

Exploring the Muslim-Friendly Hotel Concept in Malaysia Based on *Maqasid Shariah* Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Muslim-friendly hotel services are essential to meet the needs of tourists, especially local and foreign Muslim tourists from Middle Eastern countries. Muslim-friendly hotels are one of the Islamic tourism products that are expected to have the potential to be highlighted. However, most of the hotels that are implemented are not entirely Shariah-compliant. As a Muslim country, Malaysia should implement Muslim-friendly hotels because it is one of the requirements for Muslim tourists. Thus, this article aims to identify and analyze the concept and characteristics of Muslim-friendly hotels based on the perspective of *Maqasid Shariah* and the implication of *Maqasid Shariah* implementation in hotel operations. The methodology of this study is a qualitative approach with a document analysis design. The results of this study explain the concept and characteristics that need to be practiced in the Muslim-friendly hotel industry based on *Maqasid Shariah*. Integrating *Maqasid Shariah* principles while being “Muslim-friendly” will help Malaysia offer adequate services for both Muslim and non-Muslim tourists, contributing to cultural diversity. Such a pre-emptive measure will enhance Malaysia’s overall economic prospects and future benefits and its status as a country that embraces inter-ethnic and inter-religious coexistence. Therefore, the Muslim-friendly hotel is an ideal platform to promote Malaysia as a Muslim-friendly destination and an effective strategy for Visit Malaysia Year 2026.

Keywords: Muslim-Friendly Hotel, *Maqasid Shariah*, Islamic Tourism

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INTRODUCTION

The demand for halal products such as halal food and Muslim-friendly hotels has led the Malaysian government to believe that the country can be an attractive destination not only for Muslim tourists but also for non-Muslim tourists. The increase in the number of Muslim-

friendly hotels in Malaysia has a positive and significant influence on the country in ensuring the country's economic sustainability. The booming market for the global halal economy is expected to reach US\$4.96 trillion (RM22.34 trillion) by 2030, from US\$2.3 trillion in 2020, according to research and consulting firm Frost & Sullivan. The Frost & Sullivan report states that the halal economy is experiencing an upward trend, following the increase in demand for halal products from Muslims and non-Muslim countries (Dagang News, 2022).

The main factors driving the halal industry are the favorable demographics of the population, government policies, and private sector initiatives. The growing non-Muslim demand for halal food will be driven by its association with safe and healthy eating, while halal fashion and tourism are also gaining a growing acceptance among more conservative non-Muslim consumers (Dagang News, 2022). Frost & Sullivan in Dagang News (2022) concluded that the government strengthens regulation and policy support through a national master plan and an expansion of the scope of certification, which will enhance the growth of the halal industry. Furthermore, to take advantage of the growth opportunities of the halal market, global governments must strive to consolidate halal standards and accreditation processes to help reduce the number of certification requirements and promote halal trade.

Based on a statistical report by the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia (2024), the arrival of tourists in 2023 has increased 100 percent (%) compared to 2022 with a total increase of 10,070,882 tourists. A total of 20,141,846 tourists have arrived in Malaysia in 2023 compared to 10,070,964 tourists in 2022. Of these, the top five countries traveling to Malaysia are Singapore (8,308,230), Indonesia (3,108,165), Thailand (1,551,282), China (1,474,114) and Brunei (811,833). This involves tourist spending which also increased from RM28, 228.3 (in million) in 2022 to RM71, 308.5 (in million) in 2023. Malaysia, as a multicultural country with the majority of 63.7% of the population being Muslims, should take active steps to intensify the ways of discovering the market needs. The desires of Islam need to be cleared, and the spirit of *Maqasid Shariah* must be manifested equally to the Muslim and the non-Muslim.

While Malaysia leads in Muslim-friendly tourism, there is a global gap in standardized Shariah-compliant hotel practices, which this study aims to address. According to the Global Muslim Travel Index, Malaysia is ranked as the best country in Muslim-friendly tourism, however there is an evident lack of international standardization on the practices implemented in the international Muslim-friendly hotels. Such study is necessary because it seeks to fill this gap through the investigation of the Muslim-friendly hotel concept through the lens of *Maqasid Shariah*. Previous studies have stressed the importance of having Shariah laws observed uniformly in the hospitality sector, as any variation may create confusion in consumers and negatively affect Muslim tourism all over the world (Ali, 2015; Hassan & Rahman, 2018; Khan, 2016).

The existence of common guidelines specifically intended for hotels in the Muslim-friendly sector is still lacking hence practices adopted in one country may be completely different in what another country practices which may create confusion and misinterpretations as to what a Shariah-compliant experience is. Such inconsistency may discourage Muslim travelers who wish to be reassured that their religious obligations will be observed during their stay. This research seeks, from the *Maqasid Shariah* perspective, to propose a proper guideline that would not only be applicable in Malaysia but could also be used in other nations with a view to improving their offering to Muslim tourists. This is because, as the world's Muslim tourism market grows, so too does the number of people looking for accommodation that is in keeping

with Islamic culture. It has been argued that a lack of uniformity and standardization in the provision of Muslim-friendly hotels can cause the consumer to distrust these facilities, which in the end, affects their decision to travel (Ali, 2015; Hassan & Rahman, 2018; Khan, 2016).

This study aims to make an addition to the body of knowledge which is already available by putting forth many practices which can help standardize practices as well and help in devising a better experience for the Muslim population all over the world. To sum up, this study is important and well overdue since it attempts to address the current deficiency in universal guidelines for the Muslim-friendly hotels, thus boosting the attractiveness of the Muslim-friendly tourism around the world.

Prospects and Demands for Muslim-Friendly Hotels

The Muslim tourism market is a growing market in the tourism industry with the Muslim population estimated to reach 2 billion worldwide. The recovery rate of Islamic tourism at the global level was also encouraging when it recorded 110 million Muslim tourist arrivals in 2022 (Sinar Harian, 2023). Malaysia also recorded a commendable performance when it attracted 2.12 million Muslim tourists to Malaysia in 2022 with a total Muslim tourist expenditure of RM5.37 billion proving the great potential of the Islamic tourism market (Md Fauzi, 2023). It is estimated that approximately 63 million Muslim female travelers aged 18 to 40 in 2018 spent US\$80 billion (RM356 billion) worldwide (Mastercard-CrescentRating, 2021). According to Md Fauzi (2023) in the Malaysia Gazette concluded that the value of the Muslim tourism market worldwide reached approximately USD 194 billion and will continue to grow and is expected to reach US\$300 billion (RM1.4 trillion) in 2026. Thus, the Shariah-compliant hotel is an ideal platform to promote Malaysia as a Muslim-friendly destination and an effective strategy in preparation for Visit Malaysia Year 2026.

