

## **AN OPERATIONAL SHARIAH COMPLIANT HOTEL REQUIREMENTS: MALAYSIA EXPERIENCE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Shariah compliant hotel is a new lucrative products in Malaysia as part of halal industry. There are about 5,520 hotels in Malaysia and regretfully only 10% are complying with Shariah requirements. The demand for Shariah Compliant Hotel (SCH) is increasing due to the increased in Middle-Eastern tourists and the criteria for hotel room is highly sought. There are few standards been developed on Shariah compliant hotel in this country. This study will identify the criteria of Shariah compliance in hotel room provision through survey and observation methods. The methodology used on 8 SCH hotels to assess it room facilities in meeting Shariah requirements. A sample of 40 questionnaires was distributed to the hotel guests to identify Muslim guest needs based on Maslow hierarchy of needs. All data were collated and analysed through content analysis and descriptive analysis using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to generate results. The results were synchronized with Islamic Quality Standard (IQS) and MFHS Standard for hotels to be embedded with the ultimate objective of Shariah (Maqasid Shariah). The findings show that about 33 aspects of hotel room being surveyed are complying with Shariah requirements. About 15 of the criteria meeting the Muslim guest needs. Shariah compliant hotel criteria based on guestroom facilities have accommodate hotel operators to apply the criteria in meeting the potential users in the hotel in Malaysia.

**Keyword:** *Shariah Compliant Hotel, MFHS, IQS, Tourist, Facilities*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Malaysia is a multiracial country comprises with 29.7 million populations comprising of 60% Muslims where Islam is the official religion of the country (The Malaysia Economy, 2013; Islamic Tourism Centre, 2015). Malaysia is gearing towards becoming the world's halal hub in products and services industry recognized globally, especially in halal food industry, manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, halal packaging and other activities (Islamic Tourism Centre, 2015; Samori et al., 2013) through issuance of halal certificate by the Research Centre for Islamic Affairs Division under Prime Minister's Department since 1974 (Islamic Tourism Centre, 2015). The Malaysia Department of Islamic Development (JAKIM) as an organization that provides the world's first halal certificate which monitor and regulate the halal industry as encompassed in the Malaysia's Trade Description Act, 2011 (ibid). In 2000, the first halal standard was released and Malaysia became the pioneer for the halal assurance system document. The halal standard boost the successful growth of halal industry in the world with global market value estimated of USD2.30 trillion (ibid). Among the 10 Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) countries, Malaysia was ranked top as halal friendly holiday destination based on facilities and services offered to Muslim tourists in terms of halal food and facilities for Muslim travelers at hotel and airport (Halal Focus, 2012; Crescent Rating, 2015).

The Shariah compliant hotel in Malaysia is progressively being developed through certification by JAKIM with the introduction of halal kitchen in the hotel (Samori et al., 2013). Currently, there are about 5,514 hotels of various categories supplying about 347,381 rooms of different types in Malaysia and only about 10% are Shariah compliant hotel. Table 1.0 shows the distribution of Hotels and Rooms in Malaysia.

**Table 1 : Number of Hotels and Rooms in Malaysia**

Year	No. of Hotels	No. of Rooms
2011	2,707	193,340
2012	2,724	195,445
2013	3,094	209,527
2014	4,072	262,021
2015	4,799	304,721
2016	5,514	347,381

Source: (Tourism Malaysia, 2017)

The number of tourist arrivals in 2016 is about 27.4 million with a receipts of RM72 billion and is one of the top 10 tourist destinations for OIC countries (Tourism Malaysia, 2017). Among others, tourists from Saudi Arabia, UAE and Oman recorded as high spender tourists spending about RM6,000 - RM8,000 per day as compared to tourists from Australia or United Kingdom with an average spending of RM4,000 per day. Most of these expenses were on accommodation (15.4%), and food and beverages (17.7%), contributed about RM8.7 billion (Malaysia Profile, 2015).

