.0 |
| | % within Age Category | 42.5 | 41.5 | 44.7 | 44.7 | 43.2 |
| | % of Total | 5.2 | 15.7 | 11.7 | 10.5 | 43.2 |
| Saudi | Count | 18 | 52 | 16 | 4 | 90 |
| | % within Nationality | 20.0 | 57.8 | 17.8 | 4.4 | 100.0 |
| | % within Age Category | 45.0 | 42.3 | 18.8 | 5.3 | 27.8 |
| | % of Total | 5.6 | 16.0 | 4.9 | 1.2 | 27.8 |
| Total | Count | 40 | 123 | 85 | 76 | 324 |
| | % within Nationality | 12.3 | 38.0 | 26.2 | 23.5 | 100.0 |
| | % within Age Category | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| | % of Total | 12.3 | 38.0 | 26.2 | 23.5 | 100.0 |

Table 5 shows that 5.3 % of the American participants were aged between 18 and 28 years while 21.3 % came into the 29-39 age range. 33.0 % of the American participants were aged 40-49 and 40.4 % were aged 50 or above. Of the Malaysian participants, 12.1% were aged between 18 and 28, 36.4% were

between 29 and 39 years of age while 27.1% came into the 40-49 age category and 24.3% of participants were aged 50 and above. Regarding to the Saudi 20.0% of the participants were aged 18-28 years, 57.8 came into the 29-39 age range, and 17.8% were aged between 40 and 49, while 4.4% of participants were aged 50 and above.

Table 6 also shows that, for the 18-28 years age range, at 20%, the Saudi participants were the most numerous from the three populations. The Saudi participants were also in the majority (57.7%) for the 29-39 age categories. The American represented the largest proportion of those aged 40-49, with a percentage of 33.0%. Also the USA participants were the most numerous (at 40.4%) in the 50+ age range. From these statistics, it can be seen that the Saudi participants were proportionally younger than the U.S. and Malaysian participants, while the U.S. participants were older than the participants from Saudi and Malaysia. These differences in age are likely to produce different values in terms of their answers, as older participants could have more experience in life and might be more serious about their culture and religion. Younger people are the new generation and may think differently from their older counterparts; they may, for example, be more open and adapt to other cultures as a result of technologies (such as the Internet, TV and the availability of easy air travel) which have made the world like a global village. Hence, the young may think differently and may view what is important for the older generation as old-fashioned or unacceptable. The table also shows that no participants younger than 18 took part in this survey.

Table 7 Distribution of the individuals according to Nationality and Education

| Nationality * Education Cross tabulation | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------|-------------------|-------------|-----------------|---------------|-------|-------|
| | | Education | | | | | Total |
| Nationality | | Elementary School | High School | Bachelor degree | Master degree | PhD | |
| USA | Count | 0 | 24 | 40 | 27 | 3 | 94 |
| | % Nationality | .0 | 25.5 | 42.6 | 28.7 | 3.2 | 100.0 |
| | % Education | .0 | 21.2 | 25.5 | 65.9 | 50.0 | 29.0 |
| | % Total | .0 | 7.4 | 12.3 | 8.3 | .9 | 29.0 |
| Malaysia | Count | 7 | 82 | 44 | 6 | 1 | 140 |
| | % Nationality | 5.0 | 58.6 | 31.4 | 4.3 | .7 | 100.0 |
| | % Education | 100.0 | 72.6 | 28.0 | 14.6 | 16.7 | 43.2 |
| | % Total | 2.2 | 25.3 | 13.6 | 1.9 | .3 | 43.2 |
| Saudi | Count | 0 | 7 | 73 | 8 | 2 | 90 |
| | % Nationality | .0 | 7.8 | 81.1 | 8.9 | 2.2 | 100.0 |
| | % Education | .0 | 6.2 | 46.5 | 19.5 | 33.3 | 27.8 |
| | % Total | .0 | 2.2 | 22.5 | 2.5 | .6 | 27.8 |
| Total | Count | 7 | 113 | 157 | 41 | 6 | 324 |
| | % Nationality | 2.2 | 34.9 | 48.5 | 12.7 | 1.9 | 100.0 |
| | % Education | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| | % Total | 2.2 | 34.9 | 48.5 | 12.7 | 1.9 | 100.0 |

None of the American participants had an elementary school background while 25.5% were from high schools and 42% had a Bachelor's degree. The American participants scored the highest from among the three populations in terms of the percentage that held a Master's degree (28.7%) and a PhD (3.2%).

Of the Malaysian participants, 5.0% were from an elementary school background and 58.6% (the highest percentage from among the three populations) were from high schools. On the other hand, 31.4% of the Malaysians held a Bachelor's degree and 4.3% had a Master's degree and only 0.7% had a PhD. Like the Americans, not all of the Saudis have an elementary school background. The participants' highest level of education was as follows: while 7.8% had a high school education, 81.1% had a Bachelor's degree; this was the largest proportion among the three populations in this survey. 8.9% of the Saudis held a Master's degree and 2.2% had a PhD. Like religion, education has a strong influence on people's culture and so it is very important to know about the participants' education; also, education differs from country to country. However, education is knowledge and people with high levels of education may have more understanding in answering the survey, as well as taking it more seriously.

Table 8 Distribution of the individuals according to Nationality and Language

| Nationality Language Cross tabulation | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|----------|---------|--------|-------|-------|
| Nationality | | Language | | | | Total |
| | | Arabic | English | French | Other | |
| USA | Count | 0 | 94 | 3 | 15 | 94 |
| | % within Nationality | .0 | 100.0 | 3.2 | 16.0 | |
| | % within Language | .0 | 31.9 | 10.0 | 9.7 | |
| | % of Total | .0 | 29.0 | .9 | 4.6 | 29.0 |
| Malaysia | Count | 12 | 131 | 16 | 139 | 140 |
| | % within Nationality | 8.6 | 93.6 | 11.4 | 99.3 | |
| | % within Language | 11.8 | 44.4 | 53.3 | 89.7 | |
| | % of Total | 3.7 | 40.4 | 4.9 | 42.9 | 43.2 |
| Saudi | Count | 90 | 70 | 11 | 1 | 90 |
| | % within Nationality | 100.0 | 77.8 | 12.2 | 1.1 | |
| | % within Language | 88.2 | 23.7 | 36.7 | .6 | |
| | % of Total | 27.8 | 21.6 | 3.4 | .3 | 27.8 |
| Total | Count | 102 | 295 | 30 | 155 | 324 |
| | % of Total | 31.5 | 91.0 | 9.3 | 47.8 | 100.0 |

Language is part of people's culture. James Craig (1997), cited in Al-Omari (2003), noted: "The Arabic language brings the Arab World and culture together" (Al-Omari 2003 pp 86). For example, the people of such nations are known as Arabs and they are called Arabs because of their language. The table above illustrates the following: None of the Americans spoke Arabic, but on the other hand, all of them (100%) spoke English, which is their national language; 3.2% of them spoke French. Regarding other languages, 16.0% said they

spoke Spanish. A total of 8.6% of the Malaysian sample spoke Arabic. About 93.6% of them spoke English and it is important as second language. Also 11.4% of the Malaysian participants spoke French. 100% of the Malaysians spoke Malay, which is their official spoken language. Saudi Arabia is an Arab country and therefore a 100% of the Saudi participants spoke Arabic. However, 77.8% of them spoke English as well; this was expected as English is the second spoken language in Saudi and is important in applying for a job. 12.2% of the participants spoke French and 1.1% percent of the Saudi participants spoke another language.

Language is very important as it is the way people talk to, understand and communicate with each other. English is arguably one of the most important languages in the world as for example, it is the second spoken language in Saudi Arabia and Malaysia. In both countries, if someone applies for a job, one usual requirement is that they speak English; it is the language of international business, of tourism and of the aviation industry. For example, most air traffic controllers speak English in order to communicate with pilots. Another example is that when accident investigators are from different countries, they will mostly communicate in English. However, even if a nation has English as its second language, there will be different ways of explaining or understanding things in this language. Therefore it is very important for a family assistance team and airline employees to speak English and understand the background of their customers (family of victims).

A good example of the importance of speaking English occurred after the accident involving Korean Air Flight 801 in Guam in 1997. A family member of one of the victims said there were language barriers facing the families in communicating with Korean officials at the airline when they arrived at Guam Airport (Air Safety Week, 1998). Another example was the Saudi Arabian Airlines Flight SV763 in 1996 in Delhi. There, the airline employees could not deal with the Indian families because of differences in language, culture, laws and education. The airline transferred all the Indian relatives of the victims to a lawyer who could speak the language and who was from the same culture. The

airline did this in order to make it easier for the families of victims to avoid any misunderstandings and also to avoid any legal problems (Business Stander, 1996). Most of the family members of victims did not speak English although most of the Saudi employees were able to. Regarding language, William (2005) said: "Counselling clients in their own language or in Arabic for Muslims is important because religious meanings can be subtly changed when words and terms are translated". In this study, participants from the three tested populations spoke different languages: Arabic, Malaysian and English. However, most participants from all three populations spoke English.

Table 9 Distribution of the individuals according to Nationality and Religion

| Nationality * Religion Cross tabulation | | | | | | | | |
|---|---------------|----------|-----------|--------|-------|-------|-------------------|-------|
| Nationality | | Religion | | | | | | Total |
| | | Muslim | Christian | Jewish | Other | None | wish not to state | |
| USA | Count | 0 | 76 | 2 | 6 | 7 | 3 | 94 |
| | % Nationality | .0 | 80.9 | 2.1 | 6.4 | 7.4 | 3.2 | 100.0 |
| | % Religion | .0 | 80.9 | 66.7 | 24.0 | 100.0 | 60.0 | 29.0 |
| | % of Total | .0 | 23.5 | .6 | 1.9 | 2.2 | .9 | 29.0 |
| Malaysia | Count | 100 | 18 | 1 | 19 | 0 | 2 | 140 |
| | % Nationality | 72.1 | 12.9 | .0 | 13.6 | .0 | 1.4 | 100.0 |
| | % Religion | 52.6 | 19.1 | 33.3 | 76.0 | .0 | 40.0 | 43.2 |
| | % of Total | 30.9 | 5.6 | .3 | 5.9 | .0 | .6 | 43.2 |
| Saudi | Count | 90 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 90 |
| | % Nationality | 100.0 | .0 | .0 | .0 | .0 | .0 | 100.0 |
| | % Religion | 47.4 | .0 | .0 | .0 | .0 | .0 | 27.8 |
| | % of Total | 27.8 | .0 | .0 | .0 | .0 | .0 | 27.8 |
| Total | Count | 190 | 94 | 3 | 25 | 7 | 5 | 324 |
| | % Nationality | 58.6 | 29.0 | .9 | 7.7 | 2.2 | 1.5 | 100.0 |
| | % Religion | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| | % of Total | 58.6 | 29.0 | .9 | 7.7 | 2.2 | 1.5 | 100.0 |

Most societies hold to a particular religion although some nations may not. The information in this regard from this study's participants was as follows: None of the American participants were Muslims but 80.9% were Christian, 2.1% were Jewish and 6.4% held other religions (Buddhism and Sikhism). However, 7.4%

of the Americans said they did not hold a religion and 3.2% did not wish to disclose their religion. Malaysia is also a Muslim country. A 71.4% of the Malaysian participants were Muslims while 12.9% were Christians. None of the Malaysian participants were Jewish while under the heading of “Other religions”, 13.6% was found to be Buddhists, Sikhs or Hindus. None of the Malaysians said they did not have a religion, 1.4% said they did not wish to state what their religion was. Saudi Arabia is a Muslim country and Islam is its religion; 100% of the Saudi participants were Muslims, as expected.

There are many different religions in the world and every nation has one or a numbers of its own. For example, Malaysia is known as a Muslim country but has a number of different religions. Also, the USA is known as a Christian country but there are many different religions there while some people have no religion at all. Recording the different religions of the three tested populations helps to clarify the differing needs of people, even if they share the same religion. Cultural differences may also highlight or have an influence on religion, resulting in different needs.

Summary

The above tables show differences among the three populations regarding their religions and cultures. Because education, citizenship and language are all part of different cultures, the survey contained a number of direct questions regarding culture, ethical sensitivities and religion. These help to clarify and understand the needs of different people after a disaster which, in turn, helps in designing an appropriate family support plan and family support centre for Muslims in Middle Eastern countries. The responses from the three respondent populations are presented in the following pages which also include the experts' opinions and their validation of the collected data. These subjects were expected to provide accurate information about the needs of families of victims and the importance of the three factors. The following table has a number of questions about religion; these questions will help to understand the important and the needs of families after disaster from the religion point overview or religion requirement.

Table 10 the Importance and the Effect of Religion

| Please indicate to what level you agree or disagree with the following statements: | Nationality | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|------|--|
| | USA | | | | Malaysia | | | | | Saudi | | | |
| | Weighted Average | Standard Deviation | Relative Weight | Rank | Weighted Average | Standard Deviation | Relative Weight | Rank | Weighted Average | Standard Deviation | Relative Weight | Rank | |
| Practicing religion is very important? | 3.95 | 1.186 | 78.94 | 4 | 4.51 | .629 | 90.29 | 1 | 4.44 | .863 | 88.89 | 1 | |
| A Religious leader / person are capable of helping or supporting the family of victim overcomes the pain they pass | 3.95 | 1.030 | 78.94 | 3 | 4.31 | .561 | 86.14 | 2 | 3.73 | .884 | 74.67 | 4 | |
| In any community, worship places play an important | 4.10 | .928 | 81.91 | 2 | 4.29 | .629 | 85.86 | 3 | 4.12 | .776 | 82.44 | 3 | |
| Consider religious and ethical principles in interacting and dealing with families following an accident. | 4.46 | .785 | 89.15 | 1 | 4.29 | .684 | 85.86 | 4 | 4.38 | .680 | 87.56 | 2 | |

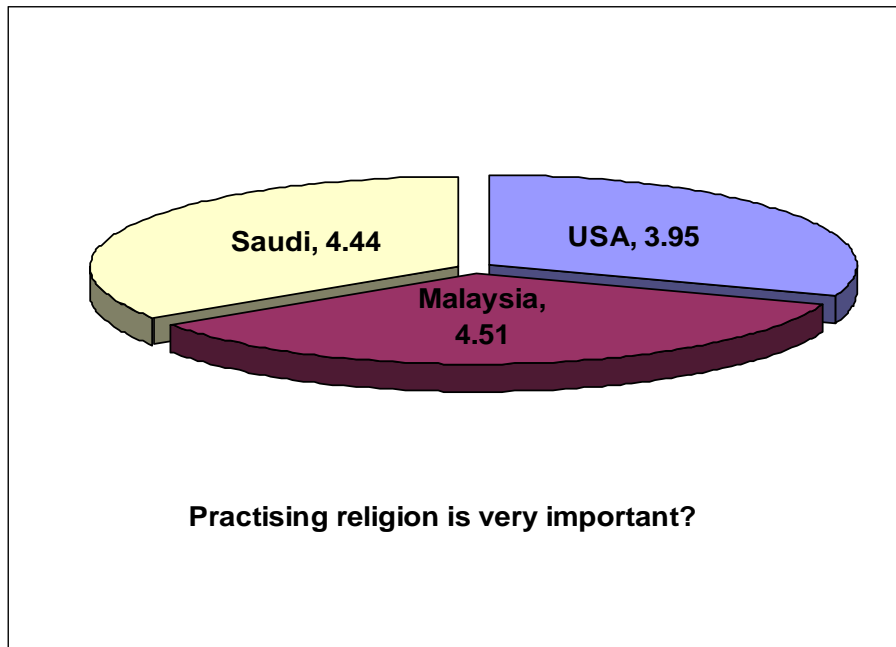


Figure 8 Practising Religion

Figure 8 shows the responses from the three populations to the question of whether or not practising their religion was important. The value (Weighted Average) is from (1 to 5) 1 is the lowest which is strongly disagreed and 5 is the highest which is strongly agreed. As the figure shows that the weighted mean of the attitude of Saudi towered participants' religion is important were 4.44 (88.89%). That response was unexpected as all the Saudi participants 100% were Muslim. Muslims must pray five times a day; this is a daily practice and is it very important as it is obligatory. Malaysia is also a Muslim country but they have different religions such as Buddhism, Christianity and Hinduism. Therefore their response was 4.51 (90.29%) agreed practising religions are very important. Therefore 72% of the Malaysian participants were Muslims. Regarding the Americans, 3.95 (78.94%) was agreed practising religion is very important. Between the three tested populations, the Americans scored the lowest.

Experts' opinions:

Capt. Saad, the Saudi Arabian Airlines Safety Manager, felt that religion was very important as it is fundamental for Muslims who must pray five times a day; this is not a choice. He stated that no Muslim can say that practising religion is not important or that he/she is not sure.

Capt. Abdulhameed, Vice President of the Safety Department for Saudi Arabian Airlines also agreed that Muslims should practise their religion every day. He said that, because praying five times a day is required, a prayer room should be considered for inclusion in a family assistance centre.

Magdy Abdellatif, Manager of Emergency Management for Egypt Air, emphasised that practising religion is very significant for most Egyptians, as it is for other Muslims. He noted that it is something Muslims do every day; it is not a choice for Muslims to practise their religion, they are required to do so. This is made clear in the holy book, the Qur'an, which orders Muslims to practise their religion every day. Practising religion is not limited to praying five times a day but everything a Muslim does should be done for Allah's sake.

Burhan Aygun said that practising religion is very important for Turkish people: 70-80% of the population pray five times a day. Not only do they practise their religion, they are also very close to it. Turkey is a Muslim country but there are secularists and some of these do not practise the religion. However, even these people will go back to their religion, which is Islam, in times of death, happiness or sickness.

Dr. Taha felt that practising religion is of the utmost importance for Muslims as it is a daily practice. He commented that practising their religion is to obey the orders of Allah (God), for which they will be rewarded; if they do not practise their religion they will be punished and go to hell.

Every religion has its own practices. The results above show that almost all the participants from the three populations asserted that practising their religion was very important to them. Not only the participants, but also the five experts,

emphasised and strongly agreed about the importance of practising their religion.

The religious leader expressed the view that practising their religion is very important for Muslims. In western cultures, however, people can say that they do not have a religion or do not wish to talk about it; some may not practise a religion. As the table 9 above shows, 7.4% of the Americans do not have a religion and they do not wish to talk about their religion. This is a kind of freedom for them but is not the norm in Muslim societies. If a Muslim feels that practising his/her religion is not important, it means that he/she is against the requirements of that religion. Islam teaches that they will be punished on the day of judgement for such a belief. In the holy book, the Qu'ran, Allah orders Muslims to practise their religion, as it states in the Chapter of Tauba: "The Believers, men And women, are protectors, one of another: they enjoin what is just, and forbid What is evil: they observe Regular prayers, practise Regular charity, and obey God and His Apostle. On them will God pour His mercy: for God is exalted in power, Wise" (Holy book of the Qur'an, Chapter 9, and Verse 71). For a Muslim to disagree or be unsure as to whether practising his/her religion is important, is not acceptable in Islam. For example, in Saudi Arabia, people stop their work and close their shops, businesses, government work, offices, malls and schools during prayer times. Also, in all Muslim countries, people have the right to pray during the prayer times; no one can stop them. Therefore, the 11 % of the Saudi participants who were not sure if practising their religion was important or not, might not have read the question properly, or perhaps their religion was not that important for them, or perhaps they do not practise their religion. On the other hand, the response may be affected by the age of the Saudi participants. Therefore it was an essential to do chi-square test. The test used to determine weather there is a significant relation between the two variables such as age and practising religion in this matter.

| Chi-Square Tests | | | |
|------------------------------|--------|----|-----------------------|
| | Value | DF | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square | 16.278 | 12 | .179 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 18.377 | 12 | .105 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 1.705 | 1 | .192 |
| N of Valid Cases | 324 | | |

Interpreting the results, since the Asymp, Sig (P-Value) equals (0.179) is greater than the significance level (0.05), it can accept the null hypothesis. Thus, it can be concluded that there is no relationship between age and practicing religion.

On the other hand the chi-square test show there is a relation between religion and education as the following table shows:

| Chi-Square Tests | | | |
|------------------------------|--------|----|-----------------|
| | Value | DF | Asymp. Sig. (2- |
| Pearson Chi-Square | 70.442 | 20 | .000 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 61.916 | 20 | .000 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 25.940 | 1 | .000 |
| N of Valid Cases | 324 | | |

Since the Asymp is. Sig (P-value) equals (0.000) is less than the significance level (0.05), we cannot accept the null hypothesis. Thus it is concluded that there is a relationship between religion and practising religion.

In some religions, such as Islam, followers need a place (a mosque or a prayer room) to pray or practise, as shown in Figure 10. For example, in Heathrow Airport and in Bedford Hospital in the UK, there are prayer rooms for both Muslims and Christians. Therefore, after a disaster, airlines should consider including a separate room for prayer when setting up a family assistance centre. Also, the family support team should be aware of their passengers' religions and consider this in their guidelines.

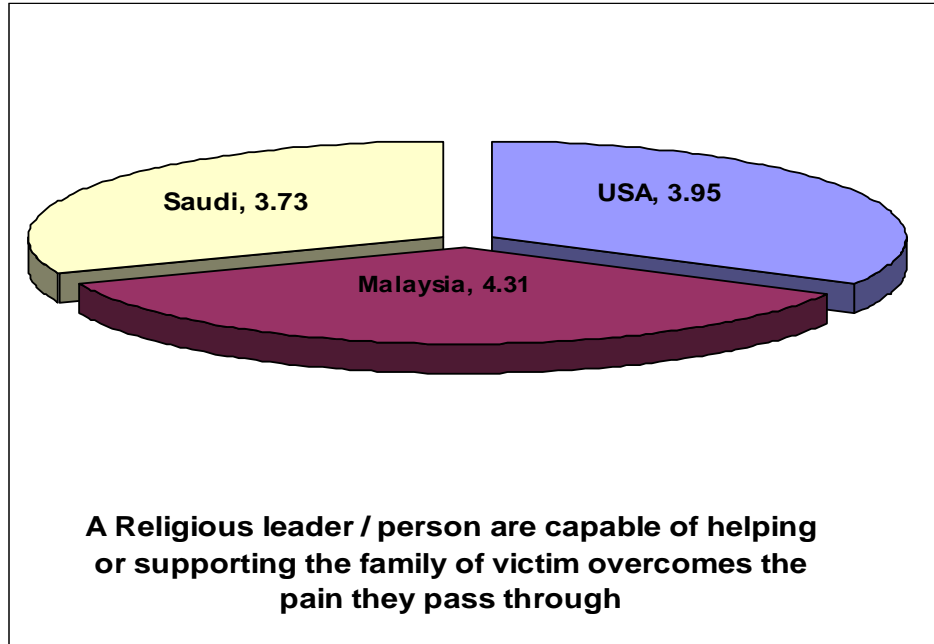


Figure 9 the Importance of a Religious Leader

The researcher asked the three populations if a religious leader/person would be capable of helping or supporting the families of victims to overcome the pain they face. The figure above shows weighted average 3.73 from 5 (% 74.67) of the Saudi participants agreed on the importance of religious leaders after a disaster if an accident occurred. On the other hand, regarding the Malaysians, who generally share the same religion as the Saudis, 4.3 of 5 (% 86.14) agreed according the important of religious leader. Of the US participants, 3.95 of 5 (% 78.94) agreed about the important of the religious leader after disaster. Almost all participants from the three populations agreed that religious leaders would be helpful in supporting the families of victims. The Malaysian population scored the highest and Saudi was the lowest.

Experts' opinions:

Capt. Saad said that a religious leader is very important in supporting the families of victims, especially for Muslim families. He also emphasised that religious leaders can reassure the families of victims so it is very helpful to have them there after a disaster. His view was the result of his long experience in supporting the families of victims in previous accidents. He suggested that,

while nothing and no one can overcome the pain of losing a loved one, not a religious leader, famous person or even a president, a religious leader can comfort the families of victims as people place a strong trust in them. They are very helpful and it is important for them to be with the airline if an accident occurs.

Capt. Abdulhameed said that religious leaders can do a lot for the families of victims. People trust them and some of them believe it is a blessing to have a religious leader present if there is a death. Usually, a religious leader will have an answer for the family and the family will follow the decisions of a religious leader, especially Muslims from Middle Eastern countries.

Magdy Abdellatif felt that airlines should have a number of religious leaders involved in providing support after a disaster. Egyptian people have a strong trust in their religious leaders, especially in times of sickness or death. Also, if they have any questions related to right and wrong, they will go to their religious leaders. This is so, not only in Egypt, but in almost all other Muslim countries. Religious leaders can reduce the pain, trauma and anger of the families of victims with their supplications and prayers; they can also remind the family of the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed and the sayings of the Qur'an. In Egypt, religious leaders are not just important for Muslims, they are also important to people from other religions. Following several accidents, Egypt Air has used religious leaders and they were very helpful and supportive. Also an important point to consider, according to Magdy Abdellatif, is that it is not at all acceptable to Egyptian families to offer the services of a psychologist after a disaster. It is regarded as insulting to tell the family of a victim that a psychologist is available to support them.

Burhan Aygun noted that religious leaders are very important for Turkish people after any disaster. After the earthquake in 1999 which killed almost 30,000 people, religious leaders were very supportive. In Turkey, people need a religious leader after a death (for prayers, reading verses from the Quran, and to be with the family), as well as in times of happiness, such as for wedding contracts and for celebrations. Religious leaders are needed, greatly respected

and trusted. Turkish people feel comfortable to see a religious leader around them, especially in death and sickness. Not only that, but they tend to listen to the religious leader's advice.

Dr. Taha noted that most Muslims have a strong relationship with their religious leaders. Muslims trust, love and respect them as they are knowledgeable about the religion. This is because, if Muslims have any questions about right and wrong, or any questions about life in general, they will ask their religious leaders in order to obtain their views. They believe it is a blessing to have religious leaders with them in sickness, happiness or death. Also in death, the prayers and supplications of the religious leader for the dead will be a blessing as, when a death occurs, Muslims ask a religious leader to recite some verses from the Qur'an.

The importance of the religious leader is highlighted in the literature. Sarhill et al. (2001) stated: "A surrogate is a person that makes decisions on behalf of the patient regarding health matters when the patient is not competent. The surrogate for a Muslim patient is almost always a member of the family, but occasionally the Imam (sheikh) will act as a surrogate". They also stated: "...under enormous stress, to make decisions, the involvement of family, friends, or clergy (the sheikh) is important". On the other hand, Paoltini (1969) stated: "The symbols of Islam are the presence of the Imam, their religious leader, the mosque with its calls to prayer..." The religious leader can overcome the pain and trauma of Muslim families as religious leaders have the necessary knowledge and Muslims depend on their religious leaders for everything concerning their religion. When the accident involving Egypt Air Flight 990 occurred in 1999, the religious leader reminded the families of victims that: "Death for us is natural; it is part of life"; he also said: "We are educated to feel patience and we are ordered to be patient under these circumstances. The moment we are born, God knows when we will die" (CNN, October 31, 1999).

The following are some of the points that a religious leader would remind Muslim families of in order to help them overcome the pain of the hard times

they are experiencing, as found in the literature review and from the advice of the religious leader:

- Reminding the families of victims of Allah's teaching in the Holy Qur'an.
- Reminding the families of victims of the teachings of the Prophet Mohammad regarding death; also of the reward that Muslims will gain by being patient, as well as by accepting the death of their beloved.
- Reminding the families of victims about life after death and telling them that heaven is the reward of their lost beloved.
- Encouraging the families of victims to pray for their dead beloved and reminding them of what the dead person needs after death.
- Informing them that everyone will die eventually but that no one knows when, where or how.

For example, when Egypt Air Flight 990 crashed in 1999 in New York, the mother of one of the victims who died in that disaster was crying hysterically but the husband reminded her of Allah and His will. He also reminded her to accept the death because death is a fact; only Allah knows where, when and why we will die and we should not deny this (Coarsey, 2004). Parkes (1997) stated that, when you notify a Muslim of the death of a loved one, "When you do, tell them to bring an Imam (religious leader) with them, so they will know what to expect and are able to take steps to prepare the dying person" (Parkes, 1997). Also, for other people who have a different religion, such as the American participants in this study, % 78.94 said that the presence of a religious leader is important after a disaster and % 80.9 of these participants were Christian. Black (1987) stated, regarding the accident concerning Delta Flight 191 in 1985, that: "Catholic, Jewish and Protestant clergy came to the hotel to provide comfort and support" and added that "the clergy were helpful in advising the families concerning compliance with religious codes for burial". He also mentioned that there were

three or more religious services held daily and that this was very helpful to the families of victims.

Coarsey (2004) cited an interview with a military wife about the comfort offered to her by her priest. She stated: "My own priest, he was so personal. He came to my level. He said, "This is not fair. It sucks. It is not right and I do not know why it happened." It was so helpful to have someone say this to me, someone who had dedicated all his life to teaching people about God. To have him say that I was not the only one thinking that this whole thing was not fair was so important. Having someone there to see it from my point of view was so helpful to me. He also told me that it was okay for me to be angry with God. He said, "He can handle little old you being mad at him... it is okay" (Coarsey, 2004, p. 144). Also, in another interview with a Colonel, he stated, regarding the needs of families, that: "There needs to be an open line of communication with the chaplain 24 hours, seven days a week" (Coarsey, 2004, p 243).

