



**DEVELOPMENT OF AUDIT CHECKLIST FOR
MUSLIM-FRIENDLY HOTEL'S ROOM**

BY

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**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the
degree of Master of Halal Management**

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ABSTRACT

The concept of Muslim-friendly hotels has been discussed since 1982. However, although in Malaysia there are nearly 3000 hotels that contribute to a capacity of about 200,000 rooms, only less than 10% out of that are considered as Muslim-friendly. Consequently, this research sought to create an auditing checklist guideline for Muslim-friendly hotel rooms, which will lead to the understanding of the facilities, services, as well as its elements and requirements. There were three objectives for this research, namely to identify the Islamic elements for a Muslim-friendly hotel room in Malaysia, to develop the audit checklist for Muslim-friendly hotel rooms (AC-MFHR) in Malaysia, and to assess the existing Islamic elements in conventional hotel rooms and in self-proclaimed Muslim-friendly hotel rooms in Malaysia. The followed methodology was literature research, observation and expert reviewed discussions, which were triangulated for validation in qualitative research. By selecting eight hotels as samples, and involving two types of hotel managements, the findings revealed that there are significant differences in the compliance and non-compliance criteria with the Islamic elements in the hotel rooms. They indicated four categories, namely prayer amenities, entertainment, environment, and interior infrastructure. Additionally, there are sixteen Islamic elements for Muslim-friendly hotel rooms, namely adequate praying space, bed and toilet position, decoration, TV channel programming, hygiene and cleanliness, toilet fitted with a bidet shower, Kiblat pointing signage, Qur'an with translation, female prayer garment, information on prayer times, halal toiletries, mini bar, no consumption of non-halal food and beverages, the day and night curtain, and the workable system. Moreover, the extent and availability of existing hotel management of incorporating Muslim-friendly concepts are different. 77% of elements compliance was scored in 'self-proclaimed' Muslim-friendly hotels rooms, while conventional hotel rooms received less than 54% of elements compliance. Furthermore, this proposed AC-MFHR was verified through validation by reviewed discussions by experts. Therefore, the developed AC-MFHR has been identified as a key finding to standardise Islamic elements in facilities and services. The results will facilitate improvements in the hotel industry, especially for those who are interested in substituting their hotel management toward the concept of Muslim-friendly hotel rooms.

ملخص البحث

تعود فكرة تأسيس الفنادق الصديقة للمسلمين أو المطابقة للشريعة الإسلامية إلى سنة 1982. في ماليزيا هناك ما يقارب 3000 فندق بسعة 200,000 غرفة، غير أن نسبة الغرف المطابقة للشريعة الإسلامية لا تتعدى 10%. من هذا المنطلق هدف هذا البحث لوضع مخطط توجيهي لتعميق فهم الخدمات المقدمة وتوضيح النقائص في هذه الغرف. تلخصت أهداف البحث في ثلاث نقاط أساسية، وهي توضيح أهم المتطلبات الإسلامية التي يجب توفرها في هذه الغرف، وتطوير قائمة التدقيق (AC-MFHR)، وتقييم العناصر الإسلامية الموجودة في الفنادق الماليزية، سواء الفنادق التقليدية أو الفنادق المدعية لمراعيتها للشريعة الإسلامية. الطريقة المعتمدة في هذا البحث تلخصت في ثلاث نقاط أساسية، وهي الاطلاع على البحوث التي تم نشرها من قبل في هذا المجال، الملاحظات النظرية، بالإضافة إلى نقاشات مع مختصين في هذا المجال. تم أخذ ثمانية فنادق حيث اعتمدت هذه الفنادق على نمطين مختلفين في الإدارة. أوضحت النتائج أنه هناك فرق كبير بين الالتزام و عدم الالتزام في الشروط الإسلامية داخل الغرف. تم الاعتماد في هذه الفنادق على أربع عناصر وهي: تسهيلات الصلاة، ووسائل الترفيه والتسلية، والمحيط العام، والبنية التحتية الداخلية، بالإضافة إلى ستة عشر مطلب إسلامي للغرف الإسلامية، وهي كالتالي: تحديد مكان للصلاة، ووضعية السرير والمرحاض، والديكورات المستعملة، والبرامج التلفازية، والنظافة، ومراحيض مع شطافات ماء، وتحديد اتجاه القبلة، وتوفير القران المترجم، ولباس الصلاة للنساء، وتوفير أوقات الصلاة، وتوفير حاجيات في المرحاض من النوع الحلال، وتوفير ثلاجة صغيرة، وعدم استهلاك المأكولات والمشروبات الغير حلال، وستائر النوافذ، وآليات العمل الجيدة. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، وجد عدد من الاختلافات لدى إدارات الفنادق حول مفهوم الفنادق الإسلامية. وجدت هذه الدراسة أن 77% من المتطلبات الإسلامية موجودة في الفنادق المدعية لمراعيتها للشريعة الإسلامية، وفي الوقت نفسه لم تتجاوز الفنادق التقليدية نسبة 54%. تم تقديم مقترح AC-MFHR لمراجعته من خلال عرضه للمناقشة مع الخبراء. و بالتالي، فإن قائمة تدقيق AC-MFHR المطورة تم اعتبارها كمييار للمتطلبات الإسلامية التي يجب أن تتوفر في غرف الفنادق الإسلامية. هذه النتائج ستسهل تطوير الفنادق خصوصا للمهتمين بتوفير غرف إسلامية في فنادقهم.

