

EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS OF HALAL HOTEL SERVICES: BASED ON PRACTICES OF HALAL HOTELS IN THREE COUNTRIES

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Abstract—Muslim market has been increasingly an attractive market for tourism industry. With total population of 1.6 Billion or 23% from total world population Muslim market is very lucrative and has to be treated in accordance with Muslim belief and way of life. Halal tourism becomes a must have in the industry to accommodate Muslim tourists. Hotel plays an important role in the growing halal tourism industry. The Success of tourist visit often depends on how acceptable is the hotel where they are staying with Muslim norms and facilities to conduct ibadah (worship) such as Sala (praying). Muslim tourists generally concern if hotel is Muslim friendly and could accommodate their halal life style. Some of the need of Muslim visitors during their stay are: the hotel provides a sign of Ka'bah direction, mat for praying, facility for ablution, wet toilet (water instead of tissue) in toilet, staff wearing modest dress, no pork on food, no alcohol, relevant music with Islamic atmosphere, no adultery entertainment, etc. therefore, it's far beyond halal food, but also not least to mention the segregation of public facilities for female and male as for majority of Moslem halal is a life style, including during travel. The objective of this research is to do exploratory analysis of halal hotel services based on practices of three halal hotel at three countries: Hotel Sofyan (Jakarta, Indonesia), De Palma Hotel Ampang (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia) and Adenya Hotel and Resort (Antalya, Turkey). Research methodology uses qualitative approach through in-depth unstructured interview with selected informants (primary data) and the use of secondary data plus site observation on selected Halal Hotels in Jakarta (Indonesia), Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) and Antalya (Turkey).

Keywords—Exploratory analysis, Halal (Muslim friendly) hotel services, Halal tourism, qualitative study.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background

The world is experiencing a rise in the number of international halal tourists, travelers who choose to

abide by the guidelines of the Islamic religion with respect to appropriate behaviors whilst traveling (Abdul-Razzaq, 2016). Muslim Market is growing, it is a lucrative market accounted to 1.6 billion people or 23% of the world population. In aggregate, the global expenditure of Muslim consumers on food and lifestyle sectors is being estimated to be \$1.62 trillion in 2012 and is expected to reach \$2.47 trillion by 2018. This figure form the substantial potential core markets for halal food and lifestyle sectors as it is represented more than \$8 trillion in GDP (Thomson Reuters, 2013).

In recent years, it has been observed that there is a growing interest in a new tourism concept such as 'Islamic tourism' or 'halal' hospitality which similar to the concept of Halal food which had been recognized in many countries including those in the Middle East (Nazari et.al, 2010 in Samori and Sabtu, 2012). The fundamental of halal friendly tourism includes the components such as halal friendly hotel, halal transportation (Halal airlines), halal food premises, Islamic tour packages or any other halal activities such as halal logistics and Islamic finance which support it in order to develop the niche of halal tourism (Zulkifli, Rahman, Awang and Man, 2013).

Samori and Sabtu (2012) further argued that there are no formal criteria for the Muslim Friendly Hotel or Halal Hotel (sometimes it is also called *Shariah Compliant* hotel).

Halal food and halal hotel should go together as part and parcel of tourism industry. In the Quran, there are a lot of verses asking the Muslim to consume halal foods such as in Surah al-Baqarah : 173 and 168. Allah SWT says in Surah al-Baqarah: 168: "O ye people! Eat of what is on earth lawful and good, and do not follow the footsteps of the Evil One, for he is to you an avowed enemy."

Again in Surah al- Baqarah : 172, Allah reminds "O ye who believe! Eat of good things that we have provided for you and be grateful to Allah, ift is Him ye worship."