From the survey responses of the three tested populations, and from experts, religious leaders and the literature review regarding previous disasters, it is clear that the presence of a religious leader is one of the most important aspects of helping and supporting the families of victims. In every disaster reviewed by this study, a religious leader was involved. These included: Delta Airlines Flight 191 (1985), Saudi Airlines Flight 763 (1997), Swissair Flight 111 (1998) and Egypt Air Flight 990 (1999). People tend to trust their religious leaders and believe they know about leading a good life and about life after death as their knowledge comes either from the holy books or from the sayings of their prophets. After a death has occurred, people need someone to remind them of their God and their religion, and that death is a fact. Furthermore, to some people, a religious leader's prayer is pleasing to the dead person. Coarsey (2001), at a conference regarding the accident SQ 006 in 2000, mentioned what Cheong Choong Kong, deputy chairman and CEO of Singapore Airlines, said: "The mention of prayer in the final paragraph is just awesome. Death and serious injury connects people to the spiritual part of themselves". (Air Safety Week, Jan 8, 2001).

| Chi-Square Tests | | | |
|------------------------------|--------|----|-----------------------|
| | Value | DF | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square | 18.427 | 20 | .559 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 16.825 | 20 | .664 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | .005 | 1 | .946 |
| N of Valid Cases | 324 | | |

Since the Asymp. Sig. (P-value) equals (0.559) is greater than the significance level (0.05), we can accept the null hypothesis. Thus, we conclude that there is no relationship between religion and the importance of religious leaders.

The importance of religious leaders was also clarified by Neergaard et al. (2007) who stated: "Religious leaders are recognized helpers, champions of the home and domestic harmony, as well as counsellors and confidants". They continued: "Some may see the rise of professional psychologists as a dilution of the influence of a religious leader as counsellor. Studies show that parishioners seek out their religion leaders for help with personal and family problems" (Neergaard et al., 2007). Therefore, a family assistance plan should consider religious leaders in their guidelines as part of the family assistance team. Furthermore, airlines should have a connection with religious communities in any country where they operate. Sarhill et al. (2001) stated that, for Muslims, "Spiritual support can be arranged through the local mosque".

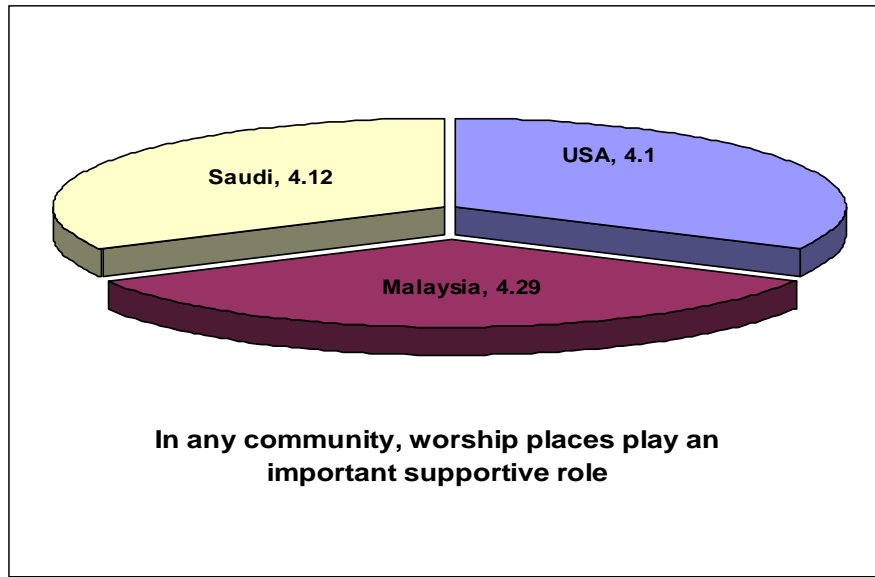


Figure 10 Worship Places

Regarding Figure 10 above concerning the importance of having a place of worship in a family support centre, the weighted average 4.12 (% 82.44) of Saudi participants, 4.29 (% 85.86) Malaysians and 4.1 (% 81.91) of the US participants agreed. The Saudi and the Malaysian score were higher than the US.

Experts' opinions:

Capt. Saad felt a place of worship is one of the most important areas in a family assistance centre. When an airline sets up such a centre, it has to consider including a place for prayer; in some cultures and religions, it is called a quiet room. However, this will be very important for all people who have a religion. Airlines must provide a place for prayer and show them the direction of Makah. For Christians, a room for prayer (or, as they call it, a quiet room) must be provided.

Capt. Abdulhameed said that one of the most important areas to consider including in a family support centre is a place of worship, especially for Muslims. Also, this is a requirement of NTSB, ICAO and other organisations, a requirement that has come from past experiences.

Magdy Abdellatif agreed that when an airline sets up a family support centre, it should consider including a prayer room. Prayer rooms are provided everywhere such as in airports, government offices, big and small companies, hospitals, malls and sport clubs; therefore, a prayer room is the best place for religious leaders to remind Muslims of the necessity to accept death. This is really very important and reduces the suffering of the families of victims. The place of worship constitutes a form of moral support for Muslims so not to consider including a place of worship in a family support centre would be a big mistake.

Burhan Aygun said that providing a place of worship is very important, not only for Turkish people but for all Muslims. In Turkey, there is usually a place of worship in every government office, hospital, sports club, airport and private company. A place of worship is part of their life which cannot be ignored.

Dr. Taha felt that a place of worship is part of the daily life of Muslims as they pray and therefore visit such a place five times a day. A mosque or a place for prayer must be provided in any organisation in Muslim society; it is very important. Including a place of worship in any organisation where there are Muslim people would be very helpful and Muslims would appreciate this.

A place of worship is where people can practise their religion and pray to God (Allah) although the places differ from religion to religion: Christians have a church, Muslims have a mosque, Buddhists have a temple and Jews have a synagogue. It can be seen that Figures 8, 9 and 10 are related to each other since most of the participants agreed that religious leaders and religious practices are important. Participants were asked this question to discover if it was important to include a place of worship in the premises of a family support centre. For Muslims, such a place is very important whether or not there is a disaster. For example, aeroplanes belonging to Saudi Arabian Airlines have a place for their Muslim passengers to pray on board during long-haul flights. Other examples, in the UK, include Heathrow Airport and Bedford Hospital where there are places for Muslims to pray, as well as a chaplain for Christians. The respondents, religious leaders and experts all agreed that to include a

place of worship is very important; an airline should consider this to be an important part of a family assistance centre. Muslims face Makah when they pray and so the direction of Makah must be known; also, females need to pray in a room separate from males. Muslims must pray five times a day at specific times and so a prayer room is very important for them. The Holy Qur'an states: "When ye pass (congregational) prayers, Celebrate God's praises, Standing, sitting down, Or lying down on your sides; but when ye are free From danger, set up Regular Prayers: For such prayers Are enjoined on Believers At stated times" (Holy book of the Qur'an, Chapter 4, Verse 103). Sheikh (1997), who worked as a doctor in a hospital in the UK, stated: "Those of us who work in hospitals can sometimes locate an unused room or quiet corridor in which to observe this most essential of rituals. Patients and visitors naturally find this much more difficult". (Sheikh et al., 1997). A prayer room is not just important for Muslims, but also for people of other religions. On the other hand, the prayer room should be separated from those not involved in the accident and from the news media.

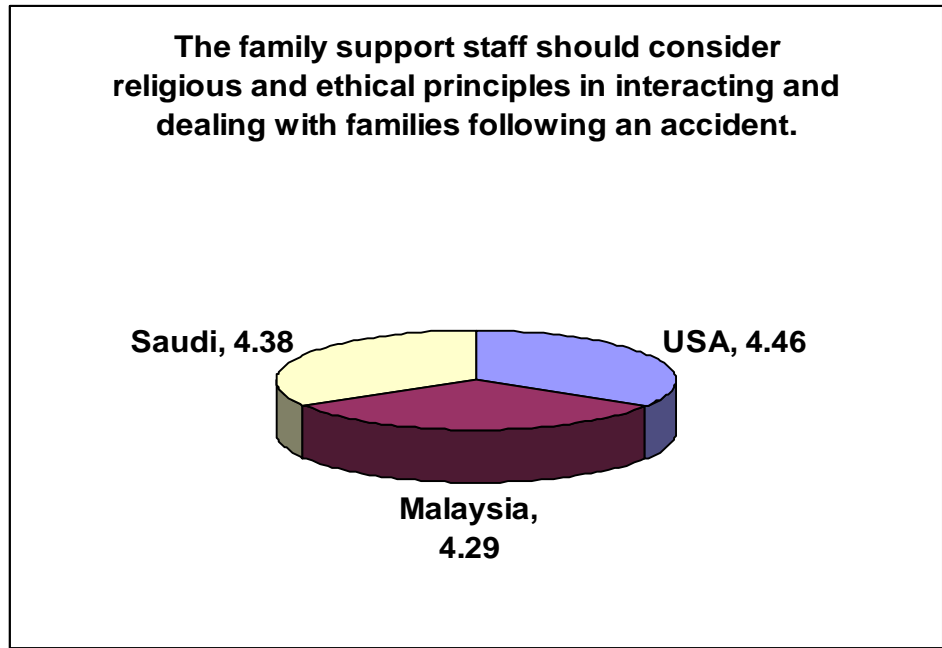


Figure 11 the Consideration of Religion and Ethical Sensitivity

Figure 11 shows the weighted average is 4.38 (% 87.56) of the Saudi participants agree that the religious and ethical sensitivities should be considered when supporting families of victims. 4.29 (% 85.86) of the Malaysian participants agreed and 4.46 (% 89.15) of US participants agreed about the consideration of culture and ethical sensitivity during the support. These answers underline the importance of religious and ethical issues to every society.

Experts' opinions:

Capt. Saad thought that religion and ethical sensitivities were very important and that considering them would protect the airline and the families of victims from any confusion or misunderstanding. If family assistance guidelines consider religion in their support it means they are directly including the cultural and ethical issues of the families of victims, especially for Muslim families. Some people may be intolerant of other religions or cultures but a family support team should not allow their own preferences or prejudices to interfere. A family support team should focus on how best to support the families of

victims; also members of a family support team should be flexible and open minded.

Capt. Abdulhameed said that religion is very important and, since ethics stem from religion, what people decide is wrong or right will depend on their religion and culture. Thus, both religion and ethics are very important.

Magdy Abdellatif felt that Egyptians gain their ethical principles mostly from their religion so religion and ethics are both very important and any family support team will face problems and will not provide effective support if they do not consider these two factors. Most of what Muslims accept or do not accept is decided by their religion. For example, Muslims do not eat pork and are not allowed to drink, keep or sell alcohol; they are also not allowed to sit with someone else who is drinking. These “rules” come from the requirements of their religion. Thus, if airline employees do not take into account religious and ethical factors, this will cause more problems for the families of victims.

Burhan Ayyun suggested that religion and ethical sensitivities are important and that they are related to each other. Ethical sensitivities stem from religion. Therefore, airlines must consider religion and ethical sensitivities in any support offered after a disaster. Family support in general should treat people as human beings and must respect their needs. Mercy and wisdom are very important after a disaster.

Dr. Taha felt that religion and ethical sensitivities are related to each other as Muslims draw ethical principles and their sense of right and wrong from their religion. Thus, it is very important to consider religious and ethical issues but also, a family assistance team should deal with the families of victims with wisdom and mercy, no matter where they come from or what their background is. Muslims should treat the family members of victims fairly, and with both respect and love; in short they should treat them as they would like to be treated in the same situation.

Religion and ethics form the basis of the way people express their thoughts and how they do things. Ethics usually stem from religion and so people who have a religion are more likely have a firmer sense of right and wrong. They follow their religion so whatever their religion suggests is wrong, it is wrong to them, while what their religion suggests is right, for them is right. Therefore, what is deemed right in one society may be wrong in another and vice versa. Regarding this, Stead et al. (1990) noted: "In other words, people who follow a religion are more likely to consider ethical issues than people who are less religious".

By asking this question, the study was aiming to find out if people's religious and ethical sensitivities would have any kind of impact on the support they received. From the responses above, it is clear that religious and ethical sensitivities are very important and so a family support team needs to be aware of their passengers' backgrounds. For example, when dealing with the victims' bodies, most religions lay down certain requirements such as cleaning the body, who is able to carry out this task (e.g. a male, female, a specially qualified person, or anyone), where to bury the body, and who should say the prayers before the burial. For example, Muslims require a female to clean a female body and a male to clean the body of a man; such people should be Muslims themselves and the body should not be seen by others. Also, in some societies, giving money to an employee to get information or to speed up a process is regarded as a "tip" and is seen as acceptable; in other societies, it is called bribery and is wrong. These examples depend on a person's culture, religion or ethics.

In dealing with death in the Middle East, people follow their religion; they feel they will be affected in some way if they do not follow the dictates of their religion in dealing with their loved ones. Thus, people who adhere closely to their religion are more likely to have increased ethical sensitivities although religion and ethics are a part of the lives of most people. Clearly, a family support team should consider religion and ethical sensitivities when dealing with the families of victims.

The following has number of different questions keen to find if the airline should be blamed if an accident occurred, if family assistance team should attend the funeral, the important of belonging and viewing the victim body.

| | Nationality | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|------|--|--|
| | USA | | | | | Malaysia | | | | | Saudi | | | |
| | Weighted Average | Standard Deviation | Relative Weight | Rank | Weighted Average | Standard Deviation | Relative Weight | Rank | Weighted Average | Standard Deviation | Relative Weight | Rank | | |
| Airline should be blamed if an accident occurred? | 2.17 | 1.023 | 43.4 | | 2.46 | 1.062 | 49.29 | | 3.56 | 1.072 | 71.11 | | | |
| Family assistance Team should attend the funeral ceremonies. | 3.43 | .849 | 68.51 | | 4.06 | .766 | 81.14 | | 3.70 | .785 | 74.0 | | | |
| Belongings are very important for the family of victims? | 4.83 | .431 | 96.6 | | 4.15 | .795 | 83.0 | | 3.52 | 1.192 | 70.44 | | | |
| Is it important for families to see the victim's body? | 3.89 | 1.000 | 77.87 | | 3.98 | .800 | 79.57 | | 3.23 | 1.132 | 64.67 | | | |

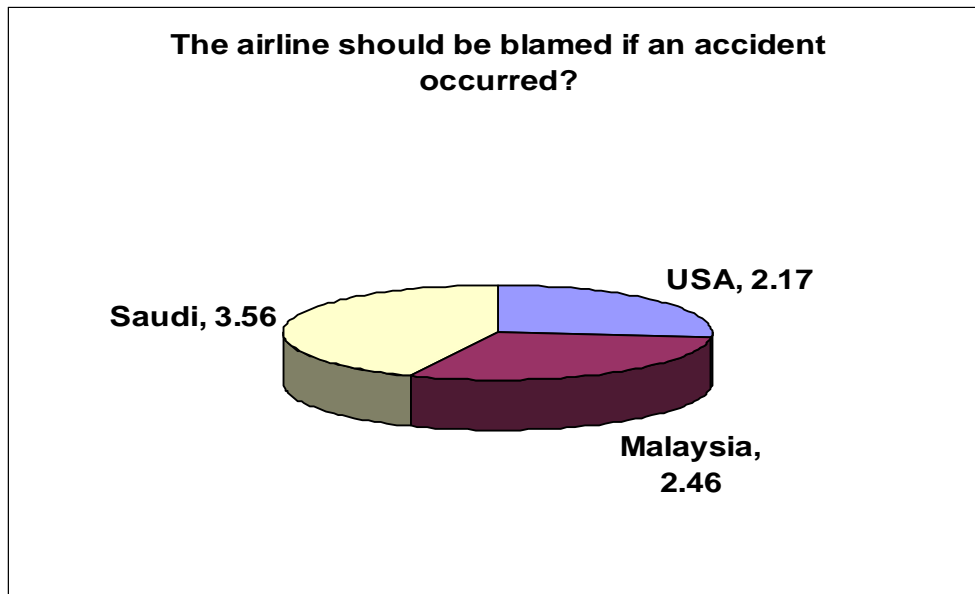


Figure 12 Blame Airlines after Disaster

This question considers the issue of blame when an accident occurs. It asks what people might think about the airline and whether they would blame the airline in the event of an accident or if they would simply accept it. Figure 12 shows that 3.56 (% 71.11) of the Saudi participants will blame the airline if an accident occurred. Of the Malaysian participants 2.46 (% 49.29) and 2.17 (% 43.4) of the US agreed that airline should be blamed after disaster.

Experts' opinions:

Capt. Saad suggested that an airline will generally be blamed as, if a disaster happens, people will naturally look for someone to blame and this will most likely be the airline. The victims are in the airline's aircraft and are their responsibility so definitely relatives will blame the airline. However, in the Middle East, Muslims receive fixed compensation, whether it is the airline's mistake or not, according to Islamic law. Therefore, if the airline supports the families of victims with dignity and respect, families will not blame the airline. In the Muslim culture, death is accepted and is a part of Muslims' belief so they cannot say that the airline killed their loved one; they will look at this as the victim's time to die. This is because Muslims believe that death is inevitable but can come in

different ways. This is so unless a crime has been committed; in such a case, Islamic law is followed. On the other hand, in the USA, for example, even if the airline offers a good level of support, many families will sue the airline no matter what, as happened with the accident of Singapore Airlines which involved U.S. passengers. However, if they wish, the families of victims must be allowed to think that the airline is responsible as that is their right. The airline must assist the families of victims with such things as belongings, transportation, compensation, and fast burial while treating them and the victims with dignity, respect and mercy. For Muslims in the Middle East, if the assistance team offers them care and respect, their blame will decrease and their trust will increase; this is what the airline is looking to do.

Capt. Abdulhameed felt that, after a disaster, people will certainly feel that the airline killed their loved one, even if the accident was not the airline's fault. However, Muslims always believe that both death and life are in Allah's hands; they have to accept good and bad alike, no matter what. The families of victims will blame the airline as it is human nature to blame someone after a disaster.

Magdy Abdellatif said that families will generally blame the airline, no matter where they come from, and whatever their religion, culture or ethics. Especially if the airline has suffered a number of accidents or they have bad history, the media will bring up this history which will add to the airline's problems.

Burhan Aygun felt that Turkish people would mostly blame the airline and that they would ask for compensation. After the earthquake, people did not blame anyone because it was a natural disaster, but if it is an aircraft disaster, people will blame the company.

Dr. Taha noted that Muslims believe that everything comes from Allah, whether bad or good; also, Allah created all mankind and all mankind will go back to Him. However, families will blame the airline as it is human nature to do so, especially if the airline does not give information about the dead. Islam requires compensation to be paid to the victims' families after death if the death was an accident or the death was committed by someone accidentally. The most

important thing people will be looking for is the outcome of the investigation. Naturally, if the airline treats the families of victims well they will respect the airline, but this may be short-lived or take a while to build.

From the responses above, the answers of the US participants were unexpected because, from the review of previous accidents, it was found that most Americans blamed the airlines after a disaster. For example, after the accident involving the Singapore Airline SQ006, the airline offered the next of kin \$400,000 per head. However, a number of family members of victims refused to take the money and instead took the airline to court (Air Safety Week, 8 Jan 2001). Morrison (2000) said, regarding the families of those on USAir Flight 427: "Demetrio and a cadre of lawyers for families of the dead had spent years building cases against the airline". Morrison also acknowledged that this was "like more than 90% of lawsuits filed after commercial jet crashes" (Morrison, 2000). The family of a victim has the right to discover who was to blame and to ask for compensation; they also have the right to go to court to bring to justice whoever was responsible.

Also, although the Malaysians are predominantly Muslim, they disagreed with the notion that the airline should be blamed, while the Saudis agreed that they would blame the airline. Also Interpreted results from the chi-Square test since the Asymp. Sig (P-value) equals (0.052) is greater than the significance level (0.05), we can accept the null hypothesis. Thus, we conclude that there is a no relationship between Education and blaming the airline if an accident occurred as showing in the following table:

| Chi-Square Tests | | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------|----|-----------------------|
| | Value | DF | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square | 26.123 ^a | 16 | .052 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 29.337 | 16 | .022 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 4.981 | 1 | .026 |
| N of Valid Cases | 324 | | |

The experts also considered that the airline would be blamed by the families of victims. However, one expert mentioned that an airline's history would be involved in this. The participants' and the experts' views were borne out by the accident involving Yemenia's Flight 626 on 30 June 2009 on the north coast of Grand Comoros in the Indian Ocean where 153 people were killed. The families of victims from that accident complained about Yemenia's bad safety record; this was also acknowledged by the media. The airline's family support team must therefore treat the families of victims properly in order to decrease the chance of the airline facing legal proceedings or of receiving very negative coverage in the media. This can be achieved by training employees well and properly preparing the airlines; well trained employees will also help the families of victims to overcome their pain in the hard times they experience. Therefore, whether or not the family of victims blames the airline, the most important thing after a disaster is to respect the families of victims and treat them with dignity and mercy.

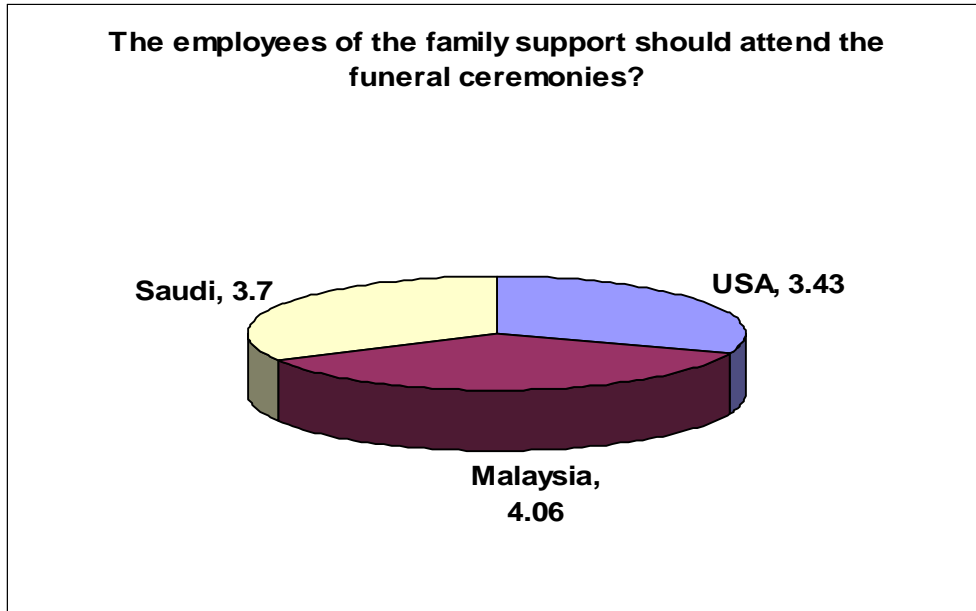


Figure 13 Family support team attend the funeral ceremonies

The participants were asked if the employees of the family support should attend the funeral. The answers to this question were as follows: 3.7 (% 74.0) of the Saudi participants agreed that the family assistance team should attend the funerals. Of the Malaysian sample, 4.06 (% 81.14) agreed that the airlines family assistance team should attend the funeral ceremonies and they had the highest score from all the three tested populations. And, 3.43 (% 68.51) of the US participants are agreed to see the family assistance team attending the funeral ceremonies.

Experts' opinions:

Capt. Saad thought that the family assistance team attending the funeral depended on the culture and religion of the families of the victims as in some religions and cultures it would not be acceptable to attend such funerals because some people need to have their privacy as they want to grieve in private; they want to bury their loved one in private and do not want to see strangers around them. On the other hand, in some cultures, such as for people in the Middle East, it is an insult if you do not attend a funeral. For Muslims, to attend the funeral is a blessing; it is also a blessing to have as many people as

possible at the funeral as not to attend is a sign of disrespect. For Muslims, it is very important to attend a funeral, to attend the funeral prayers, to be with the family and to go to their home to offer sympathy. If a family assistance team is confronted with a family whose culture or religion they are not familiar with, they should seek help from a religious leader or from the community in that country. They should not do something related to the religion of other people just because they think it is acceptable in their own.

Capt. Abdulhameed said that it is very important for the family support team to attend the funeral ceremony, depending on the religion and culture of the families of the victims. For Muslims, it is very important for the family support team to attend the funeral; they may also go to the family's home to offer their sympathy. This is very important and it will show the airline's respect to the victims and to their families.

Magdy Abdellatif also felt that the family support team and the airline's top management should attend the funeral and offer condolences as this is a form of respect as well as being a blessing for the dead person, as acknowledged by Islam; it also shows unity with Muslims. For Muslims, attending the funeral and saying the funeral prayers is seen as a reward for the dead person. The families of victims will feel that the airline has shown respect; they will also expect personnel from the airline to attend the ceremony and offer their sympathies. This is true, not only for Muslims in Egypt or Saudi Arabia, but for all Muslims, regardless of their culture.

Burhan Aygun admitted that the attendance of the family assistance team, top management, government personnel and religious leaders is very important. It shows respect and honour for the dead and for the families of victims. Islam advises Muslims to attend the prayers for the dead, help the families who have lost loved ones, and offer them sympathy. For Turkish people, this comes, not only from religion, but is also a part of their culture.

Dr. Taha stated that attending someone's funeral is important for Muslims, as Prophet Mohammed advised. Airline employees should attend the funerals of

victims as it is disrespectful not to. Going to the funeral makes a good impression on the families of victims and also offers solace.

From the responses noted above, the three populations, the experts and the religious leaders observed that it is very important in the Middle East for airline employees to attend the prayers and funerals, and to offer solace. It can be concluded that the family support team and the airline's top management should attend such rites as this is part of Islamic culture and not to attend would appear disrespectful on the part of the airline; this will upset the families of victims. The participants from Saudi and Malaysia offered almost the same responses in terms of their agreement. Muslims are directed by their religion and have two sources for this direction: the Qur'an and the teachings of Prophet Mohammed who stated: "A believer who accompanies the funeral procession of a Muslim out of sincere faith and hoping to attain Allah's Reward and remains with it till the funeral prayer is offered and the burial ceremonies are over, he will return with a reward of two (Qirat). Each Qirat is like the size of the (mount) Uhud. He, who offers the funeral prayer only and returns before the burial, will return with the reward of one Qirat only." (Sahih A-Bkhari, Chapter 32, undated, p. 47).

As previously mentioned, Saudis and Malaysians share the same religion but have different cultures. However, the respondents from the USA who have different culture and religion also were agreed. Therefore, airlines should have representatives from the same culture and religion as the families of victims so that they will know what to do or what to say to the families. Some members of the family support team may refuse to attend the funeral as to go might be against their religion. This happened with regard to the accident involving Saudi Airline Flight 763 in Delhi in 1997 when the airline employees refused to attend the cremations of the Hindu victims. However, the airline sent a representative of the same culture and religion to attend the cremations. With regard to some accidents, the importance of top management attending the funeral has been mentioned. Some participants said that this would show the care and respect of the airline to the victims and their families.

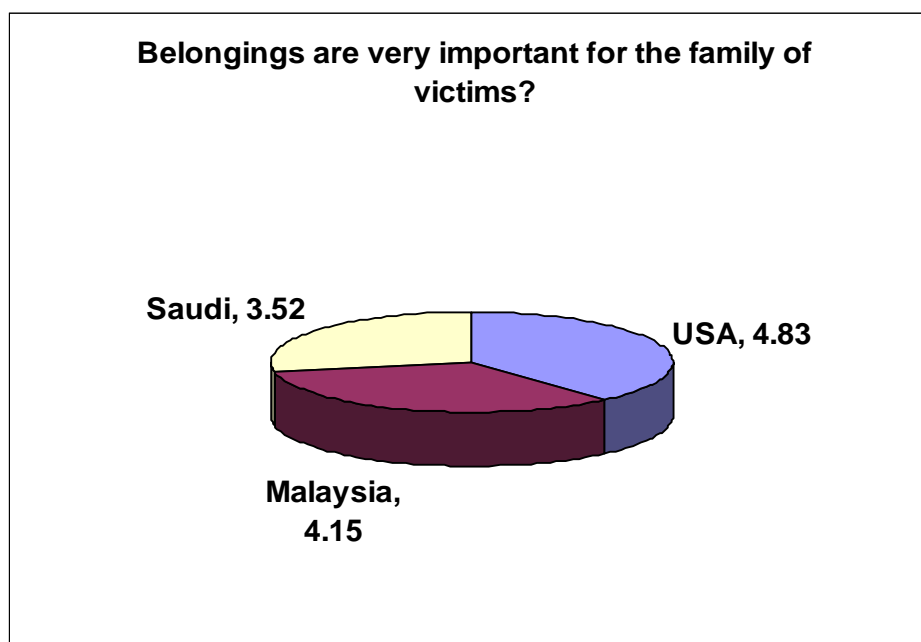


Figure 14 the important of belongings for family of victim

Figure 14 shows that 3.52 (% 70.44) of the Saudi participants suggested belongings of victims are important; however they scored the lowest among the three populations. On the other hand some of the participants added a note to say, for example, “What importance can the belongings have if we have lost a loved one?” while others wrote, “Belongings could add more pain and will be a bad memory for the family unless the item is a passport, an I.D. or money”. Of the Malaysians, 4.15 (% 83.0) said it is important to have their loved ones belonging after disaster. The American participants also suggested belongings are very important and responded highest with 4.83 (% 96.6).

Experts’ opinions:

Capt. Saad thought that belongings are very important and the airline or whoever is responsible should treat them with dignity. Usually, after any disaster, the police are responsible for the belongings but families of victims always think it is the airline. Muslims in the Middle East will be looking for the victim’s body and therefore usually belongings are not important. For example, if a Muslim dies, his/her family will give the possessions to a charity or to poor people. However, even if the belongings are not important to a group of people,

the airline, the police or whoever responsible should treat them with dignity. As these things belong to someone, the right thing to do is to give them to the next of kin who then has the right to do with them whatever he/she decides. From previous experience, the importance of belongings comes from people's culture. For example, in western cultures, belongings are very important, as they are in some countries in the Middle East.