APPROVAL PAGE

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DECLARATION

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*This thesis is dedicated to my beloved parents Haji Saffinee Sulaiman
and Hajah Rohani Abdullah and my Sibling Siti Safurah, Siti Solehah, Siti Suhailah,
Abdullah Raihan and my husband Mohd Fairuz Mat Yusoff and all family and friends*

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AC-MFHR	Audit Checklist Muslim-Friendly Hotel's Room
chap.	chapter
CHR	Conventional Hotel's Room
et al.	(et alia): and others
IIUM	International Islamic University Malaysia
IQS	Islamic Quality Standard
MAHO	Malaysian Associations of Hotels
MFHR	Muslim-Friendly Hotel's Room
MOTAC	Ministry of Tourism and Culture
n. d.	no date
P.B.U.H	Peace Be Upon Him
S.W.T	Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala (Praise be to Allah and the Most High)
SCMFHR	'Self-Claimed' Muslim-Friendly Hotel's Room
sec.	section
SOP	Standard of Operation
TAP	Tourist Accommodation Premises
UCSC	Universal Crescent Standard Center
UiTM	University Technology Mara
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
WTO	World Tourism Organization

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will outline and explain the information included in this thesis. The problem areas and research questions will be defined. The scope, purpose, and expected outcome are also highlighted in this chapter. In addition, a research outline will be provided.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The commercial hospitality industry is synonymous with the tourism industry which provides various tourism themes including eco-tourism, agro-tourism, culture tourism, and others. Principles of tourism hospitality have been developed in Europe and are based on the European context, which is not always responsive to the cultural differences and socio-economic realities of other cultures. After September 11, 2001, *Shariah*-compliant tourism products and activities have received higher demands. Malaysia is one of the popular destinations of Muslim tourists from the Middle East (Salleh, Hamid, Hashim, & Omain, 2014).

Shariah-compliant is not only for activities related to the economy, law and education but also covers all aspects of life including the hospitality and tourism industry. Hospitality in the tourism industry quickly responded by introducing Muslim-friendly hotels which provide halal food, alcohol-free bars and a space for praying. The argument is whether *Shariah*-compliant comes into picture when it does not look harmonious with the surrounding physical environment.