Malaysia should not be left behind to take advantage of the potential of this market. The Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia (MOTAC) has a special agency that focuses specifically on introducing the concept of Islamic Tourism in Malaysia and internationally, namely the Islamic Tourism Center (ITC). Since ITC was established in 2009, Malaysia has received various international recognitions such as 'The Number 1 Muslim-Friendly Preferred Destination' in the world by the Global Muslim Travel Index from 2015 to 2021 which is based in Singapore (Mastercard-CrescentRating, 2021). Malaysia was also named as the country with the most advanced Islamic economic ecosystem in the world for the halal tourism sector from 2014 to 2022 by DinarStandard based in the United States (Harakah Daily, 2022). Recently, Malaysia was announced as the 'Best Muslim-Friendly Destination' by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in the 2023 Global Muslim Tourism Index (GMTI) report and the 'Best Muslim Women-Friendly Destination' by CrescentRating and Mastercard at the Halal in Travel Awards (Sinar Harian, 2023).

The achievement further strengthens Malaysia's position and branding as a leader in the Islamic Tourism and Muslim-Friendly Tourism and Hospitality (MFTH) segment at the regional and international level (Md Fauzi, 2023). ITC sees the Muslim tourist market as very broad and able to help generate the country's economy more massively. ITC estimates that in 2028 global Muslim tourists will reach 230 million people with an expenditure of US\$225 billion. Local entrepreneurs and industry players are encouraged to develop Muslim-friendly service offerings as an added value in spreading the Islamic tourism industry in the country. However, Malaysia should not be satisfied with the award until the country implements various improvement measures. However, it is important to acknowledge that several other countries

are also competitors to Malaysia such as the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, and Egypt. Furthermore, there is a huge Muslim-friendly market opportunity that Malaysia has yet to fully explore. Therefore, Malaysia needs to continue empowering Muslim-friendly tourism to attract Muslim tourists from all over the world. The government and local industrialists need to offer Muslim-friendly tourism products and infrastructure as an added value in empowering the country's Muslim tourism industry.

The concept of Muslim-friendly tourism is becoming increasingly popular in many countries around the world. This approach focuses on fulfilling the needs and requirements of Muslim travellers by hotel operators. To be recognized as a Muslim-friendly tourism destination, certain criteria must be met, such as being located near mosques and Islamic tourist attractions, providing halal restaurants within the hotel, having qibla direction signs, prayer mats, and Qur'an available in hotel rooms, as well as a separate gym and swimming pool for female users. This initiative has led to an increase in the number of Muslim tourists visiting foreign countries, with 460,000 tourists reportedly having visited the country in April 2022 (Kini Halal, 2022).

When there is a significant increase in the number of tourists, it inevitably leads to a surge in demand for hotel accommodations. In Malaysia, the Shariah-compliant hospitality industry has also benefited from the influx of foreign Muslim tourists due to the country's peaceful and prosperous Islamic environment and infrastructure facilities (Mohamad Iman, 2023). While Shariah-compliant hotels primarily cater to Muslim tourists, non-Muslims are also welcome. Although there may be differences in the way of life between Muslims and non-Muslims, it does not pose a major problem and does not affect the enthusiasm or excitement of tourists to explore and travel to different destinations. This is because tourists often visit a country to experience and enjoy the unique customs and traditions of the local community. The tourism industry in Malaysia actively offers hotel services that are friendly to Muslim customers, in line with Malaysia's status as a Muslim country and a member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

As most of the population is Muslim, basic facilities that are friendly to the Muslim community are readily available. Some hotels in Malaysia are openly advertised as Shariah-compliant hotels or Islamic hotels, which cater specifically to Muslim travellers. Shariah-compliant hotels need to extend their services to non-Muslims as well. Not only do they offer an opportunity to highlight the beauty of Islam, but they also promote economic growth. This sets them apart from traditional hotels that focus solely on profit. The Shariah-compliant hotel business model is both exceptional and lucrative, benefiting everyone involved. Shariah-compliant hospitality is a new approach in the tourism industry to deliver Islamic messages to both Muslims and non-Muslims. The *da'wah* approach carried out by Shariah-compliant hotel can be concluded as a *bill hal da'wah* approach which is *da'wah* with a practical method such as development through human and physical capital (Borhannudin, 2021).

Numerous scholars have emphasized the importance of delving into and producing halal goods and services within the hospitality industry. Consensus has been reached that to tap into the halal market, hospitality leaders, specifically those in the hotel and residence sectors, must actively seek out ways to attract Muslim clientele (Jeaheng et al., 2019). To keep up with other halal sectors, the tourism and hospitality industry is enthusiastically producing Islamic tourism merchandise. This is a testament to their commitment to meeting the demands of this growing sector. Thus, Islamic Based Hotels which alternately be termed "Shariah-Compliant Hotels" or "Muslim-Friendly Hotels" (MFH) are among the products that need attention to accommodate this demand.

Muslim-Friendly Tourism Growth: Comparative Efforts of Malaysia, Indonesia, Turkey and China

The Muslim travel market is rapidly growing, calling for Malaysia, Indonesia, Turkey, and China to actively seek to enhance halal tourism. Particularly, these countries are using the platform of significant travel trade shows to highlight their products emphasizing the distinct needs of Muslim travellers. Specifically, the focus is on the creation of a travel environment that is friendlier to Muslims around the globe.

However, since the commencement of the MasterCard Crescent Rating Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI), 2024, Malaysia maintained a leading performance overtaking other countries. This top ranking reinforces its resolve over the years in providing excellent Muslim-friendly amenities such as halal certified hotels and halal tourism packages (Mastercard-CrescentRating, 2024). Malaysia is also involved in international events such as the AITEX where she promotes a wide range of services designed for Muslim client's needs including halal food and tourism services (Islamic Tourism Centre, 2024). In addition, Malaysia also participates in the Islamic Tourism Month and Islamic tourism world conference organized through the Islamic Tourism Centre to develop networks and promote her cultural heritage to the global tourism market (Henderson, 2016).

The GMTI 2024 is topped by both Indonesia and Malaysia as it shows its economic growth rate with full determination towards halal tourism development. For events like AITEX, Malaysia works hand in hand with Indonesia in marketing Southeast Asia as a suitable region for Muslim tourists. This collaboration underlines an excellent regional perspective on halal tourist offers (Razzaq et al., 2016). Indonesia is progressing with halal travel services that include halal-friendly hotels, religious and nonreligious performances for pleasure and pilgrimage tourism for Muslim clients on the international level (Mohsin et al., 2016).

Turkey is another country particularly active in halal tourism by marketing its strong Islamic culture and its heritage. The country has pursued actively marketing its products at international travel trade fairs, highlighting its plentiful halal-installed hotels, resorts, and cuisines (TIN Media, 2024). Turkey capitalizes on the extensive Islamic culture of the country, allowing it to attract Muslim travelers who are keen to traverse and view various ancient and religious sites (Jafari & Scott, 2014). Turkey combines ancient Islamic cultures with contemporary structures such as halal resorts, and more halal restaurants, which satisfy different kinds of tourists (Henderson, 2016). Having advertised itself in this manner, Turkey has no difficulty appealing to either traditionalist or more modern Muslim tourists wanting to serve both generations using Turkish history and modern facilities (Mastercard-CrescentRating, 2024).