Capt. Abdulhameed felt that one aspect of effective support is to treat the belongings of victims with dignity. Belongings are the possessions of someone, no matter what are they or what condition they are in so they must go to the family of the victim; they have the right to keep them or do what ever they want with them. In the Muslim culture, the most important thing is the body of their loved one but no one has the right to say if the belongings are important or not. The airline should protect the belongings and give them to the family of the victim as they are the ones who can decide what to do with them.

Magdy Abdellatif said that most Egyptian families will look for their loved one's belongings as this is something that can remind them of the victim: Egyptians say they are "something from her or his smell". Belongings are very important and the airline should protect them whatever the circumstances and give them to the family of the victim.

Burhan Aygun stated that Turkish people will usually be very concerned about their loved one's belongings; it is very important for them. After the earthquake in 1999, people went to the place of the disaster and started to collect anything that was related to their loved one. Airlines would face a lot of problems if the family of a victim found out that the airline did not treat the belongings with respect and dignity. Therefore, airlines must give the families of victims everything related to their loved one, even if it is a small thing.

Dr. Taha said that, after a disaster, the family will ask for everything related to their loved one. The airline should protect their passengers' belongings whether they are dead or alive. Belongings are owned by someone and so these should

go back to the family, no matter what. Even if the belongings are in a bad condition, the airline should give them back.

Saudis and Malaysians share the same religion but a different culture. Therefore, figure 14 shows that belongings are very important to the Malaysians as 83.0%, as opposed to 70.44% of the Saudis. Therefore, this difference between the Saudis and the Malaysians comes from their different cultures; also people look at things differently based on their backgrounds. On the other hand, 96.6% of the Americans were agreed that belongings are very important. Belongings are what the passengers have with them when they travel and this question was based on reviews of previous accidents when many families of victims were very worried about the belongings. Coarsey (2004) stated: "Always the families of victims worry about the personal belongings and other details". She also emphasised that the belongings are the only the evidence that the loved one was in the aircraft if the body is not recovered and, as such, are the only proof that the victim was on that flight. She stated: "Although recovery of personal belongings is always important in confirmation of self-worth, it is particularly true under those circumstances" (Coarsey, 2004, p.117). In previous accidents, such as the accidents of Saudi Airlines Flight 763 in Delhi in 1997, USAir Flight 427 in 1994, and TWA Flight 800 in 1996, some families of victims complained about missing possessions or the mishandling of belongings. However the chi-square test result shows Interpreted results. Since the Asymp. Sig (P-value) equals (0.016) is less than the significance level (0.05), we cannot accept the null hypothesis. Thus, we conclude that there is a relationship between education and the importance of belongings as the table below shows:

| Chi-Square Tests | | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------|----|-----------------------|
| | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square | 30.398 ^a | 16 | .016 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 36.904 | 16 | .002 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 2.613 | 1 | .106 |
| N of Valid Cases | 324 | | |

People may have different cultures and religions but the airline, or whoever is responsible, should protect victims' belongings no matter what. Something that may not be important to one group may be very important to another and a different way of thinking could bring pain to the families of victims. In the accident concerning USAir Flight 427, a woman explained her sadness and distress about the belongings she lost: "She learned that the personal belongings of passengers on board the flight were destroyed by fire after the crash. Officials felt that the condition of the articles might be upsetting to family members and decided to destroy them" (Coarsey, 2004).

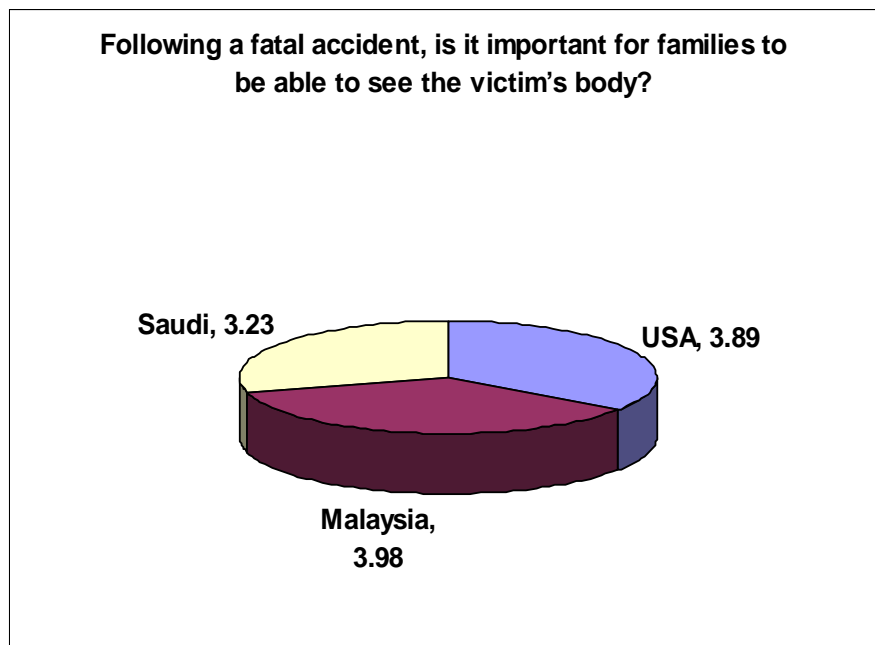


Figure 15 Families to be able to see the victim's body

The above figure shows that 3.23 (64.67%) of the Saudi participants said it is not important to see the victim's body where 1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest. Malaysians, with 3.98 (79.57%) suggested it is important for them to see their loves ones body after disaster. Also the 3.89 (77.78%) of the US participants said it is not important to see the victim's body. Some of the participants mentioned that it should be the choice of the family of the victim as every family or person has his/her own way of thinking.

Malaysian and Saudi participants share same religion (Islam) but have different cultures. It is clear from the above chart that every society has a different way looking things even if they share the same religion. Therefore, the Malaysians suggested it is important to see or view the victim's body but the Saudis felt it is not important. On the other hand, the Malaysian and American participants have different cultures and religions but generally agreed that it is important to view the victim's body. Therefore, it is important to consider culture and religion when assistance is given. Airlines must consider the needs of the families of victims who should be given a chance to choose and decide what is important and what is not.

Experts' opinions:

Capt. Saad felt that viewing the victim's body depends on the family. It is their choice and such a choice should be made available for them. Sometimes, you may have to tell whoever is responsible in the family about the condition of their loved one and after that it is their choice. However, the airline should ask them if they want to view the body or keep the last mummery. Muslim people in Middle Eastern countries will generally ask to view the victim's body.

Capt. Abdulhameed said that the family of a victim has the right to view their loved one. However, the airline should ask the family and make the choice available to them. No one has the right to tell the family of a victim not to see their loved one. On the other hand, the airline should inform the family about the condition of their loved one. From past experience, people in the Middle East will usually look for advice from the supporter.

Magdy Abdellatif said that viewing the victim's body is up to the family. Culture and religion have nothing to do with viewing the body. However, the choice to view the victim's body should be made available to the family as they are the ones who should make the decision. Egyptians will usually seek to view their loved one.

Burhan Aygun stated that Turkish families of victims will generally ask to view the body of their loved one. However, this depends on the family of the victim. If it is a normal death, the family will request to see the body. But, in an aircraft accident, the body may be in a bad condition; this will therefore then depends on the individual.

Dr. Taha felt that the family of the victim has the right to view their loved one's body and no one should stop them if they request it. Muslims will generally ask to view the victim's body and the airline and the government should help them to do this while explaining about the body's condition; after that, it is up to them. If the airline thinks it will be difficult to view the body they could pass the information to the religious leaders and let them deal with the family of the victim. They will listen to the religious leader and trust him more than any one.

The most important thing for the family of a victim after a disaster is their loved one. Therefore, the family wants information about the victim such as the condition of the body; they may want to view the victim and his/her belongings. The reasons behind viewing the body are to say goodbye, to make sure that this actually is their loved one, and to have a final glimpse of him or her. From the previous accidents, most family members seek to see their loved one's body. An interview was carried out with Carolyn, who works in and owns a recovery company, "American", that is involved in family support after disasters. She has been involved in many accidents concerning airlines such as Swissair, Delta and USAir. She was asked what the airline should do with the families of victims regarding this matter. She said it is always the choice of the family of the victim. The family support team should not be involved in making such a decision. She also said that the family support team should ask the family if they want to see the body, not advise them what to do. However, experts and the religious leader admitted that, in the Middle East, people will be looking for advice. Coarsey's statement came from her past experience with western families and, in an interview Carolyn carried out with Dawn Woody who lost her husband in the Lockerby bombing, Dawn Woody stated: "I never saw his body and I do not know the condition of the body" (Coarsey, 2004, p.167). Dr.

Mahjoubi works as a director of Rowland Brothers International, a company that specialises in arranging funerals for Muslims and Arabs in the United Kingdom. He has been involved in the handling of the remains of victims of various air accidents and criminal acts, as well as DNA testing processes. He was asked his opinion regarding the family viewing the victim's body. He agreed that most Muslim families will seek advice from someone in charge as they believe that person has experience and can therefore offer good advice. He said that they usually ask just one person if the family wishes to view the body; this is generally a male, such as the father, brother, uncle or another male in the family. However, for Muslims, the supporter must explain clearly about the condition of the body.

In conclusion, viewing the victim's body is a choice that should be available to the victim's family. However, the family assistance team should be aware of the religion and culture of the family and the airline should give them the chance to decide what they want. This is helpful for both the families of victims and for the airline.

Table 11 Distribution of the individuals according to Nationality and supported by male or female:

| Nationality * different of gender support Cross tabulation | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------|-------|--------|--------|----------|-------|
| Nationality | | Male | Female | Either | Not Sure | Total |
| USA | Count | 0 | 8 | 83 | 3 | 94 |
| | % within Nationality | .0 | 8.5 | 88.3 | 3.2 | 100.0 |
| | % within Q12 | .0 | 14.5 | 37.7 | 21.4 | 29.0 |
| | % of Total | .0 | 2.5 | 25.6 | .9 | 29.0 |
| Malaysia | Count | 28 | 28 | 76 | 8 | 140 |
| | % within Nationality | 20.0 | 20.0 | 54.3 | 5.7 | 100.0 |
| | % within Q12 | 80.0 | 50.9 | 34.5 | 57.1 | 43.2 |
| | % of Total | 8.6 | 8.6 | 23.5 | 2.5 | 43.2 |
| Saudi | Count | 7 | 19 | 61 | 3 | 90 |
| | % within Nationality | 7.8 | 21.1 | 67.8 | 3.3 | 100.0 |
| | % within Q12 | 20.0 | 34.5 | 27.7 | 21.4 | 27.8 |
| | % of Total | 2.2 | 5.9 | 18.8 | .9 | 27.8 |
| Total | Count | 35 | 55 | 220 | 14 | 324 |
| | % within Nationality | 10.8 | 17.0 | 67.9 | 4.3 | 100.0 |
| | % within Q12 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| | % of Total | 10.8 | 17.0 | 67.9 | 4.3 | 100.0 |

As noted in table 11, the participants from the three populations were asked if they would prefer to be supported by males or females after a disaster. The responses from the USA participants were as follows: none of them chose to be supported only by males while 8.5% preferred to be supported by females. However, the majority 88.3% chose either males or females, and 3.2% were unsure. The Malaysian participants showed that 20.0% preferred to be

supported by a male and 20% chose to be supported by a female. Of the 20% who chose to be supported by a female, all of these respondents were female themselves. However, 54.3% of the participants chose either males or females, and 5.7% were not sure. Of the Saudi participants, 7.8% (all of whom were male) chose to be supported by a male while 21.1% preferred to be supported by a female. On the other hand, 67.8% of the participants said they would be happy to be supported by either a male or a female, and 3.3% were not sure

Experts' opinions

Capt. Saad felt that it is very important for both males and females to be available to offer support. Gender is a very sensitive issue and it is therefore important to consider this, especially in the Middle East. However, people in Saudi Arabia, as in other Muslim countries, would prefer to be supported by someone of the same sex, especially if the accident occurred in a Muslim country. People would generally appreciate airlines giving them the chance to choose as gender sensitivity stems largely from culture and religion. Females are very important and so people may prefer to be supported by females rather than males. For people in the Middle East, if a male is with his family, the airline assistance team should talk to him and not to other members of the family, especially if they are women as this is seen as a kind of disrespect and is a very sensitive issue.

Capt. Abdulhameed also noted that gender differences are a sensitive issue and felt that a family support team should be aware of this when they deal with the families of victims. Muslims are usually particularly sensitive to this which comes from their culture and religion. The best thing is to ask the family since some Muslims will not find this a problem but this is not true of all; in short, it is a sensitive issue.

Magdy Abdellatif thought that Egyptians are more open about gender differences than those in other Muslim countries in the Middle East such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Yemen, Bahrain and Iran. However, many people are conservative about dealing with different

genders. Some people take this more seriously than others; it depends on the people. A Muslim assistance team can tell if the people they are dealing with are conservative or not by noting people's dress or if women cover their faces. For example, family support team members should be very careful of what they say when they talk to women. If a woman collapses, a male should not touch her; also, if there are females and a male is with them, the supporter should talk to the male, not to the female, unless the woman starts the conversation. If the family assistance team talks to the woman it will look as if the supporter is ignoring the male. In Middle Eastern cultures, the man is the one who is in charge; generally he is the one who can take decisions.

Burhan Aygun felt that most Turkish people are Muslim but that Muslims have different cultures. Therefore, Turkish people do not have any kind of problem or sensitivity in dealing with males or females; it is all the same. Some other Muslim countries have these kinds of sensitivity but not at all in Turkey.

Dr. Taha said that gender sensitivity is important and should be taken into consideration when supporting Muslim families. Some Muslim countries are very strict about this sensitive issue while others are not. However, in most Muslim countries, this is only a preference but in a Muslim society, women will feel freer to talk or say something to another woman; they may not be able to speak freely to a male or do something in front of him; women are more conservative. Airlines are businesses and have to satisfy their customers so personnel should be available.

From the comments above, it seems clear that a family support team should have personnel of both genders available in case a family requires a male and/or a female. In some societies, such as in some Muslim countries, dealing with someone of the opposite sex is a sensitive issue. This sensitivity comes from the people's culture or religion. However, in some societies, there is no problem in dealing with a male or a female. Furthermore, while this kind of sensitivity exists in some cultures and religions, it is still acceptable to certain individuals which might be the result of adopting another culture. In an interview carried out by Coarsey with David Sansom after the Ladbroke Grove Rail

Disaster, he stated: “To force a survivor to deal with anyone who is not of their own choosing at this stage in the aftermath of trauma poses additional threat and further erodes their natural coping responses” (Coarsey, 2004, p.141).

In Saudi society, there is certain sensitivity in dealing with different genders which comes from daily ways of life and education; religion and culture also play a significant part in this. The response that 67.8% (a large proportion) of participants would be happy to be supported by someone of either gender was unexpected. However, 65.6% of these participants were male and 34.4% were female and almost all of the females chose to be supported by someone of the same sex. Saudi and Malaysian participants are Muslim but with different cultures; their answer was almost the same. However, Saudis are more sensitive regarding gender issues as Saudi Arabian women cover their faces when they go outside of their homes and it is difficult to have a conversation in a public place with a woman who is not a relative. 88% of the American participants were comfortable with being supported by either males or females; this stems from the difference between the Malaysian/Saudi and American backgrounds in terms of their culture and religion.

The chi-square show there is a relation between genders and supporting by the same sex.

| Chi-Square Tests | | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------|----|-----------------------|
| | Value | DF | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square | 20.401 ^a | 3 | .000 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 22.378 | 3 | .000 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 8.820 | 1 | .003 |
| N of Valid Cases | 324 | | |

Since the Asymp. Sig (P-value) equals (0.000) is less than the significance level (0.05), we cannot accept the null hypothesis. Thus, it concludes that there is a relationship between gender and the need of the same sex for support.

Moreover, if the family support team needs to check the identity of a woman who may cover her face, another woman is needed to do it. In Saudi, the two genders have different schools, government agencies, banks, hospital waiting rooms and, in some places, different shopping centres etc. The Malaysians are more open as males and females work together in the same place, females can have the same job as males, and many women in Malaysia do not cover their faces. Regarding this, Sarhill et al. (2001) stated: "Muslim patients prefer to have a doctor and nurse of the same gender" and also mentioned: "This can be difficult to accomplish with the terminally ill, but failure to observe this custom may lead to emotional distress". So, having both males and females available in the family support team is very important if this is required by families.

Table: 12 Distribution of the individuals according Nationality and communication sensitivity.

| Nationality* communications sensitivity Cross tabulation Q14 | | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------|---------------|-------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------|-------|
| Nationality | | Shaking Hands | Eye Contact | Sharing Office Room | All are acceptable | All not acceptable | Other | Total |
| USA | Count | 1 | 1 | 0 | 92 | 0 | 9 | 94 |
| | % | 1.1 | 1.1 | .0 | 97.9 | .0 | 9.6 | |
| | % within Q14 | .6 | 1.3 | .0 | 75.4 | .0 | 27.3 | |
| | % of Total | .3 | .3 | .0 | 28.4 | .0 | 2.8 | 29.0 |
| Malaysia | Count | 85 | 37 | 29 | 30 | 1 | 16 | 140 |
| | % Nationality | 60.7 | 26.4 | 20.7 | 21.4 | .7 | 11.4 | |
| | % within Q14 | 53.1 | 48.1 | 53.7 | 24.6 | 16.7 | 48.5 | |
| | % of Total | 26.2 | 11.4 | 9.0 | 9.3 | .3 | 4.9 | 43.2 |
| Saudi | Count | 74 | 39 | 25 | 0 | 5 | 8 | 90 |
| | % Nationality | 82.2 | 43.3 | 27.8 | .0 | 5.6 | 8.9 | |
| | % within Q14 | 46.3 | 50.6 | 46.3 | .0 | 83.3 | 24.2 | |
| | % of Total | 22.8 | 12.0 | 7.7 | .0 | 1.5 | 2.5 | 27.8 |
| Total | Count | 160 | 77 | 54 | 122 | 6 | 33 | 324 |
| | % of Total | 49.4 | 23.8 | 16.7 | 37.7 | 1.9 | 10.2 | 100.0 |
| Percentages and totals are based on respondents. | | | | | | | | |

The USA participants answered as follows: 1.1% of the participants said shaking hands and 1.1% making eye contact with different sex is unacceptable. None of them choose sharing the same working area. However, 92.0% of the participants indicated all are acceptable in their society. None of them choose

all of the above are not acceptable. A total of 9% suggested that all the previous behaviours mentioned above, are acceptable and added that this question meant nothing to them.

60.7% of Malaysian participants said that shaking hands is not acceptable; also 26.4% felt that making eye contact is not acceptable. Conversely, 20.7% suggested that sharing the same working area is unacceptable. On the other hand 21.4% suggested all of the mentions communications are acceptable and 0.7% said all of them are not acceptable. 11.4% answered 'other' and mentioned the following points:

1. "Respecting different cultures and religions is most important."
2. "Males and females should respect each other and deal with each other as Islam advised: Muslims should be brothers and sisters."
3. "Men and women can work together in the work place with a sense of mutual respect. Islam has never forbidden them to work together but forbids them to be together in a closed room."

Table 12 shows that 82.2% of Saudi participants said that shaking hands is not acceptable while 43.3% of them said that making eye contact is not acceptable; 27.8% also found it unacceptable to share the same working area as the opposite sex. None of the Saudi participants considered all the above are acceptable while 5.6% said suggested all of the above are not acceptable. On the other hand 8.9% of the Saudi participants chose the 'other' category and remarked as follows:

1. "Women should be respected everywhere, particularly in the work environment. This respectful manner should also be applied with regard to their background (in terms of their religion and culture) regardless of whether or not they were Muslim."

2. "Women should be respected everywhere; it is very important to consider their culture and religion when dealing with them. For example, Muslim women have certain sensitivities which stem from their religion."
3. "Being impolite, behaving badly, and allowing the genders to mix are all against Islamic teaching. Also, when communicating with Muslim women, others should keep their distance; they should never get close and should avoid touching them by shaking a hand or giving a hug, for example. Men have to be careful about what they are saying; they should never move beyond a work conversation. Furthermore, anyone who helps Muslim females should know about the sensitivities of Muslims."

Experts' Opinions:

Capt. Saad noted that Muslims are directed by their religion and that religion is involved in whatever they do. However, culture and religion are related to each other; they are mixed but religion has more influence on people's lives. In the Muslim religion, shaking hands and making eye contact with members of the opposite sex is not common and generally is unacceptable. Some Muslims may do this but it is against their religion and is also a sensitive issue. Sharing the same room at work depends on people's culture but in countries such as Saudi Arabia, this is unacceptable and wrong. However, Muslims come from a range of different cultures and, in some of them, this is normal; to others, it is strictly forbidden.

Capt. Abdulhameed said that dealing with those of different genders, or, in fact, people in general, are very sensitive; family support team members need to consider this. Also, from one culture to another, people look at things differently such as shaking hands, making eye contact, sharing the same work room and sharing the same body language. In some cultures, some types of language are not acceptable at all. It is very important to consider people's cultures and religions when organising support.

Magdy Abdellatif noted that every society has its own way of communicating; also, how people see or understand things is likely come from their culture and religion. Furthermore, ethical sensitivities are sometimes different from society to society. For example, it may be possible to say that eye contact is generally not acceptable, but it is not polite to look straight into the eyes of someone of the opposite gender for a long time; this would be unacceptable and might bring problems for the perpetrator. Shaking hands with a member of the opposite sex is also very sensitive; generally, Muslim women do not shake hands. Therefore, family support team personnel should wait before asking if the person will offer his/her hand. If they want to shake hands they will do so. On the other hand, it is very respectful and much appreciated if you shake hands with a member of the same sex. It is a kind of peace and is a way of starting off friendly communications. In Egypt, people of different genders work together and share the same offices, but when people gather at a wedding or a funeral, women sit on one side and men on the other. On such occasions, it is very helpful to have some kind of separation. However, to achieve good family support, the team should monitor the culture and religion of the family of the victim.

Burhan Aygun felt that shaking hands between the opposite genders is not a problem but that sometimes, this depends on the individual. Some women and men may not accept shaking hands with someone of a different gender; especially if the woman wears Hejjap (i.e. covers her face). However, making eye contact and sharing the same conference room is not a problem although respecting the sensitivity of Muslim women is a must.

Dr. Taha said that every society has its own way of doing things that depends on its culture and religion. Communication is a kind of language people use to connect face-to-face but Muslims are directed by their religion and have certain sensitivities about communication. For example, most women would not agree to shake hands as men do. Sometimes they might say: 'I am sorry'. I do not shake hands with someone of the opposite sex'. Eye contact is something that depends on the person; however, in the Muslim culture it is respectful not to make direct eye contact with a woman. Sharing the same conference room will

be acceptable for an Egyptian but women should be separated from male strangers. It is very important to know the culture, religion and ethical sensitivities of the person you are supporting. In Islam, it is not acceptable for males and females to meet alone in a closed office or room but, in public, it is acceptable.

Communication is very important when people interact and every society has its own way of dealing with others, such as people's expectations, how they view things, and how they do things. Also, what is accepted in one society may be not accepted in another; it may even be seen as wrong. This will depend on the people's culture, ethics and religion. Muslims have certain sensitivities when dealing with members of the opposite sex and, while some Muslims are very strict about these issues, some are not. This depends on the people's culture, education and history. Some Muslim countries have adopted a different culture, such as the western culture while, in some other Muslim countries, the culture has changed as a result of previous occupations. Regarding the above question, a large number of the Saudi and Malaysian participants who share the same religion admitted that shaking hands is not acceptable for them and that shaking hands with someone of the opposite sex is also not acceptable. In an interview with an expert in supporting families of victims, Carolyn mentioned a past experience when she extended her hand to shake hands with a Muslim male and he told her, "I am sorry I do not shake hands with women". The Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (2006) stated "A considerable number of Arabs touch more between the same sexes. They hold hands, hug each other".

However, none of the USA participants had a problem shaking hands with someone of the opposite sex whereas Saudi and Malaysian participants gave almost the same answer. Usually, when Muslims converse with someone of the opposite sex, they do not make eye contact; men always look at the ground which signifies a kind of respect to the woman. The Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (2006)

stated “Eye contact during discussions--often long and direct--is important. Staring is not necessarily rude (except gazing at women)”.

The Saudi and Malaysian participants gave very similar responses about sharing the same working area. In Saudi, men have different schools, government offices, banks, mosques and hospital waiting rooms, separate from women, while Malaysians do not have that kind of segregation; they work together and share the same kinds of work. Nonetheless, even though their cultures are rather different, their answer was almost the same which might be because they share the same religion. Thus, culture and religion should be considered in any family assistance plan as that kind of segregation should be available if the families of victims request it. This would be very important if the accident occurred in a Muslim country.

In conclusion, a family assistance team should learn how to communicate with people from different backgrounds. The first step when opening a communication with someone is very important as either that person will accept you or not. For example, Muslims use their right hand when they shake hands; they never use their left hand as this is not acceptable and may even be seen as insulting.

Table: 13 Distribution of the individuals according Nationality and source of ethical sensitivity

| Nationality * from where getting ethical sensitivity Cross tabulation | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------|---------|----------|----------------------|-----------|-------|-------|
| Nationality | | Culture | Religion | Culture and Religion | Tradition | Other | Total |
| USA | Count | 10 | 6 | 64 | 6 | 8 | 94 |
| | % Nationality | 10.6 | 6.4 | 68.1 | 6.4 | 8.5 | 100.0 |
| | % within Q15 | 71.4 | 16.2 | 25.3 | 50.0 | 100.0 | 29.0 |
| | % of Total | 3.1 | 1.9 | 19.8 | 1.9 | 2.5 | 29.0 |
| Malaysia | Count | 2 | 14 | 121 | 3 | 0 | 140 |
| | % Nationality | 1.4 | 10.0 | 86.4 | 2.1 | .0 | 100.0 |
| | % within Q15 | 14.3 | 37.8 | 47.8 | 25.0 | .0 | 43.2 |
| | % of Total | .6 | 4.3 | 37.3 | .9 | .0 | 43.2 |
| Saudi | Count | 2 | 17 | 68 | 3 | 0 | 90 |
| | % Nationality | 2.2 | 18.9 | 75.6 | 3.3 | .0 | 100.0 |
| | % within Q15 | 14.3 | 45.9 | 26.9 | 25.0 | .0 | 27.8 |
| | % of Total | .6 | 5.2 | 21.0 | .9 | .0 | 27.8 |
| Total | Count | 14 | 37 | 253 | 12 | 8 | 324 |
| | % Nationality | 4.3 | 11.4 | 78.1 | 3.7 | 2.5 | 100.0 |
| | % within Q15 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| | % of Total | 4.3 | 11.4 | 78.1 | 3.7 | 2.5 | 100.0 |

The three populations (i.e. participants from Saudi, the US and Malaysia) were asked from where they gained guidance about ethical sensitivities. The responses were as follows:

Table 13 above shows that the USA participants, 10.6% said they gained their ethics from their culture and 6.4% from religion, a high score regarding religion. On the other hand, 68.1% chose culture and religion while 6.4% chose tradition and 8.5% chose 'other' but did not mention from where their ethical sensitivities derived.

1.4 of the Malaysian participants chose culture and 10% chose religion while a very large percentage 86.4% chose culture and religion. On the other hand 2.1% said they got their ethical sensitivities from tradition and none of them chose 'other'.

Of the Saudi participants 2.2% suggested they obtained their ethics from their culture and 18.9% from religion while 75.6% admitted their ethical sensitivities came from both their religion and culture. A 3.3% chose tradition although none of the Saudis chose 'other' or added any recommendation.

Experts' opinions:

Capt. Saad felt that people mostly gained their ethical sensitivities from both their culture and their religion. He said that it is a fact that Muslims get their ethics from their religion (the Qur'an and the sayings of Prophet Mohammed) as religion is everything and has a greater influence than culture on the daily lives of Muslims.

Capt. Abdulhameed said that Muslims draw their ethics from their religion rather than their culture. Muslims are directed by their religion which plays a powerful role in their lives.

Magdy Abdellatif asserted that Egyptians get their ethical sensitivities from the holy book, the Qur'an, and the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed, as do almost all Muslims. On the other hand, he felt that culture has some kind of influence on people's lives. The level of ethical sensitivity is different from one person to another, from society to society, and from culture to culture. Also, it is most important how people view these ethical sensitivities as it depends how important religion and culture are to that person.

Burhan Aygun said that, for Muslims, ethical sensitivities should be gained from their religion (Islam). However, in Turkey, some people get their ethical sensitivities from religion and some from their culture. So, both culture and religion should be considered. Furthermore, in death or after a disaster, people are closer to their religion than to their culture.

Dr. Taha felt that Muslims get their ethical sensitivities from their religion and, after this, from their culture. However, religion is the most important as the sense of right and wrong comes from the holy book, the Qur'an, and the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed. Sometimes, a Muslim may say that something is related to his/her culture but generally it will have a religious background. Everything in a Muslim's life is related to his/her religion.

