

SHARI'AH PRINCIPLES IN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY SERVICES: A MALAYSIAN PERSPECTIVE*

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Abstract

Muslim friendly tourism and hospitality is an emerging sector in the Malaysian and global halal industry. This effort aims at fulfilling the needs of local and international Muslim tourists. There have been various efforts made by service providers in the hospitality services industry to fulfil the needs of Muslim tourists and this includes providing halal inflight food, Muslim friendly tourism package, Muslim friendly tourism products and Muslim friendly tourism accommodation. In the latest development, effort is also made to provide Muslim friendly transportation. This article aims to highlight the *Shari'ah* compliant principles in tourism and hospitality services in Malaysia as manifested in the Malaysian Standard MS 2610: 2015 for Muslim Friendly Hospitality Services Requirements. It is hoped that the article could better explain how the guideline could be applied by service providers who are interested in preparing themselves for a more *Shari'ah* compliant hospitality service in the tourism sector.

Keywords: Halal Tourism, Hospitality services, *Shari'ah* compliant tourism, Muslim friendly hospitality services.

Introduction

Malaysia has started to implement certain aspects of Muslim friendly hospitality services in the tourism and hospitality services as early as 1972. This began with ensuring that restaurants and manufacturers offering Halal food to actually comply with the Shari'ah requirements. This was done through the introduction and implementation of the Malaysian Halal Certification with the use of Malaysian Halal Logo. (Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM).

Aside from the growth in Halal food industry, Malaysia has gone on further to introduce the Muslim friendly hospitality services as a specific segment of the tourism market. As a result of rigorous efforts by the Malaysian Government as well as the tourism service providers, Malaysia has emerged as the top Muslim friendly destination in the world for seven consecutive years since 2010. (Cressent Rating, 2017). Tourism is the second largest National GDP and has continuously seen an increase in tourist arrivals and this is expected to grow inline with the increase of global Muslim population which is expected to increase at 3.5% to 2.2 billion Muslims in 2030. This indirectly affects the demands for Shari'ah compliant tourism and hospitality products and services in Malaysia.

The Malaysian Government has identified tourism as one of the key economic areas (NKEA's) in order to achieve the Government's Economic Transformation

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Programme (ETP). This is done through the Malaysian Tourism Transformation Plan (MTTP) to encourage the increase in the number of tourists' arrival and receipts (Ministry of Tourism Malaysia, 2013). Tourists' arrivals and receipts also show a positive progression that illustrates how the industry is thriving. Table 1 shows this fact where it can be seen that starting from 2010 until 2016, it can be seen that although there is a slight decrease in tourists arrivals in 2015 and 2016 if compared to 2014, the total tourist's receipts has increase from 72.0 Billion in 2014 to 82.1 Billion in 2016. This is an increase in approximately 10% within two years. (Malaysia Travel News, 2014).

Table 1: Tourist Arrivals and Receipts to Malaysia 2009-2013

Year	Arrivals	Receipts (RM)
2016	26.76 Million	82.1 Billion
2015	25.72 Million	69.1 Billion
2014	27.44 Million	72.0 Billion
2013	25.72 Million	65.44 Billion
2012	25.03 Million	60.6 Billion
2011	24.71 Million	58.3 Billion
2010	24.58 Million	56.5 Billion

Source: Tourism Malaysia Corporate Website (www.corporate.gov.my), 2013

Muslim Hospitality Services in Malaysia

Muslim friendly hospitality services in Malaysia is not just confined to a industrial participation. The Malaysian government through the Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Malaysia (MOTAC) and related government agencies had seriously participated in providing the appropriate infrastructure for the growth of the industry. In February 2015, the Department of Standard Malaysia (DSM) had published the Malaysian Standard MS 2610:2015 Muslim Friendly Hospitality Services_ Requirements, which provides the necessary guidelines to industrial players who are interested on embarking on Muslim friendly hospitality services in Malaysia.