China has participated in international travel shows to further its service offers incorporating Muslim-friendly features in what is still a new market for them (Zailani et al., 2011). In seeking expansion to Muslim travelers, China is increasing the availability of halal food, constructing places of worship, and customizing travel arrangements, targeting regional Muslims specifically from Southeast Asia and the Middle East (Jafari & Scott, 2014). China intends to showcase its commitment to accommodating Muslim travelers and establishing itself as a new contender in the developing sector of halal tourism (TIN Media, 2024).

Summarizing, the comparative efforts of Malaysia, Indonesia, Turkey, and China in building Muslim-friendly tourism and hospitality services show just how these countries wish to tap

into the expanding world Muslim traveler's market. With an already established broad halal tourism models and commendable standings in the Mastercard-CrescentRating Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI), Malaysia and Indonesia are frontrunners in the Muslim tourism industry and have set the pace for the Southeast Asia region. Their collaborative projects like participation in trade exhibitions such as AITEX enable them to advocate a common cause of marketing Southeast Asia to Muslim travelers. Besides utilizing its historical and Islamic heritage sites to appeal to the culture-loving tourists, Turkey has also built many contemporary facilities to also meet the needs of today's audience. This strategy helps Turkey to achieve appeal to both spheres, Muslim tourists with traditional ties and newly emerged consumers. China as a new entering country to halal tourism market has developed prayer rooms, increased the amount of halal food, tailored travel packages to the Southeast Asian and Middle Eastern tourists which is already a big business in this area.

Muslim-Friendly Hotel Concept

Islam is a religion that offers guidance in all aspects of life and aims to organize life in accordance with *Shariah*. For Muslims, it is important that their actions and decisions align with *Shariah* principles. Many Muslims prefer products and services that are known to be Muslim-friendly or *Shariah*-compliant, particularly in the Islamic banking and financial industry. The hospitality industry should also keep up with this trend and promote the idea of *Shariah* compliance. A Muslim-friendly hotel is a hotel that offers services that are in line with *Shariah* principles (Siti Fatma & Rosmawati, 2015).

According to Ahmad (2017), the status of *Shariah* compliance is given by certain parties to organizations that carry out activities in accordance with Islamic law. *Shariah* compliance is not only focused on external aspects such as architecture or Islamic-style building patterns, but it is more important to ensure that the internal characteristics and the essence of the hotel are based on the broad teachings of Islam. *Shariah* compliance extends to other aspects beyond serving halal cuisine.

The idea of Muslim-friendly hotels can help Muslims fulfill their religious obligations even when they are traveling in other countries. These hotels provide an opportunity for tourists to follow the instructions and duties of a Muslim while enjoying their trip. The concept of "seeking what is halal is the duty of every individual Muslim" can be realized through Muslim-friendly hotels, no matter where they are located. In fact, shortly, this concept could be the best alternative to conventional hotels or even replace them completely. According to researchers, if implemented systematically, the Muslim-friendly hotel concept can be a catalyst for progress and human civilization, as it is rooted in morals and manners that can ensure the spiritual and physical well-being of people.

Muslim-friendly hotel is a hotel that is managed and run based on the principles of Islamic *Shariah*. It aims to provide a peaceful, comfortable, and healthy atmosphere, as well as friendly service to all customers. However, despite the encouragement and efforts from the Malaysian government, there are still inefficiencies in managing hotel operations that comply with Islamic *Shariah*. This is because many hotel operators only focus on food and beverages when it comes to halal hotel operations. In reality, it can also be linked to various other sectors, such as service, management, marketing, operations, use of facilities, the association of employees of different genders, and the hotel's financial resources. As a result, introducing Muslim-friendly hotels faces many constraints.

It is evident that the operation of halal hotels is a relatively new concept that is still not well understood by the public, particularly hotel operators in Malaysia. As a result, the number of Muslim-friendly hotels in the country is relatively low. To attract more tourists, especially Muslim visitors, it is essential to increase the number of Muslim-friendly hotels. Besides, this system not only appeals to Muslim tourists but also for tourists of other religions who appreciate the safety and efficiency of this type of hotel. In fact, Muslim-friendly hotels have witnessed a surge in demand worldwide.

In Malaysia, most hotels do not comply with *Shariah* requirements and only a few are recognized by the Malaysian Islamic Development Department (JAKIM) as meeting the ethical and Islamic standards. Being an Islamic country, Malaysia should have hotels and boarding houses that reflect Islamic identity and value, free from any immoral elements and activities that contradict Islamic principles. However, it's not the case that all hotels are non-compliant. There are also hotels approved by JAKIM. But the question arises, what are the criteria used to identify a hotel as *Shariah*-compliant? A preliminary study found that there is no specific standard issued by the authorities, unlike halal food and *Shariah*-compliant financial institutions. This also encourages researchers to explore the application of *Maqasid Shariah* in the concept of *Shariah*-compliant hotels. In this writing, we review past studies related to the issue of the characteristics of *Shariah*-compliant hotels and the application of *Maqasid Shariah* in the hospitality industry in Malaysia.

Islamic Hotel Concept

The terms “Islamic tourism” and “halal tourism” have given rise to the establishment of hotels that claim to adhere to Islamic rules and principles. These hotels are referred to as *Shariah*, dry, Islamic, halal, Muslim-friendly and conservative hotels. According to various sources, including Che Ahmat et al. (2015) and Musa et al. (2019), while *Shariah*-compliant hotels have been slow to gain popularity, many experts believe that they have a bright future. International chain hotels, such as the Landmark Hotel Group and The Serai Group, have shown interest in opening *Shariah*-compliant hotels as early as 2006, particularly in the Middle East. However, the global economic downturn in 2008 delayed progress. As noted by Salleh et al. (2014) and Tarrant (2010), the development of *Shariah*-compliant hotels has been slow due to economic challenges in many parts of the world.

The term “*Shariah*-compliant hotels” was coined by Yusuf (2009) to refer to hotels that adhere to *Shariah* principles in all their services and financial transactions. These hotels not only serve halal food and beverages but also prioritize health, safety, environmental, and economic aspects for the benefit of all guests. In Malaysia, the establishment of *Shariah*-compliant hotels has led to the emergence of “Muslim-friendly hotels”, which provide common facilities to cater to the needs of Muslim tourists. Some examples of such hotels include the Grand Bluewave Hotel in Shah Alam, PNB Darby Park Hotel and Putra Hotel in Kuala Lumpur, Perdana Hotel, and Raia Hotel in Terengganu, as reported by Musa et al. (2019).

The number of tourists from the Middle East visiting Malaysia has increased in recent years, providing a significant opportunity for Muslim-friendly hotels to increase their profits (Salleh et al., 2014). These hotels must provide attractive accommodation to these tourists and adhere to *Shariah* principles, not just in terms of the facilities provided to guests, but also in terms of the behavior of the hotel staff. This includes wearing proper attire, speaking properly, giving *salam*, and observing their prayers and duties honestly (Sulaiman & Maidin, 2018). Additionally, financial management must also align with *Shariah* principles.