Ethical sensitivity is about right and wrong and the sense of what is right or wrong depends on people's culture, religion and traditions. Siu, Dickinson and Lee (2000) suggested that: "Religious philosophy concerns an individual's judgment of right and wrong; also it is, therefore, logical to theorize that there are significant linkages between personal religiousness and ethical judgment". Ethical sensitivities are thus directed by culture and religion, as well as being their result. Therefore, it is very important to understand these two factors in order to help prevent any misunderstanding.

From the chart above, it can be seen that the answers of the Saudi and the Malaysian participants were almost the same because they have the same religion (Islam). Muslims are directed regarding right and wrong by their religion and whatever they do or cannot do depends on religious guidelines, as mentioned by the experts and the religious leader. Rice (1999) stated: "Muslims derive their ethical system from the teachings of the Qur'an (which Muslims believe is a book revealed by God to Muhammad in seventh century Arabia), and from the Sunnah (the recorded sayings and behaviour of Muhammad)". After accidents, the family support team should be aware of the ethical sensitivities of the families of victims; they should also be trained and educated about culture and religion which will help them to have a higher level of ethical sensitivity. Swenson-Lepper (2005) stated: "Education is the factor that makes

the biggest difference in overall levels of ethical sensitivity”. In a very hard time, the families of victims who pass through the hands of the airlines need employees who can help them to overcome their pain. Since the Asymp. Sig (P-value) equals (0.383) is greater than the significance level (0.05), we can accept the null hypothesis. Thus, we conclude that there is a no relationship between education and getting ethical sensitivity from culture, religion and tradition as show in the following chi-square test table

| Chi-Square Tests | | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------|----|-----------------------|
| | Value | DF | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square | 17.046 ^a | 16 | .383 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 17.085 | 16 | .380 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | .919 | 1 | .338 |
| N of Valid Cases | 324 | | |

However airlines should be aware of their passengers’ ethical sensitivities; also, the airline’s family support team should have knowledge of their passengers’ religion and culture. Considering the high score from the participants from the two Muslim countries (Malaysia: 86.4% and Saudi: 75.6%), it is clear that their ethical sensitivities stem from both their culture and religion and therefore these two factors are very important and sensitive issues. Thus, the airlines in the Middle East should educate their family support team and include culture and religion in their family support plan guidelines.

Table: 14 Distribution of the individuals according Nationality and fast confirmation of the name of victim

| Nationality * fast confirmation of the name of victim Cross tabulation | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Nationality | | Within 3 hours and 30% accuracy | Within 12 hours and 40% accuracy | Within 24 hours and 70% accuracy | Within 48 hours and 100% accuracy | Other | Total |
| USA | Count | 33 | 5 | 17 | 38 | 1 | 94 |
| | % within Nationality | 35.1 | 5.3 | 18.1 | 40.4 | 1.1 | 100.0 |
| | % within Q20 | 32.7 | 15.6 | 23.3 | 32.8 | 50.0 | 29.0 |
| | % of Total | 10.2 | 1.5 | 5.2 | 11.7 | .3 | 29.0 |
| Malaysia | Count | 35 | 21 | 40 | 43 | 1 | 140 |
| | % within Nationality | 25.0 | 15.0 | 28.6 | 30.7 | .7 | 100.0 |
| | % within Q20 | 34.7 | 65.6 | 54.8 | 37.1 | 50.0 | 43.2 |
| | % of Total | 10.8 | 6.5 | 12.3 | 13.3 | .3 | 43.2 |
| Saudi | Count | 33 | 6 | 16 | 35 | 0 | 90 |
| | % within Nationality | 36.7 | 6.7 | 17.8 | 38.9 | .0 | 100.0 |
| | % within Q20 | 32.7 | 18.8 | 21.9 | 30.2 | .0 | 27.8 |
| | % of Total | 10.2 | 1.9 | 4.9 | 10.8 | .0 | 27.8 |
| Total | Count | 101 | 32 | 73 | 116 | 2 | 324 |
| | % within Nationality | 31.2 | 9.9 | 22.5 | 35.8 | .6 | 100.0 |
| | % within Q20 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| | % of Total | 31.2 | 9.9 | 22.5 | 35.8 | .6 | 100.0 |

Table 14 shows 35.1% of the American participants said that this should be within 3 hours and at 30% accuracy, 5.3% said within 12 hours with a 40% level of accuracy, and finally 18.1 % and 40.4% chose within 48 hours and at 100% accuracy. A 1.1% chooses other and they mentioned as soon as possible. Of the Malaysians, 25.0% decided it should be within 3 hours and at 30% accuracy, 15.0% said within 12 hours at 40% accuracy, 28.6% said within 24 hours and with 70% accuracy, while 30.7% chose within 48 hours and at 100% accuracy. A .7% chooses other and they suggested airline must speed the confirmation as soon as after disaster and give them the body.

36.7% Of the Saudis felt that the death should be confirmed within 3 hours and at a 30% level of accuracy while 6.76% said this should be within 12 hours at 40% accuracy. While 17.8% thought within 24 hours and at 70% accuracy and, finally, 38.9% felt that this should be within 48 hours and with 100% accuracy. None of the Saudi chooses other.

Experts' opinions:

Capt. Saad stated that the greater the delay in confirming the deaths, the greater the problems airlines will have. People will not trust the assistance team if they do not give them information about their loved ones as this will leave the families in a state of confusion regarding questions such as if their loved one was actually in the aircraft, and whether he/she was dead or alive. The airline should be prepared and the sooner confirmation is made, the better.

Capt. Abdulhameed agreed that confirming the death is very important; this depends on the airline's preparation. Speeding up such a confirmation will save the airline a lot of problems while delaying confirming the passengers' names or deaths will destroy the trust between the family and the airline; also, families of victims will feel there is something behind any delay. Information is most important. If the airline has information after a disaster, it means they have answers for the families of victims. When the families of victims come to the airline, airport or to the family support centre, all they are looking for is information and answers to their questions.

Magdy Abdellatif noted that confirming the deaths can help the airline if this news is delivered quickly whereas, if the airline delays confirmation, it gives the families hope that their loved ones are still alive. Confirming death or survival quickly is best for both the airline and the families as the airline will face numerous difficulties in dealing with families of victims if they do not have an answer. Therefore, the families of victims need to know where their loved one is and the airline is responsible for giving that information.

Burhan Aygun felt that one of the most important things is to confirm the death after a disaster as delay puts the family a critical situation and they will still be hoping. The airline should do its best to confirm the death. If the airline delays the confirmation, it may face a serious problem.

Dr. Taha said that confirming death is important and that airlines should do this as quickly as they can since waiting for news is very difficult, especially if it concerns death. While they wait for confirmation, the family may lose their temper and this will put them under great pressure and make them angry.

After any air disaster one of the most important things for the families of victims is to confirm if their loved ones were on the flight or not; after this, they need to know whether they are alive or dead and, if they are alive, where they are. They also need to know if they are injured or dead and, if dead, where the body is. If the loss is complete, this will be the worst scenario for the family. From the review of previous accidents, it was clear that the most important thing for the families of victims after a disaster is obtaining information and receiving confirmation of the death. After the accident concerning TWA Flight 800, Joe Lychner, who lost his wife, struggled for support: "He stressed the importance of information and support" (Commuter/Regional Airline News, 1997). Also, Coarsey (2001) stated: "Information is so important to helping people being able to gain a sense of control over their lives after trauma and even those not involved directly get a sense of "empowerment" when they are given facts and information" (Air Safety Week, 2001). The participants' responses were similar but the percentages for the Saudis and the Americans were very much the same, even though they had different backgrounds in terms of their culture.

Hans Ephraimson, Chairman of the American Association for Families of Victims for KAL007, stated: "Families want information, information, and information: what happened, how it happened" (Air Safety Week, Oct 5, 1998). ICAO (2004) mentioned the following questions: How fast is too fast and how slow is too slow?" This depends on the culture of the population. Carole, a relative of one of the victims of Pan America Flight 103, emphasised: "I would say that the first 24 hours are crucial in setting up a good rapport between victims and families. If initially the family's impression is that the airline is less than forthcoming, the seed of mistrust is planted and will remain there" (Coarsey, 2004, p.198).

Information is one of the most important factors because people will hear information from the media and different media will offer different news so the airline should be prepared to confirm the names and should share information with the family. Coarsey (2004) stated: "The airline must give information as soon as possible because when people are not given information, their imagination will come up with an answer" (Coarsey, 2004, p.202). The Federal Family Assistance Plan for Aviation Disasters (National Transportation Safety Board, August 1, 2000) and the Family Assistance Code (Australian Government Department of Transport and Regional Service) agreed that it is most important for the family support team to confirm the name of the loved one to the family as quickly as possible.

In conclusion, airlines should be prepared to confirm the names of their passengers if an accident occurs. The ICAO (2004) and NTSB (2001) suggested that airlines must confirm the names of their passengers within three hours. As mentioned previously, delays or a lack of information only adds more pain for the families of victims and this makes the critical situation they are experiencing more difficult. The evidence from previous accidents shows that families of victims need information and confirmation.

Table: 15 Distribution of the individuals according to Nationality and family needs after disaster:

| Nationality* family needs after disaster Cross tabulation | | | | | | |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------------|-------------|-------|
| Nationality | | family needs after disaster | | | | Total |
| | | Flowers | Holy Book | Religious tapes | Rug to pray | |
| USA | Count | 87 | 51 | 26 | 33 | 92 |
| | % within Nationality | 94.6 | 55.4 | 28.3 | 35.9 | |
| | % within Q23 | 48.6 | 20.3 | 17.7 | 14.8 | |
| | % of Total | 27.5 | 16.1 | 8.2 | 10.4 | 29.1 |
| Malaysia | Count | 57 | 121 | 43 | 108 | 135 |
| | % within Nationality | 42.2 | 89.6 | 31.9 | 80.0 | |
| | % within Q23 | 31.8 | 48.2 | 29.3 | 48.4 | |
| | % of Total | 18.0 | 38.3 | 13.6 | 34.2 | 42.7 |
| Saudi | Count | 35 | 79 | 78 | 82 | 89 |
| | % within Nationality | 39.3 | 88.8 | 87.6 | 92.1 | |
| | % within Q23 | 19.6 | 31.5 | 53.1 | 36.8 | |
| | % of Total | 11.1 | 25.0 | 24.7 | 25.9 | 28.2 |
| Total | Count | 179 | 251 | 147 | 223 | 316 |
| | % of Total | 56.6 | 79.4 | 46.5 | 70.6 | 100.0 |
| Percentages and totals are based on respondents. | | | | | | |

Table 15 shows that the American participants, 94.6% of them said yes to having flowers after a disaster and 6.4% said no while 55.4% of them said yes to being provided with a holy book while 44.6% said no. 28.3% said yes to religious tapes and 72.7% said no; and 35.9% said yes and 64.1% said no regarding being provided with a prayer rug. Some of the American participants

mentioned some things that were important in their opinion. These included: food, calling cards, phones and Internet access, money, books to read and appropriate music. They also mentioned that every family has its own needs; these depend on the people's culture and religion.

Regarding the Malaysians, 42.2% said yes to having flowers after a death while 58.8% said no. Also, 89.9% of the Malaysians said yes to a holy book after a disaster and 10.1% said no. 31.9% said yes to religious tapes and 68.1% said no while 80.0% of the Malaysians said yes to being provided with a prayer rug and 20% said no. However, not all the Malaysian participants were Muslim: 71.1% of the participants were Muslim and 29.9% were from other religions.

39.3% of the Saudis agreed they would like to have flowers after an air disaster while 60.7% suggested that flowers are not acceptable after such an event. 88.8% said yes to being provided with the holy book, the "Qur'an", while 11.2% said no. Regarding religious tapes, 87.6% said yes and 12.4% said no while 92.1% said yes and 7.9% said no to having a prayer rug. Also, some of the participants said that, in death, a Muslim needs someone such as a religious leader or an Imam who can remind the family of the victim that both death and life come from Allah and are in his hands. They also suggested that a letter of apology would be very helpful. On the other hand, some of the Saudi participants said that none of the items mentioned above would help the family. The families need financial support; this was felt to be most important.

Experts' opinions:

Capt. Saad felt that knowing about the culture and religion of the families of victims is important. Flowers are acceptable in some cultures but not in others, such as some of the Muslim countries in the Middle East. However, in terms of having a rug to pray on, a holy book, religious tape or any other things, an airline can make these available for people but they should never be given to them: if they need them they will take them. You cannot suggest what people will accept or not. Death is a very critical situation and no one can know how people will think.

Capt. Abdulhameed stated that the needs of families of victims will be different, depending on their culture and religion. The family assistance team should be careful about what they say or give out. For Muslims in the Middle East flowers are usually not acceptable but it cannot be said that no Muslims will accept flowers. The airline can make available holy books and religious tapes but a rug on which to pray is very important. The family assistance team should not give anything to families of victims but it is very important to make these available to them.

Magdy Abdellatif said that it is important to know what the culture and religion of the family of a victim are before starting to offer support as their needs are different and these depend on their background. Flowers are not acceptable to Egyptians in death; it is almost disrespectful to offer these. Providing a rug for prayers, holy books and religious tapes is helpful but the airline should not give them to the families of victims; they should be made available. The most important thing for families of victims at such a critical time is information and the body of the victim.

Burhan Aygun noted that distributing flowers after a death is not common practice in Turkey. However, some people do this but it is not important and they will not expect it: if this is available, it will be fine, but if it is not, it will not change anything. Most Muslims in Turkey see it as a western practice; it is not the Muslims' way although the Turkish families of victims in the UK do not condemn giving flowers after death. The families of victims will be experiencing a critical time so giving them a holy book or a religious tape is not a good idea. On the other hand, offering a rug on which to pray would be good and the family would appreciate it.

Dr. Taha stated that the families of victims need respect, help and mercy. Regarding the provision of holy books, a rug to pray on and religious tapes, the airline can make these available but should not give them to families. They should be made available in the prayer room and in the hotel or wherever the family is staying. Flowers are generally not acceptable to Muslims after a death; however, a small percentage of Muslim may accept them. Also, most Christians

in the Middle East accept flowers after a death and this should be respected and considered. Islam does not forbid the giving of flowers after a death so this custom stems from culture rather than religion in the Middle East and other Muslim countries.

From one society to another, there will be different needs and expectations. What is acceptable in one society may be not acceptable in another; it may even be wrong. This is linked to people's culture and religion. In this section, the three populations were asked about what they would find acceptable concerning what might be provided for the families of victims after a disaster. In some societies, people give flowers on occasions of happiness, death, injury or sickness. This is acceptable in some societies but it may not be so in others. Holy books, religious tapes and prayer rugs are related to people's religion, especially for Muslims. Following a death many people go back to their religion, either to read from the holy book, listen to a religious tape, or to pray in order to overcome the pain. What people accept or do not accept depends on their culture and religion. For example, culturally, for Muslims in the Middle East, flowers symbolise life, not death, but this may be acceptable in other cultures; sometimes it might be a must. After a death, most Muslims in the Middle East focus on reciting verses from the holy book (the Qur'an) and praying for the dead person. However, nothing in the Muslim religion suggests giving or not giving people flowers after a death. Usually, Christians in the Middle East distribute flowers after a death, as mentioned by an expert and the Egyptian religious leader. However, the responses from the Saudi and Malaysian participants, who share the same religion, were different. This may be, firstly, because 31% of the Malaysian participants were not Muslim and, secondly, Saudis and Malaysian have different cultures. The Americans also have a different culture and religion from both the Saudis and the Malaysians therefore flowers for them are important, as they are for the Malaysians.

Every religion has its own religious book which offers answers to its followers; also, every religion explains to its people the way they should pray to or worship God. Muslims pray five times a day and use a rug to make sure they pray in a

clean place. Religious tapes would be helpful if people wish to hear chapters from the holy book. The Muslim Women’s Support Centre (2006), set up as part of the Muslim Carers’ Project, and provides basic and general information about the Islamic way of life. They state: “It is discouraged for people to erect elaborate markers, or put flowers or other mementos on the grave. Rather, one should humbly remember God and God’s Mercy, and pray for the deceased” (MWSC, 2006).

However, some Saudi participants asked what flowers, holy books, religious tapes or prayer rugs could do for the families of victims; they mentioned instead that, in a hard time, people need respect and condolence. They asserted that the most important thing is financial support, which people really need if they lose their supporter. Quickly paid out and generous compensation would be most helpful and it would prevent any future financial problems.

Since the Asymp. Sig. (P-value) equals (0.057) is greater than the significance level (0.05), we can accept the null hypothesis. Thus, we conclude that there is no relationship between education and flowers.

| Chi-Square Tests | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------|----|-----------------------|
| | Value | DF | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square | 9.189 ^a | 4 | .057 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 9.588 | 4 | .048 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 5.379 | 1 | .020 |
| N of Valid Cases | 324 | | |

Since the Asymp. Sig (P-value) equals (0.006) is less than the significance level (0.05), we cannot accept the null hypothesis. Thus, we conclude that there is a relationship between education and Holy Book.

| Chi-Square Tests | | | |
|------------------------------|--------|----|-----------------------|
| | Value | DF | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square | 14.394 | 4 | .006 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 14.066 | 4 | .007 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 9.434 | 1 | .002 |
| N of Valid Cases | 324 | | |

Since the Asymp. Sig (P-value) equals (0.000) is less than the significance level (0.05), we cannot accept the null hypothesis. Thus, we conclude that there is a relationship between education and Religious tape.

| Chi-Square Tests | | | |
|------------------------------|--------|----|-----------------------|
| | Value | DF | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square | 24.305 | 4 | .000 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 25.118 | 4 | .000 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | .141 | 1 | .707 |
| N of Valid Cases | 324 | | |

Since the Asymp is. Sig (P-value) equals (0.003) is less than the significance level (0.05), we cannot accept the null hypothesis. Thus, we conclude that there is a relationship between education and Rug to pray.

| Chi-Square Tests | | | |
|------------------------------|--------|----|-----------------------|
| | Value | DF | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square | 16.105 | 4 | .003 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 17.285 | 4 | .002 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 8.934 | 1 | .003 |
| N of Valid Cases | 324 | | |

In conclusion, the expectations of families of victims could be totally different, depending on their culture and religion. Something that may be acceptable and good for one group of people may be very wrong for others. For example, Muslims will generally not accept flowers, although this stems from their culture rather than from their religion. For people in the Middle East, flowers are for love, life, someone in hospital and for celebrations. However, in other societies, people may give flowers to the family of a victim after a disaster and it may be very important to do so. Flowers have different meanings for people, depending on the background of those people. Also, in the light of the responses above, airlines should not distribute anything; instead, they should make available things such as a religious tape or a holy book to the families of victims.

Table: 16 Distribution of the individuals according to Nationality and what the airline should do with an unidentified body

| Nationality * what airline should do with unidentified body Cross tabulation Q25 | | | | | | |
|---|---------------|--|-------------------------------------|---------------|--------|-------|
| Nationality | | Bury all the victims' bodies in one area | Give us what ever they can identify | I am not sure | Others | Total |
| USA | Count | 0 | 77 | 12 | 5 | 94 |
| | % Nationality | .0 | 81.9 | 12.8 | 5.3 | 100.0 |
| | % within Q25 | .0 | 36.0 | 18.5 | 55.6 | 29.0 |
| | % of Total | .0 | 23.8 | 3.7 | 1.5 | 29.0 |
| Malaysia | Count | 25 | 93 | 21 | 1 | 140 |
| | % Nationality | 17.9 | 66.4 | 15.0 | .7 | 100.0 |
| | % within Q25 | 69.4 | 43.5 | 32.3 | 11.1 | 43.2 |
| | % of Total | 7.7 | 28.7 | 6.5 | .3 | 43.2 |
| Saudi | Count | 11 | 44 | 32 | 3 | 90 |
| | % Nationality | 12.2 | 48.9 | 35.6 | 3.3 | 100.0 |
| | % within Q25 | 30.6 | 20.6 | 49.2 | 33.3 | 27.8 |
| | % of Total | 3.4 | 13.6 | 9.9 | .9 | 27.8 |
| Total | Count | 36 | 214 | 65 | 9 | 324 |
| | % Nationality | 11.1 | 66.0 | 20.1 | 2.8 | 100.0 |
| | % within Q25 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100. | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| | % of Total | 11.1 | 66.0 | 20.1 | 2.8 | 100.0 |

Table 16 shows none of the American participants suggested burying all the victims in one area. However, 81.9% of them felt that the airline should give them whatever they could identify while 12.8% were unsure what the airline

should do. 5.3% of the participants chose 'other' and asserted that DNA is very important. They also mentioned that, for religion reasons and to overcome the pain, it is very important to have something to bury, even if this is only parts of a body.

17.9% of the Malaysian participants said that the airline should bury all the victims' bodies in one area while 66.4% felt the airline should give them whatever they could identify; 15.0% of them were unsure. .7% of the participants chose 'other' and said that Muslim bodies should be buried in a Muslim graveyard. They also mentioned that identification problems can be solved using DNA testing and said that it is very important to give the families whatever the airline identifies.

12.2% of the Saudi participants suggested burying all the victims' bodies in one area but 48.9% said the airline should give families whatever they could identify; 35.6% of participants were unsure. However, 3.3% choose 'other', suggesting it is very difficult not to have the body. They also pointed out that, these days, with new technologies, there are ways to find and identify the bodies. The families of victims will not forgive the airline if they do not find the bodies and then they will think their loved ones are missing, not dead. The family will forget, and the pain, trauma and anger may possibly go away if they receive the body. However, if the body is not received, the pain will never end. Also, some participants suggested that it would be best if the airline asked the families of victims before taking any decisions regarding the bodies. Some of the Saudi participants felt that DNA is very important as this would solve the problem of identification. The airline should give the family whatever they have, and at least give them something related to their loved one.

Experts' opinions:

Capt. Saad said that it is very important for the families of victims to bring the body of their loved one home, no matter what their religion or culture. People will always ask to bring the body home and families will not believe their beloved has died unless they see the body or part of it. They need something to

bury. Equally, the body parts of the victim are very important and the airline, or whoever is in control of the accident site, should treat the victims' remains with respect and dignity. This is a humanitarian issue and people will not forgive the airline or whoever is in charge if they treat the remains without respect.

Capt. Abdulhameed agreed that the bodies and remains of the victims should be treated with respect and dignity. On the other hand, the airline must do all it can to identify every single body part and give these to the families. Usually, identifying the bodies or remains is under the control of the government where the accident occurred.

Magdy Abdellatif felt that the most important thing in general for Muslims is to have the body of their loved one. After an accident, sometimes it is difficult to find the whole body and sometimes the body might not be found at all; Egypt Air experienced this with regard to its previously mentioned accident. The most difficult time is when the family of a victim is told that the body, or even part of it, cannot be recovered. However, if the airline identifies any remains, these should be given to the family of the victim, even if it is a small part. This is very important. After the accident involving Egypt Air in 1999 in New York, the NTSB sent some of the remains to the families of victims in Egypt and the families were happy to have them. It was sad, but after they received the remains, they were relieved.

Burhan Aygun said that a human body or remains should be respected and treated with dignity. The airline should give the family of a victim what ever they identify as required. The laws of Islam state that human remains should be respected. Also, it is a humanitarian matter and any airline must respect this.

Dr. Taha also said that the body or parts of victims are very important and should be treated with dignity and respect. The body parts should go back to the family of the victim, no matter how far they are from the accident site or how small the body parts are. All body parts should be respected; this is required by Islam. In general, all people, regardless of their religion or culture, will respect the body parts.

The most important thing to the family of a victim after a disaster is their loved one and so an important part of the relationship between the airline and the families of victims after a disaster concerns the victims' bodies. The family of a victim will look to receive the body, to know what happened to it, and to learn when they are going to receive it and bury it. Also, after a disaster, the bodies some times cannot found such as in the accident involving Egypt Air Flight 990 in 1999.

In conclusion, it is very important that a family has the body of the victim or that whatever remains has been identified by using DNA testing; this was confirmed by most of the participants from all three of the tested populations. However, because of differences in the culture and religion of the three populations, the Americans (with 81%) were most concerned to receive whatever could be identified; also, none of them chose to bury all the victims' bodies in one area. The most important thing is to ask the families of victims and let them decide. This is their loved one and they are the only ones who can make the decision. Also, the airline, or whoever is in charge, should do their best to identify the bodies or any remains of them

In this part the participant were asked number of questions about visiting the accident site, the importance of fast burial, bringing the victim's body home and sharing the same conference room with opposite gender and the response came as follow:

| | Nationality | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|------|--|--|--|
| | USA | | | | | Malaysia | | | | | Saudi | | | | |
| | Weighted Average | Standard Deviation | Relative Weight | Rank | Weighted Average | Standard Deviation | Relative Weight | Rank | Weighted Average | Standard Deviation | Relative Weight | Rank | | | |
| Family of a victim should be allowed to visit the accident site | 4.40 | .920 | 88.09 | | 3.77 | .908 | 75.43 | | 3.22 | 1.036 | 64.44 | | | | |
| How important is a fast burial of a Victim's body? | 2.97 | 1.062 | 59.36 | | 4.35 | .767 | 87.0 | | 4.33 | .750 | 86.67 | | | | |
| How important do you think to bring The body home? | 4.69 | .568 | 93.83 | | 4.18 | .807 | 83.57 | | 4.34 | .901 | 86.89 | | | | |
| Would you be prepared to share the same conference room with opposite gender in the family support centre? | 4.71 | .478 | 94.26 | | 3.69 | .830 | 73.86 | | 3.29 | 1.114 | 65.78 | | | | |



Figure: 16 Family of victim should be allowed to visit the accident site

Figure 16 shows the weighted average is 3.22 (64.44%) of the Saudi participants agreed that the family of a victim should be allowed to visit the accident site if they requested. Regarding the Malaysians, 3.77 (75.43%) of them think visiting the accident site after disaster is important. Of the US participants with the highest score 4.4 (88.09%) thought it is important. Thus, although the three populations were of different cultures and religions, the majority of them suggested that families of victims should, if they so wished, be allowed to visit the site of the accident.

Experts' opinions:

Capt. Saad stated that there is nothing in Islam or in the Islamic culture to encourage or forbid a Muslim from going to the accident site but if a Muslim family asks to visit the site; the airline should be ready to do this for them. The most important thing for a Muslim after a disaster is to get the body of their loved one in order to bury it. In the accident in India involving Saudi Airlines, a number of families went to India but not all of them asked to go to the crash site.

Only one Saudi family asked to go to the crash site and that was the father and the brother of the pilot; they went to bring the body back home.

Capt. Abdulhameed felt that going to the accident site had no relation to either culture or religion. For Muslims in the Middle East, it is up to the family of the victim: some may ask to go to the crash site and some may not. However, that should be left up to the family of the victim.

Magdy Abdellatif stated that the families of victims visiting the accident site are not in the airline's hands, especially if the accident occurred in a different country. Mostly, the family will ask to go to the crash site but this will depend on whether they want to go or not; the choice should be available for them.

Burhan Aygun mentioned that it is very important for Turkish people to visit the accident site; this is to remember their relative and to see the place where he/she died.

Dr. Taha felt that visiting the accident site depends on the family, regardless of their culture or religion. However, the airline should give them the chance to go if they want. People may think they should be closer to the accident to receive their loved one's body, their belongings, or to do or provide anything they can.

A question regarding whether the family of a victim should be allowed to visit the accident site was asked to find out what the families needed. When a disaster occurs, this usually happens away from home and sometimes, the bodies of victims cannot be found or identified. This was the case with victims from the Egypt Air accident concerning Flight 990 in 1999. Rayann VanDine, a member of the Delta Care Team, was one of the people who supported the Egyptian families. Carolyn carried out an interview her and she stated: "...families had been told that there were no intact bodies that could be transported home". She also emphasised: "I could not imagine losing a loved one that way, and then not being able to bury them" (Carolyn, 2004, p. 68). In another interview with Merrilee Morris of US Air 427 regarding visiting the crash site, the interviewee said: "Going to the crash site and the special

commendation services that the airline held were very fulfilling to me. When they took us to the crash site, there was holiness, a reverence there. Knowing how many volunteers worked together to put the body parts together and the plane. There is a tremendous history there. It was awesome, holy, and reverent. It was where my son died" (Carolyn, 2004, p.148).

The crash site should be recognised, especially if the victim's body is not found. People visit their dead/loved ones when they know where they have been buried, such as in a graveyard so, in a situation when the family does not know where the body is buried, the accident site will, in effect, be the same as a graveyard. Thus, allowing the families of victims to visit the scene will help them to know where their loved one died in case they would like to visit in the future. In some religions, such as the Muslim faith, people go to visit the dead person to offer some kind of prayer or supplication.

In conclusion, just because two societies share the same religion or culture, they will not necessarily think in the same way. For example, Malaysians and Saudis share the same religion but their answers were different: 75.43% of the Malaysians but only 64.44% of the Saudis agreed about visiting the accident site. However, it is most important to ask the families of victims what their needs are and fulfil these for them.

