

MEASUREMENT OF SHARIAH-COMPLIANT HOTEL: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Malaysia as one of the Muslim countries has set an exemplary standard of practice (SOP) for shariah-compliant businesses that has been recognized worldwide. Although discourse on the concept of halal practices in tourism and hospitality is proliferating, however evidence on the implementation of Shariah compliant practice for tourist accommodation sector remain scarce. Therefore, this study aims to present Shariah compliant measurement for hotels to apply Shariah compliant. Related document from previous studies were analysed to acquire the key attributes of Shariah compliant hotel (SCH) implementation. The findings indicated that the current scope of SCH practices include the areas of operations, design and interiors, and financial. In addition, a new concept for SCH has been introduced to complement the existing practices. The implications of this study were discussed from both academic and industry perspectives. This

study enriches the existing knowledge on Shariah compliant concept specifically to tourist accommodation sector.

Keywords: shariah compliant hotel, halal, Muslim friendly, tourism and hospitality management, tourist accommodation

INTRODUCTION

Malaysia is a well-known melting-pot country in Southeast Asia. The country enacted Islam as the official religion with a majority of the Muslim population amounted 20.6 million, followed by other religions such as Christian (2.9 million), Buddhist (6.1 million), Hindus (2.0 million) and Others (860 thousand) (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2022). Malaysia also a worldwide renowned tourism destination for its mesmerising local lifestyle, cuisines, cultural diversity, history, tropical monsoon climate, islands and beaches, shopping, entertainments, and complex tropical rainforest ecosystems.

As a Muslim country, Malaysia demonstrates a promising Muslim tourists market as it contributed to 5.3 million international tourists with an expenditure of RM16.72 billion in 2019 (Islamic Tourism Centre, 2022). In addition, Malaysia has remained its position globally as the top travel destination for Muslims since the Index's debut in 2015 (Crescent Rating, 2022). Middle East tourists are among the promising tourist market for Muslim countries, including Malaysia. In that regard, the government of Malaysia proactively promoting the country as an Islamic tourism destination.

In relation to the government initiative to establish the image of Malaysia as a Muslim-friendly tourism destination, various guidelines and policy has been introduced to comply the religion obligations. For instances, halal certifications for food and beverage service, and prayer facility at public spaces and buildings. However, other elements of tourism offerings yet explicitly specified, especially for tourist accommodation sector. Thus, this study intended to outline the attributes of SCH based on the existing evidence and to propose other SCH dimension currently emerge into practice in Muslim-friendly hotels.

This study initiated ground-breaking investigation by providing a depiction of the concept of Shariah compliant application at tourist accommodations, specifically hotels to enhance knowledge as the references to the hotel operators targeting Muslim tourists market.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Islamic Lifestyle

The Islamic lifestyle can be defined as a comprehensive life of individuals beliefs and degrees of faith, life priorities, thoughts, beliefs, principles, and values for human life (Erol, 2021). The religion of Islam in Arabic is al-Din or way of life. Islam provides guidelines in every aspect of life for Muslim. Thus, any actions

performed is considered to be virtuous as long as it is in accordance with the law of Islam and does not harm or causes damage to himself or others (Akhir, 2010). As regard to that, Muslim lifestyles based on the pillars of Islam and pillars of faith (Rusydia et al., 2021). For instances, Muslim are obligated to pray five times in a day and permitted to consume only halal food in their daily basis. Some studies have found a significant relationship between consumer demographics, halal food attitudes and religious lifestyles and the preferences for halal certified products (Özdemir & Yayli, 2014; Erdem et al., 2015).

Islamic law includes the aspects of faith, practice and laws relating to the spiritual and the physical and all aspects of life in the world and Hereafter for the welfare of human life (Amir Abdullah et al., 2020). As mentioned, Muslim should not do any action that may or could cause damage to himself or others. Due to that, Muslim must take care of their lifestyle, thus, their consumption and production preferences must be halal. The consumption attitudes also influence Muslim travellers' intention to consume Halal food (Hanafiah & Hamdan, 2020). Therefore, products and services used by Muslim should be shaped in line the belief of Islam.