Concept of *Maqasid Shariah*

The term *Maqasid Shariah* is a combination of two words, *Maqasid* and *Shariah*. *Maqasid* is a collective word that comes from the word *Maqsad*, which means the place of intention (Al-Hasan, 2000). It also means purpose, middle, wishes, and intention (Engku Ali, 2013). *Maqasid* of Islamic law are the principles, objectives, and purposes behind Islam. The primary goal of *Shariah* is to benefit people and provide them with the best in this world and the next. *Shariah*, as stated by Ibnu Taimiyah, is everything that God has decreed from belief and action (Al-Yubi, 1998). As per Kamali (2000), *Shariah* can be described as ‘diversity within unity’, meaning that there may be different interpretations, but the goals and objectives remain the same. Additionally, Al-Qaradawi (2008) defines *Shariah* as the judgments of Allah and his Prophet, as mentioned in the Quran and Sunnah. *Maqasid Shariah*, from the point of view of the combination of terms, means the objective, purpose, effect, and result related to the order of *Shariah*, the burden of *taklif*, where *Shariah* tells every *mukallaf* to understand and achieve it (Al-Raisuni, 2010). According to Al-Fasy (1993), *Maqasid Shariah* is the purpose of *Shariah*, and the secrets placed by Allah SWT in each of His laws. Based on this definition, *Maqasid Shariah* is what Allah SWT wants for His servants in the form of goodness that is hidden from the practice of *Shariah* law.

The implementation of the true *Maqasid Shariah* should not contradict the established texts of the Qur’an and the *Sunnah* (Al-Yubi, 1998). The real *Maqasid Shariah* is what has been established from these texts and cannot be changed by *ijtihad* which uses *Maqasid Shariah* (Al-khadimi, 1998). It is not permissible to use reason alone to explain the *Maqasid* of a *Shariah* law, as this can damage and destroy the religion itself. Some parties have misused *Maqasid Shariah* to make a profit and attract foreign tourists by legalizing what is *haram*, such as alcohol and immorality (Al-Qaradawi, 2014). This is a form of abuse of *Maqasid Shariah* that ignores the sins and rewards involved. *Maqasid Shariah* is not a tool to make people think liberally and ignore what has been deemed *haram* by the scriptures of *syarak*. According to Al-Shatibiyy (2006), *an-Naql* (scriptures of *syarak*) must come first compared to *al-Aql* (views based on the mind), as reason must follow what has been mentioned by the script of *syarak*.

METHODOLOGY

The study of Muslim-friendly hotel concept in Malaysia employs qualitative document analysis as part of the data collection methodology. In the selection of documents, preferences were given only to those which were closely tied to the principles and attributes of the *Shariah* hotels. It comprises among other narratives that prescribe operational, ethical, and service standards of such institutions with a view of making the selected documents relevant in looking at the hospitality business in the context of *Shariah*. Such document analysis enabled the researchers to focus on the documents which sought to address the role of *Maqasid Shariah* in relation to hospitality and tourism. This ensures that the analysis remains rooted on the values of *Shariah* which are critical in the accomplishment of the study objectives of enhancing the welfare and prevention of harm. To maintain the relevance and applicability of the findings, documents published within the last 10 years were prioritized. This criterion assists the researcher in addressing the objectives of the study by looking at a suitable time frame within which some trends, practices and scholarly debates on *Shariah* hotels and *Maqasid Shariah* would have emerged. The study also makes use of journal articles, theses, books, reputable websites and varied sources. This variety ensures better of the subject matter and a holistic approach to the

analysis. Overall, these criteria guarantee that the document analysis is comprehensive and relevant to the aims of the study which makes it easier to grasp the Muslim-friendly hotel concept within the framework of *Maqasid Shariah*. The analysis is descriptive in nature and the data collected is viewed through the lens of *Maqasid Shariah* to argue that *Maqasid Shariah* may be used in further consolidating the Shariah-based hotel and hospitality sector.

RESULTS

Muslim-Friendly Hotel Criteria

The issues presented in this study are aimed at the question of the existence of Muslim-friendly hotel criteria in the hospitality industry as well as the suggestion that hotel standards be formed based on *Maqasid Shariah*, namely *Daruriyyat al-Khams*. According to Hashim et al. (2006), Muslim-friendly hotels should provide information related to Islam on their website. On the other hand, Rosenberg and Choufany (2009) explained that the concept of a Muslim-friendly hotel is more focused on the management of hotel operations, infrastructure, and financial systems, which are guided by the benchmarks of Muslim-friendly hotels. Additionally, Stephenson et al. (2010) researched the concept of a Shariah Compliant Hotel. This refers to hotels that have infrastructure that incorporates Islamic characteristics and operate under the Islamic financial management system. Henderson (2010) added to this definition by stating that a Shariah Compliant Hotel should meet all the requirements of Shariah, not just the prohibition of alcohol. The criteria outlined by Henderson are based on feedback from industry practitioners who have identified the characteristics of Muslim-friendly hotels (Henderson 2010; Nor Zafir et al., 2014).

The paper by Nor Azzah et al. (2015) examines the criteria for classifying hotels based on their management practices, which include food preparation, office operations, hotel staff, facilities, and more. The authors also outline the objectives of a Shariah-compliant hotel, dividing them into three levels namely *al-Dharuriyyat*, *al-Hajiyyat*, and *al-Tahsiniyyat*. Furthermore, Nor Azzah et al. (2015) discuss the management of Shariah-compliant hotels based on MS 1900, which is the standard for managing halal organizations, including Muslim-friendly hotels. The Malaysian Industrial Standards Technical Committee has created the MS 1900 standard, which deals with quality management from an Islamic perspective. Additionally, the committee has developed a new standard that focuses on Muslim-friendly hospitality services and only considers eight key factors to meet the needs of Muslim tourists. It is unclear what criteria the standard is measured against, and whether it aligns with the *Maqasid Shariah*, which includes the preservation of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property. These criteria are not consistently applied and therefore require further study.

Nor Zafir et al. (2014) identified several specific data gaps related to Muslim-friendly hotels. Meanwhile, Hesham Ezzat and Badran Nabil (2014) suggested that the concept of Muslim-friendly hotels needs to be researched and explored further in Egypt. This is because Egypt is a crucial destination for Arab tourists and developing and operating Muslim-friendly hotels is still a relatively new idea. Nor Zafir (2015) also discovered that there is a lack of a comprehensive study of Muslim-friendly practices in the Malaysian hospitality industry.

The study by Siti Fatma and Rosmawati (2015) concluded that Muslim-friendly hotels have four elements, namely design and space, hotel organization and employees involved, customer ethics and general facilities provided as listed in Table 1.