Halal friendly hotel is one of the hotel which provide the halal services to the Muslim travelers. This type of hotel is not limited to serve halal food and beverages but the operation throughout the hotel would

also be managed based on Islamic principles such as providing halal food and drink, no alcohol beverage being served in the hotel premises, qibla sign provided in each room, prayer mat, copied of holy quran, provide ramadhan facilities, such as ramadhan buffet and also for early breakfast (sahur) during ramadhan. Halal friendly hotel should also focus on their operation, design of the hotels and also their based financial of the hotel. Facilities at the hotel should be operating as accepted in sharia principles. For example, facilities such as spa, gym, swimming pool, guest and function should be separated for males and females (Zulkifli, et al, 2013). Therefore, Halal standard can be classified into some elements such as: quality management from perspective if Islam -food and beverages, facilities, finance, insurance, travel package, transportation/airlines, and other travel/accommodation related activities.

Hotel is an establishment of the services such as accommodation, food and drinks for or temporary residents who intend to stay at the hotel (Medlik and Ingram, 2000 in Zulkifli, et al, 2013). Earlier times hotel industry is commonly known as lodging industry which providing overnight accommodation to the guest who stay away from home. The halal hotel is not only concern on food and beverage but, it should precisely define on products, equipment, services and activities in the hotels itself (Jeffery, 2008 in Sabidin, 2015).

The Muslim travelers are becoming more conscious towards halal food and services while they are having their vacation (Zulkifli, et al, 2013). Tourism sector is a sector that has been identified by government as a catalyst for the economy. Halal industry has been becoming a lucrative market globally either for products or services. However, The services sector such as tourism has yet to tap into this lucrative market event though the halal travel is gaining popularity globally. There is a need for standard framework of halal friendly tourism. (Zulkifli, et al, 2013).

It is concluded that there are a large potential of the halal industry and tourism in terms of marketing size and income. By specifically referring to the hotel services sector, it clearly shows that it will not only benefit the Muslim but also it will give advantages to non-Muslim (Samori and Sabtu, 2012). By 2005 onwards, the Islamic-oriented trend hotels has spilled over, with a number of hotels positioning themselves as Islamic-oriented hotels, such as Caprice Hotel in Turkey, Al-Jawhara Hotel in Dubai, Hotel Sofyan and Hotel Tuara Natama in Indonesia and DePalma Hotel in Malaysia (Razalli, et al. 2013).

Despite of the previous research and discussion has led to sort of agreement with the concept of Halal hotel, however there are not a general and comprehensive accepted model for Halal hotels which can be used as guidance on determining and creating Halal Hotels to be accepted worldwide.

B. Research Objectives

The objective of this research is to do exploratory analysis of halal hotel services based on practices of three halal hotel at three countries: Hotel Sofyan (Jakarta, Indonesia), De Palma Hotel Ampang (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia) and Adenya Hotel and Resort (Antalya, Turkey).

C. Research Questions

Research questions are: How the Halal hotel services are conducted by using exploratory analysis based on practices of three halal hotel at three countries: Hotel Sofyan (Jakarta, Indonesia), De Palma Hotel Ampang (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia) and Adenya Hotel and Resort (Antalya, Turkey). Can the Halal hotels practices be accepted model worldwide?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Halal Tourism

The word halal is an Arabic word for permissible, and is used to refer to everything that is permissible for a practicing Muslim. Conversely, the word haram, the Arabic word for forbidden, is used to signify the things that are forbidden for a Muslim to consume or engage in (Battour and Ismail, 2015). The source of what constitutes halal and haram is derived from the Quran and the prophet's Sunna (the teachings, words, and daily conduct of the Prophet Muhammed).

Abdul-Razzaq (2016) and Razalli, et al. (2013) argued that the notion of halal encompasses all the aspects of Muslim's life. However, halal is widely associated with food and what is allowed to be consumed by Muslims. The Quran contains many food-related verses outlining the permissible foods, such the Ayat (verse) mentioned in Surat Al Maaidah (The table) in the Quran: "*All things suitable [for eating] have been permitted to you*" (5:4).