Shariah is an Arabic word which is defined as the Muslim guideline that should be followed (Doi, 1998). Ahmad (2000) highlighted that activities which are in accordance to *Shariah* must be based on four philosophic foundations; *tawhid*, *rububiyyah*, *khilafah* and *tazkiyyah*. According to Al Sari (2010), *Shariah*-compliant aims to fulfill basic human necessities and these necessities are religion, life, property, intellect, and posterity. *Shariah* preserved these necessities in three levels of interest. This preservation was accomplished from two sides, namely, the State, and the individual. The State is obliged to fulfill needs for all individuals according to levels of priority and according to its ability. Individuals fulfill their personal needs driven by internal motivation and by the obligations of *Shariah*.

The tourism industry in Malaysia was noted as one of the top five contributions to the national economy with a contribution of RM36.9 billion of gross national income in 2009. Malaysia has also targeted to receive 38 million tourists which is approximated to be worth RM168 billion by 2020 (Razalli, Abdullah, & Hassan, 2009). One of the most currently discussed topics in the tourism industry is hotel. As Malaysia receives millions of visitors from other Muslim countries, it is important to design and maintain the tourist accommodation premises (TAP) according to the *Shariah* guideline.

Recently, researchers have shown an increased interest in evaluating whether the food and facilities provided in hotels are *Shariah* compliance or not (Henderson, 2010a; Razalli et al., 2009; Zailani, Omar, & Kopong, 2011). There is also an increasing amount of support from the government and non-government organizations (NGOs).

In 2015, the establishment of Malaysian Standard for Muslim Friendly Hospitality and Services (MS2015:2610) became an indicator to the hospitality

industry to standardize the term, 'Muslim-Friendly'. This is because numerous terms are used to describe Islamic hotels in Malaysia such as '*Shariah-Compliant Hotel*', 'Halal Hotel', and 'Islamic Hotel' to cover the principles and concept that hold *Shariah* as a requirement for the industry. Hence, the promotion of Muslim Friendly tourism will continue to Hotel industry as the hotel industry is an important component in the hospitality facilities and services industry. This is because when 'Muslim-Friendly' is incorporated by the hotels, the hotels can create a better paradigm.

In this case, by providing the Audit Checklist for Muslim-friendly hotel's Room (AC-MFHR) as a toolkit to be used by the auditors, the lists of elements and requirements that are useful for analysis and upgrading the existing elements in the conventional can be coherent with the Islamic framework. The purpose of upholding the objectives of the Third Industrial Master Plan (IMP3, 2006-2020) is to establish Malaysia as a global leader in Halal integrity while the main objective of the strategy is to provide the best hospitality services for tourists.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Hotels play an important role as hotels act as the host for greeting the tourists, especially to cater the Muslim tourists. The hotels should portray good behavior and traits in line *Iman*. Although Malaysia has approximately 3,000 hotels which are equivalent to 200,000 rooms, less than 10% are considered Islamic rooms by the Halal hotel since the rooms do not follow the *Shariah* compliance standard (Omar, Islam, Mohamad, & Adaha, 2013). However, it was found that the inbound tourists from Muslim countries will come to Malaysia and they are expected to contribute 181 billion in the year 2018 (Reuters, 2016).

According to Zakiah & Fadilah (2013a), for Malaysia to stand with *Shariah* compliance concept, an adjustment must be made with the existing standard in hotel operations, which refer to Star Rating and Orchid rating. Unfortunately, this concept is still an area of confusion in the industry especially among the hoteliers. As mentioned in Henderson (2010), some emphasized criteria that there must be fulfilled to form Muslim-friendly hotels are the availability of Qur'an and prayer mats in each room, toilets are positioned to not face the direction of Mecca, bidets in the bathrooms are installed, and all-female floors are provided.

As stated above, some hotels have copied these criteria to be implemented in their hotel operations. Grand Bluewave in Shah Alam for example, provides an exclusive floor for only women to stay. Hence, there are some researchers that have specifically used them to further understand the concept of Muslim-friendly hotels (Hidayat, Ridzuan, Salehuddin, & Zahari, 2011; Omar et al., 2013; Nur'Hidayah, & Mohd Salehuddin Mohd, 2012; Razalli et al., 2009; Saad, 2014; Zakiah & Fadilah, 2013a) . But, there are still problems in monitoring, standardizing, and preparing the hoteliers who have 'self-claimed' their hotels to be *Shariah* compliance. This is argued by Henderson (2010), Rosenberg and Choufany (2009) and Birchall (2009) as cited in Nor Zafir et al. (2014), without having a trusted standard, the hotel operations in Muslim-friendly hotel will be different from others.