Table 1
Elements for Muslim-Friendly Hotels

Element	Explanation
Design and Space	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do not contain alcohol in food and beverages 2. No prohibited food and beverages 3. No gambling and alcohol in the hotel 4. Halal slaughter 5. Prioritizing personal hygiene and food safety 7. Has the direction of the qibla, prayer mat, and the Quran 8. Bed and toilet positions that do not face the qibla 9. Having Islamic morals. 10. Ban disco and prostitution centers
Hotel Organization and Employees	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dress that covers the <i>aurat</i> 2. Provide female staff to entertain female guests 3. Has high security. 4. Ensure the premises are in a clean condition 5. Issuing zakat
Customers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Has a separate salon/spa, gymnasium, and swimming pool, between men and women. 2. Clothes that cover the <i>aurat</i> 3. Maintain manners and morals
General Facilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Paying attention to entertainment that is characterized by Islam 2. Provide <i>sugi</i> wood 3. Prepare a prayer time calendar

Source: Siti Fatma and Rosmawati (2015)

There are differences between the attributes of common law and Shariah-compliant companies, as noted by Hassan et al. (2012). To reflect Islamic art and culture, it is suggested that the interior design of guest rooms should comply with Islamic financial management, such as the contribution of alms or *zakat*, as highlighted by Kamali (2000). Additionally, a requirement for an Islamic hotel is for it to be near a mosque or *surau*, and its restaurant should serve halal food and beverages. Other commonly agreed requirements such as prayer mats, prayer beads, qibla direction, and separate utensils for Muslim guests should also be provided. According to Rosenberg and Choufany (2009), a Muslim-friendly hotel needs to meet the criteria of three aspects, which are operations, interior design, and financial, as outlined below:

1. Operations
 - a. No alcohol
 - b. Halal food only
 - c. Majority of staff of Muslim faith
 - d. Female staff for single female floor, male staff for single floor
 - e. Conservative television service
 - f. Quran and prayer mat available in each room
2. Interior Design
 - a. Larger function room to cater to males and females separately
 - b. Signs in the room indicating the direction of qibla
 - c. No entertainment venues such as nightclubs
 - d. Bed and toilet should not be placed to face the direction of qibla
 - e. Art in the hotel should not depict human form
 - f. Separate wellness facilities for males and females
 - g. Separate floors for single males, single females, and family

3. Financial
 - a. Hotel financed through Islamic financial arrangements
 - b. Hotels should follow the *zakat* principles (giving back to the community)

Henderson (2010) developed a set of criteria for hotels to be considered as Shariah-compliant. These criteria were later expanded to include 13 more, such as providing Halal food, prohibiting alcohol, providing Quran and prayer mats in each room, arranging beds and toilets away from the direction of Mecca, including bidets in bathrooms, having prayer rooms, offering suitable entertainment options, having mostly Muslim staff, requiring conservative dress from staff, providing separate recreational facilities for men and women, having a specific dress code for guests, and obtaining Islamic funding. Additionally, Mohd Yusof and Muhammad (2013) suggested that various factors need to be considered for a hotel to be considered *Shariah* compliant, including proper Islamic staffs dress code requirements. A Muslim man should not reveal from his navel to his knee, while a Muslim lady should at any rate cover her hair and body in free and unrevealing dress, clouding the points of interest of her body from people in general.

- a. Praying schedule in every hotel room. The schedule must be consistently updated (monthly or weekly) and must be from a legitimate Islamic religious council.
- b. Music foundation, for example, Quran recitation or nasheed (the nonexclusive Malay expression for Islamic religious tunes) at the lobby, restaurant, elevators, and public area.
- c. Good *akhlak* trained staff. The *akhlak* training must be implemented regularly to build the innate quality among hotel staff.
- d. Shop offering Islamic-related items, such as Islamic books, CDs, Islamic garments, halal sustenance, refreshments, or some other items that can be considered Islamic. The utensils and equipment on the premises should also be free from any haram kind of stuff. No alcoholic drinks should be served on the premises or at a restaurant.

In 2015, a new standard MS2610:2015 known as Muslim Friendly Hospitality Services (MFHS) was introduced by the Islamic Tourism Centre Malaysia. These standards cover three main components, namely accommodation premises, tour packages, and tourist guide. The MFHS standard for accommodation premises requires compliance with five main aspects, which include guest rooms, food and beverages, prayer rooms, bathrooms, and recreational facilities. It has been found that there are seven compulsory requirements for a room to be obliged with, but it is not limited to those conditions only. The seven compulsory requirements are as follows:

- a. The room must be kept clean and well-maintained.
- b. Guest rooms must have signed a qibla.
- c. Adequate floor space must be provided for prayer purposes in the room.
- d. The washroom must be equipped with a bidet, hand shower, or water hose.
- e. The washroom must be kept clean. Halal care amenities/toiletries must be provided.
- f. Alcoholic beverages must not be placed in the refrigerator.
- g. Recommended provisions include a *Sajada*/Prayer mat, female prayer clothing (if requested), prayer schedule, and al-Quran with translation.

To establish Muslim-friendly hotels, they must be operated based on the principles of the Islamic financial system. According to Ahmed (2014), Islamic finance requires all parties involved in the finance enterprise to participate in sharing the profit and loss. It also prohibits interest (*riba*), as it is considered one of the root causes of unfair economic practices. Hence, the purpose of the study is to examine the standards or criteria used to determine whether hotels

are *Shariah* compliant, considering *Maqasid Shariah*. *Maqasid Shariah* is utilized as a benchmark to assess the level of importance of *Shariah*-compliant hotel criteria, ensuring that the criteria meet the requirements of Muslims, known as *Dharuriyyat al-Khams*.

Implication of Maqasid Shariah Implementation in Hotel Operations

The application of *Maqasid Shariah* principles in Muslim-friendly hotels is crucial for ensuring that these establishments meet the spiritual and practical needs of Muslim travelers. According to Al-Fasy (1993), *Maqasid Shariah* is the objective and secret placed by the *syarak* on each of its laws. The preservation involves five main points known as *Dharuriyyat al-Khams*, namely *Hifz ad-Din* (protecting religion), *Hifz al-Nafs* (protecting life), *Hifz al-'Aql* (protecting reason), *Hifz al-Nasab* (protecting lineage), and *Hifz al-Mal* (protecting property) (Al-Shatibiyy, 1997). Therefore, protecting the five matters is the goal of Islamic *Shariah* which makes any management compliant with *Shariah*. The implementation of the matter should follow the stage namely The Essentials matter (*al-Dharuriyyat*), followed by The Needs matter (*al-Hajiyyat*), and followed by The Complementary matter (*al-Tahsiniyyat*) (Asmadi, 2008).

These five matters are very important to take care of to ensure peace, well-being, and continued happiness in the life of the world (Azmi-Puat & Yahaya, 2021). Each of these basic matters is known as *maṣlahah*, while the matter that eliminates it or affects it is known as *mafsadah* and prevents it from happening is *maṣlahah* (Al-Ghazali, 1993). On this basis, the application of the concept of *Maqasid Shariah* or more specifically '*Dharuriyyat al-Khams*' will have a significant impact on the progress and sustainability of the hospitality industry. The implementation of *Maqasid Shariah* in hotel operations can significantly enhance both the guest experience and the overall success of the hospitality industry.