The Quran also highlights what is strictly forbidden. The following Ayah in Surat Al Baqara (The Cow) highlights food items that are considered haram: "*Only carrion, blood, flesh of swine and that which is consecrated for anything other than God is prohibited for you. Even, in these things, whoever is driven by necessity, intending neither sin nor transgression, there shall be no sin upon him. Indeed God is extremely Forgiving, Eternal in mercy*" (2:173).

Not surprisingly, the concept of Halal also extends into the realm of the tourism industry. Carboni et al. (2014) state that halal tourism has found a favoring amongst Muslim travelers who prefer to choose goods and services that follow the Islamic teachings so as to abide by Sharia (a set of rules derived from the Quran and the Prophet's (peace be upon him) *Sunna* that dictate the daily lives and practices of Muslims whilst travelling.

The hospitality industry has also seen a rise in the popularity of Islamic-friendly services (Battour et al., 2014). Although most efforts in accommodation and lodging development in the past have been dedicated to a secular market, whilst deeming religious needs as less important, catering to religious needs has gathered in pace in recent years (Weidenfeld and Ron, 2008). Islamic hospitality has developed over the past decades and has become a valid part of the hospitality and foodservice industry with several recognized features (Stephenson, 2014, in Abdul-Razzaq, 2016).

The phenomenon of the rise in demand for tourism services that adhere to the laws of Islam has been dubbed as “halal tourism”, “Islamic tourism”, or “Sharia tourism” (Henderson, 2010; Mohsin et al., 2015 in Abdul-Razzaq, 2016; Battour and Ismail, 2015). According to Carboni et al. (2014) Islamic tourism is defined as “tourism in accordance with Islam, involving people of the Muslim faith who are interested in keeping with their personal religious habits whilst travelling”. Muslims that choose to obey the teachings of their religion whilst travelling, particularly in non-Muslim countries, has created a market for Muslim-friendly tourist services. Similarly, Zulkifli, et al. (2013) stated that Halal tourism can be defined as any activities that permissible under Islam teaching including halal airlines, halal food, halal friendly hotel, Islamic tour packages or any activities which is comply with Islamic principle. Many nations around the world, such as Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore, are capitalizing on the rise in demand for Muslim-friendly tourist services (Henderson, 2010, in Abdul-Razzaq, 2016). Zamani-Farahani and Henderson (2010) in Battour and Ismail (2015) considered that Islamic tourism and Halal tourism are same concepts and defined Islamic tourism as simply tourism mainly by Muslims who prefer to stay within their culture.

B. Halal Travel and Accommodation

Travel is encouraged in Islam. Travelling for religious purposes is a fundamental aspect of the Islamic religion. One of the five pillars of Islam is the performance of Hajj (the pilgrimage to Mecca required of every Muslim of sound mind which takes place on the last month of the Muslim or Hijri calendar). Muslims must travel to the city of Mecca in order to perform the Hajj pilgrimage (Jafari and Scott, 2014 in Abdul-Razzaq, 2016). There are many verses of Quran encourages Muslim to travel, such as: “*Tell them, Roam through the earth and see how Allah SWT did originate creation: So will Allah produce a later creation: for Allah has power over all things.*” (Surah al-Ankabut: 20).

Accommodation sector is one of the most important sectors that support the tourism industry, which has grown steadily in parallel with the Malaysian hospitality industry (Salleh et al, 2014). Findings from Ahmat, et al (2015) indicated that the adaptation of a

true Syariah Compliant is still vague because hotel operators mostly are not really comprehend about the concept, hence leads to misinterpretation.

Other destinations in predominantly Muslim countries are finding a favoring amongst Muslim travelers. For example, Turkey is fast becoming experiencing a rise in the arrivals of halal-conscious tourists. In response to this rise in demand, many Turkish destinations are establishing halal-friendly facilities, such as hotels and gender segregated beaches (Girit, 2014 in Abdul-Razak, 2016). The halal friendly establishments in Turkey have proven more popular with domestic tourists rather than foreign Muslim tourists (Aydoğan, 2013, in Abdul-Razzaq, 2016).