Islamic Tourism

The religion of Islam encourages activities of *tafakhur fi qalqi Allah* (Akhir, 2010). Its evidence in the Quran where Allah SWT motives individuals to travel to seek for understanding of the religion and the Power of Allah. Thus, the act of contemplation (tafakhur) can be carried out while travelling. Contemplation is a practice that satisfies a person's spiritual needs by linking the mind with the heart (Thomas & Ibrahim, 2022). It is the act to reflect, think and observe the creation of Allah SWT. However, it must be ensured the touristic activities in compliance with the Islamic laws (Boğan & Sarıışık, 2019). Neither travels for entertainment nor for rest, Muslim should have Islamic tourism activities to ensure blessing from Allah SWT.

Since Muslims have routines that need to be carried out every day such as five times prayer, it may be challenging for them to travel because it is an obligation that cannot be abandoned. Though, Islam is a universal religion that would not burden its creation beyond his ability. It was stated in the Quran: "Allah does not burden anyone but beyond his capacity" (al-Baqarah, 2:286). Therefore, Islam has given the excuse (rukhsah) for the acts of worshiping such as prayer and fasting in the month of Ramadhan. Tourism also has contributed to the economic development and it helps the local community to generate income by doing tourism businesses (Jaafar et al., 2020).

The religion of Islam has put few philosophies and procedures of travelling that based on the Quran and Sunnah. However, to ensure the tourism in compliance with the Islamic philosophy, the needs of Muslim must be observed. For instances, provision of prayer spaces or room for Muslim to perform obligatory prayers and halal certified food restaurant. There are numerous benefits from tourism for both Muslim travellers and tourism providers can gain from it. Thus, in order to attracts Muslim travellers, the tourism products offered

should be corresponding to the Islamic rulings which the provision of facilities could covered their needs as a Muslim.

Muslim Tourist Needs During Travels

Muslim travellers obliged to their religious responsibilities while travelling. Hence, to satisfy Muslim tourists' need, service providers should cater to their demands based on their needs as a Muslim. CrescentRating (2019) has classified the needs of Muslim into three categories. Table 1 demonstrates the Muslim tourists' needs while travelling.

Table 1: The Muslim tourists' needs.

Categories	Requirements	Importance
Need to have	Halal food	Assurance for consumption
	Prayer facilities	To perform obligatory prayers
	Water-friendly washroom	To take cleansing ritual before prayers
	No Islamophobia	Muslim safety and security
Good to have	Ramadhan services	To accommodate special needs during Ramadhan (e.g., sahur and iftar)
	Social causes	Social justice
	Local Muslim experience	Muslim identity and heritage Connection
Nice to have	Recreational space with privacy	Entertainment based on religion limitation
	No non-halal services	Avoid prohibited things for Muslim

Source: Adopted from CrescentRating (2019).

Previously, the CrescentRating identified six categories of Muslim needs that influenced the consumption behaviour of Muslim tourists while travelling in 2009. The six categories include the needs for Halal food, prayer facilities, Ramadhan services, water-friendly washroom, the exclusion of non-halal activities, and gender segregation for recreational and services. Since halal tourism shows rapid developments and increment of demands among Muslim tourists, this model has been revised and three new needs were discovered in 2019 such as no Islamophobia, social causes and local Muslim experiences. The needs for Halal food are one of the most important services for Muslim tourists. While travelling, tourists would like to try the signature dish of a particular country visited. However, Muslim tourists are permitted to only consume halal food based on the Islamic laws. Thus, the restaurant that offers halal food will have the confidence of Muslim tourists to eat at their restaurant. For hotels, the

food and beverage are prepared and served in accordance with “Halal standard” such as the provision of sahur and iftar in the month of Ramadhan, the prohibition of alcohol (Henderson, 2010).