Creating a Religious Atmosphere (*Hifz ad-Din*)

Hifz ad-Din is implementing the pillars and regulations by preserving and protecting religion in life (Al-Khadimi, 2001). Every Muslim has an obligation to protect their *ad-Din* at all times. Protection of *ad-Din* at the individual level is achieved through various types of worship, such as praying five times a day, fasting, paying zakat, and performing hajj. To ensure that this is maintained, hotel operators must understand that their business is a form of worship to God. Apart from that, it is a claim of *fardhu kifayah* for Muslims. Once the hotel operators have understood this fact, then they will ensure that all the demands of *syarak* will be fulfilled, and all the prohibitions of the *syarak* will be avoided based on safeguarding their religious affairs. They will strive to create a hotel environment that makes it easier for their customers to perform worship to Allah SWT (Mohd Izzuddin & Fatimah Nadirah, 2018).

As a Muslim, it is important to have access to proper religious accommodations while staying at a hotel. The hotel's religious care should adhere to *Maqasid Shariah* principles, including the provision of infrastructure that facilitates prayer, such as spaces for ablution and comfortable prayer areas. Additionally, the hotel should provide necessary prayer equipment, such as mats, qibla direction signs, and prayer timetables. Hotel operators also need to ensure that no sound disturbs the privacy of prayer, in addition to ensuring that the room is clean and free of impurities so that comfort is achieved (Zafir, 2015). Furthermore, the position of the bed and toilet in the hotel rooms must not be facing the direction of the Qibla, and the curtains are installed in the toilet so that the *aurat* between the women is preserved (Azmi-Puat & Yahaya, 2021). The space in the room should be sufficient to perform prayers and a water pipe should be provided in the toilet to facilitate the performance of ablution and purification. In

order to take care of fasting during the month of Ramadan, providing meals to hotel guests for suhoor and iftar as well as transportation from the hotel to the mosque. The hotel does not display statues or living paintings as decoration.

The *surau* provides a spacious and comfortable setting for congregational prayer, while the annual *Ihya'* Ramadhan program further enhances the spirit of worship during the holy month (Mohd Izzuddin & Fatimah Nadirah, 2018). Additionally, the hotel management periodically hosts religious training programs and courses to promote awareness and understanding among employees regarding their role in maintaining a religious atmosphere within the hotel. By implementing *Hifz ad-Din* in this way, the hotel management lays the foundation for a Shariah-compliant hotel (Mohd Izzuddin & Fatimah Nadirah, 2018). At times, the hotel management hosts religious training programs and courses for all employees to impart awareness and understanding of their significant role in upholding a religious atmosphere within the hotel premises.

To accommodate their Muslim guests, hotels make provisions related to prayer such as constructing prayer rooms and ablution places and providing prayer items like mats and directional signs for qibla. Not only do these measures satisfy their guests' religious practices, but they also instill a sense of warmth and inclusion among the guests, which would increase their overall satisfaction and the chances of their return. It also means that there is no longer a need for the guests to leave the hotel for such activities, which makes them feel more at home when travelling. As the guests find it convenient to observe religious obligations, their satisfaction goes up and there are chances of positive comments which further prompts for repeat business. Such feeling of belonging serves as an asset in increasing customer retention and improving a hotel's image as a Muslim friendly hotel. In nowadays competitive tourism industry, such image is very valuable and helps obtain repeat visits and referrals within the Muslim population. Therefore, by implementing this aspect of *Hifz ad-Din*, the hotel management lays a strong foundation for the creation of a Shariah-compliant hotel.

Enhancing Health and Safety Protocols (*Hifz al-Nafs*)

Hifz al-Nafs is a concept in Islam that means preserving life for prosperity and glory (Al-Khadimi, 2001). This essentially means that any act that has the potential to take a life, such as murder or causing injury to someone, or anything that can adversely impact the health of an individual, is strictly prohibited in Islam. According to Mohd Izzuddin and Fatimah Nadirah (2018), a hotel with a *shariah-compliant* concept provides the best security systems and features, making it a safe place to visit or live in. The hotel is equipped with closed-circuit cameras (CCTV) in every corner to monitor visitors' movements. Implementing advanced security systems, such as CCTV surveillance, can help ensure the safety of guests, aligning with the principle of preserving life. The elevators will only move after visitors touch their card on the card reader. Additionally, a hotel that is *Shariah* compliant must be free from cigarette smoke and smoking activities. *Hifz al-Nafs* also includes hygiene aspects that greatly affect human life. Therefore, all hotel areas, including rooms, toilets, and the lobby, must always be clean and tidy. The kitchen of the hotel must receive an A grade from the Department of Health. Hotels should maintain high hygiene standards, ensuring that all areas, including rooms and kitchens, are clean and receive good health rates. Additionally, the hotel should comply with halal food standards by obtaining a halal certificate from JAKIM and displaying the halal logo on their premises. This is because Islam prohibits Muslims from consuming illegal sources, elements of carcasses, and impurities to safeguard themselves from harmful substances.

Practicing *Hifz al-Nafs* through better health and safety policies does not only satisfy the religious requirements but also adds value to the contentment of the guests thus enhancing profitability of the hotel. By emphasizing health and safety, the hotels do not just observe the religious requirements, but they also make a safer place for the guests as guests tend to feel more secure during their stay. This places the hotel in good prospects which ensures that the guest satisfaction and loyalty, occupancy rate, and income are enhanced.

Promoting Knowledge and Education (*Hifz al-Aql*)

Hifz al-Aql is the act of preserving and safeguarding one's reasoning abilities, which includes abstaining from all intoxicating substances and promoting education and knowledge for all individuals (Al-Alim, 1994). The Quran contains several verses that highlight the significance of critical thinking in Islam. This indicates that intelligence plays a vital role in the religion. Islam prohibits the use of intoxicating substances like alcohol that can impair our thinking abilities. Instead, it urges its followers to seek knowledge and enhance their reasoning capabilities.

To meet the expectations of *Hifz al-Aql*, a Shariah-compliant hotel must fulfill two main requirements. Firstly, the hotel must refrain from promoting, preparing, or selling alcohol on their premises, including in the bar, café, or mini fridge of each room (Wan Sahida et al., 2011). Additionally, any activities that involve alcohol consumption, such as dancing or clubbing, are strictly prohibited (Henderson, 2010). This is because alcohol is considered harmful to the mind, body, religion, and society (Al-Qaradhawi, 2014). Secondly, Shariah-compliant hotels are expected to provide their guests with access to knowledge and information. This can be achieved by setting up reading centers or mini libraries that offer books on local culture, architecture, cuisine, and other relevant topics (Hanson Mak, 2013). For example, Hotel Le Meridien is known to have a library that provides books on various subjects related to local tourist destinations. Similarly, Hotel Book and Bed in Japan offers its visitors access to a collection of 1700 books (Richard Smart, 2015). Lastly, Shariah-compliant hotels may also provide mental care items such as Islamic music (*nasheed*) and Muslim-friendly television channels.