Hotels with halal kitchen are highly demand by middle-eastern tourists with provision of prayer room in the hotel. The growth of halal kitchen concept in the hotel enhanced the operation towards fully Shariah compliant as shown by De Palma hotel, Ampang initiated by its General Manager (GM) of De Palma, Datuk Mohd. Ilyas Zainul Abidin (Abdullah Bogas Kuna, 2013; Biztel news, 2013). According to its GM, De Palma hotel has started this new concept for Muslim travelers worldwide. Currently, there are 358 hotels in Malaysia with certified halal logo for their kitchen (JAKIM, 2016) and on the increased as part of the tourism products and services.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Shariah compliant hotel represents about 10% of the world tourism market (Gulf Daily News, 2012) and it is an innovative tourism product which is yet to be developed in Malaysia and other OIC countries. Shamim (2009) defined Shariah Compliant hotel as a hotel served services and financing the hotel completely accordance to Shariah principles inclusive of halal food & beverages, health, environment and safety to all hotel guests. According to Wan Sahida et.al (2011) & Samori et.al (2013), Shariah compliant hotel is not confined to halal foods and beverages but included hotel operations that applying Shariah principles. In general, Shariah compliant hotel is the hotel that provides services, facilities, financial and operations in accordance to Shariah principles.

Few authors and researchers also suggested Shariah compliant hotel guidelines and attributes in their promotional pamphlets as propagated by Din (Islamic Tourism Review, 1982). These includes prayer mat, prayer beads, qiblat direction, separate utensils for Muslim guests, produced marriage identification on check-in, provision qur'an in hotel room and prohibition of illicit drugs and alcoholic drink. Hashim et. al (2006) stressed that additional information on hotel website such as hotel vicinity to mosque or surau, and hotel's restaurant serving of halal food and beverages. Rosenberg and Choufany (2009) highlighted the requirements for Shariah compliant hotel should comply with three main aspects such as operations, designs and interiors, and financial systems. In terms of operations the criteria comprises of compartmentalizing the Muslim housekeeping staff according to sex where single male floor to be handled by male staff and single female floor by female staff, channeling decent television show, qur'an and prayer mat to be provided in the hotel room. Stephenson et. al (2010) suggested the interior design of guest rooms reflecting Islamic art and culture and adhered to Islamic financial management, such as contribution of alms or zakat. Henderson (2010) reiterated the Shariah compliant hotel attributes on food and beverages, facilities, staff and operation as shown in table 2.

Department	Attributes
Food & Beverages	No alcoholic beverages Halal Food & beverages Kitchen & Restaurant always in clean condition
Facilities	Segregation facilities by gender Ablution tap in bathroom Holy Qur'an Prayer mate Qiblat direction Bidets in bathroom Bed & toilet should not facing qiblat Prayer rooms
Staff	Muslim staff Conservative dress code
Operation	Dress code for hotel guest Appropriate entertainment Interior designs (No human depict form)

Source: (Henderson, 2010 and Rosenberg & Choufany, 2009)

According to Mohd Fadil Mohd Yusof et.al (2013) some guidelines for Shariah compliant hotel must complied in terms of prayer room size that could accommodate congregation prayer, Islamic staff dress code to cover aurat, prayer schedule in the guest room, pipe qur'an recitation and nasyid in the hotel, provide training on Islamic code of ethic to staff and availability of halal products shop. It is pertinent to provide a comfortable space and facilities for Muslim guests to pray at the hotel who are away from home despite of no written rules or classifications on Shariah Compliant hotel (Che Ahmat et.al, 2012). However, according to President of Malaysian Association of Hotels, Dato' Ilyas Bin Zainol Abidin (2013), "There are general non-bidding guidelines but no clear cut standards and criteria for the services of halal hotel".

A private initiative organization, Universal Crescent Standard Center (UCSC) took the initiative to formulate Islamic Quality Standard (IQS) on hotel in substitution to the conventional star rating (Othman et. al, 2012). Its objective is to measure and classify the quality level of the hotel in complying with Islamic principles in OIC countries. Basically, according to IQS there are 5 measuring factors for the hotel to comply with Islamic principles, such as the quality of physical facilities, the quality of services, halal foods, Muslim prayer facilities and hotel operation. IQS also identified 16 aspects for guest bedroom as shown in Table 2.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Aspect</b>
General quality of Room	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Room is provided with key or key card</li> <li>2. Basic furniture</li> <li>3. Good flooring</li> <li>4. Nice décor portray Islamic features</li> <li>5. Qiblat signage</li> <li>6. Prayer mat</li> <li>7. Prayer schedule in all rooms</li> <li>8. Bedroom space is convenient with minimum size of room is 11.5 sq. m size and 2.</li> <li>9. Minimum bed size for single (190cms x 90cms = 6ft 3ins x 3ft) and double (190cms x 137cms = 6ft 3ins x 4ft 6ins).</li> <li>10. Two sheets of blankets, bedspread and duvet with cover, feather duvets and pillows are used.</li> <li>11. Good lighting.</li> <li>12. Curtain size with large enough of width and height to enhance privacy.</li> <li>13. At least one full-length mirror.</li> <li>14. Basic tea or coffee-making facilities with halal ingredients.</li> <li>15. Television with remote control and radio with basic channels are available.</li> <li>16. A fixed telephone is provided in every room with hotel and room number is displayed on the phone.</li> </ol>