Prayer facilities are crucial needs as Muslims should perform prayers even while travelling. The religion of Islam emphasises on the safety as well. Therefore, to ensure a safety journey, Muslims are urged to make supplications to Allah as the God consent and blessings are the most important things in the life of a Muslim. Even though Muslims are obligated to perform five times prayers, Islam recommends travelling prayers (nawafil solat musafir) that combined prayers to three times a day. Therefore, a Muslim is permitted to perform combined prayers when travelling with good intentions (Mayunda & Marpaung, 2022). However, the ablution ritual (wudhu’) should be performed by Muslims before prayers. Thus, a water-friendly washroom should be provided. Washrooms with a setup for water such as bidets should be available for them to purify impurities and clean before performing prayers.

In addition, Muslim also travel in the month of Ramadhan. It is good if a destination can accommodate the special needs of tourists during the month of Ramadhan (Putra & Tucunan, 2021). Thus, it considered a special need as the availability of pre-dawn halal meals might not available if Muslim travels to non-Muslim countries or countries that do not promote halal tourism. For instance, the availability of pre-dawn (iftar) services and iftar services would attracts the Muslim to stay at their hotel.

However, Muslim also faced Islamophobia in some regions. Muslim are discouraged to visit the destinations with this issue lingering as it might affected their safety. It safer to visit countries that welcoming the Muslim tourists by providing halal tourism facilities and activities. Hence, Muslim seeks for improved local living conditions, various environmental protection measures, and eco-friendly tourism activities. Halal tourism promotes social justice along with economic, animal welfare, social responsibility, environment-friendly, stewardship to earth, and ethical investment (Azam et al., 2019). Muslims are more aware of being socially responsible while travelling since Islam emphasises social justice. Muslim tourists that travels are pleasure to experiences the uniqueness of the destinations they travel. It is the way they could relate with their Muslim identity and heritage. Thus, non-Muslim tourists can learn Muslim heritage and history by visiting local heritage sites (Moghavemi et al., 2021). For examples, visiting to old mosques and Islamic museums.

Some Muslim tourists that have a high faith towards their religion would seek for recreational facilities that have segregation between males and females. Hence, discotheques or casinos, and the unrestricted interaction of men and women are all forbidden (Abdrakhmanova & Moghavemi, 2022). For instances swimming pools and gyms, beaches, spas, and beauty salons. Other services that conform to the shariah laws such as Islamic entertainment with the absence of sex channels on hotel television channels and general Islamic morality such as decoration that does not include humans or animals depicted (Papastathopoulos et al., 2020).

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a document analysis method to review secondary sources from past literature related to implementations of Shariah compliance at hotels from 2009 to 2022 and coding the content into specified classifications. In addition, documents related to official guidelines for halal certification from JAKIM and Malaysian Standard are also referred to analyse the concept of Shariah compliance for hotels in Malaysia.

The areas of Shariah-compliant measurement for hotels in the current study are classified into three areas based on the classifications of Rosenberg & Choufany (2009) that include operations, design and interiors, and financial. The findings and discussion of these focused areas are presented in the following section. Operation is defined as producing goods and providing services that are offered by the organization (Wolniak, 2020). Financial is concerned with the effective funds managements in a business firm (Al Breiki & Nobanee, 2019). Financial management is responsible for securing the financial resources and allocating those resources throughout the business organization. Designed and interiors is a built interior environment created by multifaceted professionals utilizing creative and technical solutions (Abd Hamid et al., 2020).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Shariah-compliant hotel provides all services in accordance with the Islamic laws which is refers to being faithful towards Allah's instructions that regulate every Muslim's life in every way. Table 2 presents the findings of Shariah compliance applied in hotels which highlighted the attributes of operations, design and interiors, and financial categories.

The operation attributes held of staffing, staff attires, foods, no alcohol policy, and limitation on entertainment. According to Henderson (2010) and Karim et al. (2017), the Muslim staff are perceived to be more knowledgeable about the Islamic requirements compared to the non-Muslim staff. The hotel management supposedly to hire a particular number of Muslim staff and provide appropriate resources for them to perform their rights as a Muslim (Razalli et al., 2015). All the staff are required to wear appropriate attire according to the Islamic laws to cover their aurah (Rahmiati & Fajarsari, 2020). In the conventional hotel, the staff might be not covering their aurah as their operation are not compliance with the Shariah laws. In fact, Allah SWT has mentioned in al-Quran about command to cover aurah. "And tell the believing women that they must lower their gazes and guard their private parts, and must not expose their adornment, except that which appears thereof, and must wrap their bosoms with their shawls, and must not expose their adornment, except to their husbands or their fathers or the fathers of their husbands, or to their sons or the sons of their husbands, or to their brothers or the sons of their brothers or the sons of their sisters, or to their women, or to those owned by their right hands, or male attendants having no (sexual) urge, or to the children who are not yet conscious