Abdullah (2010) in Ahmat et al (2015) defined *Syariah* Compliant as an Arabic word which means the ‘way’ or ‘path’ referred to both Islamic system of law and the totality of the Islamic way of life as *Syariah* deals with many things including politics, economics, banking, business, family, sexuality, hygiene and social issues. Meanwhile, Muhammad (2009) in Ahmat et al (2015) specifically outline *Syariah* Compliant hotel as hotels where products, services offered, and financial transactions are fully obeyed *Syariah* principles, from serving halal food and beverages to implement all parameters of Islamic values for health, safety, environment, and the benefits on economics to all mankind regardless of race, faith, or culture. It is clear that *Syariah* is a law which covers each aspect of life from aqidah, fiqh, and akhlak where it allows and prohibits certain things in addition to a set of guidelines that need to be followed by all Muslims (ATTO Report, 2013). *Syariah* compliant hotel not merely concerned on the operational side which includes the product and services offered to the customers, but actually it starts from the initial stage of designing the hotel and the most critical part is to make sure the financial transaction to strictly comply with the Islamic principles (Ahmat et al, 2015).

III. METHODS

A. Data Collections Method

Research methodology uses qualitative approach through in-depth unstructured interview with selected informants (primary data) and the use of secondary data plus site observation on selected Halal Hotels in Jakarta (Indonesia), Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) and Antalya (Turkey). Secondary data are obtained from guest response from Trip Advisors who has experienced staying in the hotels plus related previous research publications.

B. Data Analysis

Data analysis is made by comparing and through analyzing available data both primarily data and secondary data in conjunction with the research objectives. Analysis is provided in descriptive form and nature.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. *De Palma Hotel, Ampang Kuala Lumpur*

De Palma Hotel, Ampang Kuala Lumpur has developed and enhanced their hotel as a *Shariah* compliant hotel by providing Muslim-friendly services. The characteristics of this hotel are the Islamic floor at level 6 is mainly dedicated to Muslim guests include prayer room, direction of *qiblat* in each room, prayer veils, Quran, Yassin and hand bidet in the toilet for ablution. The Azan will also be heard in every prayer time. This hotel has a large prayer room with a full time Imam to lead daily prayers and Friday prayers. This is the only hotel which is allowed and permitted to conduct Friday prayers where its prayer room could accommodate a congregation of 1200- 2000 people including staff and by public. In addition to that, there are compulsory for female staff to wear Muslim dress code which proper covering the area. As a Muslim-friendly service hotel, De Palma hotel also provides halal food in their hotel restaurants and this restaurant had received certification of halal by the Selangor Islamic Religious Department. Moreover, the hotel also conducts special religious classes on al-Quran recital, *Qiamullail* and *Tazkirah* programs for hotel guest and staff in order to improve their religious knowledge (Wan Sahida et.al, 2011 in Samori and Rahman, 2013).

The hotel has only one swimming pool, used can be mixed between male and female guests. However, female should use Muslim swimming wear which cover all part of the body, except face. Normally the swimming pool is use for family, especially children. It seems that swimming is not main attraction for the hotel guests.

Traditionally the guest are Malaysia Muslim (the Malays), however, the hotel guest are not only Muslim, on certain period the hotel receive guest coming from non-Muslim country such as South Korea. Apparently, facility provided for non-Muslim guests are the same with for Muslim guests. For example hotel only provided Halal food.

B. *Adenya Hotels and Resorts, Alanya Antalya Turkey*

Adenya Hotels & Resorts is a luxury 5-star destination on the Mediterranean, on the southern coastline of Turkey. In 2014, the hotel was open 12 months of the year, with an occupancy rate of 66 percent. Source Markets: Adenya Hotels & Resorts' top source markets are Europe (especially Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Macedonia, Netherlands, Switzerland, and U.K), Central Asian Countries (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russia, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan), UAE, Saudi Arabia, and the domestic Turkish market. Their guests are honeymooners and conservative Muslim families. They also accommodate corporate meetings that usually occur off season, during autumn and winter.