Source: (Othman et.al, 2012)

A new standard MS2610:2015 was introduced in 2015 known as Muslim Friendly Hospitality Services (MFHS) launched by Islamic Tourism Sector (Islamic Tourism Centre Malaysia, 2015; Malaysian Standard, 2015). MFHS standard covers three main components of Islamic supply chain including accommodation premise, tour packages and tourist guide. There are 5 main aspects required for accommodation premises which comprised of guest room, food & beverages, prayer room, bathroom and recreational facilities. It was found out that there are 7 requirements that should be provided by the hotel operators as illustrated in Table 3.

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Requirements</b>
Room Service	<p>Should be provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cleanliness of the room</li> <li>Qiblat direction</li> <li>Necessary size of room for pray</li> <li>The bathroom is equipped with bidet, water tap and sink</li> <li>Bathroom is always clean</li> <li>Halal Toiletries</li> <li>No alcoholic beverages in refrigerator</li> </ul> <p>Good to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prayer mat</li> <li>Prayer veil is provided on request</li> <li>Prayer schedule</li> <li>A copy of Al-Qur'an with translation</li> </ul>

Source: (Malaysian Standard, 2015)

Table 3 above shows recommended requirement of MFHS for hotel to comply by the hotel operators and potential users. Among other things the IQS identified the specifications in terms of minimum room size (11.5 sq. m), height (2.5m), and bed size (190cms x 90cms to 6ft. 3ins. x 3ft.).

## METHODOLOGY

This study applied both primary and secondary collection. The secondary source of information derived from Al-quran, hadith, articles, journals, proceedings, books and government or Non-Government documents. The primary data was collected by conducting quantitative survey on guests, qualitative interview with hotel management and observation methods. A sample of SCH hotels were engaged to assess it room facilities in complying with Shariah requirements. The selection on SCH hotels was made based on the following criteria:

1. Hotel was certified by Islamic Institutions such as Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM)
2. Hotel was certified by Islamic Quality Standard (IQS)
3. Hotel owned by Religious State Department such as Jabatan Agama Islam Negeri Sembilan (JAINS), Jabatan Waqaf, Zakat & Haji (JAWHAR) and Tabung Haji.

The SCH hotels which met the criteria are listed in Table 5 below:

No.	Hotel	Location	Number of Rooms	Star Rating
	De Palma Hotel Ampang (DPA)	Jalan Ampang, Selangor	204	3
	De Palma Hotel Shah Alam (DPSA)	Seksyen 19, Shah Alam, Selangor	115	2
	Grand Blue Wave Hotel Shah Alam	Seksyen 14, Shah Alam, Selangor	341	5
	Tabung Haji Hotel Kelana Jaya (THH)	Jalan ss6/1, Petaling Jaya, Selangor	77	1
	Putra Hotel Kuala Lumpur (PH)	Jalan Tun Razak, Kuala Lumpur	103	3
	Putra Hotel Kuala Lumpur (PH)	Port Dickson, Negeri Sembilan	85	3
	Pantai Puteri Hotel (PPH)	Mukim Tanjung Kling, Malacca	87	3
	Pantai Puteri Hotel (PPH)	Jalan Convent, Taiping, Perak	45	3

Source: (De Palma hotel website, 2014; Grand Blue Wave hotel website, 2014, Tabung Haji Hotel website, 2014; Klana Beach Resort hotel website, 2014 and Jabatan Waqaf, Zakat & Haji website, 2014)

The distribution of 8 SCH hotels are in Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Malacca and Perak and only two hotels received IQS Standard Award, DPA and GBW. This study used non-probability sampling technique which known as convenient sampling. The respondents were selected among their group who stayed at least one night at the hotels. A sample of 5 respondents were selected at each hotels and managed to secure about 40 respondents to answer the questionnaires.

## ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

The data were collated and analyzed through content analysis and descriptive analysis using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to generate results. There are 31 aspects of the room facilities observed in this study based on IQS and MFHS standards. Likert Scales was applied to rate the aspects on 5 scales as shown in Table 6.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Not Acceptable	Not Acceptable	Satisfactory	Acceptable	Strongly Acceptable

Source: (Bertram, D., 2007)

The findings on the observation on hotel room facilities are illustrated in Table 7 below. Table 7 shows the assessment outcomes on the hotel room facilities at 8 selected SCH hotels. About 70% of SWH complying with the elements as required by Shariah while the DPSA has the lowest percentage (48.0%). Most of the hotels received the highest score of 5 for the aspect on decoration not resemble living creatures. Pertaining to the provision of halalan & thoiyibban toiletries, almost all the 8 SCH hotels have the lowest score of 1. Overall, from the observation findings shows that all hotels provided good provision of guest's privacy and room cleanliness.

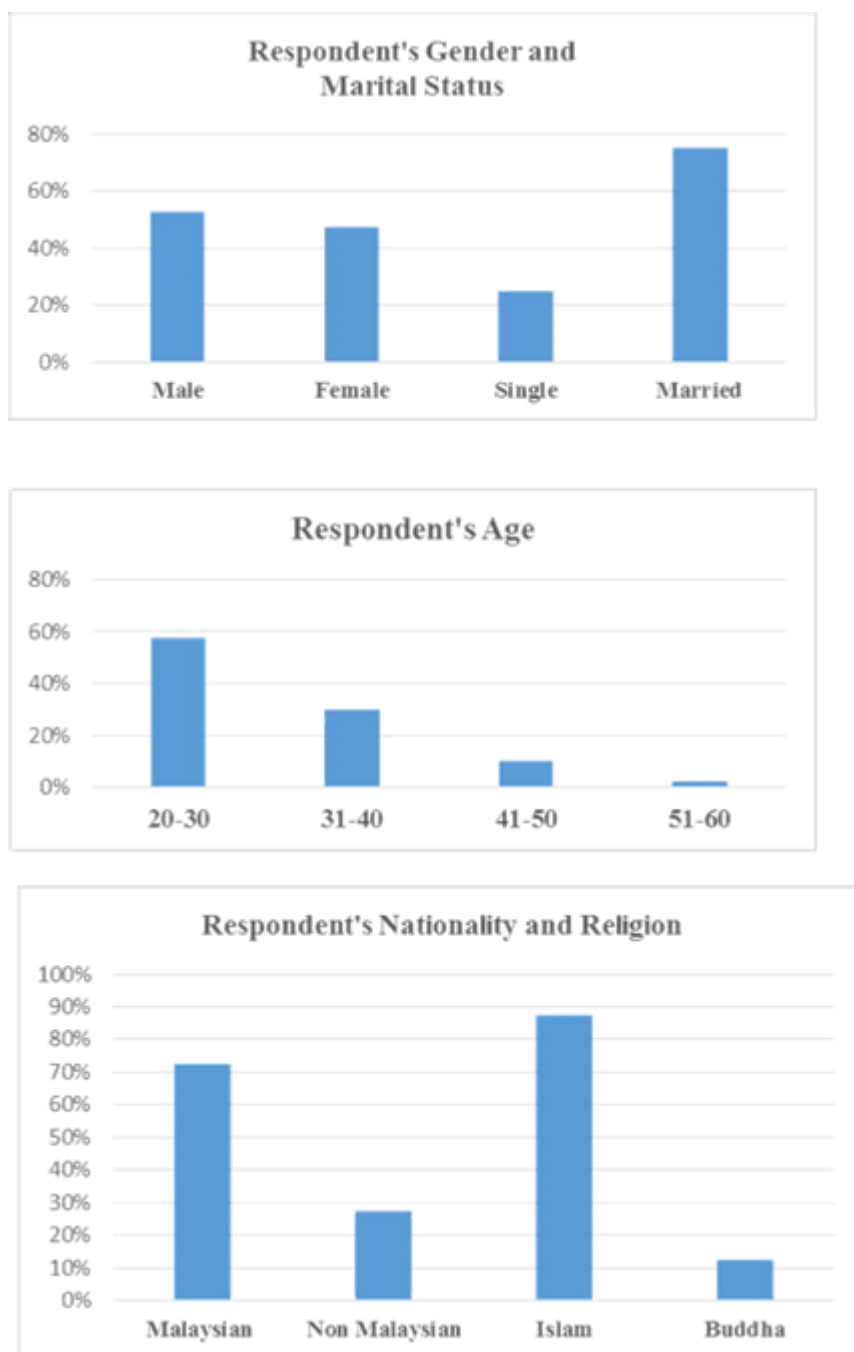
About 40 questionnaires were distributed to the hotel guests at 8 SCH hotels. The distribution patterns of the demographic profile of the respondent is shown in Figure 1 below.