Table 2: The attributes of Shariah-compliant hotels

Attributes	Authors	Henderson (2010)	Ridzuan & Zahari (2012)	Zafir (2015)	Majid et al. (2015)	Razalli et al. (2015)	Karim et al. (2017)	Omar & Adha (2019)	Suci (2021)
Operations	Muslim staff	√	√			√	√	√	√
	Staff attire	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	Halal foods	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	No alcohol	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	Entertainment limits	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Design and interiors	Room layout	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	Toilet facilities	√	√		√	√	√	√	√
	Prayer facilities	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	Arts	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	Segregated recreational space	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Financial	Islamic Funding	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	Zakat		√	√	√	√	√	√	√

Source: Henderson (2010), Ridzuan & Zahari (2012), Zafir (2015), Majid et al. (2015), Razalli et al. (2015), Karim et al. (2017), Abd Razak (2019), Omar & Adha (2019), Suci et al. (2021).

of the shames of women. And let them not stamp their feet in a way that the adornment they conceal is known. And repent to Allah O believers, all of you, so that you may achieve success” (An-Nur: 31). Therefore, the management of SCH should impose a proper staff attire or dress code.

Alcohol or any other things that intoxicating to human are prohibited to be consumed by Muslim. Hence, SCH shall not provide or sell alcoholic drinks in their premise. Allah SWT has mentioned in the al-Quran regarding to the position of alcoholic drinks in Islam. “O you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants, gambling, [sacrificing on] stone alters [to other than Allah], and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful” (Al-Maidah: 90). Thus, hotel that complied with Sharia law provide halal food and refrain from selling alcoholic (Karim et al., 2017). They must also adhere to the Halal food standard’s requirements for the slaughter as laid out by Islam (Abdul Karim et al., 2022). The food provided at SCH must be certified as halal by Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) in Malaysia. Apart from halal certification, additional requirements for food provision are needed. For instances, in the month of Ramadhan, information on pre-dawn meal (sahur) and breaking fast (iftar) should be available (Abd Razak, 2019). Thus, meal schedules for the guests should be provided for them to sahur and break their fast throughout Ramadhan accordingly (Yahaya et al., 2020).

According to Henderson (2010), appropriate entertainment such as no nightclubs or adult television channels in the shariah compliance hotels. It is supported by previous studies that there should be a decent entertainment and television services in Shariah compliance hotels (Ridzuan & Zahari, 2012; Zafir, 2015; Suci et al., 2021). The SCH design and interiors elements includes bed and toilet position, toilet facilities, prayer room and amenities, arts and segregated recreational spaces. The layout of guest room must appropriate to the Islamic practices. Aspects for considerations of design and interiors for Malays Muslim traditional hospitality includes segregation, privacy, space planning, and multiple uses of spaces (Majid et al., 2015). Karim et al. (2017) stated the requirements related to arrangement of beds and toilet facilities such as bidets in bathroom and ablution area for Muslim to take wudhu’ before performing prayers. Also, there are three requirements stated for SCH hotel owner to fulfil; mark of the direction of Mecca for prayers, bidets and toilets should not facing the direction of Mecca and Arts should not a human form depicted (Saifuddin et al., 2015). Also, SCH must segregate the use of facilities such as the spa, swimming, and gymnasium by gender (Sulaiman et al., 2022). In addition, the atmosphere of halal friendly hospitality should not have nudity in the form of decorations, designs, and painting (Han et al., 2019).