Hotels have the opportunity to improve the guest experience by providing resources, with Islamic history classes or sessions that include tools, such as two or several-week workshops in Islamic calligraphy which are consistent with the core Islamic values. This approach of offering knowledge and education brings a distinction to the hotel and appeals to travelers who are more of a cultural or religious nature. The key differentiator for Shariah-compliant hotels is their active pursuit of knowledge unlike most traditional hotels. This cultural trait enhances the appeal of these hotels to both Muslims and non-Muslims who desire to be intellectually or culturally oriented hence offering a unique selling proposition (USP) in the highly competitive market segment.

Safeguarding Dignity and Lineage (*Hifz al-Nasab*)

Referring to *Hifz al-Nasab*, which is the preservation of lineage, hotels must meet specific criteria. The concept of dignity is essential to human life and Islam places great importance on preserving it. This involves safeguarding an individual's right to privacy and refraining from publicly accusing them of any immoral or negative behavior that could harm their dignity and reputation, as well as their family's lineage.

For instance, they are required to prohibit illegal entertainment such as nightclubs and television programs that contain obscene elements. This is mentioned in the studies conducted by Rosenberg and Choufany (2009), Henderson (2010), and Master-Crescent Rating (2021). Moreover, Zakiah and Fadilah (2013) state that for a hotel to be considered Shariah-compliant, it must provide separate facilities for men and women such as gymnasiums, swimming pools, etc. This is to avoid mixing or free association between men and women, which may lead to the occurrence of adultery. The hotel must also be a veiled zone, where every visitor must cover the veil perfectly and always dress modestly. Islam aims to safeguard the rights and dignity of individuals and communities. As per Islamic principles, hotels are required to provide a dress code for their guests or customers to ensure that they adhere to the prescribed limits.

Provisions for privacy are fundamental, such as ensuring that men and women have different areas in venues like a gym or spa. It is consistent with Islamic values of modesty and curtails the chances of Muslim guests feeling uncomfortable. Moreover, the absence of indecent programs on TV and other source while being accommodated at the hotel indicates high moral standards. If guests feel their privacy as well as their dignity is secure, they develop more trust in the brand which in turn incites loyalty towards the brand. This can result in enhanced brand trust and preference, especially by Muslim travelers who respect modesty, and this will enhance the hotel's branding. Finally, the application of *Hifz al-Nasab* in the operations of the hotel can apply in the first place, enhancing the overall experience of guests through promotion of family-oriented policies, ethical conduct of the employees, respect for different cultures, nutrition and health, and community development. Not only do these initiatives meet the religious requirements but they also add value to the hotel's image and business in the hospitality sector.

Catering to Dietary Needs (*Hifz al-Mal*)

Hifz Al-Mal is a concept that covers various aspects such as acquiring property, spending property, and avoiding any sinful activities related to property such as usury, gambling, and fraud (Al-Wardi, 2006). In general, hotels that follow *Shariah* principles should prioritize the issue of financial resources and ensure that their income is derived from lawful sources only. This includes avoiding any illegal activities that may compromise the hotel's income stream. It is important to manage the financial system of Shariah-compliant hotels under the principles of Islamic *Muamalat*, which includes making zakat payments. Additionally, property maintenance involves ensuring that each room has secure safe, and properly functioning door locks. The hotel should also provide a well-lit car park and other necessary amenities.

Portering fully consisted of and sprinkled with such an ethical notion of 'halal' cuisine within the different catering situations in the hotel – from room orders to the restaurant or the other places such as hospitable reception rooms and lobbies – will call for retraining the personnel regarding taking care of the halal food, as well as exploring links with disciplined official providers in this sense. This guide might also consist of guidelines for responsible conduct, for example, to ensure that high prices and opaque accounts are not practiced in business transactions. Catering to specific dietary requirements is in the first instance fully consistent with Islam and for its followers, halal can present a very attractive marketing opportunity. Given the growing interest for halal products around the globe, hotels that respect those criteria end up catering to a fully unique and tap going to be both Muslim customers satisfied to know and respect these standards and non-Muslims who appreciate responsible eating thus increasing revenue and increasing the share in the market.

The principles and objectives of *Maqasid Shariah* work to ensure enhanced guest satisfaction through consideration of other facets which are both practical and moral, thus extending beyond simply religious obligations. As these principles are applied by hotels, they start building their quality of service, ethical code and appreciation of the religion and its culture. Thus, reputation not only builds the loyalty of the guests but also creates platforms of partnerships with other shariah compliant brands and businesses which further encourages growth and sustainability in the business of hospitality industry. By implementing these strategies, hotels can create an environment that not only meets the needs of Muslim guests but also aligns with the broader objectives of *Maqasid Shariah*, fostering a respectful and inclusive atmosphere for all visitors.

When evaluated based on the *Maqasid Shariah* perspective, a Shariah-compliant hotel's infrastructure encompasses specific features. Table 2 summarizes the five matters of *Maqasid Shariah* principles in hospitality and tourism services.

Table 2
The Principles of Maqasid Shariah in Hospitality and Tourism Services

5 Principles of <i>Maqasid Shariah</i>	Critical Criteria of <i>Shariah</i>
Religion is preserved through organizational management and administrative as well as leadership based on the <i>Maqasid</i> mindset and Islamic management system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Administration ▪ Leadership ▪ Human Resources
Steps towards safeguarding life are emphasized through monitoring the safety of infrastructure, the welfare of workers, and the provision of food.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Human Resources ▪ Food ▪ Infrastructure
Intelligence is preserved through the generation of optimal thinking in service management and continuous quality assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Administration ▪ Human Resources
The preservation of the lineage is ensured through good health care and nutrition as well as good behavioral ethics among the employees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Human Resources ▪ Health Facilities ▪ Food
Property care involves Shariah-based financial management as well as the preservation and conservation of assets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Finance ▪ Infrastructure

Source: Guidelines for Hospitality and Tourism Services based on *Maqasid Shariah* (JAKIM, 2021)

Azizah's study (2021) found that the current practices of Shariah-compliant hotels, or Muslim-friendly hotels, align with the basic principles of *Daruriyyat* in Islam. These principles are illustrated in Table 3. When drafting guidelines for hotel operators, it is suggested that the guidelines include the five basic principles of *Maqasid*. These principles are the preservation of religion, life, lineage, intellect, and property. Policy makers need to acknowledge the importance of *Maqasid* principles when drafting policies for Islamic hotels.

According to Table 3 by Azizah (2021), the main concern in the hotel industry is gender separation in hotel accommodation. This practice has become widely accepted but was not previously considered important. However, some large hotels have recently made efforts to implement this concept. Gender segregation is highly recommended in Islam, as it upholds the protection of life and heredity. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) practiced segregation between men and women in the mosque, with separate entrances for each gender to avoid mixing. Separation

is also seen to preserve dignity and lineage, as Shariah expressly prohibits Muslims from engaging in fornication and adultery.