The Malaysian Standard was developed with the aim to ensure that products and services provided for Muslim tourists are in accordance to the Shari'ah principles. The objectives of the standard are: (MS2610:2015 Department of Standard Malaysia)

- a) to enhance the ability of an organisation/individual to produce and/or manage Muslim friendly tourism products and services that meet the Shari'ah principles;
- b) to preserve and protect the integrity of Muslim friendly tourism products and services through effective application of the standard; and

- c) to enhance customer satisfaction by meeting customer requirements.

The Malaysian Standard provides guidelines and requirements for managing tourism facilities, products and services for Muslim travellers in accommodation premises, tour packages and tourist guides. (MS2610:2015). However, compliance to the standard is on a voluntary basis. The relevant authority is in the process of establishing the certification procedure for Muslim Friendly hospitality services.

Shari'ah Compliant Hotel in Malaysia

At present, compliance to the *Shari'ah* principles for hotels is done internally by the respective hotel management. However, based on the MS2610:2015, an ideal Shari'ah compliant hotel could be achieved if the following conditions are met:

Table 2: Characteristic of Muslim Friendly Accommodation/Hotel

No	Items	Requirement
1.	Food and Beverages	The organisation's kitchen shall be certified Halal by competent authority. (Clause 5.2.2.2). The organisation shall ensure that the information on services during <i>Ramadhan</i> is available and communicated. The services shall include times and meals for <i>sahur</i> and <i>iftar</i> .
2	Public <i>Musolla</i>	There shall be allocated public <i>musolla</i> for Muslims at the establishment. The requirement for public <i>musolla</i> shall be as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. located at suitable location and has a signage that dedicated for <i>musolla</i>; b. well lit with adequate ventilation, is kept clean and well maintained; c. has a clearly marked <i>kiblat</i> direction verified by a competent authority; d. has segregated prayer areas for men and women; e. has sufficient number of <i>sajada</i>; f. has current information on prayer time or upon request; g. provides clean female prayer garment or upon request; and

		h. has segregated <i>wudhu'</i> facilities for men and women which are adjacent to the musalla.
3	Public washroom	The requirement for public washroom shall be as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. the washroom shall be equipped with bidet, hand shower or water hose; b. the washroom floor shall be kept clean; and c. the amenities/products provided in the washroom are suitable for Muslims.
4	Room	The organisation shall ensure that the room is suitable for Muslim guests which includes but not limited to the following condition. (Clause 5.2.1.1) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The room shall be kept clean and well maintained. b. The organisation shall ensure that the guest rooms have a clearly marked kiblat direction verified by a competent authority. c. The rooms shall have adequate floor space for a Muslim guest to perform solah in the room. d. The washroom shall be equipped with bidet, hand shower or water hose. e. The washroom floor shall be kept clean. f. The organisation shall ensure that personal care amenities and/or products provided in the washroom are suitable for Muslim use. g. Alcoholic beverages and intoxicants shall not be stored in the room's refrigerator.
5.	Toilet	Division for toilet and ablution area. A bidet shower provided for toilet.
6.	Facilities	Segregated facilities between male and female such as swimming pool, gymnasium and small prayer room (<i>Musolla</i>)
7.	Floor	Dedicated floor for women only

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8. Recreational and wellness facilities The requirements for recreational and wellness facilities shall be as follows:
- a. recreational and wellness facilities shall be kept clean and well maintained;
 - b. the washroom at the facilities shall be equipped with bidet or hand shower; and
 - c. wherever appropriate, the organisation shall provide facilities that are Muslim friendly.
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Source: MS2610:2015. Muslim friendly Services requirements (Department of standard Malaysia, 2015)

Conclusion

The establishment of the standard intends to facilitate companies or even individuals who are interested in offering Muslim friendly hospitality services to Muslim tourists in Malaysia. It is hoped that this will improve the services provided to Muslim tourists in particular, and all other tourists in general. Through the effort of inserting Shari'ah principles into the tourism and hospitality, the bridge of *ukhuwwah* (fraternity) is created. It is also hoped that the beauty, values and culture of Islam and Muslims could be better reflected through Muslim friendly hospitality services.

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