Being a Halal hotel and Resorts the Hotel is Serving Muslim Needs:

- The resort offers indoor and outdoor pools, especially designed and separated for women and men. Five of the swimming pools are female only pools, and three are men's only pools.
- The resort also offers private beach areas. There is a dedicated female only beach, and a family beach where modesty is required. There are separate spa facilities for men and women, in addition to segregated gym, Turkish bath, sauna and steam rooms.
- The resort has a kids club and offers family-friendly entertainment. All food is halal and alcoholic beverages are not served in the hotel. They have a mosque at the resort and hold Friday prayers led by an imam. Adenya has a halal certificate from Malaysian-based World Halal Union.
- There are Adzan sounds 5 times and can be heard from the hotel lobby and the hotel surrounding area. Big mosque is available at 2nd Ground Floor. An Imam stands by to lead the *shalat* (prayer). There are not alcoholic drink available, no pork food at the restaurant. Mat for praying is provided in each room, also the Quran, and the sign of Qiblat is also provided. However, based on observation, mostly the women staff do not use hijab.

C. *Sofyan Hotel, Menteng Jakarta*

Hotel location is at Jalan Cut Mutia No.9, Menteng, Central Jakarta – Indonesia. Hotels with The Sharia Hotel theme are managed by the Islamic Sharia. Hotel promotes to stay with satisfactory services and facilities in a strategic location that is suitable for Muslim leisure travelers and business people. Sofyan Hotel is a popular choice for Muslim travelers. Only 50 KM away, this 3-star hotel can be easily accessed from the airport. Visitors to the hotel can take pleasure in touring the Jakarta city's top attractions: Tugu Tani Statue, Sunda Kelapa Harbor, Jaksa Street, National Monument, Old Jakarta town, etc.

Sofyan Hotel Menteng claims it offers impeccable service and all the essential amenities to invigorate travelers. This hotel offers numerous on-site facilities to satisfy even the most discerning guest. In addition, all guestrooms feature a variety of comforts. Many rooms even provide towels, sofa, mirror, internet access – wireless, internet access – wireless (complimentary) to please the most discerning guest. Throughout the day the relaxing atmosphere of the separated male – female fitness center, massage, garden. Superb facilities and an excellent location make the Sofyan Hotel Menteng the perfect base from which to enjoy while staying in Jakarta.

Hotel management believes that *Sharia* products are good for all, both for Muslims and non-Muslims. As for food, Muslims are the main needs of halal food and everything is lawful, therefore, halal certification must be there, all of them have to be certified. Not only halal food and drinks, any restroom or restroom should provide enough water for washing, whether to urinate or even to bathe. This is sometimes rarely found in conventional hotels.

The ease of purification including toilets, showers, as well as the availability of rinse water, not just tissues is provided. This is to cater for Muslims. To worship in addition there is a large mosque. Further, in each room there is also the direction of Qiblat, prayer mat and Al-Quran.

Hotel women staff wear hijab as part of management policy. Greeting “*Assalamu 'alaikum*” (May peace be upon you) by all staff is a mandatory to the coming guests. Most of the guests are Muslim traders, businessmen and families coming from all over Indonesia. There is no swimming pool facility in the hotel as it is a 3 star hotel.