The funding and financial management of SCH should be based on Shariah laws. A Muslim who decides to pursue trade as a career or start his own firm should first gain a complete understanding of the Islamic Shariah’s norms for business transactions. According to al-Ghazali, the purpose of money created in Islam is for exchange and standard values of goods, and it cannot be treated as other commodity goods. Thus, usury or riba are prohibited in Islam because it prevents people to run the real economic activity (Thalib et al., 2021). In

addition, a hotel should pay zakah to purify the wealth and to ensure the equality of wealth to everyone (Razalli et al., 2015). The payment of zakah should be based on the zakah principles (Majid et al., 2015; Karim et al., 2017; Qurtubi et al., 2021).

The New Emergence In Measurement Of Shariah-Compliant Hotel

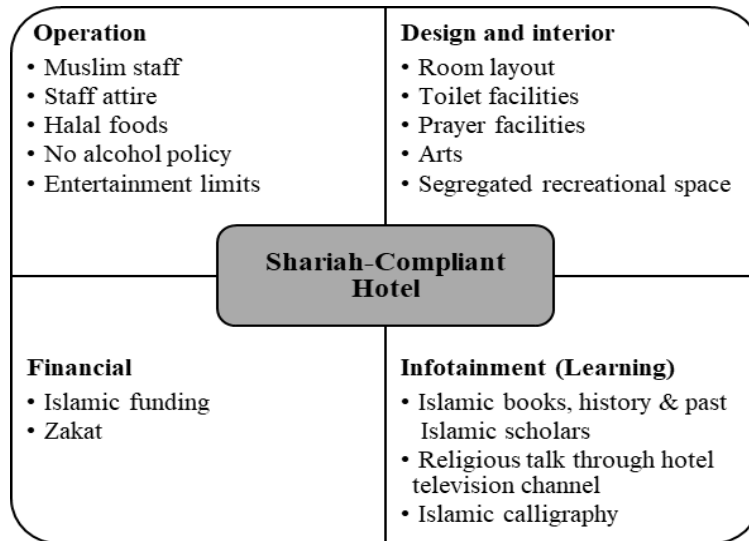


Figure 1: The new Shariah compliance concept for Shariah-Compliant hotels.

The findings of this study revealed that current three SCH attributes focused on enabling Muslims to travel yet abiding with Islamic laws. However, non-Muslim tourists might have the interest to stay at SCH who want to experience the Islamic culture and halal hospitality (Battour et al., 2018). Thus, from experience stay at SCH the non-Muslim tourists may be indirectly motivated to learn further about the religion of Islam. Furthermore, despite various efforts done to guarantee the facilities provided in line with the Muslims' needs, the learning qualities should be featured as the new aspect in the attribution of SCH. For instances, by including the tafsir al-Quran, compilation of hadiths books, Islamic books in the guest room. Several SCHs has conducted religious activities in their hotel, however, it is only for their staff or Muslim guests. Adya Hotel Langkawi has many Islamic values activities such as congregational prayers, al-Quran recital and Usrah (Islamic sharing) among their staff (bin Ya, 2021).

Besides, religious talk should be made available to both Muslim and non-Muslim guest to attend in their hotel or by watching through the official television channel of the hotel. This form of informational entertainment is beneficial for Muslim with high faith of Islam, but also for non-Muslim guest to learn more about Islam. Other than that, the inclusion of history of Islam, storyboard of Islamic past scholars and picturesque Islamic calligraphy can attract non-Muslim guests to experience the knowledge of Islam in SCH hotel.

Hence, SCH hotels must include learning qualities for different ambience that could be experienced by non-Muslim at their hotels. Therefore, this study recommends infotainment dimension that integrates information and entertainment as an additional measure to complement the current SCH attributes. Figure 1 illustrates the attributes of infotainment as a new emergence of Shariah compliance concept for hotels proposed in this study.

CONCLUSION

The attributes of the SCH should be based on the Shariah laws. Thus, the attributes of Shariah compliance hotels in the current decade are surrounded by three aspects of operation, design and interiors, and finances. The Muslim lifestyle should be taken into a serious consideration by the SCH hotel management in meeting with Muslim guests needs. The growing number of SCH hotels in Malaysia will benefits the country to be promoted as the most preferred Islamic tourism accommodation for Muslims at the international level. This study could be a source of reference for hotels that plan to offer Shariah compliance tourists accommodation.

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