No.	Observed Aspects	DPA	DPSA	GBW	THH	PH	KBR	PPH	SWH
1.	The position of door is not facing qiblat.	2	5	5	5	4	3	4	1
2.	Curtains provide total privacy to occupants.	5	4	5	4	5	5	5	5
3.	Room is quiet and calm.	3	3	4	3	2	3	3	5
4.	Good air ventilation.	2	3	4	3	3	3	4	5
5.	Room temperature is comfortable.	3	3	5	4	4	4	5	5
6.	Minimum standard of room size is 11.5sq.m and ceiling height of room not less than 2.5m height	2	2	5	2	3	2	4	5
7.	Good room circulation (space).	3	1	4	2	3	2	3	4
8.	Provision of prayer space in room.	3	2	3	3	3	2	4	4
9.	The bed is not blocking the qiblat direction.	3	1	5	2	4	2	1	5
10.	Provision of seats in the room for recitation.	5	2	5	3	4	5	2	3
11.	Separation of bathroom & toilet.	5	1	3	3	2	3	3	4
12.	Provision of Halalan & Thoiyibban toiletries.	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1
13.	Orientation of toilet bowls not against qiblat.	5	4	5	5	4	5	3	5
14.	Bathroom cater bandi for woman.	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
15.	Provision of bathroom	1	1	4	5	1	4	1	1

	slippers.								
16	Provision of ablution tab in bathroom (with necessary height).	5	1	1	1	5	1	5	3
17	Appearance of Arabesque/ Calligraphy arts in the room.	1	1	1	2	1	3	1	1
18	Decoration not resemble creatures.	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5
19	Provision of free wifi- High speed internet access	4	1	1	4	4	4	4	3
20	Variety of TV channels provided.	2	2	4	2	2	3	2	3
21	Qiblat direction signage in the rooms.	4	3	4	5	4	4	2	4
22	Provision of Halalan & Thoiyibban F&B.	3	4	4	3	4	4	3	2
23	Provision of waste-bin in room & bathroom.	5	5	5	1	5	5	5	5
24	Call for prayer (azan) is broadcast in the room	2	1	2	4	1	1	1	2
25	Good lighting for readings.	5	2	5	1	2	4	2	4
26	Availability of safety box in the room.	4	1	4	1	1	5	1	1
27	Provision for Muslim to conduct prayer (Prayer mat, prayer veils, Al-Qur'an with translation etc.)	4	3	1	3	3	3	2	4
28	Provision of prayer information (prayer time-table)	5	5	3	1	1	3	1	3
29	Cleanliness of room.	3	2	4	3	4	5	4	4
30	Room is nice and tidy.	3	2	4	3	4	5	4	5
31	Bed linen is changed daily.	3	3	4	2	4	4	3	5
	Total: 155	102	74	107	90	94	100	90	108
	(%)	(66.0)	(48.0)	(69.0)	(58.0)	(61.0)	(65.0)	(58.0)	(70.0)

**Table 7: Aspects of Hotel Room Facilities**

Source: (Fieldwork, 2015)



**Figure 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents**

Source: (Fieldwork, 2015)

Table 6 above illustrates the demographic profile of the respondents from hotel guests. From 40 selected hotel guests about 75% are Malaysian and 35% are foreign guests, of which about 13% were non-Muslim. The results shows that most of the respondents were young married couple aged between 21-30 years old.

About 65% of the respondents stayed for more than 2 nights and only 5% stayed more than 4 nights. Most of SCH hotels provided the following aspects as required by Muslim guests as shown in Table 8 below.