Table 3

Shariah-Compliant Hotels Attributes based on Maqasid Shariah Perspective

<i>Maqasid Shariah</i>		Shariah-Compliant Hotels Attributes
Preservation of Religion	Rooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Qibla</i> direction, prayer mat and time schedule for prayer • Al-Quran • Bathroom provides bidets • All female floors • Marriage certificates as a check-in procedure
Protection of Life	Foods and Kitchen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halal Kitchen (Utensils, Ingredients) • Serving Halal food at all times • Serving <i>sahoor</i> and <i>iftar</i> during Ramadhan
Protection of Mind	Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Praying rooms by gender • Swimming pool /scheduling by gender • Spa and gymnasium by gender • Separate facilities between male and female, • Azan • Congregational Jumaat prayer
Protection of Dignity	Staff Activities/ Event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shariah-compliant dress code • Entertainment for family and by gender
Protection of Wealth	Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Zakat</i> • <i>Sadaqah</i> • Islamic debt and investment management

Source: Azizah (2021)

Related Islamic dress code requirements, men are expected to cover their body from the navel to the knee. Women, on the other hand, are required to cover their hair and entire body, concealing any details from the public eye. This dress code is intended to minimize sexual temptation and corruption in society for both men and women. Following this dress code is a form of obedience to God. Islam prohibits any sexual appeal and physical attraction outside of marriage. However, it encourages sexual appeal and physical attraction between married couples within the confines of their relationship.

Good *akhlaq* training is necessary for hotel staff as it comprises of a set of accepted rules for an Islamic lifestyle. The main objective of this training is to instill and nurture moral values among hotel staff. It is imperative that this training is conducted regularly to continuously reinforce good *akhlaq* with Islamic values among hotel staff. This directly aligns with the principles of Protection of Lineage and dignity, which is one of the five main basic principles of *Maqasid Shariah*. It is important to note that Islam prohibits all activities that lead to evil, such as the free mixing of the sexes and wearing inappropriate and revealing clothing.

There are several suggestions to be made to improve the services of Muslim-friendly hotels which are:

1. The government particularly JAKIM, needs to tighten, monitor, and issue Muslim-friendly hotel guidelines specifically to ensure clarity to both consumers and hotel operators.
2. JAKIM needs to issue benchmarks to determine the validity of Muslim-friendly hotels.
3. The responsible parties also need to promote Muslim-friendly hotel products to consumers more widely and effectively.

4. The awareness of the hospitality managers is important to make the premises conform to the norms of Shariah-compliance.
5. Consumers also need to support the implementation of Muslim-friendly hotels and need to choose hotels with Islamic characteristics.
6. To further refine the characteristics of the Muslim-friendly hotel by considering Islamic design, the counter-keeper needs to check the marital status of customers as well as provide special clothing for non-Muslim visitors.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Maqasid Shariah must be adhered to when strategizing for the hospitality sector's growth in a manner consistent with Islamic law. Although many standards for Shariah-compliant hotels were established before the introduction of MS2610:2015, its strict adherence to the Shariah requirements brought out the phrase "Muslim-friendly" as a more practical term in Malaysia. This terminology enables the tourism industry to achieve the shariah objectives, especially the fundamental principles of *Dharuriyyat al-Khams* (protection of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property), while accommodating other interests held by various stakeholders. To further improve Muslim-friendly hospitality, JAKIM and other appropriate authorities may spearhead the process of modifying them to comply with *Maqasid Shariah* requirements. Some strategies in this regard could be the introduction of separate Muslim-friendly hotel classification or mark and establishing regular Shariah compliance checks. One of the methods used in Islamic finance, setting up a Shariah supervisory board within the hotel management, would also assist in consistently applying Shariah principles in practice. Services offered in Muslim-friendly hotels are of utmost importance to Muslim clients worldwide. Malaysian hotels have included vital facilities like halal food, prayer rooms, qibla's directions, prayer carpets, and appropriate entertainment. Their further expansion, as the result of detailed analysis, would facilitate best practice development for Muslim hospitality services, which show consistency and authenticity in *Shariah* compliance.

The objectives of this study lead to the conclusion that to retain supremacy in Muslim-friendly tourism, Malaysia's authorities will have to introduce novel features that cater to the target audience. Getting Muslim tourists has great economic advantages as it broadens the scope of cultural diversity and creates awareness and tolerance between different religions. To keep performing in Muslim tourism, Malaysia needs to enhance its standards, which include uniting Shariah laws with a friendly atmosphere for all. The Malaysian tourism sector has great potential if *Maqasid Shariah* is adopted at Muslim-friendly hotels, and Muslim travellers are the target-seeking hotels that do not conflict with their religion. Malaysia is already positioned as a leader in Muslim-friendly tourism by introducing a structured regulation such as MS2610:2015, where the term Muslim-friendly is used in place of no conflict with Islam to indicate an inclusive and Shariah-compliant ecosystem. Escalating this positioning requires a strategic buy-in from policymakers, industry players, and academia.

Recommendations for Industry Stakeholders

1. Development of Comprehensive Standards: JAKIM and other relevant authorities need to address current limitations by embedding the core values of MS2610:2015 within the objectives of *Maqasid Shariah*. This would mean trading beyond the basic needs of *Dharuriyyat* to include additional needs of *al-Hajjiyyat* and even beautification practices of *al-Tahsiniyyat*, which would improve guest experiences.

2. **Shariah Advisory in Hotel Management:** In the same way that Shariah compliance is observed in Islamic banks, the hotel management system must also embrace the appointing of Shariah advisors to different levels of management to ensure that operational decisions are consistent with Shariah requirements to enhance its authenticity and guest confidence.
3. **Certification and Auditing Framework:** JAKIM may propose a logo for Muslim-friendly hotels that reflect the characteristics embedded in the principles of *Maqasid Shariah*. Such certification would go hand in hand with periodic audits, enabling the maintenance of compliance and quality standards.
4. **Strengthened Employee Training on the *Maqasid Shariah* Principles of Islam:** It is fundamental to train its employees on the *Maqasid principles*. Such training will improve service delivery, as its core values will be practiced in all service operations with guests.
5. **World Partnerships and Marketing Strategies:** Marketing Muslim-friendly hotels to help Malaysia become the top choice for Muslim travellers around the world will engage travel agencies and online marketing platforms worldwide.

Recommendations for Future Research

1. **Effects of a Muslim-Friendly Certification on Tourist Satisfaction and Tourists' Loyalty:** A study seeking to establish the impacts of Muslim-friendly certifications on guest experience and guest loyalty will enable assessment of the effectiveness of the certification and its appropriate spheres of improvement.
2. **Inter-Cultural Comparison of Muslim-Friendly Standards:** Comparing Muslim-friendly hotel standards from different countries could provide deeper insights and help to understand the cultural influences on compliance with Shariah worldview, which would inform changes to the standards in Malaysia.
3. ***Maqasid Shariah* and its Environmental and Sustainability aspects:** In an era of climate change, studying sustainable practices that can be integrated into the *Maqasid Shariah* framework may help position Malaysian hospitality as a best practice globally while adhering to Islamic principles.

Integrating *Maqasid Shariah* principles while being “Muslim-friendly” will help Malaysia offer adequate services for both Muslim and non-Muslim tourists, contributing to cultural diversity. Such a pre-emptive measure will not only enhance Malaysia’s overall economic prospects and future benefits but also enhance its status as a country that embraces inter-ethnic and inter-religious coexistence.

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