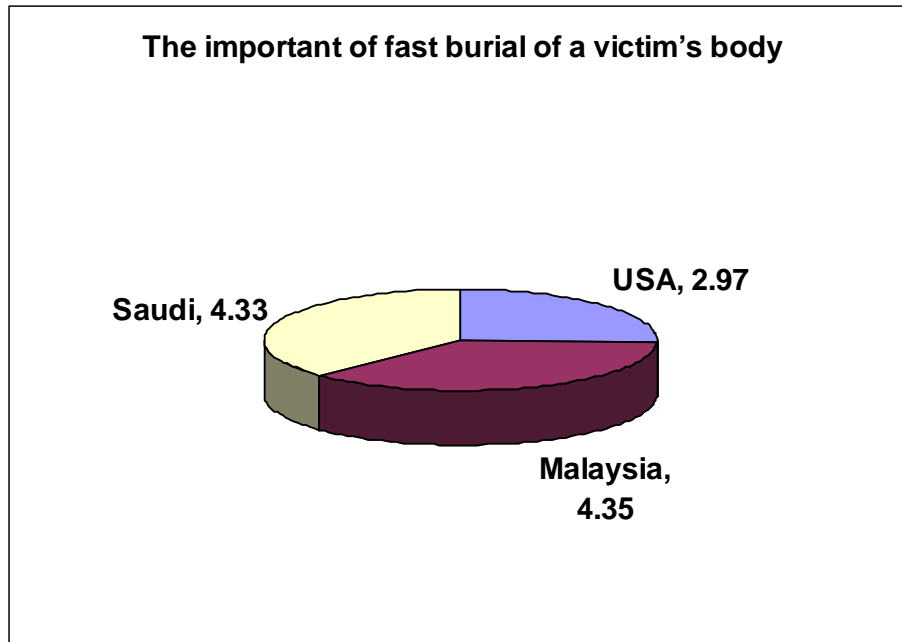


Figure: 17 the importance of fast burial of victims body

Figure 17 show the weighted average is 4.33 (86.67%) of the Saudi respondents felt that a fast burial is important. Similarly, of the Malaysians, 4.35 (87.0%) said it is important. A 2.97 (59.36%) of the American participants suggested it is important. After any disaster one of the most important things for the family of a victim is to receive and bury the body of their loved ones. However, every population has its own way of dealing with the body: some bury the body as fast as possible, some must bury it within twenty-four hours or before sunset, some cremate the body and must take their time, and some embalm the body before cremation or burial. These customs generally stem from people's religions and cultures.

Experts' opinions:

Capt. Saad stated that a fast burial is very important for all Muslims but, when an accident happens, there are many things happening behind the scenes that families of victims do not know about and cannot see. The airline will follow the laws of the country where the accident occurred and also international law. However, achieving fast burial is very important and airlines should do their best to speed up the process.

Capt. Abdulhameed noted that fast burial is required for Muslims by Islam; it is very well known that this issue is a very important one for Muslims. But, when an accident occurs, it is often not in the airline's hands to hasten the burial, especially if the accident has happened in different country, since every country has its own laws and ways of doing things. There are also many steps an airline must go through before it is able to bury or release the body of a loved one. However, to be humane, it is very important to speed up the burial process as far as possible, unless the family of a victim has a different ceremony or way of dealing with death.

Magdy Abdellatif felt that, for Muslims, it is most important that bodies are buried quickly. However, sometimes it is too difficult to speed up the burial as the airline must follow the country's laws. Also, there will be DNA and other procedures the airline must follow; sometimes, there is no body to bury, as in the Egypt Air accident concerning Flight 990 in 1999.

Burhan Aygun asserted that, generally, fast burial is most important for all Muslims. Turkish people are very conservative about fast burial and all that will concern them is to receive the body and bury it. After the earthquake in 1999, most of the families of victims tried to speed up the burial of the bodies. Fast burial is required by Islam and Muslims would like to honour the dead person. The shock of the accident, the impact of the time, and delaying the burial will cause big problems for the airline.

Dr. Taha said that, after death, either in an accident or in hospital, the most important thing for a Muslim family is to receive the body of their loved one in order to bury it. Fast burial is very important for Muslims as it respects and honours the dead; Islam also advises fast burials. However, if being able to speed up the burial process is not in the hands of the family of a victim, this is not a problem. After a disaster, there are many different procedures for the airline and the government to follow such as carrying out investigations, collecting information, and carrying out DNA examinations. The family should therefore accept the delay religiously; there is no problem if the delay cannot be helped. However, it is a good thing to carry out the burial as fast as possible.

Islam unites Muslims almost in everything; it unites them in the way they deal with the dead. Suwaed stated: "Islam provides guidance to people about to cope with loss, teaching specific beliefs and a perception that treats death" (Suwaed, undated). Also Sarhill et al. (2001) stated: "The Muslim school of thought is united regarding their views on death and dying". Therefore, fast burial in Muslim societies is important. Parkes et al. stated: "The dead must be buried as soon as possible and preferably within twenty-four hours" (Parkes, 1997, p. 164) while Gatrad (1994) emphasised that for Muslims: "It is a religious requirement that the body be buried as quickly as possible".

Based on the comments above, it is clear that the Malaysian and Saudi participants gave almost the same answer as both populations agreed it is important to bury the body quickly and that this is what is expected. This agreement stems from their shared religion, which is Islam. On the other hand, fast burial was not important for the American participants; even the people who suggested it is important explained that this is simply a human need. In Islam, fast burial shows respect, honour and appreciation of the dead. The American participants gave a different answer from the Saudis and Malaysians because of their different religion. Also, the 2.97 (59.36%) of Americans who suggested it is important to bury the dead quickly, said that this was because it is a humanitarian issue. In the accident concerning Delta Airline Flight 191 in Dallas in 1985, Black stated: "... *three Orthodox Jewish families were concerned about their religious stipulation that a person be buried within 24 hours of his death*" (Black, 1987). Thus, it is very important to consider people's religions and cultures in any family support plan. It is hurtful and difficult for families when they lose a loved one if their religion and culture are not followed in the way the victims' bodies are treated.

In conclusion, fast burial is required by the Muslim religion although airlines cannot always do what the religion or culture of the families of victims require. A number of different issues may serve to delay the burial, such as DNA testing, the condition of the body, the laws of the country where the accident occurs, if the bodies are found or not, or if a crime has caused the accident in which case,

investigations need to be completed etc. However, the airline should do its best to speed up the burials; the airline should also explain to the families of victims what is going on at the crash site.

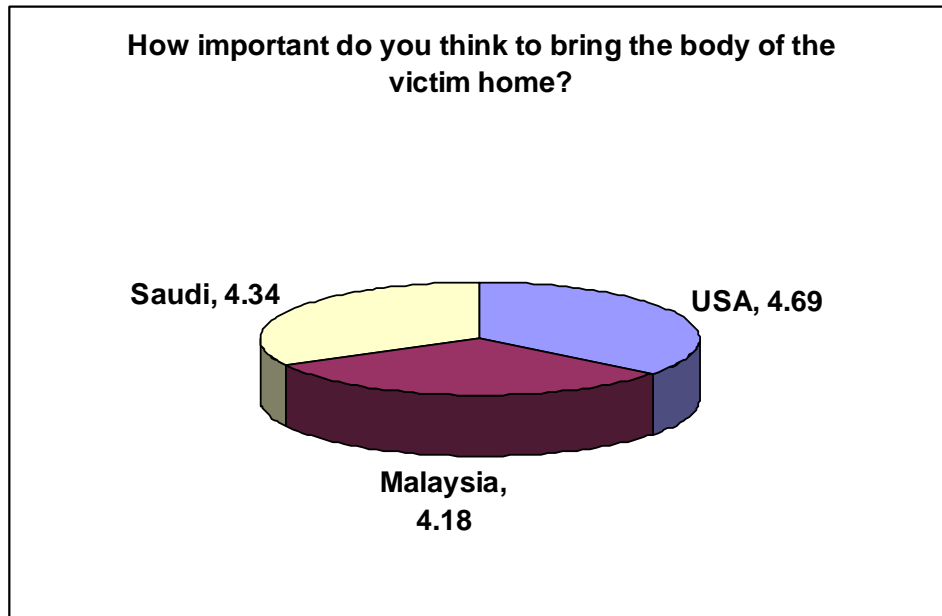


Figure: 18 the importance of bringing the victim's body home

Figure 18 shows that the weighted average is 4.34 (86.89%) of the Saudi participants indicated that bringing the victim's body home is important. Also the Malaysian participants with 4.18 (83.57%) said it is important. Regarding the American participants, 4.69 (93.83%) suggested it is important and their suggestion was the highest. Also, some of the American participants said: "As a human it is very important to have your loved one in the same town where you are." This is for families to know where their loved ones are buried in case they wish to visit the grave.

Muslims believe the earth is related to Allah (God) and so they can bury the body in any Muslim graveyard. There is nothing in Islam that requires Muslims to send a body home; it is the family's choice and their right. Although Malaysians and Saudis share the same religion (Islam) but different cultures, both of the populations admitted it is important to bring the body home. This

result was confirmed by Sarhill et al. (2001) who stated: "Muslims prefer to die at home". On the other hand, the American participants, who have a different culture and religion from the Saudis and Malaysians, also suggested it is important to send the body home.

Experts' opinions:

Capt. Saad said that for all people, regardless of their culture or religion, it is generally very important to bring the body home. It is very important for Muslims to bring the body of their loved one home; this does not stem from their religion, but from the needs of their culture.

Capt. Abdulhameed, speaking from past experience, felt that all families of victims will be eager to bring their loved one home, no matter what their culture or religion. It is very important as, usually, people will not accept leaving their loved one in a different country or city, even if that city is in the same country.

Magdy Abdellatif felt that, for Egyptians, bringing the victim's body home is a must. In a previous accident concerning Flight 1990 in New York in 1999, the difficulty they faced, when they told the families of victims, was that the victims' bodies could not be found. This made the families hysterical and it was very hard for the airline employees. Most of the families of victims will ask the airline to bring the body back to their own country. This is very important for the families and the airline should do all it can to bring the body home.

Burhan Aygun noted that, for Turkish people, it is very important to bring the body home. Always, when a Turkish person dies in the UK, his/her family will request that his/her body is shipped back to Turkey. Even though there is a Muslim graveyard in the UK and sometimes his/her family still live in England, the family will still send the body back to their own country.

Dr. Taha said that the most important thing for families of victims is to give them the body of their loved one to take to its final resting place. If the body is not found, the families of victim will be eager to have whatever there is, even if this is only some small remains. Therefore, to bury their loved one will give them a

place where they can go and visit. Human remains should also go back to the family so they can follow their religion in how to treat them; it also shows respect to the remains to treat them with dignity. It is very important to bring the victim's body back to his/her own country.

The most important thing for families of victims after any disaster is their loved ones. They need answers about what happened to them, why the accident happened, the condition of the bodies and when they are able to bury them. However, the bodies of victims are not always found after a disaster. In Islam, the body of Muslims should be dealt with by Muslims and must be buried in a Muslim graveyard; families also need to visit the grave of their loved ones and therefore most Muslims seek to bring the bodies' home.

In the accident involving Egypt Air Flight 990 in 1999, the Egyptian families went to New York with coffins and holy water for their loved ones but no bodies were found. Rayann, of the Delta Care Team, who supported the Egyptian families, stated: "What was hardest for me had to do with their expectation about receiving their loved one for burial". She went on: "Each of the families had brought with them a box containing the shroud for wrapping the deceased and the holy water for washing the body before the burial" (Coarsey, 2004, p. 68). Usually, airlines send the body of the victim home. So, this question was asked because it is part of the faith of Muslims and Jews to bury the body as soon as possible. To send the victim's body home takes time so it was necessary to ask if it was still important for the family of a victim to send the body home or was it more important to speed up the burial since it is required by the religion to bury the body within 24 hours.

In conclusion, almost all the participants of the three populations, the experts and the religious leaders felt it was very important to bring the victim's body home. Furthermore, relating to previous accidents, most families of victims required the body of their loved one to be sent back home. In this study, the three tested populations suggested it is very important to bring the body back home, regardless of their religion or culture.

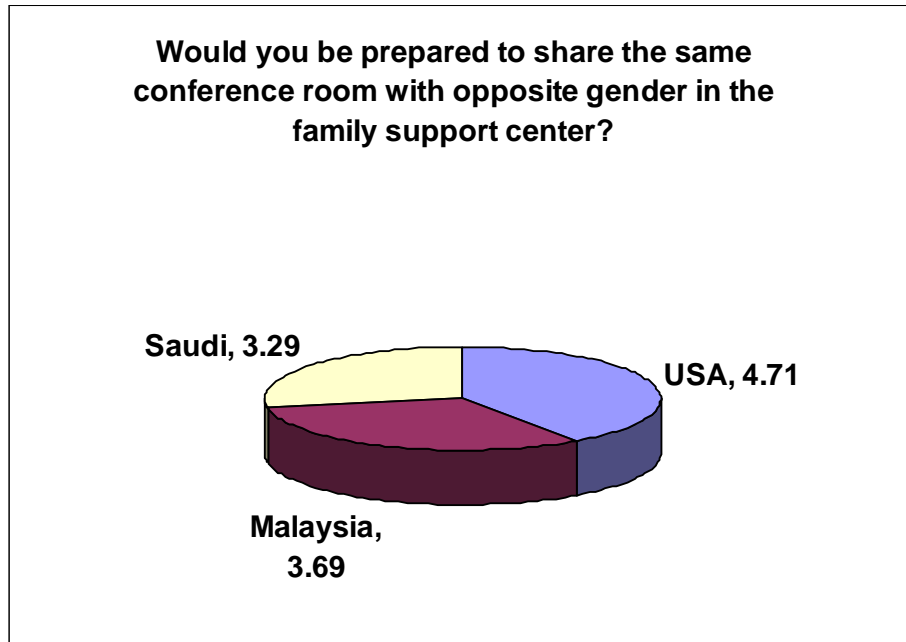


Figure: 19 Share the same conference room

Figure 19 show that the weighted average is 3.29 (65.78%) of the Saudi participants agreed sharing the same conference room as the opposite sex although their answer was the lowest. The response from the Saudi participants reinforces the reflections of Almunajjed (1997), Ember (1998), and Wheeler (2000) that highlighted the importance of segregation for the Saudi population. Of the Malaysians, 3.69 (73.86%) were agreed to share the same conference room with the opposite sex. The American participants had the highest score and the weighted average were 4.71 (94.26).

The responses of the Malaysians and Saudis, who share the same religion, were different; this probably stems from differences in their cultures. The Americans had no problem in sharing the same conference room at all. This question seems to depend on people's cultures and religion.

Experts' opinions:

Capt. Saad noted that, in some Muslim countries, segregation is very important but in others it is not; this comes from the different culture that Muslims have. If the accident happened in Saudi Arabia, a segregated conference room would

be a must for Saudi citizens but if the accident happened in another country, such as the USA or in an EU nation or in another country, it would be acceptable for both sexes to share the same conference room; however, it would be better to ask the families of victims. For other Muslim countries, this kind of segregation is preferable if it is available. On the other hand, if the accident occurred in Saudi Arabia and involved western families, airlines should likewise respect their culture as segregation may work for Muslims or Arabs because of their religion and culture, but it will not work for westerners. Airlines are international businesses and so everything should be available, depending on the needs of the families.

Capt. Abdulhameed said that members of both genders sharing the same conference room depend on people's religion and culture. For example, people in Saudi Arabia will not accept sharing the same conference room; this stems from the segregation they experience in their daily lives; it is part of their culture and religion. Segregation is important in the Muslim religion but not all Muslim countries follow it. If the accident occurs in a Muslim country, this kind of segregation could be acceptable and understandable, but if the accident happens in a non-Muslim country, it is difficult to arrange that. However, the airline should try to manage this as far as possible.

Magdy Abdellatif felt that people are different in terms of their culture and religion; however, some are strict about segregation and some are not. Airlines should follow the culture and religion of the families of victims. As an Egyptian, he felt there would be no problem in sharing the same conference room but there should be some kind of separation between the seats. Families need to be together and help each other at such a critical time.

Burhan Aygun noted that, in Turkey, males and females work and study together; they generally share the same working areas everywhere. Turkey is a Muslim country but does not have any kind of segregation. Some other Muslim countries have that kind sensitivity but not in Turkey.

Dr. Taha said that, after any disaster, the families of victims would like to be together to support each other. It is impossible to separate them but the seats should be not close to each other: cultures should be considered in this matter. Muslim women will generally not be comfortable to sit next to men who are not related to them. Muslims follow their religion, however, and in Islam there is nothing to say it is forbidden for a Muslim to share a public place such as a conference room. The strict adherence to segregation in some countries in the Middle East comes from culture rather than religion.

Every society has its own way of dealing with or accepting things. This comes from the people's culture, religion, ethical sensitivities, economic and education. Also, sensitivities regarding dealing with members of the opposite sex are different from one society to another. Segregation of the genders, which "**is still dominant**", is "*the notion that women are only able to work in segregated spheres where they cannot be seen by strange men*" (Hamdan, 2005). To examine this sensitivity regarding the segregation of the genders the researcher asked the three populations if they would be prepared to share the same conference room with members of the opposite sex in a family support centre. This question arose because of the gender segregation in some Muslim countries in the Middle East. Also, this question should help airlines, if an accident occurred, to consider culture and religion when setting up a family support centre.

For example, segregation in Saudi Arabia does not allow men and women to mix if they are not related to each other (Almunajjed, 1997; Ember, 1998; Wheeler, 2000, cited by Al-Saggaf, 2004). Some Muslim countries in the Middle East, such as Yemen and Sudan, and also citizens of the Gulf countries such as Qatar, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, practise this kind of sex segregation. This was mentioned by Hamdan (2005) as follows, regarding: "women from other Gulf nations with similar segregation rules and the obligatory veiling rule" (Hamdan, 2005). This segregation occurs in schools, hospitals, banks, mosques and government offices (or other work places) and on public transport (Al-Saggaf and Williamson, 2004). However, not all the above-mentioned countries are strict about this so, although such

segregation is preferable in the entire Muslim state, some Muslim countries apply it and some do not.

The responses from the participants of the two Muslim countries in this study, Saudi Arabia and Malaysia, were totally different; this difference stems from their different cultures. To Americans, it is normal to use the same conference room; this also comes from their culture, religion and daily life. In Islam, it is forbidden for Muslim males and females to be in a closed room or office by themselves. The Qur'an (the holy book for Muslims) warns Muslims about mixing the two sexes because this will lead to "seduction and the evil consequences that might follow" (Almunajjed (1997), cited by Baki, 2004). Culture and religion should be considered in the family support centre; these two factors should be respected, no matter how strange they seem. Thus, segregation of the sexes should be available for people who wish it.

In conclusion, gender segregation arises from people's culture and/or religion. In a critical situation, the families of victims need to be together to support each other. However, people's needs are different and therefore, as the experts from Saudi suggested, if the accident happens in the same country where the families of victims come from, the expectations will be very high; however, if the accident happens in another country, people will understand this is different and will be more tolerant. The Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (2006) stated "Women typically have a private area in the household separate from men, especially in rural areas" also they go on and stated "contact between the opposite sexes in public is considered close to obscene". Gender sensitivity in the Middle East should be taken into consideration when supporting Muslim families, if they require this. In short, asking the families of victims about their needs is most important.

The three tested populations were asked about to which level agreed or disagreed about right or wrong depends on the culture and religion, ignoring your culture when supporting you if an accident occurs would affect, Ignoring your religion when supporting you if an accident occurs would affect you, the right thing to do for the family of victim is whatever is best for them and clothes worn by employees of the family assistance centre would affect your communication and attitude toward them. All of these questions are related to culture and religion and the following table explained their response.

| Please indicate to what level you agree or disagree with the following statements: | Nationality | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|------|
| | USA | | | | Malaysia | | | | Saudi | | | |
| | Weighted Average | Standard Deviation | Relative Weight | Rank | Weighted Average | Standard Deviation | Relative Weight | Rank | Weighted Average | Standard Deviation | Relative Weight | Rank |
| Right or wrong depends on your the culture and religion: | 3.88 | 1.135 | 77.66 | 4 | 4.20 | .850 | 84.0 | 2 | 4.04 | .873 | 80.89 | 1 |
| Ignoring your culture when supporting you would affect you | 4.02 | 1.077 | 80.43 | 2 | 3.92 | .960 | 78.43 | 4 | 3.70 | .965 | 74.0 | 3 |
| Ignoring your religion when supporting you would affect you. | 3.99 | 1.187 | 79.79 | 3 | 4.11 | .968 | 82.29 | 3 | 3.67 | 1.122 | 73.33 | 4 |
| The right thing to do for the family of victim is whatever is best for them: | 4.70 | .685 | 94.04 | 1 | 4.26 | .674 | 85.29 | 1 | 3.79 | .930 | 75.78 | 2 |
| Clothes worn by family assistance centre would affect your communication and attitude toward them? | 3.18 | 1.278 | 63.62 | 5 | 3.91 | .913 | 78.14 | 5 | 3.50 | 1.041 | 70.0 | 5 |

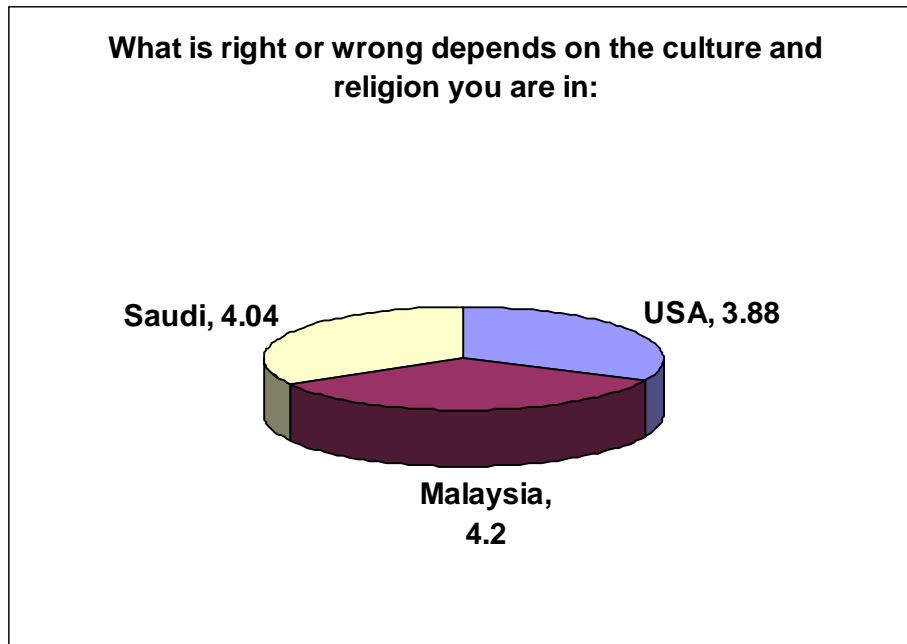


Figure: 20 Right or wrong depend on the culture and religion you are in

Figure 20 explains how far the respondents felt that a sense of right and wrong (i.e. ethical sensitivity) is the result of culture and religion. This was asked to the three populations by posing the direct question: “Does the sense of right and wrong depend on your culture and religion?” with weighted average of 4.04 (80.89%) of the Saudi participants suggested that ethical sensitivities and principles stemmed from culture and religion. While the Malaysians, 4.2 (84.0%) were agreed that culture and religion are the source of ethical sensitivity. Also the American participants with 3.88 (77.66%) suggested the same as Saudi and Malaysian but with slightly lower score than the other two.

Experts’ opinions:

Capt. Saad said that religion and culture are very important and if people call something right or wrong this will depend on their religion or culture.

Capt. Abdulhameed noted that it is important to consider the culture and religion of the family of a victim when you deal with them; this is a must. Without considering their culture and religion, there will be confusion and

misunderstanding between the family of a victim and the family assistance team.

Magdy Abdellatif also felt that the airline should consider the culture and religion of the families of victims. Culture and religion will constitute a barrier between the family support team and the families of victims if they are ignored or not considered. The airline should avoid this, no matter what, as the family support team needs to have a good relationship with the families of victims.

Burhan Aygun said that culture and religion should be considered in any kind of service or support. In Turkey it is generally thought disrespectful to ignore people's culture or religion. The service of a company will not be successful if it ignores people's culture or religion. However, Turkish people gain their ethical principles from their religion: Islam.

Dr. Taha asserted that Muslims get their sense of right and wrong from their religion (Islam) and Islam depends on two sources: the Qur'an (the holy book for Muslims) and the teachings of Prophet Mohammed. Islam directs all Muslims in matters in their daily lives and also in life after death. So Islam is the most important factor here and culture is a secondary matter. Religion is involved in Muslims' communications, laws, food, death, and all kinds of other business.

Culture and religion are very important for people as they form the map which people follow in their daily lives. Indeed, Haddonfield (2007) stated: "Beliefs and customs surrounding death, funeral rites, and mourning provide a window into a society's most deeply held values". The chart above clarifies the importance of culture, religion and ethical sensitivities for all three populations; there are also strong relationships between the three factors. Culture involves what people do every day: it informs their customs, food, how to eat, language, acceptance, expectations, body language and sensitivities regarding the opposite sex etc. On the other hand, religion is also very important; it is involved in people's lives in terms of their attitudes to happiness, sickness, death and life after death (e.g. where they will go and what will happen to them). It is also involved in what they

can do and what they cannot. Religion and culture are mixed and related to each other. From country to country, and society to society, and sometimes even within one family, there may be different cultures, ethical sensitivities and religions; people may also adopt these from other societies by, for example, travelling, watching TV, through their education, or by emigrating to another country. As illustrated in the chart above, all three populations largely admitted that the sense of right or wrong depends on culture and religion. This also agrees with what was found in the literature review regarding the three factors mentioned above. Culture and religion are very important so ignoring them when supporting the families of victims will only increase their pain and suffering as, after a disaster, there will be interactions between the family support team and the families of victims in a critical situation.

In conclusion, culture and religion are part of the daily lives of people and airline cannot ignore them. To have a good relationship with the families of victims, it is essential to know how to deal with them, what is important to them and what is not, what they accept and what they do not, etc. Thus, in order to understand these issues, the family support team must consider culture and religion when supporting the victims' families. Based on the chi-square test results, since the Asymp. Sig. (P-value) equals (0.226) is greater than the significance level (0.05), it can be accepted the null hypothesis. Thus, it can be concluded that there is no relationship between age and right and wrong that depend on culture and religion as the following table show.

| Chi-Square Tests | | | |
|------------------------------|---------|----|-----------------------|
| | Value | DF | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square | 15.281a | 12 | .226 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 15.701 | 12 | .205 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | .215 | 1 | .643 |
| N of Valid Cases | 324 | | |

Stead et al. (1990) stated: "In other words, people who follow a religion are more likely to consider ethical issues than people who are less religious". Also

the International Criminal Police Organisation Interpol (1997) admitted: “Each religious faith and ethnic culture has its own ethical considerations when dealing with the dead and dying. It is not possible to list the requirements and expectations of each individual denomination or persuasion in this Guide, but the importance of sensitivity and understanding when dealing with all victims should never be overlooked ” (Criminal Police Organisation Interpol, 1997). Almost all of the three populations admitted that the sense of right and wrong depends on culture and religion so the airline must consider culture and religion in their support; this was reinforced by the experts.

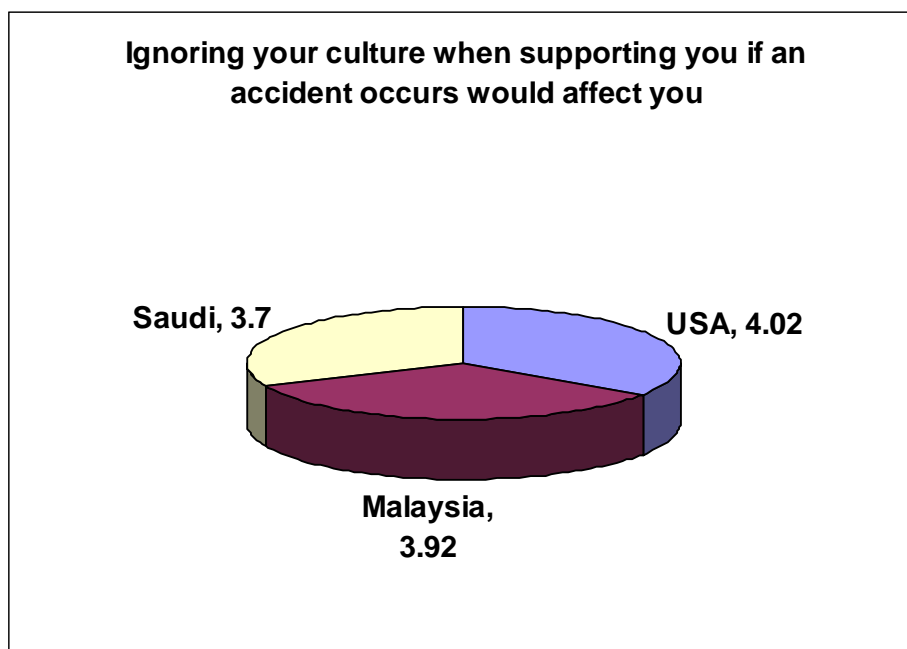


Figure 21 ignoring your culture during support would affect you

Figure 21 shows the responses of the three populations to the question: “Would it affect you if your culture were ignored?” 3.7 (74.0%) of the Saudi participants suggested ignoring their culture when supporting them will affect them. Of the Malaysians participants 3.92 (78.43%) felt they will be affected by ignoring their culture. Regarding the American participants 4.02 (80.43%) agreed that failing to consider their culture would affect them.

Experts' opinions:

Capt. Saad stated that culture is very important and ignoring it would add a great deal of pain and suffering for the families of victims and for the airline support team.

Capt. Abdulhameed agreed that the family support team would face a great many problems if they did not understand the culture of the families of victims. Understanding the families' culture would make it easier for them as it would for the airline's employees as there would then be no conflict.

Magdy Abdellatif said that the family support team should not ignore the culture of the families of victims; ignoring their culture is a problem that the airline does not want to incur as it will then not achieve good communication with families of victims.

Burhan Aygun noted that culture is the way people communicate, talk to or understand each other so it is very important to consider culture in the support as such a consideration would be very helpful for the families of victims.