Based on some of Muslim writers, researchers, academicians as well as industry practitioners have described and revealed general agreement on a set of some basic characteristics and attributes of *Shariah* Compliant Hotel. In other words, they give a set of requirements that the hotel must meet to be a *Shariah* Compliant. The attributes included among others (Henderson JC, 2010; Stephenson et.al, 2010; Suhaiza et.al, 201, in Samori and Rahman, 2013), also mentioned by Samori and Sabtu (2012), the three hotels have met the following attributes:

- Halal foods and no alcohol to be served on the premises or hotels
- Having the Holy Book Quran, prayer mat and arrow that indicating the direction of qiblat
- Beds and toilets positioned not to face the qiblat
- Prayer room available on the premises and hotels
- No inappropriate entertainment
- Predominantly Muslim staffs with a proper Islamic code of dressing
- Separate salon, recreational facilities and swimming pool for men and women
- Separate room/ floor for unmarried couple between male and female
- Tourists dressing code
- No gambling and alcohol drinks in the hotel lobby or restaurant
- No prohibited foods and beverages in the hotel fridge
- Islamic funding

Based on the above attributes generally the three hotels have shown their availability, with the exception of few attributes, such as dressing code for staff and

guests, financing aspect (payment and funding), standard of halal facilities, hotel partners (supply chain) and guest couple married status (checking and confirmation).

There has not a clear policy of each hotel on tourists (guests) dressing code, for example in Adenya Hotels and Resorts even though mostly the guest wear appropriate dress, many women guest do not wear hijab, as well the women staff.

Halal hotels and its facilities are not the only guest source of satisfaction, but also its quality of service. Halal services is a requirements, however the overall satisfaction is determined by quality of service. Most of guest complaints and comments from Trip Advisor on the three hotels are on hotel general facilities and services provided by the hotel staff, not on halal facilities.

Halal facilities at Adenya hotels and Resorts, De Palma Hotel Ampang and Hotel Sofyan Jakarta are relatively similar, except that Adenya Hotel and Resorts as located in the beach the water facilities are more complete i.e.: the beach and sauna facilities, not just swimming pool. Also hotel size and sophistication made them different, Adenya Hotel is 5 stars, De Palma Hotel is 4 stars and Hotel Sofyan is 3 Stars hotel. All other facilities are similar, such as: the segregation of man and women in the swimming pool (Adenya Hotel, not at De Palma Hotel, and no swimming pool at Sofyan Hotel)), no alcoholic drink, mosque facility, mat and copy of Quran and sign of qiblat at room. Again, dress code for staff has something to reconfirm, for example the use of hijab for women staff. Not all women staff at Adenya hotel wear hijab, but at The Palma and Sofyan Hotel all women staff wear hijab.

Another thing to reconfirm is the customer payment method and how the hotel deal with bank for its financial source (funding). This relate to halal finance and insurance. In fact the three hotels are open for credit card payment which subject to and something questionable of the *Halalness*. Halal hotel concept also has challenges in budget hotels as typically have narrow spaces, both in the room and hotel sizes. Consequently, it is also a challenge to provide a mosque facility within the hotel. Therefore, size and level of hotel sophistication may affect the Halal hotel concept applicability. Not all the hotels have the same resources, thus this limit the availability of Halal facilities, especially facilities that nice to have ones. Guest expectation may also not the same depending on their Islamic culture, travel objectives and economy wise.

Apart from the Halal facilities within the hotel, another aspect to consider is Hotel partners, such as Halal suppliers which reflect its supply chain for both goods and services a hotel required. This also determine the level of Halal of a hotel owned.

V. CONCLUSION

Model for Halal hotel should follow the *Syariah* principles, however there are a foundation facility and policy which has to be abide, but they may some “nice to have” during the stay but not necessary. On becoming Halal hotels only is not sufficient. Halal hotels with its Muslim facilities is a prerequisite or a basic requirements. However, it should be supported with a better facilities and should also incorporate with customer service and high standard of service. Therefore, model for a Halal hotel should not ignored the basic principle of high quality of service.

There are few elements in halal hotels which need to pay attention to the genuine of Halal hotel, such as staff and guests dressing code, payment method, insurance and the use of banking facilities. Other issue and challenge is budget hotels which typically have small rooms, thus limited space for exercising prayer call. Hotel resources therefore might limit the availability of Halal infrastructure. Therefore, the next model for Halal Hotels would be more complex.

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