Although much research have discussed the elements in the checklist for Muslim-friendly hotel concepts, none of them have focused on the argumentative aspect of each element from an Islamic perspective and assessing it in audit checklist. Hence, it is necessary to conduct an in-depth research on every element to suit the checklist according to Islamic the perspective and the standardization of Muslim-friendly hotel concept, specifically for their hotel rooms. This is in the context of

targeting the needs of Muslim guests who will be guided in the light of *Shariah*. By doing so, the hotel owners are keen to implement the concept of *Shariah* compliance to the hotel and they would not consider the implementation to be complicated after a proper audit checklist.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objective of the study is to create the guidelines for Muslim-friendly hotel's room audit checklist.

This study embarks on the following objectives;

1. To identify the Islamic elements for Muslim-friendly hotel's rooms in Malaysia.
2. To assess the existing Islamic elements in the conventional hotels' rooms and 'self-claimed' Muslim-friendly hotels' rooms in Malaysia.
3. To develop the AC-MFHR in Malaysia.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

From the research objectives, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- i) How to identify the Islamic elements for Muslim-friendly hotel's room?
- ii) What are the existing physical elements in the conventional hotels' rooms and 'self-claimed' Muslim-friendly hotels' rooms in Malaysia?
- iii) How to develop AC-MFHR?

1.6 SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

In this research, the physical elements in the hotel rooms have grouped into two categories; conventional hotel's room and 'self-claimed' Muslim-friendly hotel's room. Among the reasons for this categorization are to assess the elements from both types of hotels and enhance them to develop the new audit checklist for Muslim-friendly hotel's rooms. The in-depth study of the elements on hotel room is due to operational priorities, the guests' concern and to contribute their elements to AC-MFHR.

This research is focused on hotel room elements only as supported by earlier studies as well as other sources. The researcher also observes Islamic scholars' view in abiding the principles of Islam in every physical room element.

1.7 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to examine the potential relationship between conventional hotel's room and 'self-claimed' Muslim-friendly hotel's room for an ideal Muslim-friendly hotel's room. The focus will be narrowed down to the rooms provided by the hotel industry in order to explore the current elements that have been done in both lines. This is performed in order to create the strategy for the AC-MFHR guidelines.

1.8 EXPECTED OUTCOMES

A standardized elements in a hotel room which are to *Shariah*-compliant.

1.9 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Muslim Friendly Hotel - Hotel that practices *Shariah* compliance concept to fulfil Muslim guests' needs.

- Shariah compliance** - The conformity to *Shariah* (Islamic Law). The crucial principles in the *Shariah* is regarding public interest (maslahah) that secure the welfare of humanity physically, morally, and spiritually in this world and the hereafter.
- Maqasid Shariah** - *Maqasid Shariah* means the objective in *Shariah* is to hold the protection of the five fundamentals. The scholars (Al-Shatibi in Ar-Raysuni: 2006) said, there are three keys in *Maqasid Shariah*, namely, as the essential (*al-Dharuriyyah*), the necessities (*al-hajiyyah*), and the luxuries (*al-tahsiniyyah*).
- Al-Dharuriyyah** - preserve faith, soul, wealth, mind and offspring.
- Al-Hajiyyah** - Second level after *al-Dharuriyyah*. Matters that do not involved issues of life and death.
- Al-Tahsiniyyah** - Beautifying purposes.
- Shariah concept** - The principle of holding Islamic law as a base.
- Audit Checklist** - The examination of system to comply with agreed criteria of standard regulations.
- Room** - Space for human to sleep and conduct personal activities.
- Compliance** - Conformity of elements that a Muslim needs in their lifestyles.
- Non-compliance** - Antonym to compliance.
- Non-conformance** - Not performing according to the standard.