Dr. Taha felt that people's cultures should be respected under all circumstances, such as deaths, weddings, sickness or whatever. If a service provider ignores the culture of the families of victims, this will only increase their pain and will have an impact on the airline employees. It is not right to ignore people's culture.

Culture is part of the daily lives of people; it something they do every day so it is both normal and the right thing for them. Culture shapes the differences between people and is directed by language, education, geography, history, economics and religion, all of which have a very great influence on culture. Most of the participants from the three populations indicated that ignoring their culture would affect them so although these three populations have different cultures, since the Saudis have a Middle Eastern (Arab) culture, the Malaysians have an Asian culture and the Americans have a western culture, they admitted their culture is very important to them. Thus, the airline should consider culture in

their family support plan, at least in terms of the main base from which they operate (i.e. the culture of the majority of people who use their airline).

In conclusion, culture is part of people's lives and informs what they expect, what they accept, and the way they do things. Therefore, culture affects their dress, language, communications, geography, religion, economics, education etc. The three populations and experts stated that ignoring culture would affect both families of victims and the airline.

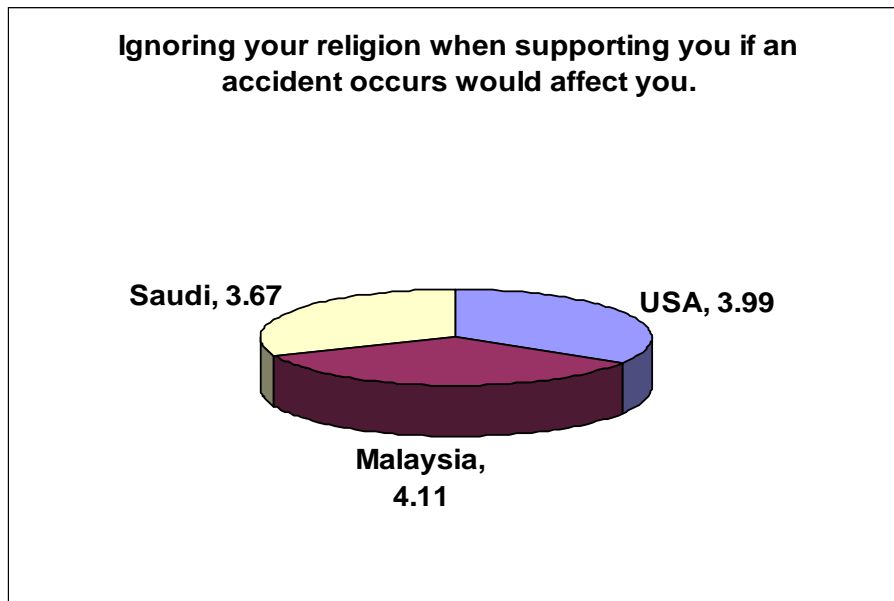


Figure: 22 ignoring religion would have an effect on people

Religion is involved in people's lives and in their views on life after death, as found in the literature review; religion also directs people's lives regarding the ideas of right and wrong, and people follow their religion in times of happiness, sickness and death. Because of this, the three populations were asked if ignoring their religion would affect them if they were supported by a family support team in the event of an accident occurring.

The figure above shows that the weighted average 3.67 (73.33%) of the Saudi participants (surprisingly with the lowest score among the participants) think that ignoring their religion when they received support would affect them. Of the Malaysians, 4.11 (82.29%) agreed that they would be affected if their religion

were ignored. The American participants with 3.99 (79.79%) score agreed that ignoring their religion while being supported by the family support team would affect them.

Experts' opinions:

Capt. Saad felt that religion is everything for people, especially for Muslims who are directed by their religion. Thus, to ignore religion would be a disaster in itself and would result in all kinds of problems for the airline. Also, it is not right to add more pain for the families of victims, especially at such a critical time, when religion plays a major role.

Capt. Abdulhameed stated that religion is the most important thing for people when a death has occurred because people follow their religion in everything they do, especially Muslims in the Middle Eastern countries, where religion is involved in every part of their lives. Also, understanding religion will help in understanding people's thinking in terms of what they think is right and wrong. It is a big mistake not to understand the religion of the families of victims as people depend on this after a disaster. However, it is very helpful after a disaster for the airline to bring in a religious leader who can explain things to the family support team.

Magdy Abdellatif agreed that ignoring religion would result in all kinds of problems for the family support team. People would view ignoring their religion as disrespectful or sometimes even as discrimination. Airlines should consider the religion of the families of victims in every aspect of support.

Burhan Aygun felt that, after a disaster and death, it is very important to consider the religion of the families of victims. For Turkish people, it is very important to consider their religion. Therefore, the victim should be dealt with through their religion in terms of prayer, the way the body is cleaned, who cleans it or where it is buried. Also, providing a place to pray is very important.

Dr. Taha said that, for Muslims, religion is most important so ignoring families' religion would affect them and add to their pain and suffering; it would also build

a barrier between the families of victims and airline employees. It is wrong to ignore people's culture or religion under any circumstances. Islam requires Muslims to follow their religion in matters such as death; it is a must unless it is not in their hands to do so.

The chart above shows the importance of religion and so ignoring it during support will certainly affect the families of victims. Of the tested population, 100% of the Saudi participants were Muslims, 72.1% of the Malaysians were also Muslim while 80.9% of the Americans were Christian. Almost all of the three populations admitted their religion is very important and religious requirements will be involved in the way a victim's body is dealt with, in the burial and ceremonies, in interactions with the family, in the disposal of the remains etc; all these aspects are important to the families of victims after a disaster and so ignoring them will affect the families and also the airline employees. People's religion should be considered as far as possible in the assistance by, for example, offering a place to pray, the presence of a religious leader and the provision of holy books. The most important thing, however, is to ask the families of victims about their needs and, before taking any decisions, the airline should ask families of victims about what is acceptable to them and what is not because, although people may be of the same religion, they will not necessarily have the same needs.

In conclusion, religion is most important for people as it is involved in their daily lives. Thus, airlines cannot ignore religion in their support but should instead pay careful attention to religion in terms of the way they treat both the families of victims and the victims themselves.

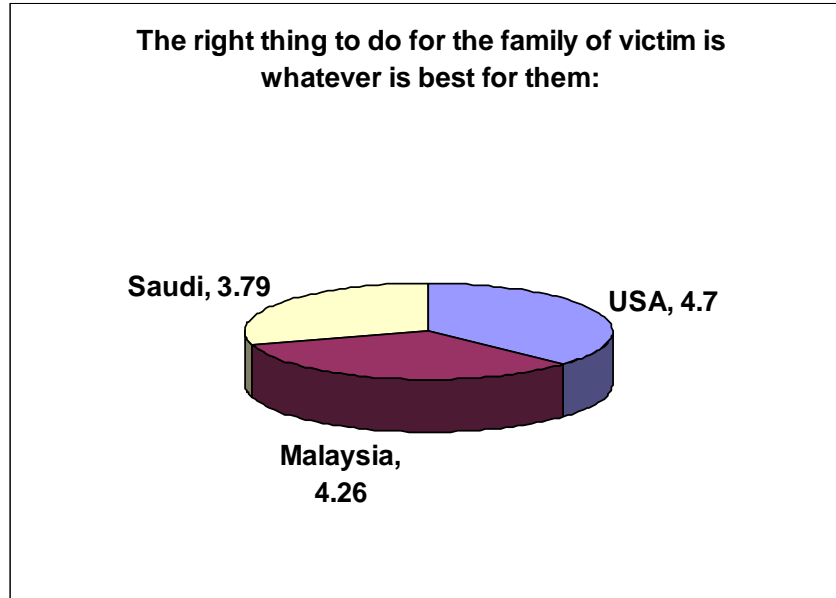


Figure: 23 the right thing to do for the family of victim is whatever is best for them

Figure 23 shows that 3.79 (75.78%) of the Saudi participants agreed the right thing to do for the family of a victim is whatever they think is best. The Malaysian participants with a highest score 4.26 (85.29%) also agreed that it is the right thing to do for the family of victim is whatever is best for them. The figure also shows that 4.7 (94.04%) of the Americans participants agreed families of victims should be treated according to whatever they felt was right for them.

Experts' opinions:

Capt. Saad pointed out that the family support plan was made to support the families of victims after a disaster and therefore it is important to do for the families whatever they need regarding their loved ones or the way they like to be supported. After an accident the families of victims will look for all kinds of help; however, there will be certain limitations. It is a fact that people's needs are different from person to person, family to family, society to society, country to country, religion to religion and culture to culture. Generally, the needs will be different and airlines should do their best to comfort the victims' families.

Capt. Abdulhameed agreed that the airline should always do everything it can for the families of victims, concerning such things as organising transport; providing information, compensation and first payments; respecting the dead; organising communications (phone, Internet and fax); and respecting different cultures, religions and ethics, foods etc. But, there will be limitations; the airline cannot do everything.

Magdy Abdellatif said that it is very important to help and satisfy the needs of the families of victims. The airline should do whatever it can for them but within the limitations of the accident.

Burhan Aygun felt that the families' needs will be based on their culture and religion. On the other hand, the needs of one family might be different from another's. The airline should do for the families of victims whatever they needed.

Dr. Taha also mentioned that the airline should be kind to the families of victims; it should respect them and treat them with mercy. In such a hard time, the most important thing for the families is their loved one. The airline should also respect their culture and religion, and treat the body and remains with dignity.

When an accident occurs, it usually involves a lot of people from different countries who have different cultures and religions. Also, people's needs are different from each other depending on these two factors. The needs of Muslims are different from those of Christians; for example, Islam encourages Muslims to bury their loved one as quickly as possible but this is not required for Christians. Even the needs of Muslims themselves are different; this stems from cultural differences. Sarhill et al. (2001) admitted that: "The Muslim school of thought is united regarding their views on death and dying". This does not apply to all Muslim countries as Muslims have different cultures, backgrounds, economics, geography and languages and some of the things Muslims do are not related to Islam but are related instead to their culture. For example, some Muslims in Middle Eastern countries such as Egypt, build on the top of the

grave and inscribe the name of the dead person. However, in Saudi and some other Arab countries, this is not acceptable. Also, some Muslim women shake hands or do not segregate themselves from members of the opposite sex; this not acceptable in some countries but is in others. Furthermore, some Muslims in Syria, Egypt Jordan and Lebanon may accept flowers and put flowers on the grave; these examples offer a clear understanding of the different needs.

In conclusion, the needs of families of victims will be different and so they have the right to have whatever they need, taking into consideration the limitations imposed by the accident. The help they most often require concerns information, transport, accommodation, financial help (e.g. compensation, a first payment), respect, treating the victims and their belongings with dignity, and a consideration of what is acceptable or not, depending on their culture and religion.

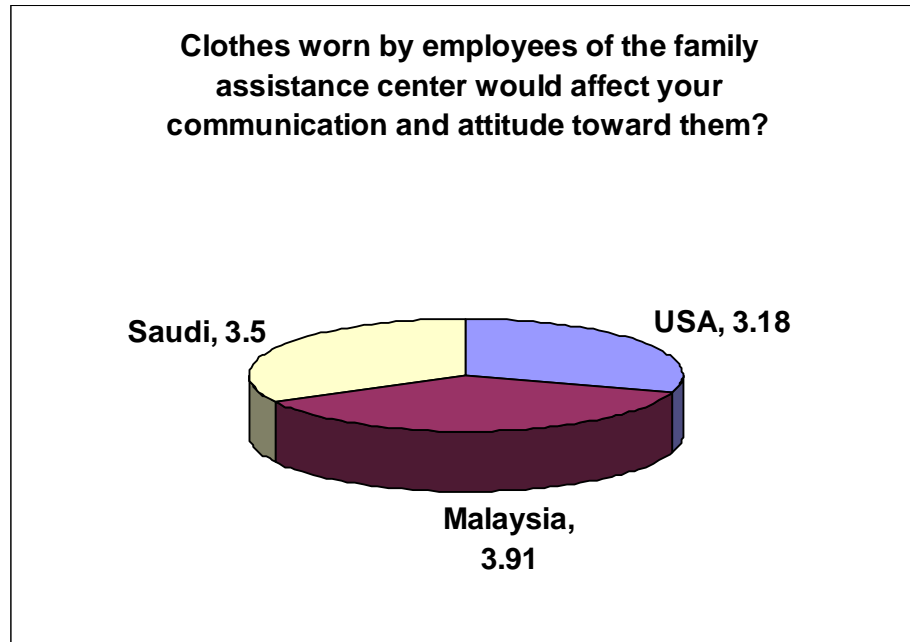


Figure: 24 Clothes worn by employees of family assistance centre would affect you communication and attitude

Figure 24 shows that the weighted average was 3.5 (70.0%) of the Saudi participants agreed clothes worn by the family support team would affect them. Of the Malaysian participants, 3.91 (78.14%) agreed that they would be affected by the clothes worn by the family support team members. The American participants, who have a different culture and religion from both the Saudi and Malaysian participants, answered weighted average 3.18 (63.62%).

Experts' opinions:

Capt. Saad said that the clothes worn by the family support team are very important as this is a very sensitive issue for Muslims as certain dress is required by Islam, no matter what the culture or background. The clothes of the family support team will have a strong impact on the families of victims so proper clothing is very important and the airline should not ignore this issue. However, even if the accident happens in a different country, which may have a different culture, religion or ethical sensitivities, proper clothes are a must.

Capt. Abdulhameed agreed that clothes are part of people's culture and religion, especially for Muslims. Their religion requires both males and females to wear appropriate clothes so the family support team should wear suitable clothes when they deal with the families of victims; this is very important.

Magdy Abdellatif stated that, after a disaster, the family support team should be very careful about what they say or wear. Generally, Muslims are very conservative about the clothes worn by both males and females. In Egypt, people wear black when there is a death as a sign of sadness. The families of victims should feel that the family support team share their feelings so proper, modest clothes for the family assistance team are very important.

Burhan Aygun said that a Muslim should wear modest clothes. In Turkey people do not have a problem with what is worn but, in a disaster, a supporter should respect the situation of the families and wear suitable clothes.

Dr. Taha noted that, in Muslim society, women should not expose their bodies by revealing, for example, their shoulders, legs and stomach. The clothes worn in public should be modest; this is part of Muslims' religion and culture. When Muslims who do not follow their religion wear clothes that do not look normal in Muslim society, many people may regard this as a form of wrong-doing. What clothes are worn is very important and any service provider should consider this kind of sensitivity.

For some people, clothes are part of their culture and for others they are part of their religion. Some people, such as some Muslims, follow their religion in terms of what clothes they wear but not all Muslims follow their religion with regard to their dress. Also, some Muslim women in the Middle Eastern and other Muslim countries cover their faces; this part of their religion. Regarding sensitivities concerning clothes, participants were asked if the clothes worn by employees of the family assistance centre would affect their communication with and attitudes towards them. A number of participants said that the way Muslim women dress is part of their religion, as it is for men. Islam is clear about a Muslim's clothes and some Muslim countries, such as Saudi Arabia, the Gulf countries and some

other Muslim nations in the Middle East, are very strict about this. The figure above shows that the Malaysian and Saudi participants were more conservative about the clothes worn by airline employees than the Americans; this is a result of differences in their culture and religion. From the literature review of previous accidents, some families mentioned that some of the family support team dressed as if they were going to wedding.

Muslims are directed by their religion in everything. Hofstede (1994), in his study regarding Muslims, emphasised: “Despite the heat, most of the body must always remain covered”. He also explained how men and women dressed in Muslim society, stating that, for men, “a jacket and tie are usually required for men at business meetings. Men should wear long pants and a shirt, preferably long-sleeved, buttoned up to the collar. Men should also avoid wearing visible jewellery, particularly around the neck” (Hofstede, 1994). However, Muslims wear different types of clothes, depending on the country’s culture. The most important thing is to cover the entire body. Regarding women’s clothes, Hofstede stated: “Women should always wear modest clothing in public. High necklines and sleeves at least to the elbows are expected. Hemlines, if not ankle-length should at least be well below the knee. A look of baggy concealment should be the goal; pants or pant suits are not recommended. It is a good idea to keep a scarf handy, especially if entering a Mosque” (Hofstede, 1994). However by doing the chi-squared test it found there is relationship between clothes worn and education as showing in the following table.

Based on the chi-square test results is, since the Asymp. Sig (P-value) equals (0.001) is less than the significance level (0.05), we cannot accept the null hypothesis. Thus, it concludes that there is a relationship between Education and clothes worn by employees of the family assistance team as the table shows:

| Chi-Square Tests | | | |
|------------------------------|--------|----|-----------------------|
| | Value | DF | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square | 39.891 | 16 | .001 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 31.931 | 16 | .010 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 11.181 | 1 | .001 |
| N of Valid Cases | 324 | | |

In conclusion, it is very important that suitable clothes are worn by members of the family support team. This was made clear by the Malaysian and Saudi participants, and also by the experts and the religious leader. However, for Muslims, this is obligatory; it is not a choice. The final report to the White House for the development of plans for responding to aviation disasters involving the families of victims stated: "Ensure that the services have uniforms and efficient procedures" (The Secretary of Defence, undated).

Chapter  **DISCUSSIONS**

9 Discussions

This research suggests that to consider culture, religion and ethical sensitivities would be very helpful in improving family assistance. Family assistance has had a significantly positive effect on improving support in general for victims, the injured and their families after a disaster; the Acts of 1996 and 1997 have also improved family assistance, as clarified in the literature review. However, the family assistance that is currently provided does not acknowledge the importance of the three factors, culture, religion and ethical sensitivities, even though these factors have a strong effect on the daily lives of people and should therefore be respected and considered.

✚ The three tested populations and the experts who validated the data agreed that practising their religion is important for many people. Indeed, 4.44 (88.89%) of the Saudis agreed that practising religion is important, 4.51 (90.29%) of the Malaysians also thought that this is important and 3.95 (78.94%) of the American thought the same, as shown in Figure 8. Practising their religion is important for people who have a faith and Muslims must pray five times a day at a specific time; in fact, they will stop any kind of work they are doing to go to pray as they believe that they will be punished on the Day of Judgment if they do not. Indeed, prayer is not a choice for them. Therefore, this should be considered when supporting the families of victims, as well as airlines considering this in terms of their Muslim employees.

✚ Every religion has leaders who have a great deal of knowledge about their religion. For example, Muslims call such people (and these are always male) Imams or Shaiks. People trust their religious leaders; they believe them and accept their opinions as right. 3.73 (74.67%) of the Saudis, 4.31 (86.14%) of the Malaysians, and 3.95 (78.94%) of the Americans agreed that religious leaders could help them after a disaster. This assertion of the participants also agreed with the findings in the literature review in the chapter on religion. Muslim religious leaders are the most trusted of people and

therefore if Muslims are confused in terms whether it is right or wrong, they take the advice of their religious leaders.

✚ Considering a place for worship is very important and 4.12 (82.44%) of the Saudis, 4.29 (85.86%) of the Malaysians and 4.10 (81.91%) of the Americans agreed that a place of worship is significant. In this aspect, almost all the three tested populations a greater worship place is very important. The Saudi participants were 100% Muslim and, because a Muslim prays five times a day, it means that a place of worship or a prayer room is very important therefore that score from the Saudi was not expected. However, the high score of 85.86 for the Malaysians was expected as 72.1 of the participants were Muslim and 12.91% were Christian and 13.6% other religion. The literature review showed that a place of worship is very important for people of all religions.

✚ Religion and ethical sensitivities are related to each other and considering them was deemed very important by the participants. A 4.38 (87.56%) of the Saudis, 4.29 (85.86%) of the Malaysians and 4.46 (89.15%) of the Americans agreed that airlines should consider the religion and ethical sensitivities of the victims and the victims' families. For airlines to deal with, interact with and/or provide services to the families of victims, they must be familiar with the backgrounds and needs of their customers. People are different and their needs are also different so what is wrong in one society may be acceptable in another. For example, boyfriends and girlfriends are not acceptable in Muslim society but are acceptable in others. Another example is that, in Islam, it is forbidden for a Muslim to drink alcohol, to sit with someone who is drinking, or to sell, buy or transport alcohol. But in other religions or societies, it is acceptable. Airlines should consider religion and ethical sensitivities in order to avoid any confusion or the addition of more pain on the families of victims.

✚ After a disaster, the families of victims will often blame the airline, as suggested by the airline experts. The weighted average were 3.56 (71.11%) of the Saudis, 2.56 (49.29%) of the Malaysians and 2.17 (43.4%) of the

Americans agreed that the airlines should be blamed if an accident occurred. In this response, the answers of the Americans and the Saudis were not expected. Saudis believe death and life come from Allah and everything is under his control. So, as part of their religion, they should not blame the airlines but should accept what has happened. In any case, an airline will pay compensation and a Muslim cannot say that an airline has killed his/her relative; they should think it is simply his or her time to die unless the accident is a result of negligence or terrorism. On the other hand, only 6% of the Americans suggested blaming the airline. This was not expected because, from the experience of previous accidents such as SQ006 and USAir 427, the airlines were blamed and were taken to court. However, the families of victims have the right to blame the airline and this was suggested by one of the experts. Airlines should do their best to support the families of victims by treating them with respect, dignity, humility, wisdom and mercy, irrespective of whether the families blame the airline or not.

✚ The family assistance team and the airline's top management should attend the Muslim funerals as this is important in showing respect for the families of victims and is a blessing for the dead. 74.0% of the Saudis, 81.14% of the Malaysians and 68.51% of the Americans agreed that the airline's family assistance team should attend the funerals; this response was expected from all the participants. Experts also stated that it is very important for Muslims to see a large number of airline employees if an accident occurs. For Muslims, it is important for the airline's employees (the family assistance team) to attend the funerals and Muslims believe that those who attend a funeral will be rewarded for it as such attendance is a blessing for the dead. One of the experts said that westerners were more likely to prefer privacy in grieving but this is totally different from Muslims who are happy to see a great many people at the funeral of a relative. At a Muslim funeral, the door is open so that any other Muslim can attend, no matter where he/she is from.

- ✚ People look at things and act differently; this depends on their culture and religion. The relationship between males and females is a sensitive issue for some societies, such as the Muslim society, yet 88.3% of Saudi participants said they were happy to be supported by males or females. The experts felt that this choice was unexpected and said that Saudi women would generally prefer to be supported by women. An expert also stated that some Saudi men would prefer to be supported by other men. Of the Malaysians, 54.3% chose to be supported by either males or females. Malaysians and Saudis share the same religion but have different cultures and so have almost the same percentage of response. The Saudis and the Malaysians feel some kind of sensitivity to this issue according to their religion. On the other hand, 67.8% of the Americans suggested that they were happy to be supported by either males or females; some of the Americans said that women are better at doing that kind of work. When supporting Muslim victims' families after a disaster, an airline should pay attention to gender sensitivities.

- ✚ When people travel, they carry with them whatever they need or they take things that are important to them such as rings, watches or clothes. After a disaster, some of the family members of victims may look to receive the belongings of their loved one, while some may not. 70.44% of the Saudis, 83.0% of the Malaysians and 96.6% of the Americans agreed that their loved one's belongings were very important to them. Experts suggested that these belongings are related to someone and therefore no one has the right to do anything with them other than give them back to the family. Belongings should be protected and treated with dignity.

- ✚ In any business, such as airlines, an attempt is made to keep customers happy and satisfied. Therefore, when a group is targeted, a search is carried out to find what people want or how to deal with them. For example, Saudi airlines do not serve alcohol or pork in their fleet because it is against their religion; also, the majority of their passengers are Muslim. Moreover, communication is a very important matter after a disaster. Shaking hands or making eye contact is sometimes sensitive in some societies but it is not for

others. For example, 82.2.7% of the Saudis and 60.7% of Malaysian participants stated that shaking hands with someone of the opposite sex is not acceptable. This is based on their religion as none of the American participants suggested that this might be a problem. Some of the American participants did not even understand the question as it seemed strange for them to be asked such a question as they do not have this sensitivity in their society. Shaking hands is just an example but there are others, such as making eye contact, crossing legs in front of an older person, members of the opposite sex kissing in public, women wearing inappropriate clothes, using bad language, talking about religion, and not keeping a distance between those of opposite genders etc.

✚ Every group of people has different sources from where it obtains guidance on ethical sensitivities. People generally gain such guidance from their religion and culture; this was the participants' suggestion as 75.6% of the Saudis, 86.4% of the Malaysians and 68.1% of the Americans suggested that they get their ethical guidance from culture and religion. This result explains the importance of culture and religion which shows that culture and religion should be considered in any family assistance guidelines. Also, people take their sense of right and wrong from their culture and religion so that whatever the religion or the culture suggests is wrong, the follower will most often follow it. The participants suggested that ignoring their culture or religion would affect them.

✚ Fast burial is very important for everybody but, for some people, such as Muslims and Jews, it is a religious matter, as explained in Chapter 6; for others, it is a humanitarian matter. With regard to this, 86.67% of the Saudis and 87.0% of the Malaysian participants suggested it is very important and that it is based on the teachings of Islam. On the other hand, 59.36% of the Americans stated it is important for them because it is a humanitarian matter as the body must go to its final resting place. Most of the time, releasing a victim's body is not in the airline's hands, especially if the accident occurred in a different country. Before the body is released, it must go through a long

procedure which includes identifying the body, issuing the death certificate, and preparing and transporting the body. In Islam, the dead body should be buried as soon as possible. However, if there is a delay that is out of the relative's control, it is not a problem. However, for Muslims, fast burial is very helpful so the airline should do its best to achieve this. If the accident occurred in a different country, the airline is responsible for explaining the importance of burying the dead quickly.

✚ The family assistance centre is very important after a disaster as it the place where the family of a victim can gather information about their loved one. Therefore, the FAC should meet the needs of the families of victims as far as it can. For example, it is essential for Muslims to have a place to pray; the prayer room should be clean and should have no pictures, no music and no shows. On the other hand, people from different religions may need a chaplain or a quiet room. Also, certain culture sensitivities, such as privacy, should be considered. For example, 27.8% of the Saudi disagreed with sharing the same conference room with members of the opposite sex from different cultures and religions because, in Saudi, there is segregation between genders in the work place, such as in banks, schools, mosques and on public transport. This segregation will work for Saudis and some people from different Muslim countries but it will not work for others, such as the Malaysians who share the same religion. 20.7% of the Malaysian was not happy to share of the same conference room with opposite sex. However Malaysians do not have segregation in the work place as Saudis do. On the other hand, 97.9% of the Americans stated they agreed to share the same conference room. For the Americans, sharing the same conference room is normal and they might not understand such a question because it does not make sense for them while Muslims and Arabs accept and understand segregation. Experts from Saudi stated that segregation in Saudi after a disaster is very important. However, in other countries, Saudis will accept this because they know they are in a different culture.

Finally, the researcher argued that if Muslim countries in the Middle East use the current family assistance plans without modifying them, it will affect the airline and the families of victims. The researcher could not find an example of published family assistance plans that took into consideration the importance of culture, religion or ethical sensitivities in a specific way. All of them simply stated that culture and religion are important and that attention should be paid to them. Culture and religion direct people's lives so, for example, Muslims follow their religion and Islam directs them during their lives and in life after death, in events such as death, sickness, happiness, food, laws and social life.

From the discussion above, the results, and the literature review concerning culture, religion, ethical sensitivities and family assistance, this research has discovered the following:

1. There is a relation between the factors above and family assistance. This is presented in the culture, religion, ethical sensitivities and family assistance model shown in Figure 25.
2. From the data, this research has outlined the needs of Muslim families of victims after a disaster according to their culture, religion and ethical sensitivities.
3. A modified family assistance centre is offered, designed according to the culture, religion and ethical sensitivities of Muslims in Middle Eastern countries. This is presented in Figure 28.
4. Finally, according to the literature review of culture, religion, ethical sensitivities and family assistance, this research presents the ways a family assistance team can deal with Muslim families.

The explanations of the four findings above are described in the following pages.

9.1 Religion, Culture, Ethical Sensitivities and Family Assistance Model

From the collected data, it is clear that ethical sensitivities are a consequence of culture and religion. Also, culture and religion are intermingled and it depends on the individual to assess which is the more important. However, there are close relations between culture, religion and ethical sensitivities. As a result, these three factors have a substantial impact on the current family assistance guidelines. Both the impact and the magnitude of these three factors have been studied in many different fields, such as in economics, international relations, aviation safety, human factors, international policing (Interpol), management studies, marketing, and in public and private organisations. However, so far, the impact and magnitude of these three factors with regard to family assistance have not been studied, or no study in this field has hitherto been published. According to table 13, 75.6 % of the Saudi participants, 86.4 % of the Malaysians, and 68% of the Americans felt they inherited their ethical sensitivities from culture and religion. On the other hand, 18.9 % of the Saudis, 10% of the Malaysians and 6.4% of the US participants said that their ethical sensitivities come only from their religion. The following section offers some definitions from the literature review of culture, ethical sensitivities, religion and family assistance. From these definitions, the relations, impacts and the importance of all of them are clarified. Wiebe and Fleck (1980) emphasised: *“If people make a religion central focus in their lives, they subsequently are more likely to be more concerned to adopt and maintain higher moral standards, self-discipline, and a sense of responsibility to their wider society”* (Wiebe and Fleck, 1980). This explains how people who have a religion are likely to be more conservative in everything they do. The results from participants, shown in Figure 22, illustrate that 73.33% of the Saudis, 82.29% of the Malaysians and 79.79% of the Americans strongly agreed that ignoring their religion would have an effect on them. Stead *et al.* (1990) explained the relation between religion and ethical sensitivities thus: *“In other words, people who follow a religion are*

more likely to consider ethical issues than people who are less religious" (Stead *et al.*, 1990).