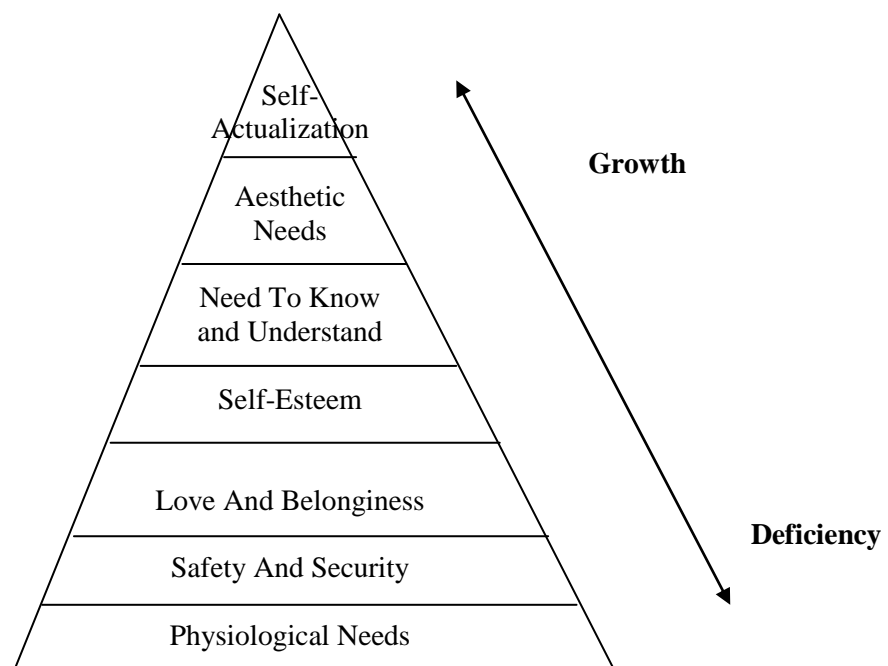
**Table 8: Aspect of Room Facilities meeting Guest Needs**

No.	Aspect of Room Facilities
1.	Praying spaces
2.	Praying amenities such as prayer mat, prayer schedule, prayer veil, <i>kain pelikat</i> and <i>Al-Qur'an</i>
3.	prayer direction that is easily noticeable
4.	Call for prayer ( <i>azan</i> ) is broadcasts in the room
5.	Variety of Tv channels provided
6.	Provision of ablution tab in bathroom (with necessary height)
7.	Bathroom which cater <i>bandi</i> for women
8.	Provision of waste-bin in room & bathroom
9.	Provision of free wifi
10.	Provision of <i>Halalan &amp; Thoiyibban</i> coffee-making
11.	Provision of <i>Halalan &amp; Thoiyibban</i> toiletries
12.	Provision of bathroom slippers
13.	Provision of seats in the room for recitation
14.	Availability of safety box in the room

Source: (Fieldwork, 2015)

Table 8 demonstrates the types of room facilities catered for Muslim guest needs. There are 15 types of room facilities which were identified in meeting Muslim guest needs as propagated by DPA, PPH and KBR hotels. These facilities have to make available in the hotels such as provision of bathroom with *bandi* for Middle-Eastern guests and *kain sarung* and prayer veil (*telekung*) for South East Asean guests. It can be concluded that the basic Muslim tourist needs are available at all hotels.

According to Maslow Theory needs satisfaction for guests at the hotel covers several levels of needs (deficiency needs) as depicted in Figure 1.0. The need varies from physiological to Self-Actualization in deriving the satisfaction of stay in the hotel. Among others the study found out that large proportion of hotel guest needs for safety and security during their stay. Some of the hotel guests who choose to stay 8 SCH hotels opt for Self-Actualization as provided under Shariah compliant.



**Figure 2: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs on Hotel Guests**

The basic needs of individual hotel guest varies from physiological needs, Safety and security, love and belongingness, Self-Esteem, need to know and understand, Aesthetic needs and self-Actualization. This profile of needs according to Maslow theory can be implemented in the design of hotel in compliance to Shariah requirements in attracting Muslim guests in particular and Non-Muslim in general.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study based on 8 selected SCH hotels shows that 31 aspects being observed met the Muslim guest needs in complying with Shariah requirements. The application of the criteria could accommodate in the planning and design of hotel rooms to meet the potential users in Malaysia. The findings help the future hotel developers to attract more guests from OIC countries to make Malaysia as a preferred destination.

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