Based on the Islamic concepts of unity, trusteeship, the need for balance and justice, as mentioned in the chapter on ethical sensitivities, it can be concluded that the ethical sensitivities prevailing in and adopted by organisations in Middle Eastern countries are, for the most part, based on Islamic ethical values. Ali (1992) noted that "*in some countries such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, ethical sensitivities are primarily derived from both religion and culture behaviour*". Airlines are either public or private organisations and they are responsible for providing services to the families of victims after aviation disasters. Such services are rendered in critical times. This entails that the airline involved should solve the problems of the families of victims, not add more pain and anguish. A family support team is directly involved with the families of victims to provide them with the support and aid they require, keeping in mind that it is very important to pay attention to their cultures, ethical sensitivities and religions. This is made clear in Figure 24 in which 80.89% of the Saudis, 84.0% of the Malaysians and 77.6% of the American participants strongly agreed that the sense of right and wrong depends on a person's culture and religion.

Nadler (2002) examined the "*direct and moderated interrelationships between religiosity, ethical sensitivity and national culture*". He tested the model that was presented by Hunt and Vitell (1986), Ferrell and Gresham (1985) and that was influenced by Bommer *et al.* (1987). Nadler found that there is a strong and close relationship between the three factors. Therefore, the researcher modified the model and implemented family assistance, as shown in Figure 30.

Figure 25 presents the interrelationships between the aforementioned three factors and family assistance guidelines. The green line represents the direct and mixed interrelationships between culture and religion while the black lines represent the influence of these factors on the family support process. Culture and religion are largely related to each other and ethical sensitivities are the result of this relationship; the red colour represents the result of culture and

religion. If people feel that something is right or wrong, this will depend on the culture and religion they follow.

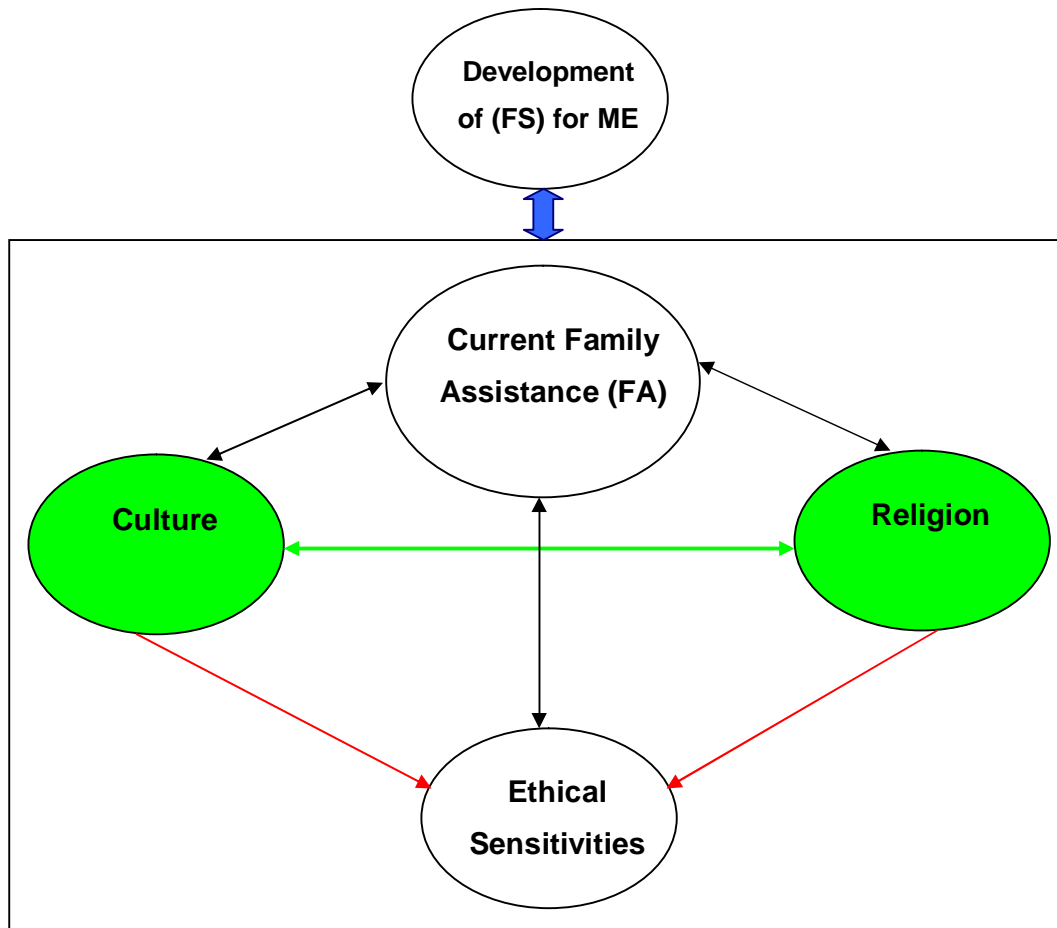


Figure 25: Religion, Culture, Ethical Sensitivities and Family Assistance Model

People are directed by culture and religion and ethical sensitivities are their result. Mostly people comply with whatever is required by their religion although this compliance may differ from one religion to another. In some religions it is mandatory for the follower to abide by a collection of commandments, whereas in others the compliance to commandments may be voluntary. Culture is also very important but in some societies an individual may or may not observe the conventions or traditions of the prevailing culture. In some societies, religion is more important than culture, such as for Muslims, and is the most overriding

factor that represents the focal point of the lives of all. Therefore, if Muslims are required by their religion to do something, such as praying five times a day, fasting or following their religion in the way they treat a dead person, they must do it or they will be punished on the Day of Judgment. In such societies, culture is a secondary issue. In other societies, religion and culture are interwoven and how they distinguish which of them is important depends on the individual. People generally opt to accept or discard hypotheses and deeds in accordance with the conventions of their cultures or the teachings of their religions.

In order to provide positive assistance to families of victims, the airline should pay attention to their cultures, religions and ethical sensitivities. However, an airline company is a business and it must know their customers and their needs, what they consider important or unimportant, and what they deem acceptable or unacceptable. The airline company must, therefore, be aware of the majority of their customers' cultures, religions and ethical sensitivities. The International Criminal Police Organisation Interpol (1997) admitted: "*Each religious faith and ethnic culture has its own ethical considerations when dealing with the dead and dying. It is not possible to list the requirements and expectations of each individual denomination or persuasion in this Guide, but the importance of sensitivity and understanding when dealing with all victims should never be overlooked*" (Criminal Police Organisation Interpol, 1997). Figures 19 and 20 show that the three participant populations admitted that ignoring their culture or religion during the support processes could affect them. After an aviation disaster, family assistance becomes a vital issue and so a family assistance plan, developed without consideration to culture, religion and ethical sensitivities, will be both generalised and impracticable.

People are different in their ways of doing things, their expectations, communication and judgment of what is right and what is wrong. The output of these interrelationships between culture, religion, ethical sensitivities and family assistance can be used to improve the current family assistance for Muslims in the Middle Eastern countries. For the Middle East countries, The Defence Language Institute Foreign Language Centre (1997) stated that: "*To understand*

the Middle East countries, whether in economy, politics, military, customs, or whatever, one must understand Islam. The variety inherent in Middle East culture expresses the variety of practice found within Islam" (DLIFLC, 1997). Applying the above three factors will give the family assistance offered greater value. All airlines around the globe should consider culture, religion and ethical sensitivities in developing their family assistance guidelines. Furthermore, they should share this kind of relevant information among them as, it is important to remember, most airlines these days have other airlines as partners. For example, with regard to the accident involving Swiss Air 111, Delta Airlines was its partner which initiated the assistance. These airlines shared reservations and helped each other with customers and so it is very important for partnerships like them to share information about their customers' cultures and religions.

As a result of the relationships noted above between cultures, religions and ethical sensitivities, and their impact on the current family assistance plans, there are relationships between the airline company, the victims, the injured and the families of victims. In general, the airline company should be able to provide, both directly or indirectly, full support and help for the families of victims according to their religion, culture and ethical sensitivity. The airline should also provide support by treating the victims with respect and dignity. As the literature review clarified, the families of victims need emotional support, information, sympathy, respect and communication (i.e. all kinds of support) from the airline, bearing in mind the families' cultures, religions and ethical sensitivities. The airline should also act quickly to identify victims' bodies and promptly provide the means by which victims' bodies can be buried with appropriate ceremonies and practices in religious terms, or quickly make arrangements to deliver the body of a victim to his/her family. The important question is, how an airline will treat the victims, the families of victims and the injured if their employees (i.e. the members of family support teams) do not have knowledge about families' cultures, ethical sensitivities and religions.

9.2 Extended FSC for Middle Eastern Countries

In general, an aircraft accident involves a great many people (it may affect thousands of people directly or indirectly) such as families of victims, friends, employees, a town or area where the accident occurred, and airport employees. So, a family support centre, either organised or run by the airline itself or by an agency, has a vital part to play for the survivors of such an accident, for the families of victims, and indeed for all those affected by the accident as it is through such a centre that they can obtain care, advice and support.

The London Humanitarian Assistance Centre Plan (2006) suggested that a family assistance centre is a central point for humanitarian assistance for bereaved families of victims, friends, survivors and anyone else who has been affected by the accident. It is the place which provides as much information as is available for those who have missing family members and friends. It emphasises the following points about the FAC's responsibility:

1. *“Act as a focal point for the giving and receiving of information and assistance to bereaved families and friends, survivors and to anyone else who has been affected,*
2. *Enable those affected to benefit from appropriate information and assistance in a timely and co-coordinated manner,*
3. *Enable the gathering of forensic samples where appropriate (in order to assist the identification process) in a timely manner,*
4. *Offer access to a range of services that will allow affected people to make informed choices according to their needs,*
5. *Ensure a seamless multi-agency approach to humanitarian assistance in emergencies that should minimize duplication and avoid gaps”.*

Furthermore, the family support centre will protect family members and friends from any kind of abuse from, for example, the media, receiving false information

or getting used by other people. In the family assistance centre, families of victims will be identified before any kind of information is given, thus protecting their privacy. Also, a range of facilities should be available for the families of victims and survivors so that they have choices according to their differing needs. A Family Assistance Centre is defined by several organisations, for example, as follows:

1. **National Transportation Safety Board, NTSB**, (2008) stated: *“The Family Assistance Centre (FAC) is the focus of services for family members when they travel to the accident location. FACs are designed to meet the immediate and short-term needs of family members: safety, security, physiological needs (food, sleep), information (about the victim recovery and identification process, and the investigation), and crisis/grief counselling. In addition, family members may be interviewed to gather ante mortem information about the victims and to submit DNA samples to facilitate victim identification. The air carrier is required to provide the FAC location. Most FACs are established at hotels or similar facilities. Consideration should be given to a facility that has multiple meeting rooms, a large ballroom, up-to-date information technology infrastructure, and food services. Arrangements are coordinated by the air carrier and the NTSB”* (National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), 2008).
2. **London Humanitarian Assistance Centre Plan** (2006) described the LHAC as: *“The London Humanitarian Assistance Centre should be seen as a sophisticated facility where bereaved families, survivors and anyone else directly affected by the incident can receive information and appropriate support from all the relevant agencies – without the need for immediate referral elsewhere”*.
3. **Rollman** (2001) said: *“The Family Assistance Centre (FAC), which is to be set-up by representatives of the involved airline, will be located at a hotel or other meeting facility. The hotel will be selected with special consideration toward security, quality of rooms, and availability of privacy*

for families, and other matters that will be of interest to the arriving family members. For security issues and to control who has access to grieving family, a budging system will be implemented for admittance into the FAC. The Joint Family Support Operations Centre (JFSOC) will be set up in a separate room, and will serve as the focal point for coordination and sharing of information among involved family assistance organizations. Representatives of each federal agency participating will be there, as well as local government emergency service representatives”.

In determining the layout of the premises of the Family Support Centre, consideration needs to be given to the potential for the centre to operate in the most effective manner, meeting the needs of both users and staff. There are different family assistance centre layouts such as the Kenyon International Emergency Service Inc. (Figure 26) and the National Transportation Safety Board Office of Transportation Disaster Assistance (Figure 27) According to Kenyon International Emergency Service Inc., a company which specialises in the provision of post-accident support to airlines, the layout of the family support centre should meet the needs of the families of victims in the following ways:

1. There should be a sufficient number of rooms of a suitable size to meet the required functions;
2. It should meet health and safety requirements;
3. It should be secure;
4. Public transport links should be available;
5. Communication or potential communication links should also be provided, and
6. It should be able to meet the additional requirements of disabled persons and the needs of the sensory impaired.

Therefore, a possible layout of such a Family Support Centre (FSC) is illustrated in Figure 26.

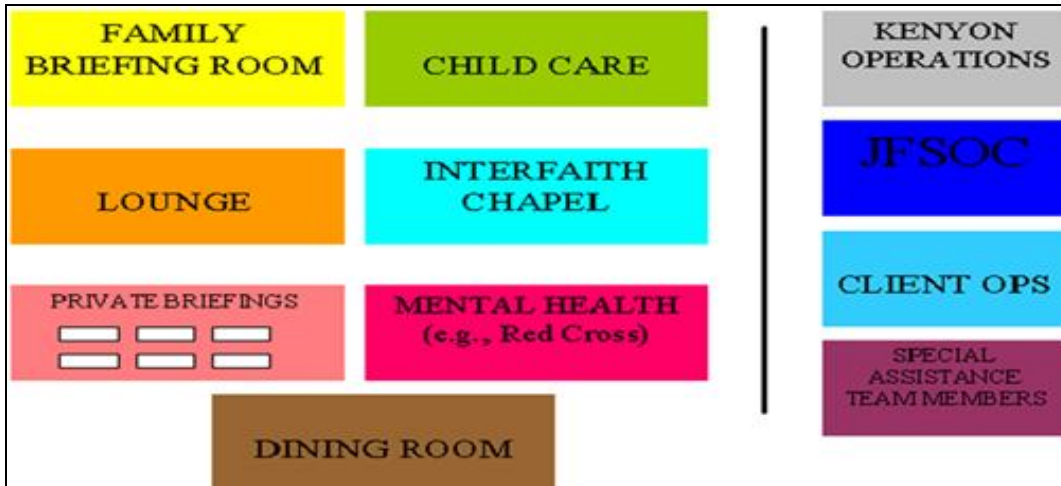


Figure 26 : Possible Layout for a Family Support Centre (as proposed by Kenyon International, web page).

Also, this information regarding a possible Family Support Centre is available on the Kenyon webpage <http://www.kenyoninternational.com/faq3.htm> :

“Q: What is included in your FSC services?”

A: The facilities for the families include an information / travel desk(s), a family briefing centre(s), a family lounge(s), multiple private briefing areas, a childcare centre(s), an interfaith centre(s) and dining areas. The FAC also includes a Kenyon operations centre, a Special Assistance Team Member, a member’s operations centre, and a sanctuary and boardroom facilities.

Also, the Kenyon official webpage contains the following information regarding a possible Family Support Centre; it also offers definitions of all the facilities in the Family Assistance Centre (Kenyon International, 2009).

Briefing Room

This is a large room with a public address system. Updates on the search and recovery process can be given at least twice daily to large gatherings of family members and friends.

Lounge

This is an area for families to relax and visit each other. It offers TV with cable news, seating including couches, tables, telephones, a message board, beverages and snacks.

JFSCO

The Joint Family Support Operations Centre is a central location where participating organisations can be brought together to monitor, plan, coordinate, and execute a response operation, maximising the utilization of all available resources.

Private Briefing Rooms

Several small rooms provide a private space where information such as ante mortem data can be gathered from families and where families can receive notifications and counselling from clergy and mental health professionals.

Special Assistance Rooms for Team Members

Here, team members receive information, daily briefings, notifications, assignments and instructions to take care of families.

Child Care

This area is for the families of victims who come with their children. This should be away from sensitive areas and should be a safe environment with certified workers.

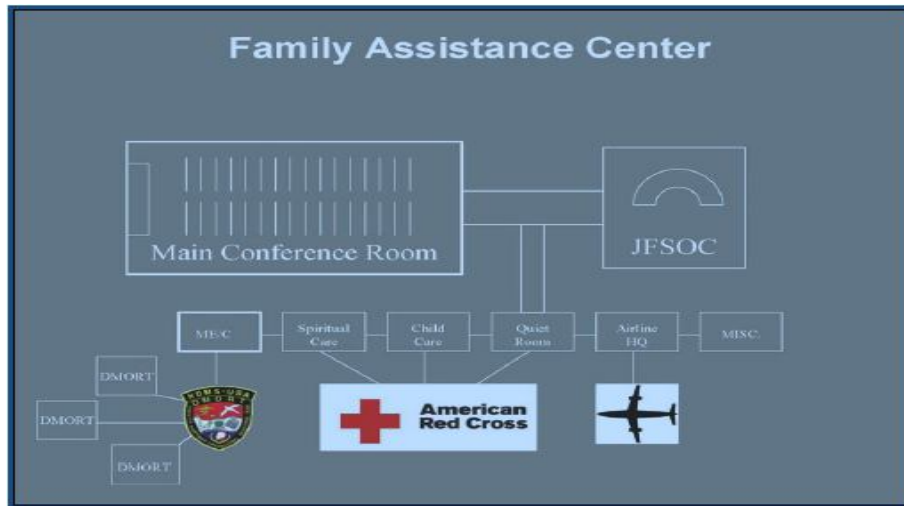


Figure 27: NTSB Office of Transportation Disaster Assistance’s FAC

In order to meet the needs of Muslim families of victims from Middle Eastern countries, the layout of the premises of the Family Support Centre could be modified based on the influencing factors of both religion and culture which may affect the support. Therefore, in the design of a family support centre, separate seating areas for the two genders are allocated in the conference rooms and separate prayer rooms which is a “*must*” for both men and women who pray five times a day. In this regard, Figure 10 showed that 82.44% of the Saudis, 85.86% of the Malaysians and 81.91 of the Americans agreed a place of worship should be considered in any family assistance centre. The prayer room has to follow Muslim rules such as: the room should be clean, there should be no pictures of animals or humans, no statues, no one should enter the room wearing shoes, the room should be quiet, no animal should enter, you should never pass in front of someone praying, no alcohol or a drunk person should be allowed to enter, and you should never talk to a Muslim during prayer.

Some Muslim countries require gender segregation. The separation of genders comes from religious teaching and culture; also segregation is practised in the mosques where Muslims pray. In some Muslim societies, privacy and separation are very important, while in others they are only preferable. The Muslim countries in the Middle East which practise gender segregation include Yemen and Sudan, together with nations of the Gulf countries such as Qatar,

Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and some parts of Egypt (Hamdan, 2005). Such segregation is practised in schools, hospitals, banks, mosques, government offices and public transportation (Al-Saggaf, 2004). Therefore, gender sensitivities and separation should be considered carefully as; in general, women may not be exposed to the presence of men they do not know. Table 12 showed 27.8% of the Saudis and 20.7% of the Malaysians suggested that sharing the same work area is not acceptable. While none of the American thinks there will be problem to them that is a normal thing they do every day.

Yet there is no evidence or published family assistance layout designed by or for airlines in the Middle East countries that considers the Muslim culture or religion. The layout of the Family Assistance Centre within Middle Eastern countries, or for flights originating from the region, should take into account the sensitivities and priorities of the Muslim faith although family assistance needs to suit the families of victims who have different religious and cultural backgrounds. This will offer choice to the families of victims, allowing them to follow the ways of their own culture and religion. For example, segregation in Saudi Arabia and some other Muslim countries does not allow men and women to mix if they are not related; this is Islamic law (Almunajjed, 1997; Ember, 1998; Wheeler, 2000, cited by Al-Saggaf, 2004). Hamdan, (2005) stated that: *“Women from other Gulf nations have similar segregation rules and the obligatory veiling rule”* (Hamdan, 2005). Therefore, the layout of the proposed Family Support Centre Figure 28 is based on the sensitivities and priorities of the Muslim faith. However, the proposed layout can suit the families of victims who have different religious and cultural backgrounds. This will offer **choice** to the families of victims to follow their own cultural and religious sensitivities concerning the sharing of the same spaces or dealing with members of the opposite sex. This allows families of victims to choose whether to segregate themselves; the availability of such a layout will allow families to choose the services they need and which may be required by their culture or religion.

Family briefing room:

This is designed with separated seats (and a distance between seats) so families can sit on one side and individuals on the other, as the Egyptian religious leader suggested. Or, if an accident occurred in a country like Saudi Arabia, separate rooms would be a must and the families of victims would then have a choice. If women would like to sit with their men folk, they could sit in the main briefing room.

Interfaith room:

It is very important for Muslims to have a room for prayer and such a room should be included in any family assistance centre, not only for the families of victims, but also for employees. However, a prayer room should be divided to accommodate the two genders separately, with one room for males and another room for females.

Private briefings room:

It is very important to have more than one person on duty in this room as Muslim women, and sometimes Muslim men, will generally not accept being with someone of the opposite sex if they are not related to them. Also, the family assistance team must include personnel of both genders for support. The airline must understand that Muslims are forbidden to drink, hold, sell or sit with someone drinking alcohol. Therefore, in the lounge or dining room, alcohol should not be available or, if available, this must be separate from Muslims. Furthermore, some women cover their faces so if they are called upon to prove their identity, this should be done in a private area/room.

Health room:

This room should have privacy and should serve both genders separately. It is essential that an airline's family support plan has the

clear potential to meet the needs of the families of victims from different cultural and religious backgrounds. Culture and religion have an important influence on people's behaviours, based on the way they live and so this research has focused on the particular needs of Middle Eastern countries with large Muslim populations. As a result, the design of the family support centre and the training given to family support staff should be modified to suit and support the families of victims from this part of the world in the same way as for other cultures and religions, should an aircraft accident occur. The families of victims can thus choose the type of support they need according to their religious, cultural and ethical sensitivities. In turn, this is likely to have a positive effect on the way in which they try to come to terms with their loss.

9.3 Effect of Airline Privatisation / commercialisation on Family Assistance

In countries such as USA, the provision of family assistance is established in law and therefore airlines are required have a family assistance plan. Airlines are businesses and in the Middle East some of the airlines supported by their government and some operating independently. Saudi Arabian Airlines is supported financially by the Saudi government although they are currently being prepared for privatisation. Whilst this will not change the airline's obligations to provide family assistance, it may well affect the level of resources available, particularly if the company is broken into smaller companies as part of the process (since 2006, the airline has started to divide itself into strategic business units). Villalonga (2000) noted "*Privatisation can be defined in a strict sense as the sale of a state-owned firm to the private sector*". Generally after any disaster in the Middle Eastern countries, government agencies will be directly involved in responding to the accident whether the airline belongs to the government or not and this may make decision making slow or difficult. Airline privatisation can be helpful as it can make it easier for the airline top

management to take decision in providing service to customers (victims' family) before or after disaster. Such decisions could take longer with the public organisation as it has to go through different procedure, law and signatures. Villalonga (2000) through a longitudinal study of 24 Spanish firms, found that several political and organisational factors are found to influence the estimated effects of privatisation on efficiency, negative effect initially followed by positive effects in the long run.

New independent operators have started in operations in Saudi Arabia such as National Air Services – NAS Air and SAMA (now defunct) and compete against the state owned flag carrier. Neither has had the misfortune to be involved in a serious incident or accident nor as neither of them operated to the USA, they are not required to have a family assistance plan. If a serious incident or accident were to occur within Saudi Arabia then it is likely that Saudi Arabian Airlines would be expected to provide assistance as an agent of the State.

9.4 Recommendations for Operator and Aviation Authority

Airlines are an international business. As mentioned in the literature review in Chapter 4 concerning airlines and international cultures, Braithwaite (2001) acknowledged: *“It is difficult to imagine any air operation that does not involve some form of multinational collaboration, whether it is in the design, construction or maintenance of aircraft or the supply of flight planning information, air traffic services or operational crew”*. The following points are very important as recommendations:

1. Every airline should have its own family assistance programme designed according to its home or the base country where they operate. This should include considerations of:
 - Culture,
 - Religion,

- Ethical sensitivities.
2. Family assistance teams should be trained by trainers who come from the same background so they will know about the three factors above.
 3. Airlines should have methods in place for exchanging information with each other about the aforementioned three factors.
 4. Organisations such civil aviation authorities in every country should provide airlines that operate in their territory with information about the local culture, religion and ethical sensitivities.
 5. Airlines should engage employees in their stations from the same country where they operate so that these employees will speak the same language, and share the same culture, religion and ethical sensitivities.
 6. Airlines and civil aviations authorities in every country could have, in their web page, information about their populations needs according their cultures, religions and ethical sensitivities. That information could help the family assistance team in how to deliver the support.

Chapter 10

Family Support Plan

10 Family Support Plan Based on the NTSB Model

These guidelines are derived from the US Federal Family Assistance Plan for Aviation Disasters, prepared by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), Office of Transportation Disaster Assistance (2008). The following guidelines have been modified to reflect three main issues (culture, religion and ethical sensitivity) highlighted in this research work. It should be noted that the NTSB model involves exchange of information among NTSB, FBI, TDA, Red Cross and other government bodies, which may or may not be similar in different countries. Wherever possible, the role of these government bodies was assigned to the similar organisation the Middle Eastern countries, for example the role of Red Cross is attributed to the “Red Crescent” and, in the absence of a dedicate accident investigation agency, the role of NTSB was assigned to the local Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

For Middle Eastern Countries such as Saudi Arabia, the following tasks are required to be undertaken in the event of accident.

Local Civil Aviation Authority Tasks

Coordinate government assistance and serve as a liaison between the air carrier and family members.

- Provide a toll-free number and e-mail address to family members for obtaining information on the victim recovery and identification effort, accident investigation, and other concerns.
- Request a copy of the passenger manifest from the air carrier.
- Review with the air carrier the logistical needs of families, giving special consideration to security, quality of hotel rooms and facilities, and privacy for family members.
- Integrate local government officials and air carrier staff to form a Joint Family Support Operation Centre (JFSOC) to coordinate services and activities for families.

- Coordinate assistance efforts with local authorities, including the medical examiner, local law enforcement, emergency management agency, hospitals, and other emergency support personnel.
- Maintain communications with the air carrier to receive updates regarding the notification status of the victims' families.
- Conduct daily coordination meetings with the air carrier and local government representatives to review daily activities, resolve problems, and synchronise future family support operations and activities.
- Provide and coordinate family briefings both with families at the accident city and with families who remain at home.
- Discuss with the medical examiner the subject of victim identification, in particular the use of DNA analysis.
- Discuss with the medical examiner the capabilities of his or her office staff to conduct victim identification.
- At the discretion of the CAA, coordinate a visit to the accident site for family members.
- Provide information releases to the media, in coordination with CAA Office of Public Affairs, pertaining to the types of government support available to assist family members.
- Maintain contact with family members to keep them informed about the victim recovery and identification effort, accident investigation, and other accident-related concerns.
 - Inform family members of the release dates for preliminary, factual, and probable cause statements.
 - Inform family members of the date, time, and location of the public hearing, if applicable.
- Inform family members of the date, time, and location of the Board meeting, if applicable.
- Consolidate and review the After Action Report (AAR) to resolve problem areas and to update operating plans and procedures.

Air Carrier tasks

- Notify the Local Civil Aviation Authority of the accident and provide the following:
 - o Location or general vicinity of the accident
 - o Number of passengers on board
 - o Number of crew on board
 - o Number of injuries and fatalities (if known)
 - o Flight number
 - o Flight origination
 - o Flight connection points
 - o Flight's final destination
 - o Demographics of passengers (if known)
 - o Flight's designation as domestic or international
 - Name and telephone number of the carrier's representative in charge of:
 - Carrier's humanitarian response
 - Passenger manifest reconciliation
 - Family notification process
 - Name, telephone number and location of the facility designated for use as the FAC and JFSOC
- Provide a reliable publicised toll free telephone number with sufficient capacity to handle the anticipated call volume from victims' families and friends.
- Coordinate public notification of the toll-free number with various media (television, radio, Internet) emphasising the following:
 - o The number should only be used by people who have a reason to believe a family member or friend was a passenger on the accident flight.

- Initial calls to the air carrier will provide basic accident information and establish point of contact information for affected family members and friends in order to initiate humanitarian support.
- When referring to the toll-free telephone number, the following information should always be provided:
 - Name of the carrier(s) involved
 - The accident flight number(s)
 - The flight's airport of origination
 - The flight's connection point(s)
 - The flight's final destination
- Modify normal "on-hold" messages. Eliminate music, sales information and similar non-accident-related messages.
- Provide timely notification to family members and friends prior to releasing passenger names to the public.
 - The notification should be initiated through the religious leaders, police, relatives or older man in the family.
 - Request family members to designate one primary point of contact for information sharing.
 - Remember that the air carrier is under no obligation to release the names of victims if family members request.
- Airline should immediately open a Family Assistance Centre at a hotel or airport or at any other convenient location. The family assistance centre should act as a focal point for giving and receiving information to bereaved families and friends. The facility should include:
 - Reception/information desk to welcome people and verify and record their identity
 - First-aid which should be provided by both genders
 - Security to protect the family from the media and from the normal crowds

- Facility for the phones, computers, fax, mobile chargers and adapters for the victim's family members in order that they may contact their relatives etc.
 - Briefing room which should provide segregation between males and females, for example separated seating arrangement
 - Private rooms for confidential interviews
 - Catering facility for snacks/refreshments
 - Media facility such as television / radio for the news, (it should not have any music due to the religious reasons)
 - Prayer/faith rooms which should be separated for both genders and also, if appropriate, for mixed groups.
 - If desired by the families, provide access to a religious leader.
- The Family Assistance Team should consider following aspects of the cultural background of the people
 - Family assistance team should be trained in how to support families of victims.
 - Adopt and understand the need of people from other culture.
 - Following appropriate customs is very important.
 - Family assistance team should be ready to assist family.
 - The team should consist members of both the genders, as this is very important in the Middle-Eastern culture.
 - Family assistance team should consider the gender sensitivity of Muslim families.
 - Team members should be aware of the method in which they can deal with males/females of Muslim families in the Middle Eastern countries. This is discussed in detail in table 11.
- Ensure notification of family members and friends of Red Crescent care and crisis assistance available at the FAC.

- Ensure notification of family members and friends of Red Crescent family care and crisis assistance available after their return home (if applicable).
- Ensure that requests for crisis assistance are forwarded to the Red Crescent representative at the FAC.
- Provide media representatives with continuous updates regarding the following:
 - Progress of the notification process
 - The number of victims' family members notified as of a certain time
 - The number of families remaining to be notified
 - This process continues until all victims' families have been notified
- Provide the CAA, upon request, with the most current reconciled copy of the passenger manifest.
 - Each copy of the manifest should be numbered or annotated indicating the date and time so that it is distinguishable from previous copies
- Assist family members as they travel to and from the accident city by informing flight crews and airport personnel about family members aboard particular flights.
 - At departure, connecting, and arrival airports, family members should have air carrier personnel meet and assist them while on airport grounds.
 - If necessary, seek assistance from other carriers with a larger presence at the airport.
 - Assist family members as they depart the accident city and provide a contact person who will continue to be the air carrier's interface with them after they return home.

- Provide a contact person to meet family members as they arrive and accompany them at the accident city
 - This person will be responsible for assisting the family while at the accident city and should continue to be the air carrier interface with them until they return home.
 - Once the family returns home, the air carrier may decide to designate a single contact person for all family members.
 - This point of contact should be available via a toll-free phone number.
- Maintain daily contact with family members who do not travel to the accident city by providing a contact person from the air carrier until the on-site investigation has concluded.
- Designate an individual who will be the air carrier's representative to the CAA.
 - This individual will travel to various locations, such as the accident site, morgue, JFSOC and FAC with the CAA.
 - The designated individual should have the authority or ready access to those who have sufficient authority to make decisions on behalf of the air carrier.
- Establish an exclusive badge system to appropriately identify family members.
- Participate in daily coordination meetings to review daily activities, resolve problems, and synchronize future family support operations and activities at the FAC.
 - This information is helpful in planning logistical support (such as meals, lodging, and transportation) and allows for an update of current and future support operations.
- Make provisions for private areas within the hotel for medical examiner personnel to collect ante mortem information and DNA reference samples from family members.

- Provide quiet space and communications for medical examiner personnel to telephonically collect ante mortem information from family members who are not at the FAC.
 - Plan and provide for a sufficient number of rooms for crisis counselling use.
 - Be aware that crisis counselling rooms are also used as venues to inform families when positive identification has been made. By having the medical examiner located within the FAC, transportation of victims' remains and other logistical considerations can be better coordinated.
- Establish a liaison with the Red Crescent at each medical treatment facility to monitor the status of injured victims and to provide assistance to their families.
 - Develop procedures for the handling of personal effects released by the CAA if the aviation disaster is declared a criminal act.
 - Consider utilising a third party that has experience in the return of personal effects associated with aviation disasters.
 - The proper handling and management of personal effects cannot be discounted.
 - As required by law, provisions will be made for unclaimed possessions to be retained
- Consult with family members about any air carrier-sponsored monument, including any inscriptions.
 - Provide reasonable reimbursement to the Red Crescent for the services provided to the family, air carrier, and supporting personnel.
 - Provide the same support and treatment to families of non-revenue passengers or any other victim of the accident (for instance, ground fatality) as is provided for revenue passengers.
 - If the CAA conducts a public hearing or comparable proceeding at a location more than 80 miles from the accident site, ensure that a

simultaneous transmission of the proceeding is available to family members at a location open to the public at both the origin city and destination city of the accident flight.

Red Crescent

- Deploy a Red Crescent representative to serve as the functional leadership of family care and crisis intervention following an accident.
- Assign a representative to the JFSOC to coordinate Red Crescent related issues and family requests for assistance.
- Coordinate and manage the numerous organisations and personnel offering counselling, religious, and other support services to the operation. A staff processing centre, operated away from the FAC, should be created to screen, monitor, and manage personnel (employee and volunteer staff). The staff processing centre will also be responsible for developing an exclusive badge system for personnel, matching volunteer skills with organisational needs, assigning work schedules, briefing and debriefing of support staff, and planning for future activities.
 - Qualified local resources should be integrated with Red Crescent personnel for crisis and grief counselling, food services, administrative assistance, and other support services to family members and support organizations.
 - Crisis and grief counselling for family members who do not travel to the accident city should be coordinated with air carrier personnel.
- Employ an accounting system to accurately record cost data in specific cost categories for reimbursement by the air carrier.
- Assess the needs and available resources of other crisis support agencies, coordinate with them to ensure ongoing emotional support for workers during the operation, and provide debriefings before departure.

- Establish a liaison with the air carrier at each supporting medical treatment facility to monitor the status of injured victims and to provide assistance to their families.
- Coordinate with the air carrier to establish areas in the FAC for families to grieve privately.
- If deemed necessary, arrange a memorial service for any future burial of unidentified remains. (note that Muslim victims must not be cremated)
- Provide additional support to affected special needs or demographically/culturally diverse populations as deemed necessary.

10.1 Dealing with the Muslim Families

As this study is focusing on the Muslim family the three factors must be considered. The literature review (of family assistance, culture, religion and ethical sensitivity), experts' suggestion and the collected data approve the important of considering people background during the support. Therefore the following points are very important to consider when dealing with Muslim families, investigators, airport employees, other airlines, agents or police:

Shaking hands

- Muslims of the same gender usually shake hands; it is considered respectful and an appropriate way of starting a communication.
- It is disrespectful to shake hands softly or using only the ends of the fingers for Muslim people in the Middle East. Usually, to press the hand firmly shows a strong and warm welcome and care.
- Generally, shaking hands with someone of the opposite sex is not acceptable for the majority of Muslims; do not offer your hand until the other person offers theirs. Sometimes, you may meet someone who may say, "I am sorry but I do not shake hands with anyone of the opposite sex". The reason behind this is a religion matter; it is the fear of temptation or the provocation of sexual desire.

- When Muslim shake hands they say 'Alslam Alykom' (peace be upon you) and other person replies and says 'Walykom Alslam' (peace be upon you too). This is expected and it is very important that Muslims say this to other Muslims; it is almost disrespectful for a Muslim not to say it to another Muslim but it is not expected from non-Muslims.
- Muslims always use the right hand in eating, drinking or handing something to someone or for shaking hands. Never use your left hand to shake someone's hand.

 **Eye contact:**

- Making eye contact with someone of the same sex is considered respectful; it shows you are paying attention and that you care.
- Family assistance team members should avoid eye contact with someone of the opposite sex.
- It is preferable and is a form of paying attention if a family assistance team member makes eye contact with someone of the same gender.
- Arabs of the same gender may use their eyes in communication; sometimes, if you ask someone for a favour and they can do it, they point to their eye and say 'Sure'. Also, sometimes they may point their nose to say the same thing.

 **Body language:**

- The 'thumbs up' gesture means that something is all right.
- In the Arab culture, crossing your legs when sitting in front of an older person is thought to be disrespectful. Also, wherever you are sitting, do not show the bottom of your feet (shoes) when crossing your legs.

- Usually the person on your right hand side goes first when entering by a door as this is felt to be respectful.

Clothes:

- The clothes worn by employees are a sensitive issue and so wearing appropriate clothes is very important.
- Female helpers should not show their shoulders or stomach.
- It is essential for women to wear modest clothes so baggy garments should be chosen.
- Men should wear long trousers and a shirt at all times. Muslim helpers should not wear visible jewellery as this is not acceptable practice.
- In some countries in the Middle East, women cover their faces so, if proof of identity of a woman is sought, this should be done in a private room.

Food and Drink:

- Muslims are forbidden to eat pork by their religion. Also, they are forbidden to eat anything that has pork products within it. Furthermore, a Muslim will not feel comfortable if someone eats pork in their close presence (i.e. at the same table).
- Any meat that a Muslim eats should be Halal (i.e. the meat should be bled, the animal's throat having been slit by a Muslim in the accepted Islamic way, such as is kosher meat for Jews); this means that the animal has been killed according to Islamic custom. However, if a Muslim goes somewhere and Halal food is not available, he/she can eat any food at all except pork.

- Muslims eat with their right hand and they expect Muslims around them (for example, members of the family assistance team) to do the same.
- Muslims are forbidden to drink alcohol or any alcoholic product. Also, Muslims are forbidden to sell, buy, sit with or hold alcohol. Therefore, never offer a Muslim any alcohol; it is not acceptable at all.

 **Religion:**

- Muslims are followers of the religion of Islam and this is the most important matter in their life. Therefore, it is very helpful to have someone who is of the same religion to support Muslim families.
- Do not say anything negative about Islam as this would build a barrier between you and the families of victims.
- Muslims must pray five times a day. During their prayers, do not talk to them or interrupt them; also, do not walk in front of them during prayers.
- It is very important to have a prayer room for Muslims as they have to pray at very specific times.
- Women and men pray in separate room.
- Muslim face Mekah when they pray and therefore some means of indicating the direction should be available.
- With any problem regarding a dead person, the airline should contact a religious leader because Muslims feel a very strong sense of respect and trust for their religious leader.

- Muslims will accept the personal opinion and advice of a religious leader. Also, a religious leader can comfort the family of a victim by reminding them of the Prophet Mohammed and of the holy Qu'ran.
- Bringing in religious leaders to assist the families of victims alongside the family assistance team is important.

The Prayer room (Masjed):

- In the Masjed (the prayer place) never speak loudly as this is the most respected place for Muslims.
- Men or women should not enter the Masjed wearing shorts.
- Women should not wear short sleeves; they should cover their hair and wear long dresses.
- Never enter the Masjed with shoes on – leave them outside.
- Masjed or prayer room is not furnished; therefore there will be a carpet and shelves for the Qura'n.

Death:


- Females should clean or prepare a female body and males should clean or prepare males.
- The family support team should attend the ceremony; this is both very important and respectful. The more people there are at the funeral, the greater the blessing.
- The dead person should be buried in a Muslim graveyard.
- Cremation and embalming are completely forbidden.

- According to Islam, a dead person should be buried as soon as possible as this is seen to respect and honour them; thus, it is viewed as very important.
- A male family support member should not talk to females when a man is with them unless he is asked to do so. The men in the family will always be in charge of everything.
- After death, it is not acceptable to offer Muslims flowers; flowers are for life, not for death.
- Some Muslim women in Middle Eastern countries wear black clothes if there is a death; it is a sign of sadness.
- Some women may cry in a hysterical way; they may also put both hands on the top of their head which means there is a problem or disaster.
- Death is acceptable but is mostly met with strong emotions, especially from women.
- The family assistance team should attend the funeral and the prayers for the dead; they should also offer solace.

Behaviour

- Usually, an older person is responsible for taking decisions.
- For people in the Middle East, and especially for Arabs, the word 'No' does not always mean no. There are always other ways of getting something, either with the help of someone from the family or through friends' connections.
- Do not try and engage a woman in conversation unless you have been formally introduced.

- Do not talk in public to professional Arab women unless it is business related
- Never use bad language in any situation; it is unacceptable, indeed forbidden, and disrespectful.
- Music is not acceptable at all after a death; it is for happiness, not for a sad time, especially after a death. Moreover, some Muslims do not listen to music at all.
- Muslims will expect to trust a helper. Also, after a disaster, helpers should expect there to be a large number of family members around; most of them will feel they have the right to ask questions and they expect answers.
- Whether the husband, wife, brother, sister, father, mother or uncle, all family members believe they have the right to ask and give opinions. This comes from the strong relationships among family members.
- Showing generosity and respect is a good way to deal with Muslim families.
- They should be treated according to their religion; this will make them feel friendly and will build their trust.
- Males should not touch women under any circumstances; keeping a distance is very important. Furthermore, a helper should avoid any kind of sexual conversation.
- Men should not make compliments about women, (such as saying you have beautiful wife etc.); it is not acceptable at all in the Muslim culture.

Chapter  **CONCLUSIONS**

11 Conclusions

After any air disaster, the most important focus is generally the injured, victims and the families of victims as this is a humanitarian issue. The families of victims will need help and assistance in having their loved ones cared for after death. They will be looking for information concerning why the accident took place and what actually happened to their loved one. To support the families of victims, airlines must be ready and prepared, not only to provide support, but also to know how to deliver that support. Any company that delivers services needs to know the needs of their customers and ways to satisfy those needs, together with what is important and suitable for them and what is not. An airline needs to know what can be done to best reduce their pain.

The project started by conducting detailed case studies of several accidents including several US accidents which led to major changes in family assistance requirements – US Air 427, TWA 800 and Egypt air 990. There was also a rare opportunity to focus on the response to the midair collision involving Saudi Arabian Airlines and a Kazakhstan freighter in 1996, using data collected by the company. The airline was especially open in sharing details of what was a terrible event and many examples of bad (and good) experience showed the importance and the need for culturally-specific family assistance after any such disaster.

The research found that current family assistance practices in the Middle East countries generally lacked the ability to address specific needs of the victims' families in terms of their religious and cultural requirements. The work carried out here was to investigate the importance of three main factors; religion, culture and ethical sensitivity in the family assistance in the Middle East countries, particularly focusing on Muslim passengers. Saudi Arabia was chosen as the main case study with data collected from two other countries as a comparison - , United States of America (a mainly Christian country that has comprehensive legislation regarding family assistance) and Malaysia (a moderate Muslim nation). A total of 200 questionnaires were sent to each of

these countries which addressed three main elements; culture, religion and ethical sensitivity. The questions examined visiting the accident site, the importance of dealing with different genders, speed of burial, viewing the victim's body, ethical and communications sensitivities.

Interviews were also conducted with ten experts with experience of dealing with the aftermath of major air disasters to develop a better understanding of the context of the questionnaire returns. The experts were chosen carefully according to their experience and the number of accidents they were involved in dealing with. Their answers were able to better explain why some of the questionnaire responses were what they were and whether this was in accordance with what the experts' own experienced had been. Interviews were also conducted of the Muslim religious leaders from Egypt, Turkey and Saudi Arabia in order to understand the religious requirements pertaining to the death and burial of Muslims following an accident.

From the interviews and questionnaires, it was suggested that a deeper understanding of cultural, religious and ethical sensitivities would be very helpful in improving family assistance. For example from the results of the sensitivity of different genders, 54.9% of the Malaysian the 67.8% of the Saudis participants agreed to be supported by either gender but the rest others would like to be served by the same sex. On the other hand the Americans did not show this kind of sensitivity, gender mix is very common in the American society. Muslims are required to bury the body of their love one as soon as they can; this is a must for the Muslims but not for other religions. Also communications, most Muslim has a sensitivity in communications such as shaking hands with the opposite sex, eye contact and distance between genders who are not related to each other. Muslim pray five times a day, so practicing religion is a must. Family assistance has had a significantly positive effect on improving support in general for victims, the injured and their families after a disaster; the Acts of 1996 and 1997 have also improved family assistance, as clarified in the literature review. However, the family assistance that is currently provided does not acknowledge the importance of the three factors, culture, religion and

ethical sensitivities, even though these factors have a strong effect on the daily lives of people and should therefore be respected and considered.

Based on the results, it is argued that if Muslim countries in the Middle East use the current family assistance plans without modifying them, it will negatively affect the airline and the families of victims. The researcher could not find an example of published family assistance plans that actually took into consideration the importance of culture, religion or ethical sensitivities in this specific way. All of them simply stated that culture and religion are important and that attention should be paid to them.

Based on this, a modified Family Assistance Plan was developed. This plan is originally based on the NTSB Family Assistance Plan and was modified to reflect three main issues highlighted in this research work.

11.1 Recommendations for the future work

- The current research work considered the effect of culture, religion and ethical sensitivity in the Middle Eastern countries, focussing particularly on the needs of Muslims. Based on these findings, it is important to investigate how such factors would affect the family assistance in other parts of the world, particularly the non-Western countries.
- There are no clear guidelines on the factors the amount of compensation or the best way to distribute it. Whilst legal proceedings will ensue in many part of the world, initial compensation, for example to deal with immediate loss of the income earner, cost of funeral and so on, is important and best practice should be established. Also, emergency planners may need to consider the number of family members eligible for family assistance. This is particularly important in dealing with cultures with large extended families and has implications for the level of resources that are needed.

Chapter 12

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13 Appendix

13.1 Appendix A (Ethical Clearance)

13.1.1 Research Project

The research project aims to examine where the current 'best practice' for support to the families and loved ones following an aircraft accident may be improved in order to best support Muslim families in the Middle East. Several past accidents have shown that when an accident occurs, there is an important need to provide support to family members immediately, and in the longer term. This support may range from financial compensation and practical help such as recovering a body for burial, to emotional support. Airlines flying to and within the USA are mandated to provide 'family support', but the majority of the guidance material seems to be oriented towards western societies. Several key accidents involving Middle Eastern airlines have demonstrated that much of the existing family support is culturally deficient and ignores aspects of religion, culture and other ethical sensitivities. This research project aims to identify areas for improvement, specifically focusing on Muslim families in the Middle East.

13.1.2 Research Methodology

The majority of the research involved literature search, interviews with airline safety managers, and personnel from victim support organisations. Such interviews involved people who were very familiar with the topic and who generally had substantial experience in dealing with disaster victims.

To test some of the findings from this work, a questionnaire was distributed to a carefully selected sample of the general population in USA, Saudi Arabia and Malaysia. The questionnaire was designed in collaboration with Saudi Arabian airlines (the sponsor) and organisations such as the family support foundation.

13.1.3 Ethical Considerations

The subject of family support following aircraft accidents clearly has the potential to be a sensitive one so care was needed to ensure that data were collected ethically and by causing no harm to the people involved. The researcher received training from Kenyon's International in how to deal with those who had been affected by aircraft accidents before contacting any of the subjects. This was supplemented by attendance at a Family Support Foundation conference where he was able to speak to a range of experts in the field including many who had been affected by aircraft accidents. This provided an invaluable exposure to some of the difficulties that could be faced during evidence collection. The researcher dealt with potential ethical issues in the following way:

13.1.4 Sampling / recruitment

All of the managers, experts and religious leaders approached during the study received an e-mail or verbal description of the project before they agreed to participate. In this, the nature of the work was described as well as the voluntary nature of their participation. In many cases, they were recommended to the researcher by others working in the field, or they approached the researcher because of presentations made at Family Support conferences.

The questionnaire involved respondents from Malaysia, USA and Saudi Arabia which included those who had been affected by aircraft accidents. In the case of the Malaysian and USA based participants, they were approached through the Family Support community. This was for two reasons; firstly because these organisations had direct contact with people who had experienced such losses and who were willing to participate in such a study; and secondly, because they included highly skilled counsellors who could offer emotional support should anyone be affected by topics raised in the questionnaire. As the survey populations were based overseas, this was considered to be the best way for the researcher to discharge his responsibility for care of the participants.

The sample from Saudi Arabia was different, principally because cultural and religious factors make it very difficult for a researcher to approach a general group of the population, especially females that are not known to him. Through discussions with various airline staff, it was suggested that a local hospital could be a good way to access a variety of staff at different levels. Hospitals are one of the few places where males and females regularly work together without segregation and, because of the nature of their work, where staff have regular exposure to death and grief. There was also a high level of emotional support available to staff and as such, a Jeddah based hospital agreed to allow its staff to participate in the study.

13.1.5 Freedom of participation / right to withdraw

The questionnaire was anonymous and distributed via third parties (family support organisations or the hospital). This meant that only one form per person was handed out, but that respondents were able to participate voluntarily. If someone wanted feedback then they were asked to include an e-mail address. If someone did so then it was possible for them to later withdraw their data, but in practice, no-one did so.

13.1.6 Procedures for handling data

Where questionnaires were submitted with an e-mail address included, this data was kept securely on an encrypted memory stick. Feedback was provided on the aggregated data and the information will be destroyed after five years in accordance with good data protection practice.

The survey data was aggregated without personal information that would allow the respondent to be traced. Although demographical information such as age, gender and religion was collected, the anonymity afforded by the use of a third party for distributing the survey protected individuals from identification. The quality of the data received, particularly from the Saudi Arabian population gave the researcher a high degree of confidence that people had felt confident to respond truthfully.

13.1.7 Deception

There was no deception used in this study. All participants were fully briefed as to the nature of the research before any interviews or surveys took place.

13.1.8 Confidentiality

As detailed above, the questionnaire distribution process was designed to afford a high degree of confidentiality for all of the participants. Although the study related to a sensitive topic, participation was completely voluntary and individual views were treated with sensitivity.

Where interviews took place, each participant was given the opportunity for their testimony to be described as anonymous. The vast majorities were happy to be cited by their role, title or name and it was also explained to them that the final thesis would be available publicly. Where confidential data were accessed such as internal documents relating to accidents, they were done so with the express permission of the Vice President, Safety. Notes were taken and in some cases audio recordings were used. In these cases, a transcript was sent to the interviewee for verification afterwards. This was considered to be particularly important when an interview took place in Arabic and notes were then translated to English. In these cases, a second reader was used to verify the translation of phrases.

13.1.9 Protection from harm

There were no invasive procedures or experiments as part of this research. All participants were approached with sensitivity and generally through a third-party organization such as the airline (for staff), hospital (for the Saudi Arabian sample) or a family support groups. All participants were made aware of the nature of the research and the provision of additional support, if needed, was offered through the respective organisations, all of which are experienced in dealing with grief following loss. Indeed, these organisations were best placed to ensure that those volunteering to participate in the research were at low risk

of any additional psychological harm and to identify any need for additional support as a result of participating in the questionnaire.

13.2 APPENDIX B



School of Engineering

Department of Air Transport

Family Support Plan Framework Survey

Population Questionnaire



Voluntary

Your participation in this questionnaire is completely voluntary. The goal is to achieve maximum participation to ensure validity in the results.

Confidentiality

Your responses to this questionnaire are confidential. There are no identifying questions in the survey so once it is completed, it is not possible to identify who filled in the questionnaire.

Purpose

The aim of this research is to improve the quality of family support planning after an aircraft accident. It is also to investigate the current relationships between culture, religion and ethical sensitivities in the Middle Eastern countries, in particular in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. By understanding the relationships from this survey outcome, we believe that the current family support plan will be more appropriate and applicable to Middle East countries.

What is a family support plan?

It is the help and support that is provided by airline companies to the families of victims after any accident. This support includes condolence, sympathy, financial support and treating the victim and their belongings with dignity and so on.

Survey Info

If you have any questions about the survey, please contact: Alhosain Alahdal at + 44 (0) 798 802 7409 or email a.alahdal@cranfield.ac.uk Also you can write to Alhosain Alahdal, Department of Air Transport Building 115, Cranfield University, Bedfordshire, MK43 0AL, England.

Results & Action plan

Shortly after all the questionnaires have been analysed, the results of the survey will be shared with you, along with any plans of action. To ensure you receive your copy of the results, please provide your email in the following lines:

The closing date to respond to the questionnaire is <Date>.

Please be sure to respond before then.

Your participation is very much appreciated.

The purpose of this section (Question 1 to Question 8) is to collect information about your background;

1. What is your gender? (please mark one)

Male

Female

2. What is your age category? (please mark one)

18-28

29-39

40-49

50 and above

3. What is your country of birth? (please state)

USA

Malaysia

Saudi Arabia

Other

4. What is your nationality? (please state)

5. Would you please list all the countries you have lived in for more than three months?

6. What is your highest level of education? (please mark **one** of the following options)

Elementary school

High school

Bachelor's degree

Master's degree

PhD

7. Which languages do you speak fluently? (please mark **all** that apply)

Arabic

English

French

Other (please state)

8. What is your religion? (please mark **one** of the following options)

Muslim

Christian

Jewish

Other (please state)

None

I do not wish to say

The purpose of this section (Question 9 to Question 25) is to collect information about your cultural, religious and ethical beliefs, also what kind of service do you think would be suitable for you if an airline accident occurred;

9. Please indicate to what level you agree or disagree with the following statements: (please mark **one** response for each item)

- Practising religion is very important?
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Unsure Agree Strongly Agree
 - A religious leader / person is capable of helping or supporting the family of a victim to overcome the pain they pass through.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Unsure Agree Strongly Agree
 - In any community, places of worship play an important supportive role.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Unsure Agree Strongly Agree
 - The family support staff should consider religious and ethical principles in interacting and dealing with families following an accident.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Unsure Agree Strongly Agree
10. The airline should be blamed if an accident occurs.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Unsure Agree Strongly Agree
11. The employees of the family support team should attend the funeral ceremonies.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Unsure Agree Strongly Agree
12. If an aviation accident occurred, would you prefer to be supported by a male or female member of the family support team?
- Male
 - Female
 - Either
 - Not sure

13. Belongings are very important for the family of victims.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Unsure Agree Strongly Agree

14. Which of the following would NOT be acceptable in your society when dealing with someone of a different gender? (Please mark **all** that apply)

- Shaking hands
 - Making eye contact
 - Sharing the same working area (office/room)
 - All of the above are acceptable
 - All of the above are not acceptable
 - Other (please state)
-

15. From where do you get guidance on ethical sensitivities in your society? (please mark one of the following options)

- Culture
 - Religion
 - Culture and religion
 - Tradition
 - Other (Please state)
-

16. Following a fatal accident, is it important for families to be able to see the victim's body? (please mark one of the following)

Not important at all

Not important

Undecided

Important

Very Important

17. The family of a victim should be allowed to visit the accident site. (please mark one of the following)

Strongly Disagree Disagree Unsure Agree Strongly Agree

18. How important is a fast burial of a victim's body? (please mark one of the options)

Not important at all

Not important

Undecided

Important

Very Important

19. In the event of a fatal accident, what do you think would be the best way to be informed about the death of a relative? (please write your comments below)

20. If a fatal accident occurred to a flight and one of your relatives was on the aircraft, how fast would you prefer the airline to confirm to you the name of the victim? (please mark one of the following options)

- Within 3 hours and 30% accuracy
- Within 12 hours and 40 accuracy
- Within 24 hours and 70% accuracy
- Within 48 hours and 100% accuracy
- Other

21. How important do you think it is to bring the body home? (please mark one of the following options)

- Not important at all
- Not important
- Undecided
- Important
- Very important

22. Would you be prepared to share the same conference room with someone of the opposite gender in the family support centre? (Please mark one of the following options)

- Strongly Disagree** **Disagree** **Unsure** **Agree** **Strongly Agree**

23. Which of the following would be acceptable for distribution in the family support centre? (Please mark one of each option)

1. Flowers Yes No

2. Holy book Yes No

3. Religious tapes Yes No

5. Rug for prayer Yes No

6. Others (please state)

24. Please indicate to what level you agree or disagree with the following statements: (please mark one response for each item)

- What is right or wrong depends on the your culture and religion.
 Strongly Disagree **Disagree** **Unsure** **Agree** **Strongly Agree**
- Ignoring your culture when supporting you if an accident occurred would affect you.
 Strongly Disagree **Disagree** **Unsure** **Agree** **Strongly Agree**
- Ignoring your religion when supporting you if an accident occurred would affect you.
 Strongly Disagree **Disagree** **Unsure** **Agree** **Strongly Agree**
- The right thing to do for the family of a victim is whatever is best for them.
 Strongly Disagree **Disagree** **Unsure** **Agree** **Strongly Agree**
- Clothes worn by employees of the family assistance centre would affect your communication and attitude toward them? (Please mark one of the following)
 Strongly Disagree **Disagree** **Unsure** **Agree** **Strongly Agree**

25. If an accident occurred involving one of your relatives and the airline could not identify the body or they could only identify some of the body, what would you think the airline should do?

- Bury all the victims' bodies in one area.
- Give whatever they could identify.
- I am not sure.
- Others (Please state, if you have any comment).

Please feel free to write any suggestions or comments or anything that you think is important regarding this subject that has not been covered in the questionnaire.

13.3 APPENDIX C

School of Engineering

Department of Air Transport

Family Support Plan Framework Survey

Experts' Questionnaire



Aim of research

The aim of this research is to improve the quality of family support planning after an aircraft accident as well as to investigate the current relationships between culture, religion and ethical sensitivities in Middle Eastern Countries, in particular in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. By understanding the relationships from this survey's outcome, we believe that the current family support plan will be more appropriate and applicable to the Middle Eastern countries.

Your response will add greater validity and information to this research. It is important to have the opinion of experts who know this field and practice within it in real accidents.

Survey Info

If you have any questions about the survey please contact: Alhosain Alahdal at + 44 (0) 798 802 7409 or email a.alahdal@cranfield.ac.uk Also you can write to Alhosain Alahdal, Department of Air Transport Building 115, Cranfield University, Bedfordshire, MK43 0AL, England

Results & Action plan

If you would like to receive the results of the survey, and to ensure you receive your copy of the results, please provide your email address in the following lines.

The closing date to respond to the questionnaire is <Date>. Please be sure to respond before then. Your participation is appreciated.

Name:

Job title:

Number of years working:

How many accidents have you supported?

3. What are the influences of culture, religion and ethical sensitivities on family support?

4. From your experience, would you please share with us some of the stories regarding culture and religion that have had an impact on supporting the families of victims?